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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

@Zvonova E. V.

Syncretism and Symbolism in the Language of Contemporary Art: an Invitation to Scholarly Debate

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Abstract. Art evolves in parallel with the evolution of human cognitive processes. Contemporary art utilizes a unique language reflecting the laws of cultural-historical thought. The language of contemporary art exists in the context of interdisciplinary and intercultural counterpoint. A defining characteristic of the language of contemporary art is syncretism. Contemporary syncretism creates the conditions for the emergence and interpretation of the meaning of a work of art. The process of creating meaning is determined by the author of the work of art. The consciousness of the listener (viewer, reader) creates an aesthetic image by comparing the identified syncretism with the main, guiding idea of the work of art. The guiding idea is based on lofty ideals, and the chosen artistic means are focused on an aesthetic response. The syncretism of contemporary art takes into account potential differences in stimulus modality and allows the respondent to choose the most compatible stimulus type. Contemporary art, at its best, is symbolic. The nature of a symbol lies in its polysemy, cultural variability, and the need for intense intellectual activity. The syncretic language of contemporary art determines the dominant position of syncretic art forms. Cinema, in particular, defines specific standards for the transmission of information, as well as standards for the aesthetic perception of modern man. The subject's specific intellectual development and aesthetic Literacy transform the perception of a work of contemporary art into a creative process, a search for meaning that reveals the individual's inner world.

Keywords: contemporary art, language of art, syncretism, main idea, symbolism, intellect, aesthetic response, image, syncretistic artistic forms.

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Синкретизм и символизм языка современного искусства – приглашение к спору

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Резюме. Искусство развивается вместе с эволюцией познавательных процессов человека, полку искусство является особым языком, отражающим законы культурно-исторического мышления. Язык современного искусства существует в условиях межвидового и кросс-культурного контрапункта. Отличительной, ведущей характеристикой языка современного искусства является синкретизм. Современный синкретизм создает условия для возникновения условий для рождения, понимания субъектом смысла произведения искусства. Процесс создания смысла задается автором произведения искусства. Сознание слушателя (зрителя, читателя) создает эстетический образ в процессе соотнесения выделенной синкреты и главной, ведущей идеи произведения искусства. Ведущая идея базируется на высоких идеях, а выбранные художественные средства ориентируются на эстетическую реакцию. Синкретизм современного искусства учитывает потенциальные различия модальности стимулов и оставляет возможность для респондента выбрать ту модальность стимула, которая является для него наиболее комфортной. Современное искусство в его лучших произведениях является искусством символическим. Специфика символа в том, что он многозначен, культурно подвижен и требует большой интеллектуальной активности. Синкретический язык современного искусства определяет ведущее положение синкретических форм искусства. Кинематограф определяет специфические эталоны передачи информации, а также эталоны эстетического восприятия современного человека. Современные книги написаны таким образом, чтобы тексты легко вызвали зрительные образы, которые могут двигаться, звучать и пахнуть. Специфика интеллектуального развития и эстетической подготовленности субъекта превращает восприятие произведения современного искусства в творческий процесс, поиск смысла, раскрывающий собственный внутренний мир.

Ключевые слова: современное искусство, язык искусства, синкретизм, основная идея, символизм, интеллект, эстетический отклик, образ, синкретические художественные формы.

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Introduction

When we begin to discuss art, the fundamental concept of aesthetic activity immediately comes to mind: "beauty"

(Demuth & Demuthová, 2023). However, further consideration of the goals of art leads to the understanding that art is not a beautiful, embellished reflection of reality.

Historically, art has captured and processed information relevant to many people. The result of this process has been artistic structures that embody not so much an ideal of beauty as a profound, highly generalized symbolic representation of everything encompassed by the concept of "humanity" (Awa et al., 2024). Ultimately, the entire history of art has been an unwavering mission to remind people that they are human.

The contemporary landscape of aesthetic practice reflects the development of social intercultural dialogue, which requires each participant to embrace a conflict-free, cosmopolitan interaction among diverse movements, aesthetic theories, artistic languages, and even artistic forms. It must be acknowledged that how we create and appreciate art is connected to how we relate to each other and organize our collective lives. Artistic artifacts have created a cosmopolitan network formed by individuals whose creativity compels respect for any other aesthetic practices that fall within this space (Gingerich, 2025).

Contemporary art is developing at a rapid pace. Its evolution outpaces the achievements of modern scholarly reflection. We propose discussing the distinctive features of the contemporary language of art and the significant theoretical and analytical foundations that should be considered in the study of contemporary art.

This study is based on the following assertions:

1. The general trend in the development of art is subject to the logic of cultural-historical thought. Since the second half of

the 20th century, a new type of logic has emerged, the "logic of culture", a product of a specific type of thinking— design and construction thinking (Bibler, 2020). This approach is characterized by the active interaction of advances in various fields of science, a desire to search for new structures, as well as an active appeal to the achievements of other civilizations and the interaction of diverse cultures. In fact, this active, mutually reinforcing collaboration of all human achievements has led to the emergence of a unique phenomenon—the Metaverse (Stephenson, 2000), which not only defines the modern human environment (shaping new forms of communication) (Castells, 2009) but also influences cognitive development (for example, by expanding the repertoire through the emergence of new standards of perception) (Cruz & Oliveira, 2024).

2. The art world is becoming an arena of conflict and a field of interaction between contemporary artistic endeavors and the cultural heritage of all Eras. This makes the process of creating a work of art, as well as its perception (the role of the reader, viewer, and listener is expanding), an active process of intellectual co-creation. It is precisely this intellectualism—the constant presence in a work of art not only of a contemporary context, but also of numerous connotations, references, and direct quotations from historical heritage—that makes contemporary art so complex to perceive. Understanding a work of art becomes an act of self-knowledge in the context of "Great Historical Time". Intellectualism currently serves as the dividing line between pop art and high art, an "artifactual event". Since the time of

Aristotle, there has been a tradition of studying any object in relation to its role in human life: what it represents now, what its function is, embedded in words and concepts, and how it arose historically. An object becomes a real event when formal, final and efficient causes coincide, creating a situation of possible interaction between a person and an object (Evnine, 2016). Perceiving art as an active human interaction with a work of art has ceased to be a mere pastime—contemporary artists strive to penetrate the depths of the soul. Sometimes it prompts a reaction similar to Gertrude in Act 3, Scene 4: "O, speak to me no more. These words, like daggers, enter in my ears... Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul..." (Shakespeare, 2021).

3. The extraordinary power of this impact is achieved through the unique, syncretic language of contemporary art. The language of art is a communicative system created specifically to influence the respondent, activating their intellectual potential and emotional experience in the crucible of understanding. Understanding becomes a process of constructing Individual meaning from the perceived information. While social and historical context are certainly significant, the more important aspect is not socially approved interpretation, but personal impressions and evaluations. Artists deliberately construct their own communicative systems, utilizing established artistic tools, citing historical techniques, and inventing new ones.

4. Syncretic forms, such as cinema or contemporary, "directorial" opera, are emerging the leading modes of contemporary art. These forms of artistic

social communication create emergent structures that shape the contemporary subject's perception, which becomes a complex, immersive process of intellectual decoding and encoding (creating symbolism), as well as aesthetic experience.

The method of this study is a cultural-historical analysis conducted within a semiotic framework

Syncretism of the artistic language of contemporary art

The term "syncretism" describes the communication systems of societies in which the formation of individual languages has not yet been completed. In art psychology and art criticism, syncretism is an important characteristic of early, ancient art. In ancient syncretic art, the core meaning of an artifact, its "communicative message", is created through the interaction and mutual complementarity of words, gestures, clothing, face paint, the sequence of ritual actions, location, and other elements of social communication.

The syncretism of the language of contemporary art represents a distinct phenomenon. Art has already undergone significant development, creating a large number of artifacts, some of which have acquired a symbolic, timeless character. These works of art have become symbols, highly generalized and deeply meaningful phenomena. They pass from century to century, migrate from culture to culture, and sometimes even lose their original purpose, acquiring new meanings, connotations, and random associations. Of course, the core of the artistic culture of a given historical period is created within a

specific cultural-historical system, enshrined in uniform rules of creation and decoding. However, for contemporary art, there is no concept of "classic" ideal, or exemplary, since for many art forms, the dialogue "author-viewer (listener, reader)" becomes a polylogue: "author-performer (director)-viewer (listener, reader)-social context". And each participant in this creative process actively contributes to the creation of meaning. Of course, the first, original text is created by the author, but their presence is like the presence of a ghost or spirit - sometimes it clearly appears, sometimes it disappears (Summers, 2025).

Any communication system, any language, like the syncretic language of contemporary art, has structural elements, systemic connections, modality, syntax, and principles of formal organization. The nature of the syncretic language of contemporary art dictates the need to go beyond a single artistic practice (for example, painting or music), which has created beautiful aesthetic concepts, and to seek a more general, fundamental scientific paradigm capable of investigating how a specific response to a work of art is formed in the respondent's mind. This will help to study the variability and psychological complexity of contemporary art perception and to analyse the potentially chaotic and individual nature of aesthetic response. Numerous previous studies in neuropsychology and art psychology have collected a wealth of data on how our brain processes complex information (color, sounds, rhythm and movement imitation, etc.). However, the process of meaning formation remains a pressing issue in art psychology (Minissale, 2013, 15).

An element of syncretic language is defined as a syncrete. But what is a syncrete? What makes an element of established artistic language a syncrete? What is necessary for a given element to function as a syncrete?

Our engagement with a work of art is a cognitive process of perception that requires certain conditions to be met. We must be able to identify the individual elements of the perceived object; their existence must be logically permissible and fit within our model of the world. However, the process of perception is the sequential unification of elementary particles into a holistic image, which is determined by our understanding of the surrounding world, in which the perceived object has a specific relationship to us (the perceiver). The concept of a holistic image, in turn, allows the particles to unite. Thus, the process of perception represents an interplay between the transition from a syncretic to a holistic image and the reverse transition from a structurally and textually defined image to a syncretic one.

The author provides an original reference point — a kernel of understanding, a syncretic element, a specific component of the artistic text that nudges the respondent in the author's intended direction. The holistic image in contemporary art is defined by the cosmopolitan space of the modern world.

For example, Ursula Biemann's film *Acoustic Ocean* (2018) presents an aesthetic concept for depicting ocean spaces from the perspective of underwater animal communication. However, the underlying idea is the unity of the unique deep-sea environment and the life of the indigenous

world – all living beings: humans, animals, and plants. The beauty and fragility of underwater sound demand environmental justice, limiting modern technology's sensory access to the ocean space, and finding unobtrusive ways to interact with the underwater world (Curtis, 2024).

Another example is the architectural idea of Antoni Gaudí (Antoni Plàcid Guillem Gaudí i Cornet), embodied in Park Güell (Catalan: Parc Güell; Spanish: Parque Güell).

Despite the park's natural beauty, where plants serve as an artistic medium and organize space beyond purely ecological characteristics (Daglio & Kousidi, 2023), and despite the sophistication of the architectural structures, the primary semantic syncretic element is "Gaudí's rosary" – rounded stones laid sequentially throughout the park. They organize the visitor's perception of the park space similar to the process of counting beads, a serious, focused stringing together of one impression after another. The pinnacle of the park's beauty is a small mountain with crosses, Golgotha, a metaphorical end of the journey. The view from Golgotha is boundless – the park, the city, the sea, the sky, and beyond, into boundless space. The architect created the conditions for the experience of limitlessness, the infinity of beauty – this is the crowning achievement of the park's exploration.

Syncretic language and symbolism of contemporary art - managing perception

Modern research shows that there are significant differences between the three leading artistic media of poetry, music, and visual art. The vividness of the images

evoked is a significant predictor of the aesthetic appeal of poetry, emotional valence is the most powerful stimulus in the perception of music, and complexity and unfamiliarity can become a barrier to the perception of visual art images (Mehl et al., 2023). The syncretism of contemporary art takes into account potential differences in stimulus modality – the syncretic series allows respondents to choose the stimulus modality that is most comfortable for them. And with the intellectual and aesthetic readiness of the listener (reader, viewer, etc.), each perception of a work of contemporary art becomes a compelling search for the semantic content of the artistic text.

The syncretic language of contemporary art is not a coherent, defined, or static entity. For many works of the second half of the 20th century, the system of artistic language is constructed by the artist exclusively for each individual work. This trend is becoming dominant in the 21st century.

In contemporary art, not only elements of visual and artistic means enter into a mutually complementary or debatable dialogue, but also holistic constructions, formed images that act as symbols of the meanings of human existence in the world.

Symbolism is the ultimate end of the intellectual and affective experience of a particular phenomenon. Symbolism in contemporary art is a gateway into the crucible of broad semantic content. However, despite its perceived finality, symbolism has great potential for acquiring meaning, supplementing, expanding, and changing, sometimes to the point of metamorphosis.

The central image upon which a work of contemporary art is built, in order to become central to the process of meaning-making, must address a fundamental question of modern cognition: if humanity has already accomplished so much in scientific, intellectual, and aesthetic pursuits, why do real practices continue that contradict long-established concepts such as good and evil; life and death? Any pressing contemporary problem or timeless, eternal question of human existence, whether explicitly or implicitly present in public consciousness, is again and again embodied in contemporary art.

A single image or an entire work of art often becomes a symbol, regardless of its author's artistic intent, ideology, or aesthetic position. In many works of art, the author's intent may coincide with the image perceived by the modern viewer, but without information about the author's intent, how can we judge this?

This is true of artistic artifacts of the past that have become symbolic embodiments of a particular idea, such as the diptych the Melun Diptych (Kemperdick, 2018) by Jean Fouquet. The history of the conception and creation of this image contains many unknown facts. Who is depicted as the Madonna and why such means of representation were chosen remain a mystery. We know nothing, yet the impact of this artistic artifact is enormous. The enigma of the central image coexists with the absolute accuracy of historical details. For example, the realistic depiction of a hand axe in the saint's hands becomes an argument in favor of the artifact's attribution in archaeological research (Key et al., 2024).

The process of perceiving a work of art is like solving a riddle, searching for meaning—this is also true for contemporary art, where the artist's original intention may differ significantly in content from the images evoked in the public. For example, the symbolic, barbaric act of burning a piano is one of the emblematic images of the late 20th and 21st centuries. In art, this symbol has become quite familiar, appearing in musical works by Annea Lockwood (Davis, 2003) (who seems to suffer from a pathological hatred of the piano and has repeatedly addressed the theme of musical instrument destruction), Yōsuke Yamashita, Diego Stocco, and Michael Hannan, as well as in installations (Chiharu Shiota, Arman). Finally, Douglas Gordon created a video installation with the explanatory title *The End of Civilization* (Grosenick, 2005).

Certainly, the theme of the destruction of everything connected with the essence of the "divine spirit", as that which constitutes the essence of man, is a tragically constant theme in art (one can recall Dante Alighieri and "*Götterdämmerung*"), but the means (a burning musical instrument), chosen for direct impact on the subject living in the modern world, have a destructive anti-aesthetic effect.

From the very beginning of experimental research into the processes of perception, the specific nature of the perception of works of art has been highlighted (Leder & Pelowski, 2024). Excessively shocking naturalism leads to the rejection of the entire idea. The rejection of aesthetic generalization and convention, "the trivialization" (Krauss, 2000) and

reduction of artistic language to the mundane, do not lead to greater "intelligibility" of the aesthetic idea.

The issue of blurring the boundaries between reality and contemporary art, reflections on the loss of artistic autonomy (Scheller, 2024) as a way out of the closed world of the pedagogical province (Hesse, 2012), from the framework of the conventional game into the expansive field of everyday life, has ceased to be controversial at the present moment.

With the recognition of the Metaverse as a valid metaphorical description of the modern social context, a clear understanding has emerged of the existence of a demarcation line between the real and virtual worlds in the subject's worldview, the permissible possibilities for representing these two realities, and the specific modality of the virtual world's media. Virtual reality offers the opportunity undergo experiences and modes of existence that, for various reasons, everyday life cannot provide (Burrows, 2022).

In this context, art and everyday life create a unified field of meaning, but employ distinct means of expression. Artistic means are modally linked to the field of aesthetics, and the study of the specifics of their impact on the subject is possible using the full range of methods of modern psychology (Punch, 2022) and cognitive science. This evolution of scientific knowledge about art represents a shift in the art historian's role from that of a mediator facilitating viewers' interaction with art (Krauss, 2025) to that of multidimensional, interdisciplinary empirical research and high-level

generalization, which will enable the creation of a new science (Specker, 2025) of humanity in its subjective, group, and mass manifestations.

From syncretic language to syncretic artistic forms

The artistic language of contemporary art is syncretic and symbolic (Wilson, 2025). A new stage in the development of artistic media is taking place in cross-species collaboration and cross-cultural counterpoint. Enormous technical capabilities, a wealth of information representing not only descriptive but also theoretical and practical materials on historically established trends, styles, forms, and compositional techniques, and a context of existence characterized by cross-cultural, cross-national, and cross-species interaction have determined contemporary art's quest for complex, fundamental forms and profound themes. This has led to a veritable feast of all kinds of festivals and other forms of popular art. Cinema has firmly established a dominant position, offering its potential for preserving and prolonging the life of temporary art forms (such as music) in new forms.

Cinema is one of the most syncretic forms of modern art, as its artistic language integrates the achievements of all forms of aesthetic practice. However, there is another form of popular art, opera, which is currently becoming less elitist and more intellectual. Throughout human history, theater has always been a place of mass communication, and opera has always been distinguished by a certain aesthetic sophistication and social elitism. The development of the contemporary opera is

determined, in our opinion, by the following trends of the modern global world:

- Knowledge of opera and its technical terminology functions as a marker of intellectual community. In particular, the metaphor of the transition from one type of opera to another was used by physicians to describe the evolution of surgical research in The United Kingdom (Hutchinson et al., 2023). This technique elevates the surgical profession to the level of high art, which takes on the meaning of a compliment.
- Opera is recognized as a genre for the general public, since it is not only a specific mode of aesthetic experience, but also because opera has historically developed and evolved, and is one of the conditions for the formation of national identity (Wilson, 2025).
- Every year, growing interest in national cultures is driven not only by aesthetic searches for new texts and distinct melodies, but also by new heroes. The formation of a transnational culture draws diverse and highly compelling operatic works into the global sphere. This is evident in productions such as "football opera" (Bateman, 2014) and attempts to develop completely different interpretations of the operatic genre, such as Chinese opera (Liu, 2025). Cross-cultural interaction does not lead to the destruction of national operatic traditions, but rather facilitates the transformation of classical European forms within

Eastern culture (Asatryan, 2025) and the emergence of new, multilingual dramaturgy (Lech, 2024). In this situation, art historians contribute to the interest of opera house intendants and festival directors in works and national schools unknown to the general public (Abe & Falusi, 2025).

- Attending opera is becoming a prestigious and socially significant event. The opera industry is keeping pace with modern trends in commercial success: opera festivals not only showcase captivating, engaging, and often simply stunning performances, but are also commercially successful. Festivals' focus on both the generally accepted "elitism" of the opera genre and strategic financial goals is currently yielding excellent results. An ever-wider audience is falling under the spell of opera staged by contemporary directors, and the world is being introduced to an ever-wider range of musical heritage and new works. This trend can be explained by the results of modern empirical studies, which reveal two different dimensions of aesthetic experience: involvement and confusion (Lee et al., 2025). Modern audiences recognize that opera is a complex art form. However, a contemporary director's concept offers a vast field for historical, political, and other connotations, revealing not only the composer's original intended meaning but also triggering an active process of reflection and intellectual activation.

Thus, the director's conceptual vision replaces the psychological premise of complexity and potential misunderstanding with a different, familiar and understandable (which does not mean simple) cue that conveys to the listener a framework that facilitates understanding of the syncretic text. This is entirely consistent with the theory of predictive information processing, which is increasingly used as a basis for explaining the mechanisms of artistic understanding (Frascaroli et al., 2024).

- Video recordings (with varying degrees of proximity to the art of cinema) make it possible to preserve and broadcast interesting performances, thereby expanding the number of potential opera fans.

Contemporary opera directing – two examples, two masterpieces

Contemporary opera is a complex, syncretic genre, the central element of which is symbolism. The director creates this magical unity, resulting in a powerful aesthetic experience for the audience.

A contemporary opera production is impossible without a director. For the full palette of syncretic language to speak, for individual melodies, lyrics, sets, and other elements of the operatic genre to merge into a symbolic embodiment, a unified artistic and organizational intellect is essential that can embody lofty ideas and musical masterpieces using modern technical and scenographic means. The musical essence of an opera requires the conductor's high professionalism and musicality, but the director ensures the

powerful impact of the entire opera score, taking into account all modern technical resources (Cannon, 2012).

It should not be forgotten that the modern viewer is being shaped as a film viewer; for them, cinematic (Sheppard, 2005) (although it would be more accurate to define this in light of our practice of interacting with various digital media) digital realism has become the leading strategy of perception.

Modern research shows that subjective assessments of singing and the characteristics of the human voice are based not on the acoustic properties of the voices themselves, but on how these properties are perceived by listeners (Bruder et al., 2024). Directing has the ability and means to control this perception process, which determines the success of a director's decision.

As an example, we propose to consider two great works: the production of Carl Maria von Weber's opera *Der Freischütz*, directed by Philipp Stölzl at the 2024/25 Bregenz Festival, and the monumental mythological saga of Richard Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung*, directed by Dmitry Chernyakov (Staatsoper Unter den Linden), 2022.

According to the librettist, the action of C. M. Weber's opera *Der Freischütz* takes place in Bohemia following the Thirty Years' War (in 1690). However, the opera was written and performed after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, in which the German-speaking states found themselves on opposite sides of the conflict. In his production, Philipp Stölzl chooses the timelessness of the aftermath of any armed conflict—death, decay, and darkness—as

the leading syncretic motif. Throughout the performance, a clock on a leaning, dilapidated tower is present on stage, its hand rapidly turning, sometimes forward, sometimes backward. The action itself, on the one hand, maintains a historical connection to the legend and horror of the Thirty Years' War, while on the other, it establishes direct analogies and references to the first half of the 19th century, precisely at the time of the opera's completion, when vast swathes of European lands lay empty, littered, and poisoned by corpses as a result of the Napoleonic Wars. The stage itself, located on the shores of Lake Constance (Bodensee), helps the director create an apocalyptic picture of disaster and destruction.

The director's concept intersects and establishes semantic and figurative parallels between the historical contexts of the two wars. This aesthetic generalization was applied to the creation of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, a lament for the losses of World War II. The text of *War Requiem* is based on poems by Wilfred Owen, written during World War I (Penner, 2025). Through the temporal juxtaposition of the two contexts, the fallen soldiers emerge as protagonists, and their corpses, in varying states of decomposition, play a significant role in creating the terrifying atmosphere of the Wolf's Glen in Weber's opera.

The protagonist, who leads the narrative and serves as the central thread of the entire performance, is Samiel, the devil's assistant, a "black" archangel. Samiel's costume and the overall design of his role are more reminiscent of Till Eulenspiegel,

but without the traditional owl and mirror. He resembles the evil, ironic, and cynical hero of D. Kehlmann's modern version of the Till legend (Kehlmann, 2017). As Samiel lacks vocal themes, his natural speech does not function simply the connecting narrative as is typical in a classic Singspiel. Instead, Samiel, as a figure of eternal evil, rises above the situation, governing, directing, tempting, and immediately reflecting ironically.

The director also includes Samiel in other episodes of the opera. For example, it is he who, perched on the clouds, performs the famous cello solo. After the hermit's famous intervention, it is revealed that the omnipresent Samiel Had been hiding under the luxurious, carnival-like robes of a holy man. This, on the one hand, explains the invisible force that redirects the enchanted bullets toward Kaspar. On the other hand, Samiel becomes not simply a servant of dark forces, but a symbol of triumphant evil—strong, ironic, utterly cynical, and, therefore, all-conquering.

Samiel orchestrates and directs the actions of the living. However, the opera's score and the director's palette give a huge role to the dead warriors, who emerge from the water wearing horrific makeup and clearly identifiable costumes associated with the participants in the German campaign of 1813 (Befreiungskriege). Various uniforms are presented, recalling the Landwehr, the Landsturm warriors, and the heroic history of the Lützower Jäger. Yet the warriors themselves are no longer on anyone's side; they have lost their lives, becoming cadavers hostile to humanity.

The most powerful scene, as the ideological culmination and embodiment of the performance's central idea, is the wild hunt scene. A horse skeleton, engulfed in flames, emerges from the water and is harnessed to a cart in which the fallen warriors are heading off to a joyful picnic. This is a distorted image of the perverted joy in Männertag, which is driven by evil itself.

The rest of the action unfolds under the sensitive guidance of Samiel, who is having a blast: the devotion of Agatha's friend, Anchen, is explained by lesbian love. Prince Ottokar, the judge of purity and honesty, arrives in the company of three mistresses. The opera concludes happily, accompanied by Samiel's mocking laughter— yes, people are notoriously naive fools, testing the value of life time after time, century after century, and never stopping. Well, until next time!

Philipp Stölzl's production is stunning – the music sounds absolutely contemporary, every element is meticulously considered, and the director's technical vision is astounding. The opera is becoming a highlight of the Bregenz Festival, and thanks to the cinematic version, a remarkable phenomenon of contemporary culture. Everything has been done to maximize the target audience without losing the musical's aesthetic value: alongside horrific scenes of destruction and a bloody attack on a village, presented through shadow theater and red light, there are idyllic scenes with mermaids, performed by synchronized swimming specialists, and skating motifs

that, on the one hand, blend into the set and evoke the paintings of Pieter Bruegel the Younger, while, on the other, softly illuminate the souls of figure skating fans.

The 2022 production of the monumental cycle *The Ring of the Nibelung*, directed by Dmitry Tcherniakov at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, offers an original solution that links all parts of this mythological saga into a single, coherent context.

The story describes a scientific experiment conducted by scientists (gods) using human subjects in order to study human behavior. This predictive information processing is established from the very first moments of the opera – a floor plan of the E.S.C.H.E. (Experimental Scientific Center of Human Evolution), where the experiment is taking place, hangs on stage. The opera's characters move from one floor to another, passing from a public meeting hall or from the Scientific Council auditorium to an experimental laboratory. The path to the human behavior laboratory passes through an animal testing facility, where rabbits sit in large glass boxes, melancholically munching hay. All of this relates to a series of "horrible psychological experiments", most notably as the Stanford Prison Experiment¹ and attempts to replicate its findings (Reicher & Haslam, 2006).

Each element of the opera is symbolic and opens up the possibility of new meanings. For example, the abbreviation E.S.C.H.E. means "ash tree" in German, and "spear" in Old German. In Norse mythology, the giant ash tree is the sacred

¹ Stanford Prison Experiment [Electronic resource]:
URL: <https://www.prisonexp.org/>

tree Yggdrasil. This tree connects the nine worlds. The enormous ash tree grows through the building of the scientific institute, connecting all levels of scientific activity.

Time, the constant experimenter and controller of human history, becomes the central syncret. The director structures the events of Wagner's tetralogy over the lifespan of a single generation of the experiments' ideological inspirers and organizers—scientists under the direction of Wotan. The historical context is reconstructed through photographs, video footage, and the changing styles of the subjects' costumes and domestic environments. Dmitry Tcherniakov deliberately addresses the most tragic and morally complex periods of history, the memory of which resonates with pain in the soul of every German. For example, the appearance of Siegmund and his meeting with Sieglinde takes place against the backdrop of the tragic, acute political confrontation of the Rote Armee Fraktion era, when the political struggle of ideologies turned into a struggle of generations.

Only the scientific world remains virtually unchanged. New computer models emerge in the constant chaos of wires in the data processing department. Nevertheless, the rabbits, the academic council meetings, and the indispensable attribute of a research institution—the smoking room (where in-depth information exchanges take place, forecasts are made, and personal assessments of everything happening in the scientific world are formulated)—remain constant. It is there, in the smoking room, that three

institute employees—three Norns, daughters of Erda—gradually age and grow decrepit—weave the thread of fate.

Throughout the opera, the god-scientists age, and in the final part of the tetralogy, Wotan appears as a half-blind, shuffling old man, having abandoned his elegant, expensive suit for old sweatpants with stretched-out knees. However, old age has neither forgotten nor lost its mystical power, nor does it create the conditions for forgetting all past deceptions, thefts, and betrayals. Wotan's legal wife, the goddess of marriage, Fricka, despite her venerable age, cannot forgive her husband's infidelity and interferes with the experiment, leading to the death of Wotan's illegitimate offspring. This inevitably evokes parallels with the Stanford prison experiment, specifically the intervention of Christina Maslach, a graduate student and later Philip Zimbardo's wife. As one of the fifty observers, she spoke out against the study's continuation due to its unethical nature.

The director's titanic work takes Wagner's music, which is considered very difficult to understand (Baker & Mullensiefen, 2017), to a new level of interaction with the audience. The opera's structure is presented in the style of scientific research, where hypotheses are put forward and operationalized, variables are controlled, and experimental situations are modeled. The different stages of the plot are structured like experimental series: one hypothesis is tested, then a second. Therefore, changing conditions and introducing characters are required. However, the scientists are also human, and base passions interfere with the cold

logic of scientific research, tragically compromising the experiment. The obtained results, zettabytes of information that make up Big Data, like the institute building itself, are consumed. The giant ash tree, the tree of knowledge, the tree uniting different worlds, is likewise also perishing. Brunhilde throws down the ring, marking the end of the age of heroes and a return to the void. The world is perishing not in fire, but in emptiness, in the lack of demand for scientific knowledge, in the loneliness of scientists.

Is this a punishment for the gods' inordinate pride? No. It is the result of human passions raging behind the scenes of the scientific community—betrayal, envy, incompetence, malice destroying people, ideas, and the world itself. Is such an end a tragedy? In the context of individual human destinies, which constitute the context of science, of course it is. Yet, in the context of dispassionate scientific research, no, because the end has not been reached, the path to further exploration remains open. Horrific situations can be repeatedly simulated to study what man is capable of, how this manifests itself in his behavior, whether there is a limit to baseness and a pinnacle of greatness. This vicious circle is endless. However, a moment may come when, after the purifying fire, there will be nothing and no one left to restore the burned-out world.

Conclusion

The materials presented allow us to advance the following propositions, which, in the author's opinion, can be adopted as the theoretical foundations for studying

the artistic language of contemporary art and lay the foundation for the creation of a new discipline is a more accurate word here –the Psychology of Contemporary Art. Regardless of the name, it is clear that:

1. Contemporary art establishes a true world without boundaries, an important part of the Metaverse;

2. The foundation of contemporary art is a new syncretism, a fruitful interaction of all artistic languages;

3. The syncretism of language determines the leading position of complex syncretic art forms not only within the hierarchy of specialized vocabularies and theoretical propositions, but also in shaping the perception of art by modern man;

4. The process of perception becomes a complex cognitive, deeply intellectual process of constructing meaning, making any listener, viewer, or reader an important participant in the existence of a work of art. This determines the need for creative scientific collaboration between psychology and art criticism;

5. Contemporary art is symbolic because the process of modern human perception is largely based on symbols, necessitating a qualitatively new stage in the study of symbolism, one that would unite specialists from various fields: historians, art historians, philosophers, psychologists, neuroscientists, sociologists, and others;

6. The laws Governing the modern cultural space determine the presence of the enriching influence of other cultures, therefore the science of contemporary art must be cross-cultural.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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

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THE MYSTERIES OF CREATIVITY

Original article

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The Phenomenon of Ritchie Blackmore: Musical Creativity as an Absolute Form of Realizing Childhood Vitality

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Abstract. The article analyzes the unique cultural and psychological phenomenon of the 1960s–70s — the heyday of hard rock, characterized by a richness of styles and a high level of performance mastery. A special focus is made on Richard Hugh Blackmore, who stands out among the numerous musicians of that time due to his distinctive personality and creative achievements. The implementation of a multidisciplinary approach in the biographical method of studying personality and creativity can be understood through the lens of Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, particularly his concept of life stages development and the conflict of vitality. Erikson identifies eight stages, each involving a contradiction between the internal need for self-realization and external constraints, thus looking into the grounds of forming and realizing creative potential. An important prerequisite for the development of uniqueness and creativity is innate individuality embedded at the genetic level, called childhood vitality — the inner force that determines personality development throughout life. In the case of Blackmore and other talented musicians of this era, the manifestation of a high level of mastery and innovation is associated with an internal readiness to overcome stages of conflict and realize their unique natural ability. Research, analysis, and understanding of the psychological mechanisms of development and inner vitality are important for explaining differences in creative potential and achievements.

Keywords: multidisciplinary paradigm, innovations in music, creativity, epigenetic developmental map, childhood vitality, musical thinking, personal uniqueness, biographical method, Richard Blackmore

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Феномен Ричи Блэкмора – музыкальное творчество как доведенная до абсолюта форма реализации детской витальности

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Резюме. Статья посвящена анализу уникального культурного и психологического феномена 1960–70-х годов — эпохи расцвета хард-рока, характеризующейся богатством стилей и высоким уровнем исполнительского мастерства. В центре внимания находится фигура Ричарда Хью Блэкмора (Richard Hugh "Ritchie" Blackmore), который выделяется среди многочисленных музыкантов того времени своей особой личностью и творческими достижениями. Реализация полидисциплинарного подхода в биографическом методе исследования личности и творчества можно понять через призму психосоциальной теории Эрика Эриксона, особенно его концепции стадий жизненного развития и конфликта витальности. Эриксон выделяет восемь этапов, каждый из которых включает противоречие между внутренней потребностью в самореализации и внешними ограничениями, что особенно важно в контексте формирования и реализации творческого потенциала. Важной предпосылкой для развития уникальности и креативности является врожденная индивидуальность, заложенная на генетическом уровне, которую Эриксон называл детской витальностью — внутренней силой, определяющей развитие личности на протяжении всей жизни. В случае Блэкмора и других талантливых музыкантов этой эпохи, проявление высокого уровня мастерства и инноваций связано с внутренней готовностью преодолевать стадии конфликта и реализовывать свою уникальную природную способность. Исследование, анализ и понимание психологических механизмов развития и внутренней витальности важно для объяснения различий в творческом потенциале и достижениях.

Ключевые слова: полидисциплинарная парадигма, инновации в музыке, творчество, эпигенетическая карта развития, детская витальность, музыкальное мышление, личностная уникальность, биографический метод, Ричард Блэкмор

Для цитирования: Ильин В. А. Феномен Ричи Блэкмора – музыкальное творчество как доведенная до абсолюта форма реализации детской витальности. *Arts in Cultural Dialogue*, 2026, 1(2), 21–48. <https://doi.org/10.67019/3033-8298.2026.2.2.001>

Introduction

The musical culture of the late 1960s and 1970s is of particular interest as a unique psychological phenomenon. Within the most popular direction of this period, usually called hard rock — a direction that

was very diverse, covering a huge range of works from the most complex polyphonic compositions of Emerson, Lake & Palmer to the popular hits of Queen — an anomalously large number of authors and performers with a tremendous influence

on entire generations emerged. Within this genre, which essentially had no strict boundaries, one can find plenty of examples of mediocrity, outright opportunism, and "honest" creative failures, but in its best manifestations, this period represents a phenomenal integration of the highest performance mastery and compositional innovations into conventionally "youth" music. Moreover, "different performances of the same composition may vary in terms of performance parameters such as timing or dynamics, and these variations may have a major impact on how a listener perceives the music" (Lerch et al., 2020, 221). The only common criterion for including individual works or a musician's oeuvre in popular music can be attributed as the pleasure listeners derive from listening (Schubert, 2013).

Against this colorful background, the figure in black stands apart — the figure of Richard Hugh "Ritchie" Blackmore (Bloom, 2008) — an amazing musician and personality. "Amazing" in this case is neither a compliment nor a biased fan assessment of his talent. There is indeed much that is amazing in the life and work of Ritchie Blackmore, as well as in the public perception of him.

In various rock encyclopedias, wikipedias, and other similar sources, Blackmore is invariably characterized as "one of the most significant and influential guitarists of the twentieth century"². In the 1970s, the unofficial title of "king of the guitar" was firmly attached to him. At the

same time, the king of the guitar, certainly included in all sorts of lists of the best and greatest guitarists, as a rule occupies far from top positions in them (for example, according to Rolling Stone magazine, he is only 55th). Let us not look into the grounds of these lists; let us simply note the fact. Blackmore also does not appear in the lists of the well-paid and richest musicians. At the same time, by the age of 30, he had secured financial independence that allowed him to play what he wanted, write what he wanted, and maintain a lifestyle that met his rather expensive demands and tastes.

As early as the beginning of the 1970s, a popular image of Ritchie Blackmore was formed as a gloomy, unsociable and at the same time scandalous genius — almost a sociopath. Meanwhile, unlike many of his colleagues, Blackmore was not involved in any really major scandals. He loved to drink all his life (and never hid it), but did not arrange orgies that made the front pages of tabloids, never used drugs; the drama of his legendary feud with Ian Gillan is greatly exaggerated. Behind the only truly major episode in his career, involving the smashing of guitars and the destruction of stage equipment at the California Jam in 1974, widely circulated thanks to surviving video footage, was a complex set of motives that included completely rational considerations of a commercial nature. Moreover, Ritchie Blackmore can be called an exemplary family man — his official marriage to Candice Night, resulted in the birth of two

² Ричи Блэкмор – Интервью в прямом эфире. URL: <https://youtu.be/5PRE4UqT2HE?is=NyiS-hTcjPTP9xFF> (accessed: 05.04.2025).

children and an unusually fruitful creative collaboration, has lasted 18 years, and their cohabitation is much longer (they became engaged back in 1994). Prior to this, the "unsociable" Blackmore had been officially married three times – all these marriages were short-lived, apparently largely fleeting infatuations, but, note, the "scandalous" and "self-absorbed" rock idol preferred to formalize relationships. The same "unsociable", "scandalous", "withdrawn" Blackmore, who constantly cursed music producers in public declarations throughout his career, was perfectly able to deal with them, invariably achieving satisfaction of his financial and organizational demands, as well as his musical preferences.

And here we come to the main point. Not only as a completely unique, inimitable performer, but also as an extremely talented and prolific composer, Ritchie Blackmore not only elevated popular music to the level of high art, but also made a fully academic contribution to the development of musical culture as a whole.

The Transformation of Musical Language in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

1. In the second half of the twentieth century, music saw the coexistence of three directions in the development of musical language – the modal-tonal system with "classical" musical forms continued to function, the search for new means of musical expression, new logic of their interaction, and new "avant-garde" forms continued, while at the same time an appeal began to actively

manifest itself (both in the form of quotations and in the form of using individual techniques, stylization of styles, and an appeal to the forms of structures and logic of musical language of past eras and distant cultures) (Chibisova, Zvonova, 2020). In the 1960s–70s, the opposition of "the changing and the unchanging in the evolution of musical thinking" (Kholopov, 1982), reflected in theoretical studies, came to the realm of mass culture through the system of music education and broad musical practice (including journalism). This process was accompanied by an increasing role of the author's originality, who often created and used his own musical system in only one work (Kholopov, 1978, 169–199).

Sustained changes in the harmonic and tonal syntax of the musical language of popular culture (Léveillé Gauvin, 2015), vividly manifested in the search for new harmonic consistency and logic of development (De Clercq, 2015), occur under the basic conditions of popular music – to bring pleasure, to be liked, even causing negative emotions, civic anger, or other strong stirring feelings (Mehl et al., 2023). As N.V. Kret points out, "musical works striving to express the Sublime go beyond simple entertainment and offer the listener an experience of transcendence, power, and terror, contributing to a deepening of emotional and intellectual understanding of the world" (Kret, 2026, 95). E.A. Bodina develops the same idea in her research, stating that in modern education "calls for the need to cultivate developed aesthetic

taste and the ability for artistic creativity are heard in parallel" (Bodina, 2025, 89). Another pressing problem, in addition to the unnatural introduction of the developing personality of the student (as an individual) to "external" social norms, is the leveling of the ever-increasing cognitive noise, which significantly hinders the search for personal identity and the acquisition of genuine understanding of oneself and one's creative abilities. According to researchers I.A. Korsakova and M.M. Sadritdinova, in the modern world, the problem of comprehending "the redundancy of the information space comes to the fore in such facets as: authentic knowledge and 'information noise,' fragmentariness and superficiality of knowledge, speed of perception and depth of knowledge acquisition" (Korsakova, Sadritdinova, 2025, 9).

Thus, the "figure in black", woven from contradictions, recedes into the background, the realm of rumors, gossip, and commercial image, and instead of it we see the authentic Blackmore – a very integral, strong, multifaceted, and, yes, of course complex personality. Of course, our goal is not to write a "truthful biography" of Ritchie Blackmore (or another history of the groups "Deep Purple", "Rainbow", and "Blackmore's Night"), but to attempt to analyze and understand the reasons he was able to go much further than gifted rock musicians of the 1970s, as well as to preserve and realize his creative potential throughout his long life – this, in our opinion, is certainly worthwhile.

Creative Potential of the Personality

The general social causes and conditions for the formation of the musical phenomenon of the late 1960s and early 1970s have long been known and described – peaceful and not-so-peaceful youth movements in the United States and Western Europe, based on a demand for freedom of creativity, personal independence, rising prosperity, and social reforms that created a favorable environment – all this is not empty words. But behind these external factors a deep content rooted in human nature lies. Researching in the field, the scientist Verneert and colleagues develop the idea that, "as the need for more creative and open pedagogical-artistic strategies has been emphasized by many and the coaches in the TOSO project reach a very diverse group of people and succeed in finding a way of working with music that is 'relevant to the musical self,' we deemed it important to look closely into the pedagogical-artistic strategies of the coaches in this project. <...> We believe that the diversity of artistic-pedagogical strategies found in community music projects needs to be implemented throughout music teacher education <...> and can play a role in changing society through music" (Verneert et al., 2024, 14–15). According to S. Moscovici's definition, "social psychology is a science that studies the conflict between the individual and society" (Moscovici, 2007, 19). Let us add – the universal and inevitable conflict in all its diverse manifestations. And here a natural question may arise – why is this conflict inevitable? What about "man is man's friend, comrade, and brother?" and all that sort of thing? Let us try to figure it out.

Every person is born unique, different from all other humanity. This is not a metaphor, this is a "medical fact" – the DNA of each individual is unique. That is, the need to manifest, assert, and realize one's initially individual – physiological, and then, as one develops, personal uniqueness is embedded in each of us already at the genetic level. This need was called childhood vitality by the founder of the psychosocial theory of development, E. Erikson, and he considered it the main internal driving force of human development throughout life. The author J. Korostenskiene explains that "humanism is perceived here as an anthropocentric paradigm of free education <...> grounded in the values of democracy, human dignity and recognition of human individuality" (Korostenskiene, 2022, 3). In the same vein, Winarko and Budiwati (2024, 1) emphasize that "humanistic pedagogy offers an alternative educational framework that focuses on the holistic development of students, emphasizing autonomy, emotional well-being, and personalized learning" (Winarko & Budiwati, 2024, 1), which is directly consonant with the task of the fullest possible realization of childhood vitality. And here the problem inevitably arises – how far in the social space can each of us go in realizing this need? In other words – where does my freedom end, including freedom of self-expression? Where does the freedom of another person begin? And with what, excuse me, authority, especially if this "other" is not particularly sympathetic to me (just as perhaps I am to him)? Let him better move over with his freedom!

Once upon a time, this dilemma was resolved according to the "law of the jungle" – whoever has stronger fists, a heavier club, whoever is more "cold-blooded", is more freely. A natural, archetypal echo of this approach can be observed in countless children's squabbles over various, often incomprehensible to adults, external reasons, with the background of the indicated existential contradiction. But at some extent in human history, social structures began to emerge whose main purpose in the context under consideration was precisely the regulation of these relations – determining the boundaries and forms where community members could realize their childhood vitality in a socially acceptable form. In science, it is known, as socialization. At different times, in different societies, existing norms set a very different range for the realization of childhood vitality of their members – from the widest possible space of opportunities, "everything not prohibited is permitted", to petty regulation of private life, "everything not permitted is prohibited". In this sense, in the United States and Western European countries during the period, we began our discussion with, a number of socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-psychological factors converged, thus contributed to the expansion of the space of personal opportunities and human self-realization.

However, even in the most favorable conditions of this kind, socialization inevitably, one way or another, limits the manifestations of an individual's childhood vitality. Hence the inevitable conflict between the individual and society

follows, S. Moscovici wrote about. And every person – consciously or not, is essentially forced throughout his life to resolve this dilemma – how to maximize the realization of his childhood vitality while remaining within the normative field of the community he is a member. Or, in other words, how to manifest one's free will, freedom of self-expression and self-realization, without infringing on the freedom of others.

The answer to this extremely complex question, as well as to many other similar questions, is found in the Bible: "Man is created in the image and likeness of God". Some perceive this postulate literally, others as a beautiful metaphor, but in any case it is useful to think about what exactly is meant – what exactly do these "image and likeness" consist of (leaving aside the notion of God as an old man in white robes sitting on clouds)? One of the definitions of God often found in the Bible is "Creator", the creator of all things. And in this, in our opinion, lies the essence of the "spark of God" originally embedded in man. Man is capable of creativity and he is like God in this option. And it is precisely the ability to create – to create something new, unique, reflecting the personality, the soul of the creator – that is the most adequate, practical answer to the question posed above. Researcher A. Fung adds: "Music is a key element in realizing personal and collective identities that are formed in the intersection of affective life experiences" (Fung, 2022, 2). Note one can create in any field of activity – according to S.L. Rubinstein's definition, activity: 1) is always the activity of a subject (i.e., a person, not an animal or a machine); 2)

activity is the interaction of a subject with an object, i.e., it is necessarily objective and substantive; 3) it is always creative; 4) it is independent (Rubinstein, 2003). In this sense, the established concept of "creative activity" is an obvious tautology. At the same time, it is impossible to deny that there are a number of areas of human activity providing expanded opportunities for creativity, but the ability and readiness to create is the most important criterion of professional mastery. Such areas certainly include art in the broad sense of the word and musical art in particular. At the same time, not every musician is a creator "by definition". A performer-creator is always unique; he conveys his original reading, understanding, and vision of the work and thereby realizes his childhood vitality. Simple, even ideally accurate, reproduction of notes – the dream of many unimaginative music teachers (just as the dream of equally unimaginative mathematics teachers is to always hear the correct answer) – is not creativity; in this process there is no subject. Such a performer essentially acts as an animate appendage to the musical instrument, just as a worker on an assembly line acts as an animate appendage to the machine.

And here it is appropriate to ask another question – why some people are ready and able to create, while others, even possessing a high level of technical skills, are not.

The Biographical Method of Research

In the humanities, the biographical method of research is widely used (Musagulova, Shakhaieva, 2023). When analyzing the creative process and assessing the social and artistic significance

of creative products, scholars rely on the study of the development of a creative career, personality traits, individual differences, and turning points in biography. The search for ways to increase the objectivity of conclusions leads to an appeal to reflective essays (Ovchinnikova, 2024), analysis of memories and interviews of people who knew the artist-creator closely (Hill et al., 2011), and analysis of the cultural and historical context of his work (Shcherbakova, 2024). Trying to overcome the possible subjectivity of the biographical method, modern researchers propose to conceptually organize key biographical stages and internal factors explaining aspects of creative development (Priilaid, Callaghan, 2023).

The desire to move away from subjective interpretation and assumptions leads to the need to analyze artistic language, providing objective measuring the psychological characteristics of the personality and the patterns of the creative process through the means of expression (in musical language – harmony, form, melody, rhythm, and others) the composer uses (Boyd, 2017). As future directions of research in the field of aesthetics and artistic creativity, a shift toward the inclusion of interdisciplinary approaches and the use of more advanced statistical modeling is considered (Specker, 2025). The multidisciplinary paradigm corresponds to the peculiarities of the development of modern artistic, in particular musical, thinking, symbolism, and syncretism of forms of contemporary art (Zvonova, 2025). Psychological theory as a basis for the analysis of works of art has been the foundation of scientific study

throughout the development of psychology and gives excellent results in the modern world (Işık, 2026). However, which psychological theory will become the basis of biographical analysis and allow the implementation of the multidisciplinary paradigm (Ilyin, 2020)?

The Epigenetic Map of the Personality Life Cycle according to E. Erikson

The most comprehensive and well-grounded answer to this question, in our view, can be revealed by the epigenetic map of the personality life cycle developed by E. Erikson. He represented the life of an individual as eight successive stages, within each a person experiences an existential conflict of development. By and large, each of these conflicts reflects the contradiction between the need to realize childhood vitality, in forms reflecting the specifics of a particular age stage, and its inevitable external limitations. Thus, within the framework of our research there is neither the opportunity nor the expediency to present the psychosocial theory of development in full, but for understanding the phenomenon of Ritchie Blackmore, it makes sense to briefly characterize these stages, specifically in terms of the formation and realization of the ability and readiness to create.

So, the first stage of psychosocial development of an individual occurs in the first year of life – infancy. The conflict of this stage is expressed by the dichotomy "trust versus mistrust". The reference figure on whom the resolution of this conflict decisively depends is, naturally, the mother. In the first year of a child's life, a basic attitude is formed, at the subconscious level, in the perception of the

surrounding world. In the context under consideration, this is the answer to the question of the unknown environment, where through no will of his own, the newborn suddenly finds himself. Is it a space of opportunities, a world that is generally benevolent, accepting, understanding, providing primary needs according to A. Maslow, and therefore conducive to focusing on interaction with other people, self-expression, and self-realization? Or is it a gloomy, rejecting environment in which everything is divided, in which the newly appeared "extra mouth", and even more so his individual uniqueness, is of no use to anyone, where he literally has to fight for physical survival with a hostile and suspicious social environment? It is clear that in the first case, the basis for the manifestation of childhood vitality is laid; in the second, it is actually blocked at the embryonic level.

The second stage covers the period from one to three years. E. Erikson designated the conflict of this stage as "autonomy versus shame and doubt". Here, the father figure is added to the maternal reference figure. At this stage, the foundations of the subjectivity of the personality are potentially laid, the essence described by E. Erikson as "the courage to be an independent individual who can choose and build his own future" (Erikson, 1996, 124). From the point of view of realizing childhood vitality, in the process of interacting with parents, the child receives an answer to the question of whether he can be himself. Can he, within certain boundaries, do what he wants, and not what he can or should? An important

external indicator of subjectivity is the ability and readiness to say "no". This problem is not about compulsive denial of everything and everyone, but precisely about the ability to take and state one's own reasoned position, independent, including from recognized authorities, canons, algorithms, etc.

The third stage of psychosocial development occurs between the ages of three and six and is a natural continuation of the previous one from the point of view of the development of individual subjectivity. The conflict of this stage is expressed by the telling dichotomy "initiative versus guilt", and to the reference figures are grandparents and any siblings. If at the previous stage of development the child's natural need was to ensure some personal space he can fully be himself, now he strives to go beyond the boundaries of this space into the wider world with his desires, fantasies and ideas, which is potentially greatly facilitated by mastering speech not just as a means of communication, but as an effective way to "get into" the heads and consciousness of others, as attributed to V.A. Petrovsky, to become "ideally represented" in the social environment. It is precisely a result of resolving the conflict "initiative versus guilt" that the leading subconscious motive of personality activity is formed – the orientation toward achievement or avoidance of failure.

The fourth stage of psychosocial development occurs in early school age – from six to twelve years. The basic conflict of this stage is "competence versus inferiority", and the circle of reference figures expands significantly to include

significant adults in general – teachers, neighbors, parents of classmates, etc. If at the previous stages of psychosocial development the question was essentially "Do I have the right and opportunity to create in this life?", now this question moves into the realm of "doing" – "Can I be a creator?" In other words, can I achieve the most ambitious goals, realize any projects that seem fantastic, overcome the inevitable difficulties associated with this? This is not about the notorious knowledge, skills, and abilities (which in themselves, of course, are important), but about the deep subconscious confidence of the individual that he is truly good, that he "can"; this is, about the psychology of a winner. The most important condition for a positive resolution of this crisis is that the child finds a socially significant area of application of his efforts that would be truly fascinating for him and where he would achieve real success valued by significant adults. Parents who crave excellent grades in all school subjects with the mandatory addition of outstanding results in a couple of sports sections and learning the piano are doing their children a disservice.

The fifth stage of psychosocial development occurs in adolescence. In E. Erikson's classical interpretation, it covers the age period from 13 to 20 years. The reference figures here are peers and informal authorities, who may also be older people. In reality, the resolution of the basic conflict of this stage – "identity versus psychosocial confusion" – often turns out to be greatly protracted and extends far beyond the upper boundary designated by E. Erikson. This is due to the

objective complexity of the intrapersonal processes occurring at this stage of psychosocial development of the personality. In the context under consideration, the essence of the conflict of the fifth stage lies in the individual's search for his real "I". Let us explain this with an example. Let us imagine that a little boy has an older brother whom he loves and respects. He says to himself: "My brother is a great guy, I want to be like him". Thus, the child identifies with this significant figure and begins to copy his brother. For example, if the brother plays the guitar well, the boy also begins to learn to play the guitar. But by adolescence, with a favorable course of personality development, our boy begins to realize: "Yes, my brother is really great, but I am not him, I am different" – childhood identification ceases to work. And then, in all its complexity, the natural question arises – who is the real "I"? What am I like? In particular, is playing the guitar really my true calling, or does the true calling of my real "I" lie in something else? The most important external condition for a successful search for an answer to all these complex questions, E. Erikson considered what he called psychosocial moratorium. "By psychosocial moratorium we mean a delay in assuming adult responsibilities... This period is characterized by selective indulgence on the part of society and defiant carefreeness on the part of youth, and yet it leads to significant, although often transient, achievements and ends with a more or less formal confirmation of achievement by society" (Erikson, 1996, 167). The classical social form of experiencing the moratorium by young

people is university education. With a positive resolution of the developmental crisis under consideration, the individual acquires the inner strength to be himself and to realize childhood vitality, reinforced by satisfaction from the fact that he is engaged in "his own business" and success in this business. If this does not happen, a person is essentially doomed to "beat his head against the wall", trying to achieve success in something for which "he has no heart", or, even worse, being outwardly quite successful, he does not experience inner satisfaction and, moreover, suffers because this is "not his" success.

The sixth stage of psychosocial development occurs in early adulthood (in the standard scheme of the epigenetic map, 20–25 years). The basic conflict of this stage is "intimacy versus isolation", and the reference figures are friends and sexual partners. At the same time, intimacy in this case is understood in the broad sense of the word – essentially it is about the ability to establish adequate relationships of closeness in a broad social context. Recall that adequate relationships of closeness always imply a certain distance – otherwise a pathological form of relationship known as symbiotic dependence arises. Essentially, this is about the second – "adult" edition of the problem of boundaries. At this stage the answer is found (or not) to the question – how to realize one's free will without infringing on the freedom of others.

The seventh stage of psychosocial development covers mature adulthood – from 26 to 60 years. The reference figures here are family members and colleagues at work. The basic conflict is expressed by the

dichotomy "generativity versus stagnation". Generativity implies the ability and readiness of a mature personality to take responsibility for the renewal and improvement of everything that can contribute to the preservation and improvement of culture as a whole. In practical terms, this issue involves creating conditions for the realization of childhood vitality of younger generations, not limited to adequate parental care of children. It is about understanding and accepting by the individual the needs for self-expression and self-realization of those who are younger in age, lower in social status, qualification, etc. From the point of view of creativity, this is the answer to the question – whom do I create for? A positive resolution of this conflict means not just that the results of creativity are in demand in the sense that someone is willing to pay for them, but that they meet the deep, vital needs of other people, thereby contributing to their development and changing the world as a whole (Maysak, Ilyin, 2019). The destructive alternative to generativity means the eternal suffering of "unrecognized geniuses", the despair of a person "writing for the drawer", or primitive commercialization of creativity.

The eighth stage of psychosocial development occurs after age 60. The basic conflict of this stage is "integrity versus despair", and the reference figures are humanity as a whole, religious and philosophical authorities. According to E. Erikson's interpretation, this is the age to begin to take stock, as well as to restructure one's life in the light of inevitable age-related changes. Every person who lives to this stage inevitably faces two very simple

and at the same time very complex questions – what truly important I have done in my life and what can I still do, as there is not so much time left. A positive resolution of this conflict means that the individual perceives his life path with all its ups and downs as a unique and unconditional value, but also finds and masters new forms of realizing his childhood vitality that are adequate to changing opportunities and circumstances. According to E. Erikson, "with such a final consolidation, death loses its torment" (Erikson, 1996, 257). Despair, on the other hand – a consequence of the conviction that life has been wasted – is directly related to the fear of death and "expresses the awareness that there is too little time left to try to start a new life and try other paths to integrity" (Erikson, 1996, 258).

Possibilities of Applying the Theory of Psychosocial Development in the Use of the Biographical Method

So, we have examined the stages of the personality life cycle from the point of view of their connection with the individual's readiness and ability for creativity. Next, we intend to analyze through the prism of the resolution of the described developmental crises the life path of Ritchie Blackmore, based on his own interviews and interviews with his immediate circle, as well as on the results of his work³.

Let us start with the facts not reliably obvious. Richard Hugh Blackmore was

born on April 14, 1945. This fact is reliable. How, when, and in what way Richard Hugh managed to turn the standard, common abbreviation of the name Richard into Dick (which also has an extremely indecent meaning) into the short and sonorous abbreviation "Ritchie" is known only to God. But it was his name at school.

Thus little is reliably known about Ritchie Blackmore's early years. But some facts are known. His father worked as an air traffic controller at the airport – a responsible and well-paid position. The future king of the guitar's mother had her own small shop. Ritchie was born in an objectively very difficult time overall; as post-war England was hungry and cold, but in a quite prosperous, middle-class family. He never complained about an arduous childhood.

We can assume and even assert some information about the early years of this amazing person's life based on known facts. Ritchie Blackmore throughout his life violated, as a composer and performer, every conceivable and inconceivable musical canon. He periodically changed the lineups of his groups; yes, the music was always written by Ritchie Blackmore, and the public always flocked to the guitar exercises of Ritchie Blackmore – let us honestly admit this. And then something worthy of attention begins. The widely known interpretation of Blackmore's life and behavior is simple – yes, a great guitarist, but quarrelsome, scandalous, a complete narcissist, etc.

³ The article uses materials from an interview with Ritchie Blackmore: Alexander Pronyakin. Ritchie Blackmore Metall Magazin Interview September 1993. URL: <https://youtu.be/r4goh4BLfss?is=MCZ0HCn->

[s_bvIOz3](https://youtu.be/s_bvIOz3) (accessed: 05.04.2025); Vasiliy JLT Ritchie Blackmore Story (русский перевод). URL: <https://youtu.be/YCYth5g1Wpg?is=QKexJBjLANTkH8Oo> (accessed: 05.04.2025).

From the point of view of psychosocial theory of development, this looks different. Blackmore perceived the world as a space of opportunities, a space for maximum realization of his childhood vitality. By the way, none of the musicians "offended" by him ever claimed that Blackmore robbed, fleeced, appropriated, etc.

So Ritchie was most likely lucky with his mother — in infancy, the psychosocial developmental conflict "trust versus mistrust" was resolved quite positively. By the way, Blackmore himself — certainly a born introvert — explains his "unsociability" during the "Deep Purple" period very rationally and convincingly: "Thanks to this, I could walk the streets, go to shops, cinemas. No one pointed a finger at me. I could live a quiet, normal life".

Next, continuing the psychosocial study of the genius, we have a very curious fact. From interview to interview, Ritchie Blackmore recalls a story from his childhood. His mother invited a photographer to capture her son, but he refused to pose and asked the question: "Why do you need my photo — here I am". Eventually, his mother apparently persuaded him. This photo can be found on the internet; it is clearly formal and staged — Richard Hugh stands there on some kind of elevation in an ironed Boy Scout uniform.

This means that, firstly, the boy could say "no" to his mother, apparently without fear of any serious consequences. Let us not forget that this is about "good old England" of the late 1940s and early 1950s, where corporal punishment of children was common. Blackmore himself recounts that at school he periodically received it from

teachers and the principal (they probably hit his fingers, not knowing what they were doing). In his family, apparently, this kind of upbringing was not practiced.

And, secondly, the boy did not just "kick back" against the photographing procedure; he offered his mother a quite reasonable alternative — here I am, alive, cool, I can hug you, you can hug me, let's play — what the hell do you need a piece of cardboard with my dead image for?

It seems that childhood vitality simply gushed out of Richard Hugh, and credit must be given to his parents (I suspect it was not easy with him) — they did not try to package this fountain into a pipe. Recalling his parents, Blackmore characterizes his father as a man who wanted "everything to be done right" — apparently, from him he inherited his perhaps extreme perfectionism. The father's exactingness was balanced by the mother's position: "Lewis, leave him alone — let him do what he wants!". This is a very important point. Here we do not have a schizophrenic, mutually exclusive contradictoriness of parental messages to the child, "You must do everything right!" — "No, you can do what you want!" The mother is not addressing the boy; she is addressing the father — "do not pressure him, allow him to be himself". As a result, Ritchie Blackmore apparently took away from early childhood a very important lesson, from the point of view of psychosocial development of the personality, an enormous wealth, the essence of which can be expressed by the formula: you can do what you want, but you must do it well, as best as possible. Not everyone is as lucky as Ritchie Blackmore!

In his interview given to Swedish television in the early 1990s, Blackmore briefly and very precisely, in our opinion, formulated the essence of an autonomous personal position: "I do not want to hurt others. But if I do not meet others' expectations, that is their problem". The fact that both the second and third stages of psychosocial development received a positive resolution is also revealed by another indirect but rather striking fact. The phrase "Deep Purple", which went down in rock music history, is nothing other than the title of an old song performed on the piano by Blackmore's grandmother (he does not specify which side). So, he had quite positive and significant relationships with at least one member of the extended family in childhood.

And then we move on to perhaps the most famous and extremely important period of Ritchie Blackmore's childhood (he is still Richard and is starting elementary school). In the standard, repeated from article to article, "internet" version, this story sounds something like this: Ritchie Blackmore studied very poorly at school; his father bought him a guitar and threatened that if he did not learn to play it, he would break the guitar over his head.

What actually happened? Young Richard did indeed study mediocrely. It was not about a lack of ability. As he himself recounts, once he asked his father to help him solve a math problem. Dad solved it; the next day the teacher said: "Blackmore, the answer is correct, but you solved the problem not the way I taught you!" A familiar story? Based on the

totality of such precedents, Ritchie came, in his words, to a curious conclusion – "if I study well, I will become like the schoolteachers, and I do not want to be like them". A very precisely formulated subconscious motive that many schoolchildren are guided by to this day.

At age 11, he asked (like many modern boys and girls) to buy him a guitar. As for the threat of Blackmore Sr. to break the instrument over his son's head for negligence, as Ritchie recalls, "something like that seems to have happened", but judging by the context and how he tells it, it was clearly a joke. Seriously, his father stated that he would like his son to take this seriously (everything must be done right!) and then paid for a year of lessons with a classical guitar teacher. A very revealing episode, again from the point of view of positive resolution of the second and third stages of psychosocial development and productive parent-child relations in general. "I want a guitar", the boy says to his father. "Okay, you will get it, on certain conditions – you must truly learn to play it, and I will provide the necessary conditions". The child acts as a subject, declares his need, shows initiative – literally initiates a process that includes financial, organizational, and other aspects. The father accepts this as a position undoubtedly deserving careful and respectful attention, and does not resort, for example, to the cheap manipulative bargaining so popular with many parents – get a high grade in math and you will get a guitar. But he introduces children's subjectivity into certain boundaries related specifically to the need to have a guitar, thereby, by the way,

contributing to a positive resolution of the conflict "competence versus inferiority".

The boy tried. The teacher lived quite far away, four miles away (rounding down, 7.5 km). He rode his bicycle to have lessons – 15 and a bit kilometers round trip, including in winter, and with a guitar – not an easy bike ride for an 11-year-old boy. He fell more than once, quite painfully, but he rode. Existing biographies say that he was distinguished by determination, perseverance, and quickly mastered and performed complex classical guitar pieces. Blackmore describes this period of his life differently. The classical guitar teacher constantly reproached him for being lazy and not practicing at home. When telling this, Blackmore uses the word "practice" – in the context of systematic training (arpeggios, etc.). According to his own words, "I fully realized the importance of 'practice' much later and began to do it systematically". (According to Candice Night's testimony, even at 60 he systematically practiced "practice" at home on acoustic guitar and other string instruments, often loudly and sharply expressing dissatisfaction with the results of his efforts.)

After studying for a year, the boy began to sit for hours on the porch of the neighbor, the outstanding, from Blackmore's point of view, guitarist of those times, Big Jim Sullivan, waiting for his attention. Whether it was long or short, the idol of young Ritchie indeed taught him what was interesting and exciting – the specifics of performing on an electric guitar.

As a result of these lessons, Ritchie Blackmore did a simple thing – he got a

pickup from somewhere, "attached" it to his acoustic guitar (on the question of the father threatening almost murder if he did something "wrong" to the guitar) and "plugged" the whole thing into a cheap radio receiver. This is exactly how he describes his beginnings.

And here we come to the main thing that happened at this stage of Ritchie Blackmore's life.

So, elementary school. The boy is indeed unsuccessful in most "classical" and "main" school subjects (though not distinguished by any outstanding physical abilities, young Ritchie was good at football, swimming, and javelin throwing). But not at all because he is biologically stupid, starving, subjected to systematic abuse in the family, etc. Nothing of the kind. The boy said to himself: first, I do not want to be like the schoolteachers. And second – my schoolteachers will say that Blackmore is the worst student in the school, but even they will admit that Blackmore plays the guitar better than anyone. The boy is 12 years old. He found the most important thing – what he is really good at, what he will be successful in. And, most importantly – how to remain himself in this success – unique and inimitable, how to realize his childhood vitality. Ritchie Blackmore found the answer to this question, the answer that very many, not the least intelligent people, search for their entire lives, at age 12.

So far, in the psychosocial development of young Ritchie Blackmore, everything is going well, in a certain sense almost ideally. But then, perhaps in the most difficult period, with the beginning of the fifth stage of psychosocial development,

very ambiguous, at first glance, fluctuations begin. First of all, after studying for a year with a professional classical guitar teacher, he essentially switches to self-education and spontaneous informal learning from J. Sullivan. It fits perfectly into the logic of the conflict "identity versus psychosocial confusion" – Ritchie realizes that the classical acoustic guitar is not his way and tries to find his true self in performing popular music on the electric guitar, with an informal adult leader before his eyes.

But at 15, Blackmore drops out of school and goes to work. Almost all internet biographies say that he got a job as an apprentice radio technician at the airport where his father worked. A 15-year-old teenager going to work instead of continuing his education is clearly not the best option for experiencing a psychosocial moratorium and a favorable resolution of the conflict "identity versus psychosocial confusion". But the essence, as often happens, lies in the details.

As far as can be judged, young Ritchie was not forced to go to work "for a piece of bread". It was a conscious decision, based on two motives: negative – aversion to school, and positive – the desire to earn money for a real electric guitar. This work activity did not last long. Having implemented his desire to become the owner of a coveted guitar, young Blackmore plunges headlong into the world of the music show business. From the age of 17, he regularly works as a session guitarist. "On some days I had four

sessions, and I made good money". By the way, this means that no matter how lazy Ritchie was while studying classical guitar, his technique was in a perfect order – who would invite a 17-year-old boy to record, and for "good money", if he could not accurately and qualitatively perform the proposed material? This was undoubtedly useful experience; as Blackmore notes, "session work is very disciplining". From the age of 19, Ritchie begins to perform on stage, accompanying various musicians, including quite famous ones at the time, such as Jerry Lee Lewis; he joins several "second-tier" groups (staying the longest with The Outlaws), tours with them around England, and begins to tour abroad, particularly in Germany – in a word, a quite ordinary beginning of a guitarist's career in the 1960s.

However, in this ordinariness, there is something important for our analysis. On the one hand, the teenager plunges into the specific world of show business, a world with its own unwritten laws, "behind-the-scenes" currents, greed and dishonesty, sometimes outright cruelty. When asked if he had any advice for beginner guitarists, the 81-year-old Blackmore, with his characteristic inimitable sense of humor, replied: "Yes, I do. Let them hire a lawyer"⁴. It is clear that it is not the best social environment for a positive resolution of the basic conflict of the fifth stage of psychosocial development – rather the opposite. But, on the other hand, it was a specific environment, largely isolated from "adult" everyday life, corresponding to the

⁴ Richie Blackmore – Live Interview. URL: <https://youtu.be/5PRE4UqT2HE?is=NyiS-hTcjPTP9xFF> (accessed: 05.04.2025).

inner personal needs and aspirations of young Blackmore, allowing constant communication with peers who shared similar interests and authoritative figures in this field. So psychosocial moratorium – very specific and contradictory – did take place in Ritchie Blackmore's youth. Including, due to its specificity, the search for an answer to the question "who am I, the real, the authentic?" turned out to be greatly protracted by a number of signs. But the basis for a positive resolution of the conflict "identity versus psychosocial confusion" was laid in the sensitive age. An important role was played by a strong intrapersonal "foundation" formed, as we have tried to show above, in childhood. It allowed young Blackmore not only not to get lost among the countless groups and performers playing at warm-ups, parties, in second-rate clubs, etc., but also to gain experience of stage performances (especially important for a truly withdrawn and shy introverted teenager), make useful contacts, and become, in the first approximation, recognizable.

However, chance plays an important role in life – as they say, the stars must remain align. Such a chance for Ritchie Blackmore was a rather strange story that happened in 1968. He received a call from the then quite famous drummer Chris Curtis (Blackmore was living in Germany at the time), who said he had found a sponsor for a new group and offered him to become the second guitarist. Blackmore (according to him, he was "starving" then) replied: "Okay, who will be the first?" "Me", said Curtis. "And who will play the drums?" "Me too". "And bass?" "Me". "Is

there anyone else in this group?". "Yes, keyboardist Jon Lord".

This amazing group did come together, and thus the acquaintance of Ritchie Blackmore and Jon Lord took place. The one-man band for some reason almost immediately left his brainchild, and Blackmore and Lord, after playing together, decided that they suited each other very well (it is important that they agreed on the desire to introduce classical music and performance canons into the popular genre, although they saw it differently). Ritchie suggested inviting Ian Paice, a drummer, he had met earlier, and Jon suggested Nic Simper, a bassist. Vocalist Rod Evans joined them. Thus the first lineup of what, at Ritchie Blackmore's suggestion, was named "Deep Purple", emerged. This lineup did not last long, but was quite productive – released three albums, toured extensively, and achieved some success. Mostly the group's repertoire consisted of cover versions of popular country songs, and the arranging was mainly done by Ritchie Blackmore – for him it was a "warm-up".

Everything changes dramatically in late 1969. At the suggestion of Blackmore himself, impressed by the musical innovations of "Led Zeppelin" and especially the vocals of Robert Plant, Ian Gillan is invited to the group. Along with him comes a bassist Roger Glover. Thus, the legendary lineup "Mark II" emerges, which turned out to be capable of creating an original product, of realizing the idea of integrating classical motifs into rock music. And here Blackmore's talent and childhood vitality manifested to the fullest. According to Jon Lord's recollections, "Ritchie was an

amazing musician in terms of guitar riffs. Almost wasteful. They just fell out of him. And it was heaven, absolute heaven for the band, because a guitarist never repeats himself — Ritchie never repeated himself, he would not go down the same road twice". Moreover, it was not just guitar riffs that "fell out" of Blackmore; they "fell out" of many at the time. Already at that early stage of his work, he created innovative, if not in compositional, then at least in performance terms, musical works. Let us illustrate this with the example of perhaps the simplest (and probably for this very reason the most famous) piece written by Ritchie Blackmore at that time.

There was a period when he could not calmly hear the phrase "Smoke on the Water". Blackmore's irritation was caused by the fact that his "calling card" was far from the best composition he had written for "Deep Purple". "It's not bad — no more than that; after all, it's only four notes". Later, having become more calm and even philosophical about many things, not only musical, Ritchie Blackmore explained to fans the technique of performing this riff. "Most guitarists play it in thirds. That's wrong. The correct way is to play it in fourths (Ritchie demonstrates the difference on an acoustic guitar). In this case, the sound acquires a gloomy, even ominous tinge, and four notes acquire meaning"⁵. The sequence of harmonies consisting of parallel fourths, bearing the name "perfect consonance", is not welcome in the theory of classical harmony. The perfect consonance was an important part of the musical language of the European

Middle Ages and Renaissance. The "break" of classical harmony — is not a protest for the sake of a protest; it is not a spot from a bucket of paint splashed onto a canvas with the comment: "The artist sees it that way!" It is an almost mathematically precise choice by the creator of the means to convey to the listener his worldview, the meaning embedded in the work, and the induction of auditory and visual images. The use of the interval of fourths plays the role of predictive coding, an effective means of managing the perception of aesthetic information (Leder, Pelowski, 2024).

Later, already in adulthood, Blackmore, recalling the early 1970s, said: "Back then I wanted to play as fast and as loud as possible. Now I understand that it means nothing at all. Sometimes you can play fast, but it's important to say something profound, not just show — look how cool I am, how I can do it!" Apparently, Blackmore subconsciously had already used this criterion — "to say something profound" — even when he wanted to just play fast and loud — a quite teenage desire that many guitarists get stuck on for life. This same clear tinge of archaic teenage ways of resolving conflicts related to the struggle for space to realize one's childhood vitality was initially present in the confrontation with Gillan. "He was what you call an alpha male, and I was the same. He wanted to control everything, and so did I. We were like two bears in one den". As we noted above, the resolution of the conflict of the fifth stage of psychosocial development, for quite objective reasons, apparently dragged on

⁵ Ritchie Blackmore discussing the writing & recording of 'Smoke On The Water'. URL:

https://youtu.be/Vc7nBoEaEhs?is=A_nW3Vik_7r4w6lr (accessed: 02.02.2026)

for Blackmore. A strong and quite functional intrapersonal basis was formed, but the search for identity, the search for a final answer to the question "who am I?", primarily as a musician and creator, continued (one of the paradoxes of Ritchie Blackmore's personality is that this search seems to have continued throughout most of his life).

But in 1970 he turned 25 – in purely formal age terms, he had already "leaped over" the stage of early adulthood and was entering the time of maturity. But what about the problem of the sixth stage – the problem of boundaries, what about the ability and readiness to realize one's freedom, including freedom of creativity, without infringing on the freedom of others?

With this, at first glance, everything was very unfavorable. Those who like to "point out" Blackmore's lack of empathy, dictatorial tendencies, consumerist attitude toward colleagues, etc., most often refer to the endless rotation of the lineups of his groups. To some extent, Blackmore confirms this: "For me, the main thing is music. I don't care about politics or the lineup. The music must be good and well performed" (one can almost hear the voice of Lewis Blackmore – can't one?). But here, as always, details and context are important. Blackmore did not fire many musicians – they left themselves, like, for example, the most famous member of "Rainbow" after Ritchie – Ronnie James Dio. The reasons for the parting of Dio and Blackmore are described differently – the former cites creative differences, the latter believes that at the instigation of his girlfriend, Dio became fixated on the idea

that Ritchie was taking all the glory for himself. In any case, it was Dio's decision, not Blackmore's. Of course, there were cases of rather unceremonious dismissal of people, caused not only by the harsh demands (including on himself) of Blackmore's perfectionism, but also by his personal stylistic and taste preferences (keyboardist Tony Carey did not play football, vocalist Graham Bonnet had too short a haircut, etc.). But these are details; let us turn to the context. Who became "victims" of Blackmore's "authoritarianism"? Defenseless, socially vulnerable people deprived of choice? Nothing of the kind – these were quite successful, highly paid professionals, for many of them cooperation with Blackmore became a serious impetus for career development in the music show business. So they had a choice. And if Blackmore did not meet someone's expectations, well, "that's their problem". By the way, while rigidly, sometimes aggressively defending his own freedom, he was by no means devoid of the ability to respect the freedom of others. Blackmore explains his departure from "Deep Purple" in 1975 by the fact that under the influence of Hughes and Coverdale, the group was increasingly plunging into the "funk" style. "I didn't want to play this music – there's no soul in it. I wanted to play hard rock or the majestic music of the European Renaissance". We dare to assume that if he had wanted to, Ritchie could have "pushed through" his own preferences, as he had done more than once before and after. But he chose his own path, giving his colleagues in "Deep Purple" the opportunity to go their own way.

In 1975, Blackmore celebrated his 30th birthday. By formal age boundaries, he is already in the era of maturity. But the search for an answer to the question "who am I" continues. The quote above reflects an internal contradiction. Ritchie knows exactly what he does not want to play, but in positive motivation there is a clear split – hard rock or Renaissance music? If one, so to speak, "digs" really deep, one can find something that unites both directions, namely the idea of freedom of creativity and self-expression, in other words, the full realization of a person's childhood vitality. But as for musical forms and cultural stylistics in general, these are almost mutually exclusive things. Paradoxically, meeting and collaborating with Dio – an outstanding vocalist, greatly fascinated by classical "fantasy", particularly the works of J. Tolkien – allowed Ritchie to quite organically combine the incompatible at this stage of his work. Yes, by and large, it was probably eclecticism, but eclecticism of a very high level.

Blackmore realizes his "mutually exclusive" preferences in a variety of musical forms – from the generally banal performance of "16th Century Greensleeves" in a hard rock interpretation to original, exquisitely beautiful lyrical compositions like "Temple of the King" and "Catch the Rainbow", stylized as ancient ballads, and complex philosophical works such as "Stargazer" and "Gates of Babylon". Dio's lyrics add a medieval flavor. Already at this stage of his work, Blackmore effectively abandoned the desire to "play as fast and loud as possible". His delivery is distinguished by extraordinary depth and thoughtfulness; he boldly experiments,

combining "incompatible" performance techniques. Technical searches are dictated by the author's established harmonic thinking, which boldly combines the logic of tonal ("classical") harmony, the legacy of the past, and fantasies of new harmonies. Harmonic schemes require the search for technical possibilities (Doll, 2017). Let us leave it to philosophers to discuss cosmopolitan harmony and aesthetic agonism (Gingerich, 2025); for any composer free in his creativity, the choice of means and ways of embodying his artistic concept is inherent. The composer has the right to turn to such centuries-old, symbolic sound sequences embedded in the consciousness of listeners, such as the descending bass (Shea, 2020), or to reject certain instrumental timbres as not corresponding to the composer's concept (Huron et al., 2014). Essentially, it is precisely in the "golden period" of "Rainbow" that Blackmore creates a completely unique style of performing a musical work on the guitar, meeting the highest standards.

It would seem, Ritchie has found himself – he composes and plays very good music that is personally interesting to him and does it incredibly well. But life is a complicated thing, and Ritchie Blackmore's personality is a very complex personality. The group's compositions were highly valued and are still valued by music critics, records sold, tickets were bought up, but still the popularity and commercial effect, especially in the United States, were far from the success of "Deep Purple" in the early 1970s. Many fans of "Smoke on the Water" simply did not understand (and did not accept) either the refined lyrics or the

complex polyphony of the compositions of the mature Ritchie Blackmore.

Blackmore was not entirely satisfied with this state of affairs. And he planned to make the fourth album simpler, without at all intending to step on the throat of his own song. "There is nothing wrong or inferior in simplicity per se. Simple music can be very good". (Note that if we talk about resolving the conflict "generativity versus stagnation", here, along with obvious commercial motives, there is concern for the audience, including those not distinguished by high intellectual and aesthetic demands, while maintaining the quality of the product offered). It was precisely because of this intention to "commercialize" the "Rainbow" repertoire that Dio, according to him, left the group. Blackmore, at the instigation of Roger Glover, with whom he began to collaborate again, finds a very strong vocalist, Graham Bonnet, and in 1979 a new album, "Down to Earth", is released. The lyrics were simple and understandable for mass consciousness – mainly simple stories about relationships. But the music, close to popular "dance" genres, turned out to be, apparently, insufficiently simple. As a result, this very solid, in our opinion, much underrated by critics album, although not unnoticed, still did not bring the desired success.

And here the first signs of a creative crisis appear in Ritchie Blackmore. In 1980, he parts with Bonnet (because of a haircut, which generally looks very much like a regression to teenage maximalism and peremptoriness), and after that his interest in "Rainbow" clearly weakens. He does not seek a replacement for Bonnet – the producers do that. When Blackmore was offered to listen to a recording of another

candidate – Joe Lynn Turner – his first reaction was: "I'm not interested. I'm tired of all these vocalists". In the end, he was persuaded, and Turner became the next frontman of the group. Blackmore invariably speaks well of Turner, but does not express particular enthusiasm for his vocal abilities, emphasizing rather that he is "a great guy". With Turner's participation, three more albums were recorded with rehashes of the same invariably popular motifs – love, happy and not so happy, meetings, breakups, etc. The musical compositions are solid, abundantly decorated with Ritchie's signature solos, but by and large – routine. Nothing like the breakthrough ideas and their implementation of the project's early years.

Of course, Blackmore understood the problem and apparently saw no further prospects for working in this format. It explains his agreement to participate in the re-creation of "Deep Purple" in the legendary "Mark II" lineup. In 1984, the new old group gathers and begins to work. The first album "Perfect Strangers" in Blackmore's opinion turned out "quite good", but the next one, "The House of Blue Light", turned out to be "outright hackwork". "We were all very lazy, including me. There were practically no new ideas". A quite exhaustive statement of a creative crisis, isn't it? Then an indistinct "gray" period begins – another departure of Gillan who, according to Blackmore, "finally soured", his replacement by the same Turner, the recording of another indistinct album, the return of Gillan... In the end, in 1993, Blackmore once again, this time finally,

leaves "Deep Purple". He leaves in the middle of a concert tour, which certainly must have cost him substantial financial losses, but something much more valuable was at stake — "it couldn't go on like this. I felt like I was selling my soul".

The protracted creative crisis, judging by all accounts, was merely the most obvious manifestation of a much deeper crisis, so to speak, a second edition or an exacerbation of a protracted identity crisis. Blackmore directly testifies to this. In a 1993 interview, he frankly stated: "I still don't know who I am and where I'm going". Consistent with this statement is his assessment of his own activities given there: "I still haven't said anything, but someday I will". For all the self-criticism and even quite palpable depressive nature of these statements, the objective results of Ritchie Blackmore's activity from the point of view of resolving the basic conflict of the seventh stage of psychosocial development at that time look very impressive. Above we have already mentioned his readiness and ability to understand and accept the needs of the not most demanding and, let's face it, not his favorite part of the audience — to take care of it. But even more vividly, Blackmore's generativity manifested itself in the professional sphere.

Ritchie Blackmore never gave guitar lessons — "I do not master the instrument well enough and am not as confident as guitar school teachers". But many of the most famous guitarists of the next generation — Yngwie Malmsteen, Steve Vai, and others, often ranking higher than Blackmore in all sorts of "lists", tell how much they were inspired by his music and unique performance technique. As we

noted above, many musicians who worked directly with him largely owe their careers to him. Who was David Coverdale before Ritchie listened to his promo? A shop assistant. Ronnie James Dio and his group "Elf" earned money at warm-ups. Joe Lynn Turner eked out a "career" as an unemployed musician. Not just the name, but communication and interaction with Blackmore allowed them to become stars of the music show business.

But let us return to Ritchie Blackmore. His attempts to say something immediately after refusing to "sell his soul", frankly speaking, are not impressive. He tries to breathe new life into "Rainbow", recruits new musicians, records another album that did not enjoy particular success with either the public or critics. At the group's live performances, there are still sold-out crowds, but the public increasingly obviously comes for the "living legend of rock and roll". Ritchie is still magnificent as a performer and a showman, but it is unlikely that this role brought him satisfaction (he himself categorically denied his "legendary" status). In general, everything looks rather dull and smacks of hopelessness. And then another happy chance arises in Blackmore's life.

In 1989, 18-year-old fashion model Candice Night, who collaborated with some, either near-music or just glamour magazine, came to a football match involving Ritchie Blackmore to interview him. Apparently, Ritchie's team won — he was in a good mood, and the interview took place. She asked for an autograph. He invited her to a restaurant. The most banal story of a rock star meeting another young

fan. But the result of this acquaintance turned out to be far from banal.

The stars, once again, aligned in Ritchie Blackmore's life. In Candice Night, he found not only a wife, the mother of his children, but also a true friend, partner, and like-minded person. At the time of their acquaintance, Candice was not just a girl with a striking appearance; she was born and raised in an intelligent family, received a good, including musical, education. Upon learning of their daughter's relationship with a famous rock musician almost 25 years her senior, her parents were shocked. As Candice recounts, her mother, a teacher, met with Blackmore and they "talked about something for a very long time. I still don't know about – probably about his intentions". Apparently, Blackmore's intentions seemed quite worthy and convincing to Candice's mother – from that moment on, the parents did not object to their daughter's relationship with Ritchie, also to her accompanying him on world tours.

With the appearance of Candice in Blackmore's life, the crisis of psychosocial development "intimacy versus isolation" receives a final positive resolution. "He always had a very good relationship with my parents. I think that after many years of wandering around the world and loneliness, he liked being part of a big family"⁶. But the "big family" of the mature Ritchie Blackmore was not limited to close relatives. With the emergence of the creative union "Blackmore's Night", he

began to perceive his audience in a completely special way. "The people at our shows are like friends who came to our home for a party, whom we ask: well, what would you like us to play? After the concert, we usually go to some pub with part of the audience – we drink, talk, sing songs without any equipment"⁷.

Blackmore's generativity as a creator was also clearly manifested in his care for the audience. With the beginning of the "Blackmore's Night" project, with the radicalism characteristic of the young Ritchie, he made several public statements that he was tired of rock and roll, that this music was limited, that it simply "allows paying the bills", and that in general he was hanging the "Stratocaster" on the wall. Fans of "Deep Purple" and "Rainbow" were shocked – talk began along the lines of "he traded us for a woman", that his young girlfriend made him take up all this medieval music. Commenting on these rumors, Candice laughs: "These people have no idea who Ritchie Blackmore is. It's simply impossible to make him do anything".

It should be mentioned that on the first two albums of "Blackmore's Night", the electric guitar is indeed practically absent. But then Blackmore clearly realized that his legendary riffs were missed not only by aging "beer drinkers" stuck forever in the four notes of "Smoke on the Water", but also by people who truly understand and appreciate his music. And he takes the "Stratocaster" off the wall. Subsequent albums and performances of the group

⁶URL:
<https://youtu.be/LlixYMoJG6g?is=a0KRc9BMXsG ojF1P> (accessed: 15.03.2026).

⁷URL:
https://youtu.be/4zodqKkRBUM?is=v9c_QZ2aEnh 326UG (accessed: 15.03.2026).

feature original compositions with Blackmore's signature solos, covers of songs not only from "Deep Purple" and "Rainbow", but also famous hits of other rock groups of the early 1970s, in particular "Lady in Black" by "Uriah Heep". Moreover, in 2015, at Candice's instigation, Blackmore re-creates "Rainbow" in another new lineup (now he is not annoyed by the short haircut of vocalist Ronnie Romero, nor the punk "quiff" of drummer David Keith), and in 2016–17 he gives several concerts. At the same time, he emphasized that this was only a response to the nostalgia of fans, and by no means a change of priorities: "It's always fun to rock on the 'Strat,' but the main thing for me remains 'Blackmore's Night' and Renaissance music"⁸.

But the main thing that happened in Ritchie Blackmore's life with the appearance of Candice Night at the intrapersonal level was something else – he clearly found the final answers to the questions "who am I" and where and why he is going. In creative terms, a final choice was made in favor of the music of the European Middle Ages and the Renaissance. And here Candice's influence clearly took place. It was expressed not in the fact that she forced Blackmore to make such a choice, but in the fact that she apparently sincerely shared his fascination not only with music, but also with the culture and way of life of these periods of European history in general.

Having made a choice, Blackmore approached the matter with his

characteristic thoroughness and perfectionism. He looks for a professional teacher to play ancient string instruments. When it turned out that there were none in principle (at least in the space-time continuum convenient for Ritchie), he begins to study intensively on his own. As a result, another manifestation of the childhood vitality of the mature Ritchie Blackmore was revealed – the talent not only of a multi-instrumentalist virtuoso, but also of a researcher of medieval musical culture, a popularizer, and a reconstructor. After all, no one today knows how the songs of minstrels and troubadours actually sounded in medieval castles and town squares – no recordings have survived. Blackmore managed not to recreate, but to create this amazing atmosphere on albums and especially in live performances of "Blackmore's Night". Candice contributed to this. She also independently mastered ancient folk wind instruments – shawms, chalumeaus, rauschpfeifen, etc. Moreover, she mastered them quite professionally – in many compositions she uses them not just as a stylistic illustration to her vocals, but performs quite valuable, independent parts.

As a result, a creative tandem was formed with a clear "division of labor" – Blackmore writes the music, Night writes the lyrics. The tandem, which has existed for almost 30 years now, has proven to be extraordinarily productive – 11 albums have been released (the last in 2021), many singles, live recordings, and a number of videos (previously Blackmore categorically

⁸URL:

https://youtu.be/4zodqKkRBUm?is=v9c_QZ2aEnh326UG (accessed: 15.03.2026).

refused to do it – "I'm a musician, not an actor"); until recently, the group constantly toured, mainly in Europe.

Musical ideas, compositions, and interpretations are again "pouring" out of Ritchie. But these are already different ideas, much more complex than the most complex guitar riffs – they reflect the true identity of the authentic Ritchie Blackmore. "If you try to play too technically, you lose something in the music – as if you're playing for another guitarist. I like to play for people. I think about the guitar last when I write. The most important thing for me is the vocals, then the arrangement, then the song. And yes, there should be a guitar solo. But for many players, everything revolves around the solo".

This credo is clearly embodied in the compositions of "Blackmore's Night". Blackmore's performance position radically changes – he often "fades into the background", acting as an accompanist to Candice's heartfelt vocals. Even solo fragments have become an organic part of the polyphonic sound of the group (to which he constantly attracts violinists, backing vocalists, bagpipers, etc.) as a first-class orchestra. In the second part of the live performance of the composition "All for One", Blackmore's virtuoso solo on the "Stratocaster" serves as a backdrop to the thunderous roar of bagpipes. In this new approach, realized with "Blackmore's Night", Ritchie, in our opinion, fully realized another maxim he had voiced earlier: "The music must be good and well performed".

Over time, along with his fascination with the "majestic music of the Renaissance", Blackmore develops an

interest in the folk musical culture of European countries. Touring with the group, he buys records with recordings of musical folklore, later using them for arrangements in the "Blackmore's Night" style. For example, the group's repertoire included compositions written on the musical themes of Russian folk songs "Polyushko Pole" and "Vinovata li Ya", as well as an original composition on a Russian theme, "Run My Troika, Run". Apparently, the intuitively felt by the musician, diagnosed by modern equipment, universal human striving for musical harmony (Shanahan, Huron, 2011) has an attractive effect.

In 2005, Ritchie Blackmore turns 60 – he enters the final stage of the life cycle, according to the psychosocial theory of personality development. But he clearly does not think about summing up. Instead, in 2008, he formalizes his official marriage to Candice, and in 2010 their first child is born – daughter Autumn. Their professional activity is in full bloom. Two years later, a son is born – Rory.

However, as a person by all indications who has already achieved integrity, Blackmore begins to realize his childhood vitality in new, completely uncharacteristic forms. Having found his true "I", living and creating in harmony with himself, people, and the world, Ritchie suddenly becomes, by his standards, extremely sociable. Touring with "Blackmore's Night", he gives an unimaginable number of interviews; later, at the instigation of his wife, he masters the genre of internet streams with his audience. And here another completely unpredictable talent of Blackmore is revealed – the talent of an extremely

interesting, profound conversationalist and storyteller. In a disarmingly leisurely manner, with an invariable "poker face" and signature sense of humor, Blackmore willingly answers questions, talks about himself, meetings with famous and not-so-famous people, and reflects on music, life, and the "eternal" questions that concern him and others.

But time is powerful even over the ever-young Ritchie Blackmore. He clearly perceives this fact with the wisdom, calmness, and confidence of a person fully aware of the significance of what he has done, is doing, and will still do. Thus, ten years ago, answering a question about when he would be seen on stage again, with a good dose of self-irony, he outlined the objective circumstances: "Everything will depend on how I feel. After all, I'm already 71. My teeth hurt, my legs hurt, my back hurts, my ears are falling off. I don't want to play furniture on stage; I'm not interested in that".

This year Ritchie Blackmore turned 81. He still lives in "Minstrel Hall", surrounded by his beloved wife, children, cats, tapestries, and a collection of antique weapons. He continues to communicate with fans (on his birthday, with Candice as host and operator, he released almost a three-hour stream). He continues to practice his beloved music (according to Candice, it truly helps him cope with ailments). In recent years, Candice Night, certainly with her husband's support, has released two solo albums. Will the 81-year-old Ritchie Blackmore surprise us with any other unexpected manifestation of his inexhaustible childhood vitality? Who knows? Life goes on.

Conclusion

The use of Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory in the study of personality and creativity significantly expands the interdisciplinary approach of the biographical method. Erikson's theory of developmental stages allows the integration of psychological, cultural, and musical aspects, creating a holistic understanding of the process of individual development of talented individuals. Through the prism of life conflicts and inner vitality, it becomes clear that the development of creative potential is not only a matter of professional skills but also the result of the interaction of a person's internal resources with the external environment throughout life. Innate, genetically determined qualities – the so-called childhood vitality – form the basis for further development and make it possible to understand the mechanism unique abilities manifest in outstanding musicians such as Richard Blackmore. This approach helps explain individual differences and identifies the conditions that promote the realization of inner potential in various cultural and socio-historical contexts. Thus, Erikson's theory becomes a powerful tool for interdisciplinary research, uniting psychology, sociology, cultural studies, and music, and ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of personality development and creative abilities. Taken together, these approaches expand the possibilities of biographical analysis and also help identify universal mechanisms of human development applicable to a wide range of humanities and practice.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Authors' Contributions

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

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PANORAMA OF THE ARTS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Original article

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Nikolai Sidelnikov's Opera "The Flight": the Genre, Dramaturgy and Specificity of the Style

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Abstract. Nikolai Sidelnikov's opera "The Flight" based on Mikhail Bulgakov's play with the same title was created during the course of four years (1981–1985). In 2011 its premiere took place at the Boris Pokrovsky Chamber Theater, the production was carried out by producer O.T. Ivanova. The opera was performed in a revised version of Sidelnikov's student Kirill Umansky, who reorchestrated it for a smaller orchestra. Analogously with the writer's play, the opera consists of four acts, each of which is comprised of two scenes. Correspondingly, the structure of the opera includes eight scenes or eight "Dreams". The action of the opera takes place in the 1920s – specifically, during the years 1920–1921. In Russian history, this particular period was marked by a bloody civil war, which in many ways was the consequence of the October Revolution of 1917. The place of action is: Northern Taurus – Crimea – Constantinople – Paris – Constantinople. The first and second acts of the work are devoted to Russia, while the third and fourth act unfold in Turkey, France and then, once again, Turkey. *The aim of the present article* is to disclose the peculiarities of the genre and the opera "The Flight", in which the main qualities of the composer's artistic manner are reflected quite concisely. Another important goal is also to present to the readers the authors' discovery of numerous stylistic allusions forming a parallel semantic background and unfathomably deepening and expanding the composition's musical-scenic dimension. The quotations and allusions not only create a broad associative polystylistic field, – the play of various "types of music" as a certain analogy of "a section of the culture of various epochs", the sounding sonosphere, – but also possess a symbolic meaning. There appears a deep "basin" of meanings, which stimulates an intellectual comprehension of the musical text.

Keywords: Nikolai Sidelnikov, Mikhail Bulgakov, the opera "The Run", genre, dramaturgy, stylistic allusions, quotations.

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Опера «Бег» Н. Н. Сидельникова: жанр, драматургия, специфика стиля

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Резюме. Опера «Бег» Н.Н. Сидельникова по одноименной пьесе М. А. Булгакова создавалась на протяжении четырех лет (1981 – 1985). В 2011 году состоялась ее премьера в Камерном театре имени Б.А. Покровского, постановку осуществила режиссер О.Т. Иванова. Опера прозвучала в версии ученика Н.Н. Сидельникова – К.А. Уманского, который создал камерный вариант данного сочинения.

Опера, по аналогии с пьесой писателя, состоит из четырех действий, каждое из которых содержит две картины. Композиция оперы включает в себя соответственно восемь картин или восемь «Снов». Действие оперы происходит в двадцатые годы XX столетия (1920-1921). В истории России этот период ознаменовался кровопролитной гражданской войной, которая во многом явилась следствием октябрьской революции 1917 года. Место действия: Северная Таврия – Крым – Константинополь – Париж – Константинополь. Первое и второе действия произведения посвящены России, третье и четвертое разворачиваются в Турции, Франции и вновь Турции.

Цель настоящей статьи – раскрыть особенности жанра и драматургии оперы «Бег», в которой основные качества художественной манеры композитора отразились весьма отчетливо. Важной задачей является также обнаружение многочисленных стилевых аллюзий, образующих параллельный смысловой фон и неизмеримо углубляющих и расширяющих музыкально-сценическое пространство сочинения. Цитаты и аллюзии создают не только широкое ассоциативное полистилистическое поле, – игру разных «музык» как некий аналог «среза культуры разных эпох», звучащую соносферу, – но имеют и символическое значение. Возникает глубокий «колодец» смыслов, который стимулирует интеллектуальное осознание музыкального текста.

Ключевые слова: Н.Н. Сидельников, М.А. Булгаков, опера «Бег», жанр, драматургия, стилевые аллюзии, цитаты.

Для цитирования: Комарницкая О. В., Говердовская М. А. Опера «Бег» Н. Н. Сидельникова: жанр, драматургия, специфика стиля. *Arts in Cultural Dialogue*, 2026, 1(2), 49–76. <https://doi.org/10.67019/3033-8298.2026.2.2.002>

Introduction

Nikolai Nikolayevich Sidelnikov (1930–1992), People's Artist of the USSR, Laureate of the State Mikhail Glinka Prize, Professor of the Moscow State Conservatory, is one of the most original, genuinely Russian composers. His musical legacy comprises a bright page of Russian musical culture of the second half of the 20th century. Sidelnikov belongs to the generation of composers who began their activities during the 1950s and 1960s and by the present time have become classics. Among them, we can list Rodion Shchedrin, Sofia Gubaidulina, Alfred Schnittke, Edison Denisov, Sergei Slonimsky, Boris Tishchenko, Georgiy Sviridov, Yuri Butsko, Roman Ledenyov, Valeriy Gavrillin and many others who have inscribed their names into the history of Russian music of that particular historical period.

The composer's closest friend, pianist Grigoriy Haimovsky has expressed himself very vividly and stridently in his essay "Sidelnikov as I hear and read him": *"It may be that for you, my friends, the following words of mine about Sidelnikov may seem to be fantastically exaggerated, but I shall pronounce them. Sidelnikov was an ingeniously gifted musician of a most rare intensity of thought, of great depth of sensation of the most acute perception of the phenomena of his time"*⁹. It is hard not to agree with this.

Sidelnikov's legacy is broad and diverse. It encompasses musical compositions written in various genres. He created vocal-choral works, various compositions written in the so-called mixed genres – a symphony-divertimento, a concerto-

symphony, a symphony-oratorio, – chamber instrumental and vocal genres, as well as music for various films and radio productions.

Sidelnikov is an outstanding composer for the theater. He penned the ballet "Stepan Razin", based on Stepan Zlobin's novel with the same title and Maxim Gorky's cinematic scenario (1974–1977, produced by ballet master Alexei Chichinadze,), two large-scale operas – the grandiose dilogy "Chertogon" ["The Exorcist"] set to his own libretto based on Nikolai Leskov's short-story with the same title (1978–1981), and "The Flight" based on Mikhail Bulgakov's play with the same title (1981–1985). The composer also wrote a children's opera "The Scarlet Flower" set to A. Mashistov's libretto based on Sergei Aksakov's fairy tale (1974).

The foundation of Sidelnikov's style is based on the traditions of Russian culture, the *Russian* element predetermined the conceptual-aesthetic principles, the choice of plotlines for his music for the stage – frequently historical ones, the accentuation on the spiritual-moral issues connected with Russia and with separate personalities, as well as his inclination towards national folkloristic intonations in his music. Sidelnikov is a remarkable original melodist, and this attribute of his creative style is vividly attractive for professional musicians, as well as for music lovers; he is very much endowed with this great priceless gift, which testifies of his adherence to the national style, his connectedness to the traditions of the 19th century Russian classics and, most likely,

⁹ Sidelnikov, how i hear and read him. [Electronic resource]. Available at:

http://www.gregoryhaimovsky.com/?page_id=1257 (accessed on: 17 December 2025).

primarily to the music of Pyotr Tchaikovsky.

Sidelnikov is a formidable symphonist who has absorbed into his musical style the traditions of the 19th and early 20th century Russian and Western European composers. The most significant qualities of many of his compositions are immensity, largesse, grandiose orchestral qualities of the texture, fresco writing, the process of qualitative transformation of the thematic material, the dialectic principle of unswerving incremental unfolding, the outgrowth of the thematism from the initial germ-theme, – with a multitude of various modifications and transformations, including arch-like "transfers" of thematic material from one movement to another. The technique of writing presents a means of manifestation of a multitude of serious conceptions, creating a philosophical comprehensiveness.

The aim of the present article is to disclose the peculiarities of the genre, the dramaturgy of the opera "The Flight", in which the chief qualities of the composer's artistic manner have reflected themselves very concisely. Another important goal is to discover the inherent stylistic allusions that create a parallel semantic background and accentuating and broaden unmeasurably the opera's musical-scenic space.

The opera "The Flight" was created by Nikolai Sidelnikov during the course of four years (1981–1985). During the composer's lifetime, only a fragment of the

composition was performed at the "Moscow Autumn" festival. Later, in 2011, the opera was staged by producer Olga Timofeyevna Ivanova at the Boris Pokrovsky Chamber Theater. The premiere of the work took place with great success and received broad resonance in the musical culture of Moscow¹⁰, as well as beyond its bounds. The opera was performed in a chamber version of Sidelnikov's student Kirill Umansky, who reorchestrated this composition for a smaller orchestra. Umansky himself indicated that the changes were brought in mostly to the orchestration. He reduced certain textural doublings, and also made a number of changes of register. The main goal of Sidelnikov's student was to preserve the basic features of the original score. All of this made it possible to stage the premiere of the work.

The Specificity of the Genre

The opera's literary text, the groundwork of the plotline, the number of the characters, as has been noted before, were derived by the composer from Mikhail Bulgakov's play "The Flight". Analogously to the writer's play, the opera consists of four acts, each of which is comprised of two scenes. The structure of the opera, correspondingly, includes eight scenes, or eight "Dreams".

The action of the opera "The Flight" takes place in Russia in the 1920s – to be precise, during the years 1920–1921. In the history of the country, that period was marked by a bloody civil war, which in many ways was the consequence of the

¹⁰ The world premiere of Nikolai Sidelnikov's Opera. Ekaterina Biryukova contemplates about the complexities of travel in time. [Electronic resource].

Available at: <https://opera-pokrovsky.livejournal.com/3122.html> (accessed on: 12 December 2025).

October Revolution of 1917. The places of action are: Northern Tauris – Crimea – Constantinople – Paris – Constantinople. The first and second acts of the opera are devoted to Russia, whereas the third and fourth acts unfold in Turkey, France and, once again, Turkey.

Researcher Galina Grigorieva provides the definition of the opera "The Flight" as a "literary opera" (Grigoryeva, 2014, 116). According to her observation, Sidelnikov realized the idea of "the music by following directly the prosaic text" (Grigoryeva, 2014, 116).

The term "literary opera" (*Literatur oper*) came into scholarly use due to the research writings of Edgar Istel, a music critic who applied it in his work *Das Libretto*, written in 1914 (Tarnopolsky, 2019, 55). According to the German researcher, the distinctive feature of such a type of opera is a precise adherence to the original dramatic text of the composition. Peter Peterson and Hans-Gert Winter in their respective times have also indicated at the specific features of literary opera. They noted that the structure of a literary text, its lingual, semantic and aesthetic sides are completely preserved in the musical dramaturgy of a musical composition (Tarnopolsky, 2019, 57).

In 1983 German theorist and music critic Carl Dahlhaus turned to the present phenomenon of "literary opera" and developed it in his work "From Music Drama to Literary Opera" (Dahlhaus, 1983). Vladimir Tarnopolsky in his article "What Comes after Dahlhaus? From Literary Opera to a New Music Theater" notes that the German music theorist's work defines the process of development

of "literary opera" as a particular type of operatic work composed in the direction of the so-called new music theater (Tarnopolsky, 2019, 58).

The opera "The Flight", undoubtedly, one way or other, reflects the characteristic tendencies of many literary operas of the 20th century – when the text of the literary work is applied, its verbal, figurative and artistic organization in the musical-dramatic direction are preserved. Along with this, the dramaturgy of Sidelnikov's opera cannot be exhausted merely by one sole definition – "literary opera". Here it is necessary to indicate the specific natural occurrences of *opera as a genre*, which includes in itself several most important components (Komarnitskaya, 2011, 28–52; Komarnitskaya, 2011, 9):

- indications of the genera of art connected with the poetics of the drama (tragedy), epos or fairy tale (an independent branch within the epic direction), lyrical genres, comedy (satire);
- the historically emerged genre type of opera (or the genre model of opera) – *dramma per musica* (Italian for "drama set to music"), singspiel, buffa, opera seria, opera semi-seria, etc.
- an authentic individual-authorial definition of the genre of opera, frequently inscribed by the composer in the opera's title on the title page of the score – opera-bylina [lay poem], opera-ballad, etc.

The opera "The Flight" is a work, first of all, pertains to a *dramatic genre* – from the perspective of the genera of the arts. It is characterized by the sharp social conflicts connected with the frightening years of the

Revolution, the Civil War and the lives of separate groups of people who ended up in the whirlpool of the described historical period. The opera shows the social conflict between the new and old governments – the Bolsheviks and the White Army. Cruel scenes of killings of innocent people without any due process of law are also present here, as well as the flight and total migration of some of the protagonists from Russia. Here the most important moral and religious issues are raised – namely those of the spurning of all the centuries-old foundations of Orthodox Christian Russia. All of this, in one way or another, became manifested in Bulgakov's play and Sidelnikov's opera.

Besides the social and ideal collisions, the opera shows a moral-spiritual conflict on the example of one of the main protagonists – General Roman Valeryanovich Khludov. This character's pangs of conscience are connected with the fact that he, having been in a condition of extreme exaltation, killed the orderly sergeant Krapilin. The phantom of the latter character constantly haunts the general during the course of the entire opera.

The theme of reproach of conscience, wherein the figure of a dead or recently killed person appears before the gaze of the protagonist, can be frequently traced in Russian classical opera of the 19th and 20th centuries. In this respect, we may perceive as the most illustrative compositions, for example, Alexander Dargomyzhsky's "The Mermaid" (where at the Duke's wedding the voice of Natasha, who has thrown herself off the cliff into the river, is heard), Pyotr Tchaikovsky's "The Queen of

Spades" (where the phantom of the Countess haunts Hermann), Modest Mussorgsky's "Boris Godunov" (where the phantom of the slain Tsarevich Dmitri appears), and Dmitri Shostakovich's "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District" (where the phantom of Boris Timofeyevich appears before Katerina Izmailova and curses her for what she did). Sidelnikov in a certain sense continues the traditions of the Russian culture, reflecting in his composition profound psychological and moral considerations. At their basis lies the idea of retribution for committed sins, the trampling of human values.

The composer's unique talent is expressed by the fact that in the opera many social strata are depicted, variegated protagonists are shown who are at conflicting positions with each other, and, – if it is possible that such a comparison may be applied here, – here "everybody is against everybody". The existent collisions in the adversarial positions of the various social groups and separate protagonists are vividly expressed. The knot of the opera's contradiction affects a large number of characters, at the same the acuity of the struggle, the antinomian character, are brought to a maximal limit.

The dramatic category of art in opera, undoubtedly, turns out to be the predominating one. At the same time, identically to Mikhail Bulgakov's play, there is a vivid *satirical directedness* present in the opera, expressed in an incriminating derision of human vices and passions.

One of the most vivid instances wherein this tendency is disclosed is the *scene of cockroach races* (the third act, the fifth scene, or the fifth "Dream"). General Charnota

decides to place his stake on cockroach races in order to improve his difficult financial position. He sells for an underrate to the organizer of the cockroach races Artur Arturovich a box with toys and Circasian cartridge belts¹¹, – at that moment, these objects comprise his entire fortune. Charnota gambles on the favorite of the races, the cockroach named Yanychar [Janissary]. But fortune does not favor the general, since Yanychar, as the result of a manipulation created by Artur Arturovich, falls by the wayside. Thereby, Charnota's final savings turn out to be lost.

The satiric aspect of the present situation consists in the fact that the Russian people, ending up in emigration and finding themselves in a state of poverty, try to earn their living by all possible means and even participate in senseless gambling games. The cockroach races described in Bulgakov's play and recreated in Sidelnikov's opera possess a symbolic meaning, one that is connected with the title of the composition "The Flight".

One of the crucial scenes in the opera is the "card game" scene (the seventh scene or the seventh "Dream"). In it Grigoriy Charnota, being in an extremely difficult situation, without a penny in his pocket, ends up in Paris. The former general in torn and ragged clothes (i.e., in his underwear) arrives to the house of his compatriot and long-time acquaintance, Paramon Korzukhin, who, in contrast, is in a financially secure state and lives in great prosperity. The former asks money from Korzukhin, but receives a harsh rejection. Then Charnota decides to lay hold of

Paramon Ilyich's fortune in a fraudulent manner, and provokes him to a card game. The luck turns out to be on the side of the former general, who makes a packet and wins twenty thousand dollars. Korzukhin, finding himself in a desperate situation, refuses to part with such a large sum and makes the attempt to retrieve his money, pretending to be ill and threatening with the police.

In this scene the image of General Charnota's former travelling wife Lyus'ka is presented. In this plotline-stage situation, she is featured as a French woman and calls herself Mademoiselle Lucie Frejal, and also is the beloved of Paramon Korzukhin. However, in spite of her new lover, she helps her former husband Charnota preserve his money and leave Korzukhin's house without encountering any encumbrance. Through the prism of satire, here the tragic voice of the composer is ostensibly heard – Sidelnikov deeply commiserates the disadvantaged Russian people who found themselves in a tragic position and became engaged in unattractive actions.

The lyrical line reflects the amorous-moral collisions of the mutual relations of private-docent Sergei Pavlovich Golubkov and Serafima Vladimirovna Korzukhina (the former wife of the deputy minister of trade Paramon Ilyich Korzukhin). Their emotional stress, compassion towards one another and sincere feelings of love and devotion are demonstrated in the opera. The aim of Sergei Pavlovich Golubkov's life turns out to be, first of all, his interest in the fate of Serafima Korzukhina, who

¹¹ A gazyr (cartridge belt) among the Caucasian peoples is a rifle cartridge prepared in advance,

consisting of a measured-out charge of gunpowder or paper patron and bullet.

has found herself in a most difficult afflictive physical condition (being ill with typhus). He wants to preserve her life, to protect her from the frightening events and, in the final run, to obtain his happiness with her. Such a considerate attitude towards Serafima conveys the genuine sincerity of this protagonist's feelings. The lyrical theme of love presents a peculiar bright ray permeating Sidelnikov's entire opera.

In this connection, it is possible to remember certain other Russian operas by 20th century composers, likewise endowed with a vividly expressed emotional intensity, wherein the natural laws of the lyrical genera of art are also manifested: Sergei Prokofiev's "War and Peace" (the relationship between Andrei Bolkonsky and Natasha Rostova) and Sergei Slonimsky's opera "The Master and Margarita" (showing the love between the Mater and Margarita). The lyrical directedness, defined by the life events and the elevated noble feelings of these protagonists, brings in a vivid contrast into the dramatic action.

All of these genre-related inclusions are subject to the predominating idea, connected with the tragic world-perception of that cruel reality that reigned in the era of the revolution and civil war in Russia.

From the point of view of the historical genre type, the opera "The Flight" presents a demonstrative example of the so-called "grand opera". Broadly defined, this is, essentially, the definition of an opera consisting of many acts, predominantly of a serious (non-comedic) character. It is characterized by the use of historical

plotlines, stage effects and full-fledged mass scenes. The opera "The Flight" is a broad-scale (lasting over three hours), in which true historical events are reflected. An important component of it is presented by the mass scenes with the participation of a large number of characters pertaining to diverse groups conflicting with each other, as well as the choral episodes.

The turning to the genre of "grand opera" in the composition "The Flight" is not accidental. The given genre is exceedingly illustrative for many musical compositions pertaining to 19th and 20th century Russian culture reflecting the lofty patriotic idea – wholehearted service and devotion to the Motherland, Russia. Outstanding examples of this are, as it is well-known, Mikhail Glinka's "A Life for the Tsar", Modest Mussorgsky's "Khovanshchina" and "Boris Godunov", Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maid Fevroniya", and Sergei Prokofiev's "War and Peace". The connectedness of Sidelnikov's opera "The Flight" to these ingenious compositions is all too apparent. And herein lies the civic stance of the Russian composer, commiserating the fates of his countrymen, who ended up in the frightful whirlpool of the social collisions of the early 20th century.

The Principles of Dramaturgy

In Sidelnikov's opera "The Flight" broad reflection was provided to the *musical-dramaturgical principles* of opera of the dramatic genre, which in many ways are dictated by the specificity of the poetics of drama as a gens of art. Its foundational principles are: the principle of anticipation, the dialectics of interaction between the

centripetal and the centrifugal forces (or lines), the principle of repeated complexes of dramatic positions (Komarnitskaya, 2011, 84–90).

The principle of anticipation is based, first of all, on the forestalling by the music of the plotline-stage action. There occurs an advance perspective of a certain plotline-scenic situation, a consistent process of "germination" demonstrates itself in the musical dramaturgy in the description one or another protagonist – prior to his or her appearance on stage. And this "germination" is carried out because of the emergence of intonational, rhythmic, textural and timbral harbingers. On a larger scale – the culminating, pinnacle moment of any particular scene, or even the opera as a whole, may be forestalled purely by musical means. Within the musical language, an independent system of arch-like connections, culminations-harbingers is frequently formed, its logic of development may be to a certain degree separate from the onstage component, but, at the same time, organically connected with it. The music supplements or "articulates" the verbal text, at the same time, enriching the latter from within. The present principle manifests itself on various scalar levels: the separate episodes, scenes and acts, as well as the opera as a whole. At the same time, the intonational narrative, the orchestral development, the text of the libretto, and the line of plotline-scenic action are situated in a tight inter-conditionality. At the same time, the anticipation may also appear on separate relatively independent levels – the musical proper, the plotline-scenic level, as well as on that of the expounding of the verbal text

– the libretto. For example, a separate intonation or vividly developed characteristic motive may exercise a "radius of effect" on the upcoming development of the musical dramaturgy. At another instance, a separate word of the text of the libretto may turn out to be forestalling in regard to another significant key word. This has to do with the onstage development, as well – a certain plotline-scenic situation is likewise "capable of looking ahead" into the future "arrangement" of the plotline-stage action. Let us trace out the aforementioned principle in "The Flight".

The anticipation of the plotline-stage situation is illustrative, for example, for the scene of "The Card Game" in the third episode of the seventh scene (the seventh "Dream"). At a preliminary stage, at the first episode of the seventh scene (the seventh "Dream"), during the dialogue between Golubkov and Korzukhin, the leitmotif of Serafima appears in the orchestra (*Example 1*). Its exposition is by no means accidental, since Golubkov, and then General Charnota ask for money from Paramon Ilyich for Serafima, in order to save her from squalor and hunger (reh.485) – while the heroine herself is not present on the stage at that time. This musical "harbinger" is organically connected with the future plotline-scenic situation (Serafima's leitmotif also opens up the episode of the "card game", reh.532). Charnota decides to engage himself in a gambling session with Korzukhin, and intends to win from him a sum of money that would save Serafima and himself from poverty.

It is noteworthy that in the present scene of the "card game" the particular expressive motive with the ascending thirds appears in the woodwinds (*Example 2*). It previously sounded in the conclusive episode of the sixth scene (the sixth "Dream") also in descending motion in the vocal parts of Khludov and Golubkov (with the accompaniment of flutes, oboes and clarinets). The tertial motive is connected with the idea of *money* – at the end of the sixth scene, Roman Valeryanovich Khludov gives away all of his savings and his medallion to Sergei Golubkov. It is no accident that similar thematic material also appears in the seventh scene (the seventh "Dream"), as a reminder of the difficult financial situation. Such delicate overlaps, the "reminder motives" "entangle" the entire musical score, which bears witness to the process of a through symphonic development, which interacts organically with the text of the libretto and the logic of the plotline-scenic dramaturgy.

The anticipation of the protagonist forms and important natural law of the opera's musical dramaturgy.

In the fourth episode of the first scene (the first "Dream") we hear Serafima's arioso, into which a noteworthy text is brought in: "I am the wife of the minister of commerce" (reh.63). These words in particular become forestalling in relation to the third episode of the second scene (the second "Dream") of the first act, in which the protagonist Paramon Ilyich Korzukhin already appears. The orchestral part "accompanying" Serafima's arioso feature expressive, syncopated intonations in minor seconds dancing up and down,

resembling a Charleston dance – presenting a sort of "portrait" of the given protagonist. The text of the libretto and the thematic material also become anticipating: the "threads" extend into the upcoming onstage occurrences.

In the fourth episode of the first scene (the first "Dream"), in Grigoriy Charnota's words – "We are going to Crimea! To Roman Khludov under his wing!" (reh.70) – correspondingly, General Roman Khludov is mentioned. This character will appear only at the beginning of the second scene (the second "Dream", reh.101). In the first scene, Khludov's first leitmotif is also heard, sounding out in the strings and the piano (5 measures after reh.70), (*Example 3*). Thereby, the anticipation of the protagonist is present both in the text of the libretto and in the music.

On the level of the opera, on the whole, the principle of anticipation is connected, first of all, with the personal destiny of one of its main heroes – Roman Khludov. His spiritual conflict turns out to be the result of all the vicissitudes occurring in the opera. The general's tragedy is stipulated by the frightening blood-letting events taking place in Russia into which he is dragged in by circumstances, frequently not depending on him, but at the same time, he has to live and act in these circumstances; his path – that of a person and a citizen – is also connected with the given circumstances. Khludov's killing of a completely innocent private soldier, elderly sergeant Krapilin exacerbates the general's spiritual catastrophe and foreordains his tragic end.

In the fourth episode of the eighth scene (the eighth "Dream") Khludov decides to

set off to Soviet Russia, where it is anticipated that the White Army officers would be shot. At the same time, Golubkov, Serafima and Charnota warn him of his possible death in his native land. It is probable that in this manner the general wishes to commit suicide. Here a peculiar "open" finale appears. General Khludov's suicide seems to be presumed by the composer, but in reality, it is not carried out. The idea of death as an obsessional idea haunting general Khludov, becomes predominant in the opera.

An important musical-dramaturgical principle exposing the dialectics of the opera's development of opera of the dramatic genre is the *principle of interaction of the centripetal and the centrifugal forces (or lines)*.

The *centripetal force* reflects the unswerving increment of the action, which is achieved due to the disclosure of the entanglements of conflict by means of collision of the main heroes or separate social groups. The *centrifugal force* presents a peculiar disentanglement from the main events of the drama. This line involves the episodes carrying out, on the one hand, secondary, background functions, and on the other hand, manifesting periodic cessations in the development of the line of the drama, appearing to "draw away" from the main collisions of the plotline.

The centripetal force is connected with the powerful unswerving development of the dramatic action, it is essentially the concentration of the drama, whereas the centrifugal force, on the contrary, keeps it at bay. Their correlation is such that they both "proceed" to one goal – towards the

highest culminating point, the "resolving" moment of the composition.

In the opera the *centripetal line* is expressed in the collisions between the main the main protagonists: Roman Khludov, Sergei Golubkov, Serafima Korzukhina, Grigoriy Charnota, Lyus'ka, Paramon Karzukhin, as well as the orderly sergeant Krapilin.

A conflict occurs between General Khludov and sergeant Krapilin, which develops unswervingly during the course of the entire opera and leads to its tragic outcome at the very end of the musical-scenic action. The figure of Krapilin is perceived as an allegorical symbol of the torment of Khludov's conscience, which is why the constant collisions between these protagonists lead to spiritual duels, in which General Khludov almost always loses, despite the advantage of his position.

The elderly sergeant calls Khludov "a brute, a jackal", and all his military merits are virtually undercut by him. However, after Krapilin realizes his guilt towards the general and expresses his apologies to the latter, Khludov pronounces a frightening verdict – death through hanging.

Another thing also connected with the centripetal line is the adversarial position of the ordinary, simple Russian people with the authorities, in the persecution and reprisals against the peaceful civilians. Immense significance in the opera's dramaturgy is obtained by two episodes having to do with *checking the people's documents*. The *first* of them takes place in the second episode of the first scene (the first "Dream") of the first act, wherein the Red Army officers appear in one of the monasteries (reh.36). It features such

characters taking part in it as the monk Paisiy, a certain dame named Barabanchikova (in reality, it is General Charnota in disguise), as well as two representatives of the Red Army – Bayev and Budyonovets. There arises an extremely alarming situation, since the personalities of each of those present are checked thoroughly. The vocal part of Budyonovets – a representative of the government – is based on imperative, ascending invocative intonations sounding against the background of an expressive fanfare of the trumpet. Budyonovets' utterances are answered by the monk Paisiy in a "shaky" recitative manner, he prays to St. Dimitri. Next comes a scene between the pregnant Barabanchikova, who continuously moans and complains about her critical condition, and Bayev, who does not exhibit the least bit of commiseration to "a woman". His manner of speech turns to an aggressive scream, which is connected with expressive, characteristic "barking" intonations.

This scene between Barabanchikova and Bayev is interrupted by an utterance by Budyonovets, who describes rather "favorable" conditions and says that nothing suspicious had been found. In this scene Sidelnikov recreates the social collisions of that time – a setting permeated with fear, terror and compulsory fraud.

In the *second* episode, the opposite situation occurs. The power passes on to the representatives of the White Army, headed by General de Brizard. This takes place in the fourth episode of the first scene (the first "Dream") of the first act (7 measures before reh.61). Here General de Brizard interrogates Archpriest Afrikan,

Serafima Korzukhina and Sergei Golubkov. De Brizard's part is exaggeratedly expressive. It "discloses" the nervous state of this character and is based on invocatory intonations based on perfect fourths and perfect fifths. The melodic relief in the parts of the other characters is based on recitation, conveying the fear, agitation and unbelievable alarm.

The opera also includes *two broad-scale scenes*, in which the representatives of the White Army engage in the interrogation of civilians, in this case, Sergei Golubkov and Serafima Korzukhina. This is what happens, for example, in the third scene (the third "Dream"), which is crucial in the dramatic sense. The head of the preventive security Tikhii interrogates private-docent Golubkov. Tikhii is interested, first of all, by Serafima's personal information and her activities. He hints to Golubkov that the latter must bear testimony against Serafima, setting it forth on paper. For the private-docent, a very unexpected turn of events is unfolded for which he is absolutely unprepared. This unusual onstage situation is "commented" by the orchestra. Here the leit-theme of Golubkov is stated, as a symbol of his love towards Serafima (*Example 4*). But, at the same time, in counterpoise to this soft and simultaneously emotional theme, motives permeated with leaps endowed with a vivid punctured rhythm are heard, reminding of the leit-theme of "hanging" (the second leit-theme of Khludov), (*Example 5*). Thereby, the music "illustrates" the ambiguousness of the formed situation, the problem of choice – love or death, devotion or betrayal, – which may save the heroine or, on the contrary, lead her to hear

death. The head of the secret services Tikhii threatens Golubkov, demonstrating to him a frightening "tool" – a red-hot needle. It is not accidental that in the orchestra a "rustling" theme of the string instruments appears, symbolizing this object of torture.

The following interrogation scene (in the same third scene) appears between the head of the secret service Tikhy and Serafima (reh.202). This scene is not as unfolded as the previous one. In the orchestra the greatest importance is achieved by the leitmotif of Serafima, but then it is replaced by the leitmotif of flight (*Example 6*). The flight leitmotif appears by no accident, since it forestalls the appearance of a new character – Charnota. Particularly the emerging General Charnota saves Serafima from inevitable death.

To the centrifugal line we must relay, for example, the prayers in the first and second scenes ("Dreams") of the opera, the choral plangent song from the epilogue of the second scene (the second "Dream"), various colorific episodes recreating the Eastern exoticism of Constantinople, the expressive scene of the cockroach races in the fifth scene (the fifth "Dream").

The first scene (the first "Dream") opens with a confessional prayer of the monks with the landmark text – "Holy Father Nicholas, pray to God for us ...". This is a short prayerful address, creating a sublime atmosphere.

Most remarkable is the prayer of Archpriest Afrikan from the fourth episode of the first scene (the first "Dream", reh.65). In it a fragment from the Book of psalms is reproduced (kathisma 11, Psalm 79, verse

15): "God of Power! Turn to us, look from heaven, see, and visit this vineyard". The apocryphal text is somewhat changed in the present episode of the opera. The prayer presents a symbol of the patronage of Russia and is permeated with nobleness and deep humility.

The centrifugal line includes the epilogue of the second scene (the second "Dream"), wherein the plangent song "I cannot be on the loose", it is performed by a chorus offstage. The composer incorporates a genuine text of a Russian folksong "I cannot be loose, drive away the sorrow and grief", widespread in the Voronezh region. The orchestral accompaniment of this song is illustrative – here practically all the instruments of the orchestra are incorporated, but they sound very soft and muffled (with the dynamic mark of *p*). Gradually the texture thickens, which does not dispel the overall atmosphere of sadness and grief.

The eastern episode of a displacing kind, appearing in the fifth scene (the fifth "Dream"), is connected with the prayer of a muezzin (a mosque official calling for collegial service). The present scene brings us into the atmosphere of Muslim service and vividly reflects the color of Constantinople. The muezzin's prayer opens up with a strike of a bell, which is then picked up in the orchestra by the flute and the vibraphone. It is against the background of the drawn sounds of these instruments that the muezzin's voice comes in. It sounds somewhat dolefully and sadly.

The scene of the cockroach races in the fifth scene is one of the culminating pinnacles of the opera. This episode

demonstrates Sidelnikov's talent as a master of the musical "portrait". Two directions are highlighted in the cockroach races. The first of them is connected with a very noteworthy character; it is Artur Arturovich, who directs the race. The second direction characterizes the crowd. The latter is depicted by Sidelnikov in a very diverse way – as a multitude of people smitten with a single impulse, or as a "community of like-minded people", in which separate colorific characters stand out. Among them is a prostitute-beauty, a number of Englishmen, a Greek boy, Charnota and others.

The vocal parts of the characters are not individualized and present a speaking type of singing with an approximate indication of pitches.

Several strata stand out in the orchestral writing. The first of them is connected with the periodical strikes on cymbals and drums. The second has to do with the ostinato piano, contrabassoon and double bass parts. The third stratum presents the rhythmic pulsation of clarinets, horns, second violins, violas and cellos. The fourth involves "interchange calls" between the oboes, and also the inclusion of the trumpet part. The expressive roudades of the vibraphone and the first violins stand out. An addition to this colorful musical array is presented by the harp glissando, conveying the sound of bells – an integral attribute to all possible races.

The principle of repeated complexes of dramatic positions is based on repetition of the scenic situation that is crucial to the composition, which stipulates the integrity and unity of the dramatic action. The

generalizing conception of the drama is realized in connection with the through conduction of such scenes, personifying the idea that frequently seems to "surpass the framework of the plotline" and carries a profound philosophical meaning – the idea of life and death, the divine and infernal elements, the finiteness of earthly life and the infiniteness of the spiritual, transcendent, who is present already beyond the boundary of human knowledge. Such motives are also presented in the opera "The Flight".

In Sidelnikov's composition the principle of repeated onstage situations is reflected in the *duel scenes of General Khludov and Sergeant Krapilin*.

These duel meetings occur three times. The first of them takes place in the fifth episode of the second scene (the second "Dream"). This presents a "real" plotline-scenic collision of the characters. Also quite remarkable in this respect is Krapilin's part – "Just as it is written in the books ..." (reh.153). The following two meetings occur already in Roman Khludov's diseased consciousness – the killed Sergeant Krapilin appears as a phantom: in the fourth scene (the fourth "Dream"), where General Khludov's part is: "Well, this may be the best outcome..." (reh.244); in the eighth scene (the eighth "Dream"), Khludov's part is "You have tormented me enough" (reh.606).

The chief techniques of the storyline-narrative dramaturgy uniting all these aforementioned scenes are:

- the presence in each scene of the leitmotif of "hanging";
- the repetition of the key word: "sergeant";

- the similarity of the orchestral writing (especially conspicuous is the timbre of the piano).

The thematic foundation of all the duels turns out to be the leitmotif of "hanging". Exceedingly remarkable is the following musical solution: the appearance of the characteristic syncopated rhythm, a thick chordal texture based on quartal and secundal intonations; most illustrative is the use of instruments from the woodwind group, as well as the horn, vibraphone and piano. A vivid transformation occurs in the context of the concluding third plotline-scenic situation. The theme that initially sounded as a volitional impulsive "outcry" at the very end is "transformed" into a "soothing ostinato".

The word "sergeant" is important not only for the aforementioned repeated scenic situations, but it also becomes significant in the context of the dramaturgy of the entire situation. It is a refrain word personifying the leit-ideas and manifesting the conflicting collisions of the composition.

The piano timbre creates the sensation of a special kind of "cruelty", one that is deathly cold. Also illustrative is the inclusion of woodwind instruments, which are the constant "companions" in the meetings between Khludov and Krapilin.

Quotations and Allusions

An important dramaturgical role in the opera "The Flight" is played by *quotations* and *allusions*. Bulgakov's text¹² presents a musical palette saturated with a wide array of associations. Many literary scholars

make note of the writer's interest in such a genre as opera. In particular, one of the writer's favorite musical compositions was Verdi's "Aida". It is quite likely that, in connection with this, the text of the play "The Flight" features the writer's various authorial indications that "induce" the composer to put in numerous polystylistic insertions into his opera.

The polystylistic element in the opera "The Flight" becomes a "conscious technique" and discloses the "manner" of the composer's work with various stylistic musical sources. Musical quotation in the opera is presented in several different types: *direct quotation* – the precise replication of a theme, *adapted quotation* – "the retelling of somebody else's musical text in one's own musical language" or "the free development of another composer's material in one's own manner" (Schnittke, 1990, 328) *quotation of the technique of somebody else's style* – the replication of the compositional, textural and rhythmic features of the music of various epochs and by different composers, *stylization* – the quotation of a generalized image, style, wherein the complex of the motivic-intonational, modal-harmonic and other features is replicated.

There appears such a technique as *allusion*. According to a remark by Alfred Schnittke, allusion "manifests itself by the subtlest hints and unfeasible promises on the borderline of quotation – but not crossing it" (Schnittke, 1990, 328).

Quotations create a parallel symbolic subtext. This presents a broad lexical thesaurus that recreates the disunity of the

¹² Sokolov, B. V. *The Bulgakovian encyclopedia*. Moscow: Lokid-Mif, 1996. (In Russian).

various social strata and characters. Sidelnikov "extricates" from the text of Bulgakov's play the hidden associative plan connected with musical comments. Virtually the entire opera "The Flight" is permeated with various genre associations – these include the waltz, Turkish tunes, the solo playing of a barrel organ and many other things.

One of the writer's first comments can be found at the very beginning of the play: "It can be heard how a choir of monks in a cavern sings desolately". Sidelnikov brings into his opera a male chorus of monks with the words: "Father, Holy Nicholas, pray to God for us", sounding austere and devoutly (in the first scene, the first "Dream").

An expressive "musical" comment of the writer appears in the second "Dream": "At a distance at that time a gentle slow waltz was heard. A certain time ago such a waltz was danced to at gymnasium school balls". In the second, as well as in the third scene ("Dreams") of the opera "The Flight" a waltz is heard numerous times, which, strange as it may seem, symbolizes the appearance of General Charnota (his image is connected with the genre of a waltz). It is performed by an ensemble of wind instruments. It is a precise quotation from Valentin Eduard Becker's popular waltz "Forest Fairytale" (*Example 7*).

In the fifth scene (the fifth "Dream") another hint to the composer from Bulgakov is provided by the following comment: "It is a strange symphony. They are singing Turkish tunes, into which the Russian barrel-organ 'Parting', groans of street vendors and drones of tramways are interwoven". In Sidelnikov's opera we hear

an expressive melody of an eastern character (reh.269). Subsequently, in Charnota's line and in the orchestral part the famous popular song "Parting" is sounded (3 measures after reh.276), which Charnota sings to the words "It does not smash, it does not break..." (*Example 8*).

A peculiar summation of the quoted material could be seen in the epigraph to the eighth scene ("Dream") to Bulgakov's play: "There lived twelve robbers...". Sidelnikov made use of the hint provided by the writer and brought in a chorus with the same text in the fourth episode to the eighth scene (the eighth "Dream", reh.692). This song sounds in the rhythm of a waltz. The theme of the barrel organ from the fifth scene (the fifth "Dream") appears as a background. The text about the "robbers" is derived from a folk lay about Kudayar the warlord, whose author remains unknown. Subsequently Russian poet Nikolai Nekrasov revised this lay and included it into his poem "For Whom Is Life in Russia Good". In his turn, composer Nikolai Manykin-Nevstruyev set this text to music, which resulted in the creation of a song that became very popular; it was performed by many opera singers, including Feodor Shalyapin. In the early 20th century, it acquired the status of a sacred song, in this function it is preserved up to the present day. Sidelnikov transferred the song "There lived twelve robbers" from the sphere of sacred music to the realm of secular, mass culture (a song chanted in taverns appeared). Moreover, it is shown to the listeners as a peculiar cliché of the musical style of the era of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The composer makes use of expressive characteristic

techniques of sound: written out melismas and *glissando* in the parts of the woodwind instruments, imitation of the timbre of a "marching" drum with cymbals bringing a grotesque tint to the overall color.

The exposition of the song "There lived twelve robbers" by means of parallelisms in sixths in the choral part refers to the traditions of choir gallery church singing. It is also worth noting that the composer interprets the choral part as a coloristic element or a supplemental sonoric color to the sounding orchestra (*Example 9*).

In the text of the opera's libretto there appear certain allusions to the European opera classics, and these allusions are likewise "dictated" by Bulgakov's play, such, for example, is Khludov's phrase "Well, now, I have crushed you" (reh.233) in the first episode of the fourth scene (the fourth "Dream") reminds of Iago's well-known comment "I could have flattened him with my heel as a reptile!" from the third act of Verdi's opera "Otello". The similitude is present not only in the text, but in the onstage situations. General Khludov's emotions are at an extreme state of tension and affectation – Iago, who is ready to kill Othello, is also in a state of blinding rage.

A remarkable moment occurs in the third episode of the seventh scene (the seventh "Dream"): in Charnota's vocal part we hear recognizable comments – "You shall receive a deathly blow ... three cards, three cards, three cards ..." (5 measures after reh.548). This well-known text is derived from Tomsy's ballad from the first scene of Tchaikovsky's "The Queen of Spades".

The opera abounds with numerous musical quotations, in which phenomena of both mass culture and professional culture are assimilated together.

Thus, in the second episode of the first scene (the first "Dream") there appears a motive from the song "Apple" sounding in the oboes and the vibraphone (reh.27). It also fulfills the function of the leitmotif of the Red Army soldiers (*Example 10*). The incorporation of the well-known song "Apple" exacerbates the social aspect – the Red Army soldiers come from the stratum of common people, and so such a popular stylistic "aura" is perceived quite organically. Likewise, the present social stratum is also represented by the famous revolutionary song, the "Marseillaise", which carries the function of yet another leitmotif (second episode, reh.40, the piercing trumpet solo), (*Example 11*). The "Marseillaise" is the symbol of the revolution, of elemental and, quite frequently, destructive transformations; such a substantive interpretation is intrinsic not only to Sidelnikov, but to many other composers.

According to Galina Grigorieva's keen observation, in the first scene (the first "Dream"), in the third episode there appears a remarkable quotation – the march of the army of the chasseurs' Leib Guards or the "Chasseurs' March" (reh.50), recreated in a thickset orchestral palette (Grigoryeva, 2014, 124) (*Example 12*). It appears in the scene of arrival of Charnota's cavalry platoon and sounds emphatically grotesque.

Most remarkable is Charnota's aria "Oh, Kiev – a city that is a beauty..." (second episode, reh.306). in this case, there are

permanent associations with Kutuzov's famous aria from Prokofiev's "War and Peace", "Majestic, in the sun's rays ...".

The scene of the cockroach races (the fifth scene or the fifth "Dream", the fourth episode) is written in an original and distinctive manner. The disturbing atmosphere of the forthcoming event is connected with the conducting of the well-known Touche March, performed *tutti* by the orchestra (*Example 13*). The present quotation symbolizes the preparation for the cockroach races, when the "main protagonist" – Artur Arturovich – invites to the races all those who wish to join and calls for overall attention. Also quite illustrative in the present onstage situation is the motive of the Russian folk song "The Crescent is Shining", appearing in the part of the oboes and clarinets (*Example 14*). This theme symbolizes the mentality of a Russian person, his bold character, prowess, and frequently even recklessness. A vivid, colorful representative in this event is General Charnota, who craves to take part in it and is ready to undergo all sorts of risks.

The numerous musical allusions to musical masterpieces presents an important quality, not only of the opera "The Flight", but also of Sidelnikov's artistic style, in general. For example, it is possible to contrast Serafima's arioso from the first scene (the first "Dream", reh.63) with Lyubka's part from Act III of Sergei Prokofiev's opera "Semyon Kotko". "Serafima's expressive *Agitato* with the 'supplicating' suspensions and sequential repetitions arouses allusions with the aforementioned fragment from the work of the great 20th century classic. Also, to a

certain degree, a parallelism of the plotline-scenic situations also arises. In Sidelnikov's opera Serafima is lying in a state of delirium, due to a grave illness, while in Prokofiev's work Lyubka goes insane.

A demonstrative situation occurs in the fifth episode of the first scene (the first "Dream"): the monk Paisiy breaks into the abbot's cell and relays the news that Archpriest Afrikan betrayed them and disappeared. Paisiy's monologue is accompanied by an incessantly repeating hiccough. The present scenic situation arouses direct allusions with the well-known song of Varlaam "Where is he going" from the second scene of Act I of the opera "Boris Godunov" (the scene in the tavern on the border with Lithuania, reh. 33). Varlaam's hiccough is depicted by Mussorgsky by means of the orchestra: an expressive grace-note appears in the bassoon part. The characteristic quality of Paisiy's image in the opera "The Flight" undoubtedly reminds of the techniques of artistic writing of the outstanding composer of the preceding century.

The part of private-docent Sergei Pavlovich Golubkov in many fragments of the opera arouses our attention. It is characterized by the typical ascending sequential progressions, as well as rhythmic figurations with trills in the accompaniment. All of these means of expression clearly bear resemblance with the style of Tchaikovsky's operas. There appear constant allusions to Hermann's party from "The Queen of Spades" and that of Lensky in "Eugene Onegin".

We also discover parallels between the part of Archpriest Afrikan from Sidelnikov's opera "The Flight" and that of

the Scribe from Mussorgsky's "Khovanshchina". Both of them were assigned to high tenors with noteworthy "squeaky" sound emissions. This similitude also arises in the interpretations of the images. They are emphatically satirical. The main qualities of these characters are their lubricity, treacherousness and unreliability.

"Khludov's Dream" from the final scene of the opera "The Flight" (the first episode of the eighth scene, or "Dream") is associated with Boris Godunov's monologue "The Soul Grieves" from the second scene of the Prologue of Mussorgsky's opera "Boris Godunov".

The figure of the narrator is brought into the opera "The Flight"¹³. Constant connections with Stravinsky's music appear, namely, with his opera "Oedipus Rex", which, as it is known, includes a narrator, who recounts about the contents of each of the six fragments of the work. In Sidelnikov's opera the narrator comes out twice. His first appearance occurs in the epigraph to the first scene (the first "Dream"), and his second takes place at the beginning of the second scene (the second "Dream"). It is remarkable that in both of his entries the *Speaker* (whose role involves speaking) pronounces genuine lines from Bulgakov's play "The Flight" – the epigraph to the first and second "Dreams".

Figures of narrators are present in other Russian opera compositions, as well. In this connection, we may consider as an illustrative example Rodion Shchedrin's opera "The Charmed Wanderer". The narration in it takes place from the mouth

of the leading protagonist, Ivan Flyagin, who is simultaneously the storyteller and the main protagonist: he is sailing on Lake Ladoga on the island of Valaam, recounting the story of his life to chance travelers.

The numerous quotations and allusions not only create a broad associative polystylistic field – the play of different types of music as a certain analogy of "a juncture of cultures of various epochs", forming a sounding sonosphere, but also possess a profound symbolic meaning. The content becomes deeper, more capacious, the associative links "compel" the listener and the researcher to "ponder" over the reasons of the appearance of some various quotation or allusion or other – obviously, their introduction is not by chance. The thought comes to mind that it was necessary for the composer to create a genuine live atmosphere of the epoch of the early 20th century – hence comes the cultivation of the mass genres and the popular folk songs. At the same time, the characteristic qualities, the contextual "image" of a certain plotline-scenic situation or some concrete protagonist "compel" the composer to turn to the masterpieces of the art of opera, so beloved by the composer, who was, at it is well-known, a brilliant connoisseur of it. A deep "basin" of meanings is created, which stimulates an intellectual comprehension of the musical text is formed. In no way does the polystylistic "motley" create an impression of a certain eclecticism; on the other hand, in Sidelnikov's music

¹³ In the score there is the indication of a *Speaker*.

everything is proportionate, thought-out and masterly.

Bulgakov's play "The Flight" and Sidelnikov's opera with the same title are both compositions that have left a profound imprint in 20th century artistic literature and the art of music. Notwithstanding their historical remoteness, they are united by many things. Powerfully, with all the force of the writer's and composer's artistic temperaments, the theme of Russia sounds, the theme of the infinite love and compassion towards the Russian person, who by will of circumstances, at times not depending on him, falling into the tragic whirlpool of revolution and civil war.

Sidelnikov's opera "The Flight" presents a specimen of an opera in which the musical drama strictly follows the logic of the storyline-narrative action of the play. the composer reflects the text of the master's work practically without any changes. The opera's literary component is situated in an organic connection with the musical element. Bulgakov's play is saturated with symbolic associations – considering this, the necessity arrived of "deciphering" the writer's narrative, his numerous allusions and parallels and hidden meanings, which are the ones that predetermine the polyvalence of the

interpretation of various plotline-scenic situations, separate characters, the protagonists' comments and onstage details. In this regard, the play "The Flight" is commensurable to a certain degree with the novel "The Master and Margarita".

In many ways, it is in connection with this that the method of polystylistics, most important for Sidelnikov's music, appears. The opera's dramaturgy bears the impact of numerous quotations and allusions, polystylistic "playing" – this all-embracing lexical thesaurus intentionally brought in by the composer and possessing its semantic logic. For the artist, it presents the indispensable cultural space, which, according to him, compels us "not to live merely our immanent lives, but always to look about".

Nikolai Sidelnikov's music is distinctive, it charms by its power, force, volume and originality of artistic ideas – *inventiveness* becomes the quintessence of his worldview. The master's style is unique and recognizable, it is impossible to mix him up, "to bring him close intentionally" to the style of any other composer. And particularly for this reason does Nikolai Sidelnikov's connectedness to the great legacy of the Russian classics of the 19th and 20th centuries reveal itself.

List of musical examples

Example 1. Serafima's leitmotif (episode Four, scene One)

63

330 *Agitato*

Ar.I

Серафима

f

Я же-на то - ва - ри - ща ми - нис - тратор-гов - ли. Я за - стра - ла в Пе-тер-бур - ге, а мой муж у - же в Кры-му.

Agitato

V-ni I

V-ni II

Vle.

Vc.

Cb.

Example 2. The tercet motif. Is associated with the idea of money (episode Five, scene Six)

801

Fl.I

Fl.II

Ob.I

Ob.II

Cl.I

Cl.II

Example 3. Khludov's first leitmotif (episode One, scene Two)



Example 3 shows a musical score for Khludov's first leitmotif. The score is for Soprano (S.), Baritone (Bar.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). The Soprano part has lyrics "come di eco" and "1гоголос" with dynamics "mf" and "mp". The Baritone part has lyrics "Хлудов" and "Мнеко мен дан та!" with dynamics "f" and "subp". The Vc. and Cb. parts have dynamics "f" and "subp".

Example 4. Golubkov's leitmotif (episode One, scene One)



Example 4 shows a musical score for Golubkov's leitmotif. The score is for Soprano (S.), Baritone (Bar.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). The Soprano part has lyrics "О нет, о нет, о нет, э - то бес-по-во - рот - но, и" with dynamics "mp" and "f". The Baritone part has lyrics "Агитато" and "f". The Vc. and Cb. parts have dynamics "mp" and "f".

Example 5. The second leitmotif of Khludov, or the leitmotif of "hanging" (episode Three, scene Two)



Example 5 shows a musical score for the second leitmotif of Khludov, or the leitmotif of "hanging". The score is for Synthesizer I, Piano (Pno.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). The Synthesizer I part has lyrics "Висаю" and "Е т и з а н о" with dynamics "sub" and "mf". The Pno. parts have dynamics "mf" and "subp".

Example 6. The leitmotif of running (episode One, scene One)



Example 7. V.E. Becker's waltz "A Forest Tale" (episode Two, scene Two)

83 Tempo di walzer

Fag. I *p*

Fag. II *p*

Cor. I *p*

Cor. II *p*

Tr-be I *p*

Example 8. The song "Parting" (episode One, scene Five)

Чарнота *mf*

Не бьёт - ся, не ло - ма - ет - ся, а толь - ко ку -

Example 9. The song "Twelve Robbers Lived" (episode Four, scene Eight)

Лор

Жи - ли две-над-цать раз - бой - ни ков и Ку - де - яр - а - та - ман.

Example 10. The dittie "Yablochko" (episode Four, scene Eight)

Ob. I *mf*

27

Example 11. Example 11. The song “La Marseillaise” — in the trumpet part (episode Two, scene One)

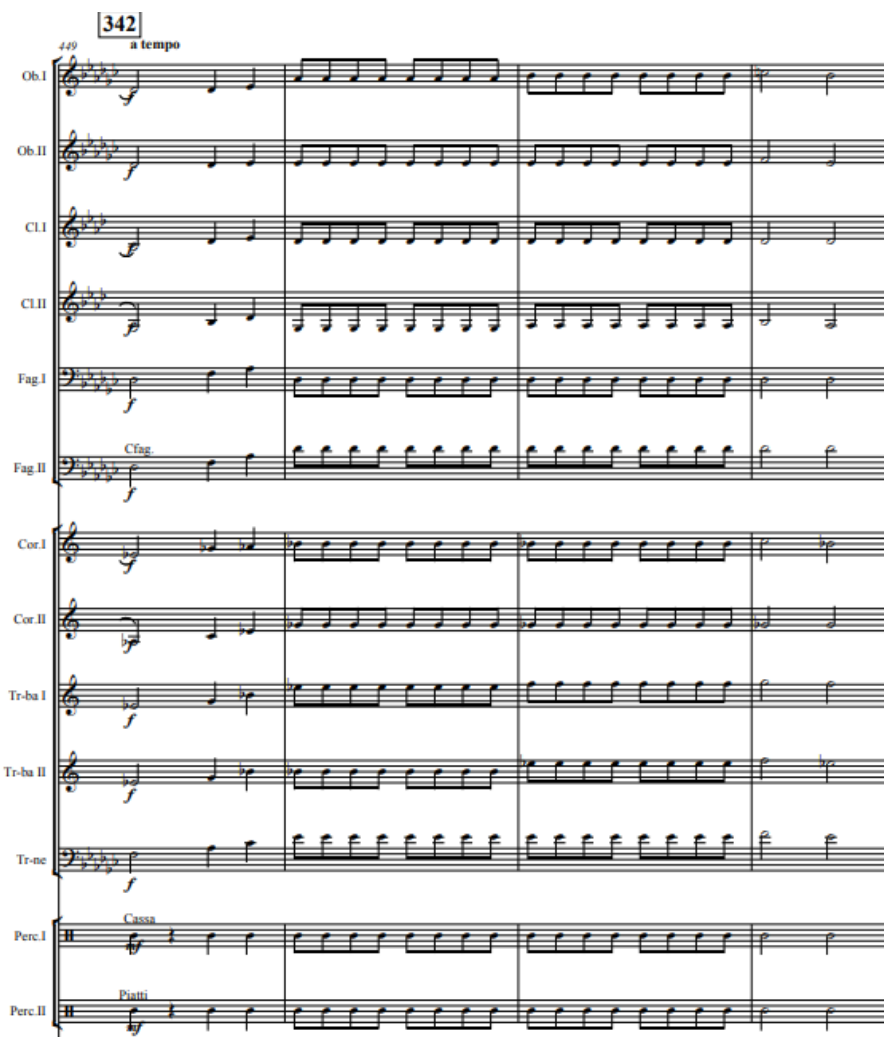


Example 12. "The Jaeger March" (episode Three, scene One)

50 *Moderato - Crescendo*

Example 13. The Tush march (scene Four, picture Five)

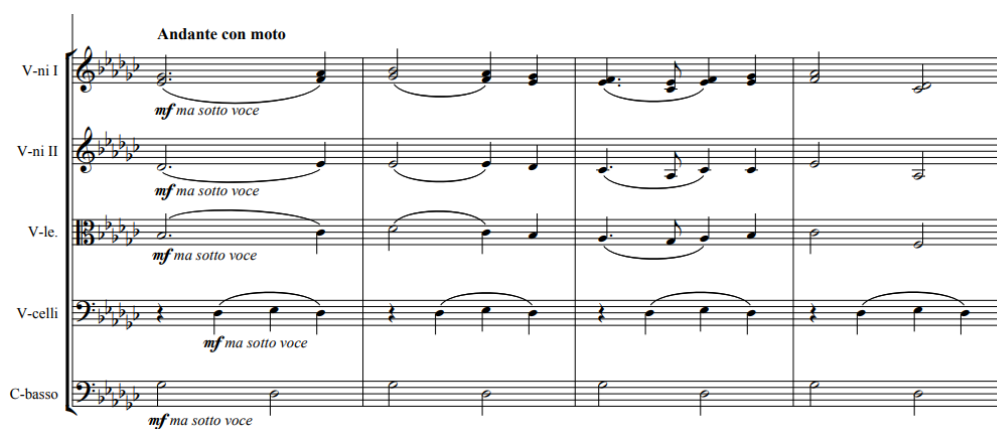
449 **[342]** *a tempo*



Ob. I
Ob. II
Cl. I
Cl. II
Fag. I
Fag. II
Cor. I
Cor. II
Tr-ba. I
Tr-ba. II
Tr-ne
Perc. I
Perc. II

Example 14. The song “The Moon Is Shining” (scene Four, picture Five)

Andante con moto



V-ni I
V-ni II
V-le.
V-celli
C-basso

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Original article

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French Graphics of the 1920s–1930s: Theoretical Foundations and Practice

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Abstract. The article is devoted to a comprehensive analysis of French printed graphics from the 1920s–1930s as a socio-cultural phenomenon of the era. The work examines the theoretical foundations of graphic art in the context of profound socio-political transformations caused by industrialisation, economic crises and the ideological polarisation of society.

The focus is on analysing graphics as an "open structure", whose form, content and meaning were transformed under the influence of industrialisation, economic crises and ideological polarisation. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the interdisciplinary synthesis of graphics as a unified semantic field that integrates political propaganda, Art Deco aesthetics and avant-garde practices.

The author systematises the factors driving the development of the school — from the integration of the creative heritage of the Russian emigration to the impact of the philosophical concepts of the era. The research methodology is built on a synthesis of classical and modern approaches: source studies and comparative analysis, formal stylistic and iconological methods are complemented by tools of hermeneutics, semiotics and socio-cultural analysis.

The research findings prove that French graphics of the 1920s–1930s reflected historical turning points, shaped the visual codes of society, mirrored the deep societal crisis and, later, the looming threat from Germany, as well as conveyed ideological attitudes in the context of the confrontation between left-wing and right-wing forces.

The practical significance of the study lies in the fact that its results can be useful for examining historical mechanisms of influencing society through images, thus providing an understanding of contemporary strategies of visual impact.

Keywords: printed graphics, France, visual communication, Popular Front (Front Populaire), Art Deco, Surrealism, ideology, semiotics of art, artistic emigration.

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Французская графика 1920–1930-х гг.: теоретические основы и практика

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Резюме. Статья посвящена комплексному анализу французской печатной графики 1920–1930-х годов как социокультурного феномена эпохи. В работе исследуются теоретические основы графического искусства в контексте глубоких социально-политических трансформаций, вызванных индустриализацией, экономическими кризисами и идеологической поляризацией общества. В центре внимания – анализ графики как «открытой структуры», чьи форма, содержание и смысл трансформировались под влиянием индустриализации, экономических кризисов и идейной поляризации. Научная новизна исследования заключается в междисциплинарном синтезе графики как единого смыслового поля, объединяющего политическую пропаганду, эстетику ар-деко и авангардные практики. Автор систематизирует факторы развития школы: от интеграции творческого наследия русской эмиграции до влияния философских концепций эпохи. Методология исследования построена на синтезе классических и современных подходов: источниковедческий и сравнительный анализ, формально-стилистический и иконологический методы дополнены инструментами герменевтики, семиотики и социокультурного анализа. Результаты исследования доказывают, графика 1920–1930-х годов во Франции отражала исторические переломы, формировала визуальные коды общества, отражала как глубокий кризис в обществе, и позже, нависающую угрозу Германии, а также отражала идеологические установки в контексте противостояния «левых» и «правых» сил. Практическая значимость исследования состоит в том, что его результаты могут быть полезны для изучения исторических механизмов воздействия на общество через изображения, что обеспечивает понимание современных стратегий визуального воздействия.

Ключевые слова: печатная графика, Франция, визуальная коммуникация, Народный фронт, ар деко, сюрреализм, идеология, семиотика искусства, художественная эмиграция.

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Introduction

In the first half of the 20th century, graphics underwent a radical

transformation, ceasing to be merely a sphere of elitist or museum art. Thanks to industrialisation, the development of

printing, rising literacy rates and intense ideological struggle, it became a significant instrument of mass communication.

In an era dominated by visual communication – from advertising graphics to political posters and digital memes – the mechanisms of influence developed in the mass printed graphics of the past prove to be extremely relevant. The article demonstrates in detail how visual coding techniques – such as radical simplification of forms into signs (e.g., the symbolic depiction of the bourgeois or the worker), typically clichéd images (such as depictions of Hitler and Stalin in French graphics), the use of aggressive colour contrasts (like the combination of black and red in Popular Front agitation), and typographic emphasis – worked to create instantly recognisable and emotionally charged images that influenced public perception.

Tools of Semiotic Analysis of French Graphics of the 1920s–1930s

The analysis of French graphics of the 1920s–1930s as a semiotically open system provides key tools for critiquing contemporary media practices. The decoding methods identified in this work can be directly applied to the analysis of modern digital propaganda, infographics and even viral content. The source study analysis undertaken ensures the examination of a corpus of graphic works, periodicals of the era (art journals, newspapers, almanacs), archival documents, artists' memoirs and contemporary accounts, allowing for the separation of reliable facts from subjective interpretations. As Hopkins (2023, 2) notes, "The principal difficulty was the apparent

inability, then and even today, of stating with certainty the provenances of all the Palladio drawings located in Britain, the main issue discussed here". This quotation from A. Hopkins's study on the provenance of Palladio's drawings underscores the central problematic of art historical source studies – the difficulty of reliably establishing the origin and authorship of graphic artefacts.

To identify the internal logic of graphic development, typologisation and classification are employed, which help group works according to stable stylistic (Art Deco, Surrealism, Neoclassicism), thematic (industrial utopias, political satire, everyday scenes) and functional (commercial advertising, political propaganda, book illustration) characteristics.

The method of comparative analysis allows French graphics to be removed from national isolation, comparing them with parallel processes in other national schools, for example, with the work of Russian émigré artists in France, revealing unique features and points of mutual influence. At the level of analysing a specific work, the method of art historical hermeneutics is applied, aimed at interpreting individual artefacts.

Formal-stylistic analysis focuses on identifying the artistic language of the work: compositional principles, the plasticity of line, work with spot and texture, as well as the specifics of graphic technique. Iconographic and iconological analysis (in E. Panofsky's interpretation) moves the study into the semantic plane: iconography allows for the identification of subjects, themes, allegories and symbols,

while iconology reveals their deeper cultural and historical meaning. The synthesis of these approaches is semantic analysis, which traces the inextricable relationship between form, content and meaning.

At the level of interpretation and synthesis, methods are employed that allow artistic phenomena to be placed within a broad context and generalising theoretical conclusions to be drawn. Socio-cultural and contextual analysis examines graphics not as an autonomous aesthetic object but as a product of its era and the specific social function it performed. Semiotic analysis decodes graphics as a system of signs, revealing how the visual codes of the era – for example, metaphors of progress in Art Deco, images of the "new man" in Popular Front posters, symbols of power or protest in caricature – were formed, transmitted and perceived. As Ozgen (2015, 416) asserts, "the language constitutes the basis of culture and identity and each language creates its own culture".

Fundamental Understanding of Graphic Art

According to the definition proposed by A.M. Muratov in the Great Russian Encyclopedia, graphics¹⁴ (from Latin *graphice* – drawing, drafting; from Greek *γραφικὴ ἡ τέχνη* – the art of writing or drawing) is a type of fine art based on drawing technique, encompassing completed drawings, preparatory artistic works such as sketches, studies and drafts, and reproductive techniques such as engraving. The relative cheapness ensured

by the availability of paper endows graphics with valuable reproductive and auxiliary properties.

The specificity of materials, techniques and technologies gives graphic works their aesthetic distinctiveness. Depending on technological features, graphics are subdivided into unique and printed. Unique graphics are created by hand by the artist using graphic and painterly materials. Printed graphics are created through impressions from an original, using various techniques such as engraving, lithography, etching, or using high-performance printing presses. This art form encompasses both completed drawings and preparatory artistic works.

The transition from technological description to substantive analysis of graphics was carried out within the framework of the exhibition "Graphic Art in the USSR. 1917–X–1927" (VKhUTEIN, Leningrad). Its catalogue not only offered an exhaustive sectoral classification, presenting a comprehensive systematisation of all branches of applied graphics – from state and book graphics to posters and industrial graphics. The article by M. Roslavlev published in the exhibition catalogue introduced the term "industrial graphics" into scholarly circulation (Glinternik, 2023, 166–187).

For the most complete analysis of graphic works and the evolution of graphic art, it is necessary to turn to the triad "form – content – meaning", a concept that traces back to ancient philosophy, particularly to Aristotle's ideas about form

¹⁴ Muratov, A. M. (2007). Graphics. In Great Russian Encyclopedia (Vol. 7, pp. 637–640). Moscow. (In Russian).

as an organising principle (Asmus, 1976, 11–12). In the art historical analysis of graphic works, the triad "form – content – meaning" allows for the structuring of the interpretive process.

In particular, "form" in graphics encompasses the technique of execution, compositional solutions, graphic means of expression, as well as the textural features of the impression. The "content" of a work is manifested in its figurative structure, narrative fabric and presented objective world. The "meaning" of a graphic sheet is revealed through the idea embedded by the author, the message being conveyed, as well as the emotional and ideological subtext that shapes the overall impression of the work. The disclosure of meaning, as mentioned earlier, becomes an act of co-creation, when the viewer's perception of form and content occurs within the context of the era (Kalugina, 2018, 333–338).

The classical philosophical tradition, from Hegel to Russian thinkers of the early 20th century, establishes a fundamental principle for the analysis of any art, including graphics: the indissoluble unity of form and content. As Hegel (1999, 119) noted, the task of art is to mediate the idea (content) and its sensual, figurative embodiment (form), creating a "free, reconciled whole". Belinsky (1948, 138) developed this idea, emphasising their organic connection, where form, being an adequate expression of content, becomes inseparable from it.

The specificity of graphics as an art form lies in the particular way this principle is realised. Its content is revealed through a strict and economical set of formal means: line, stroke, spot, contrasting with the

surface of the paper. Colour here is usually subordinated to drawing. A critically important element of form becomes the background – the "air of the white sheet", in V.A. Favorsky's definition, which is not a passive empty space but actively participates in the construction of image and meaning, forming a unique relationship between the depicted object and space (Semenova, 2008, 5–6).

This economy of means translates into semiotic richness. As Uspensky (1995, 60) demonstrates, graphics possess the unique ability to convey not only the image but also the very process of its creation, the energy and intention of the artist. The character of the stroke – its "rapidity and nervousness" – can directly transmit to the viewer the dynamics of the depicted object (for example, the flight of a bird), involving them in the "creative process" of perception and interpretation.

Florensky's concept adds ontological depth to this analysis. He defines graphics not through material but through the principle of "linearity" and "motor space". For Florensky, the line is the trace of a volitional gesture, an act of constructing reality. Thus, graphics appear as a philosophical category – an active, volitional construction of space through the semantics of the trace-gesture (Gerchuk, 2000, 10). Although this approach remains debatable, it substantially enriches the theoretical toolkit, allowing the graphic work to be viewed as a fixed act of creative will and thought.

Historically, the most ancient form of graphics is drawing, whose origins can be traced back to primitive cave paintings and

ancient vase painting, where line and silhouette dominate. Despite the closeness of the tasks of drawing and painting, the boundaries between them can be mobile and conditional, which is confirmed by the use of techniques such as watercolour, gouache, pastel and tempera, which can be employed both for creating graphic and painterly works. Lacking the fullness of possibilities of painting in creating a spatial illusion of the real world, graphics vary with great freedom and flexibility the degree of spatiality and flatness (Semenova, 2008, 5–6).

This conventionality and semantic concentration of graphics is developed by Polevoy (1981, 10), closely linking it with drawing but indicating a departure beyond its framework. He emphasises that graphics encompass methods of reproduction, and its essence lies in the "primacy of artistic perception of life", the direct and immediate embodiment of nature. In comparison with painting, a graphic work creates a "self-sufficient artistic world" which, however, "does not pretend to absolute completeness of representation". This laconicism and openness of form allow the graphic image to resemble a "short, clear phrase, an aphorism", becoming a capacious sign, as in emblematics. Thus, from drawing to graphics as an independent art form, there is a transition from direct recording of nature to sign representation, where the economy of means translates into maximum semantic concentration. As Van Gansen (2017, 214) explains, analysing the advertising function of poetry in the typographic journal *Arts et métiers graphiques*, "the contents of the poems in

Arts et métiers graphiques do not directly laud a product; the poems as a whole are advertisements, by means of their material quality".

Thus, the theoretical line under consideration finds its completion in Sarabyanov's (2024) concept, which shifts the emphasis from the author's "message" to the very act of creativity as the materialisation of an internal state. In his view, the artist is not so much striving to "say" something as recording what lives within – in feeling, in gesture, in the movement of the hand. This idea directly resonates with the understanding of graphics as a trace of volitional effort in Florensky's interpretation and the transmission of the energy of the process in Uspensky's expression. A simple line or stroke becomes the bearer of this impulse, and the viewer receives complete freedom of interpretation. Thus, the viewer's task is not to seek a single "correct" authorial intention but to engage in individual interaction with the graphic work, which establishes the graphic work as a fundamentally open, unfinished structure. Its semantic fullness is formed in the dialogue between the recorded gesture of the artist and the personal experience of the perceiving subject.

In summary, it should be clarified that creativity cannot be reduced merely to the execution of an intention. The artist's inner world (personal experience) plays a role no less significant than external sources of inspiration. Sudden illuminations and spontaneous discoveries often arise at the intersection of the artist's inner and outer worlds. The traditional understanding of information expands: in the context of

creativity, information includes not only external objects but also internal experiences, bodily experience, intuition (Ruotsalainen, Late & Kumpulainen, 2025).

Adaptation of Journalistic Graphics to Socio-Political Tasks

In the context of the 1920s–1930s, in its functional aspect, journalistic graphics serve as an aesthetic means for solving extra-aesthetic tasks. Graphics not only retain their basic characteristics but also adapt to the tasks and requirements of the new era. A quotation from D.S. Moor's personal diaries — "Not art for art's sake, but art as a means of struggle" — serves as vivid evidence that the art of this period, including graphics, was often not an exclusively self-valuable phenomenon but was used as an instrument for achieving socio-political goals (Abramsky, 1977). In capitalist countries, graphics not only accompanied market processes but also shaped the very environment of mass consumption: they set taste standards, formed consumer demand and embedded in viewers' consciousness the values of the capitalist way of life. This orientation had a profound influence on the themes, stylistics and functions of graphic works, and must be taken into account when interpreting and evaluating the artistic heritage of this period.

In the theory of graphic art, there is a phenomenon concerning printed graphic works whose classification as an original authorial work or a work of mass reproduction raises ambiguity. In the traditional approach to graphics, characteristic of easel engraving and lithography, each impression is considered an independent artistic work with its

inherent uniqueness. However, newspaper, magazine and poster graphics represent a qualitatively different phenomenon.

According to Polevoy (1981, 10–11), the specificity of printed drawing lies in the fact that it is initially created as a work intended exclusively for mass reproduction. In this case, there is no classical original in the traditional sense, since the work may be executed directly on the printing plate and its artistic value is realised only in printed form, as the independent existence of the original (initial) drawing is not assumed. Printed graphics are created with consideration for the specifics of the publication; their form and content are designed for printing reproduction, and their artistic value is manifested exclusively in the multiple print run.

The chronological framework of the study covers a period of radical social and political transformation in France. The post-war economic boom and the deep crisis of the 1930s defined the context in which printed graphics existed and developed.

The material examined within the framework of this article comprises works originally created for reproduction and mass distribution: political and advertising posters, satirical magazines, book illustrations. Reproductions of classical art in periodicals, while fulfilling a cultural-educational function, remain outside the scope of analysis, as they do not reflect the specifics of the formation of a new visual language of the era.

At the intersection of traditional humanistic values, avant-garde

experiments, acute socio-political issues and technological progress, a unique layer of French graphic art was formed. In the graphics of France during this period, the heritage of the national school – in particular, the traditions of book illustration, the poster art of Toulouse-Lautrec – intertwined with avant-garde experiments of styles such as Cubism, Futurism, Dadaism, as well as the commercial aesthetics of Art Deco (Petukhov, 2020).

Russian Graphics in the Process of Cultural Integration

During this period, Paris was the world centre of Russian émigré culture. The exhibition of Russian art in Brussels in 1928 became the largest manifestation of the art of the Russian emigration. The exposition of the contemporary Russian art section comprised works by over 60 artists (Krasnoslobodtsev, 2021, 118–129).

Integration occurred not only through exhibition activities but also through professional unions and private galleries, whose owners actively exhibited Russian authors. Interaction with Western gallerists allowed artists not merely to "live in emigration" but to transmit their plastic school, which, in combination with the Parisian school of painting, produced new forms.

As Efros (cited in Uryadova, 2019) noted, the central moment in the process of cultural integration was the realisation that the Russian artistic heritage was not a closed phenomenon but represented an organic component of the general European artistic process. The term "peintres français d'origine russe" in relation to Russian artists indicates a high

degree of assimilation: Russian artists came to be perceived as bearers of quality who enriched the local environment.

Soviet criticism of the first half of the 20th century often relied on ideologically conditioned narratives in its evaluation of the work of émigrés, emphasising the break with the "national soil" (Koptseva, Zamaraeva & Menzhurenko, 2024). However, life in emigration became for many masters a period of professional rebirth, caused by adaptation to a new social and commercial reality. The rethinking of artistic language and strategies in emigration led not to a loss of identity but to the formation of a synthetic artistic consciousness while preserving national identity. As Lobodenko-Senani (2013, 3) states, "we examine press drawing as a meticulous chronicle of the journey of the White Russians in France, capable of responding with laughter to social and personal anxieties. [...] We suggest for it the role of an identity mirror, this 'poetic rhetoric of integration and difference'".

Although existentialism as a formed system crystallised later, its basic motifs – the absurdity of existence, existential anxiety, "freedom as burden" – were already penetrating the artistic consciousness.

Gordon (1987) interprets expressionism as a symptom of the socio-psychological crisis of the era, where art becomes an instrument of psychic survival. He defines its key vectors: the alienation of the individual in the metropolis, generating existential anxiety (Angst); nihilism; flight into the irrational (mysticism, theosophy, the primitive); and artistic practice as therapy through deformation of form and

aggressive colour. According to Arnold's (2023) research, the intuitive expression of feelings through artistic materials helps people who have experienced loss and grief to cope with the feeling of loss. The capacity of art to heal personal loss transformed individual experiences into artistic manifestos of the time.

Neo-Thomism, whose key representative was Jacques Maritain, formed the philosophical foundation of the Catholic intellectual revival of the 1920s–1930s. This direction offered a response to the challenges of secular modernism through a creative reinterpretation of the heritage of Thomas Aquinas. Within its framework, a synthesis of theology and rational metaphysics was carried out, creating the theoretical prerequisites for the search for spiritual stability in conditions of the value crisis of the era (Maritain, 1922). This movement fit into the broad cultural tendency of *retour à l'ordre* ("return to order") that succeeded the radicalism of the *avant-garde*, acting as its religious-conservative wing, while its secular analogue was Neoclassicism¹⁵.

In the sphere of religious graphics, a return to the use of traditional symbolism and allegory, Gothic fonts and ornaments, as well as the application of restrained colour schemes, is noted¹⁶. In secular graphics, as seen in the example of A.M. Cassandre's posters, clear silhouettes, balanced compositions, elements of Neoclassicism and strict classical fonts were used. A similar principle of "noble"

simplicity and order can be traced in publishing, for example, in the typography and design of the elite journal *Nouvelle Revue Française* (NRF) and the religiously oriented journal *L'Art Sacré*¹⁷.

Socialist ideas of class struggle, based on Marxism-Leninism, were actively materialised in visual agitation. Posters and caricatures of the Popular Front period (1936), published in French Communist Party organs such as *L'Humanité* and *Les Lettres Françaises*, employed laconic slogans, contrasting colours and dynamic compositions to criticise fascism, the bourgeoisie and colonialism, creating heroicised images of workers and anti-fascists (Polevoy, 1981, 296–299).

Secular humanism and rationalism in French graphics, ideologically represented by figures such as the critic Benjamin Crémieux, found expression in the striving to visualise the universal values of reason, freedom and human dignity through laconic, informative posters dedicated to education and public health, for example, campaigns against tuberculosis or for personal hygiene, where the clarity of the message was placed above decorativeness. Compositions were generally balanced, forms clear and generalised, and typography legible and functional. In contrast to the agitational function of the Soviet poster, French graphics of secular humanism performed a predominantly educational mission aimed at informing (Uler, 2002, 661–688). At the intersection of the philosophy of progress, technological determinism and the

¹⁵ Whittet, S. (2021). *Retour à l'Ordre: The Return to Order in French Art, 1918–1929*. [S. l.].

¹⁶ Schmitt, J. (1990). *L'Art sacré en France, 1919–1939*. [Paris]: Documentation française.

¹⁷ Art sacré (L'Art sacré) [Digitized journal collection]. (n.d.). Available at: https://archive.org/details/pub_art-sacre-revue-mensuelle (accessed on: 22 May 2026).

modernist worldview in France during this period, a visual phenomenon was formed that embodied the aesthetics of technicism. In contrast to Soviet technicism, subordinated to the tasks of social utopia, the French variant was oriented towards the market and mass culture, receiving its fullest expression in the commercial graphics of the Art Deco style. Posters and advertising promoting the achievements of industry and transport (the railways "Paris – Lyon – Mediterranean", Air Union airlines, transatlantic liners) actively used modernist techniques: geometrised and dynamic forms, the ziggurat motif (stepped compositions), alternating stripes (chevrons) and expressive, often modernised antiqua, creating a visual metaphor for speed, power and technological optimism. This aesthetics, despite its external closeness to Constructivism, remained within the bounds of decorative stylisation and lacked the social-transformative pathos (Golan, 1995).

Thus, French graphics of the 1920s–1930s developed under conditions of interaction and competition among various social, philosophical and artistic programmes, which determined its broad spectrum of visual solutions, the diversity of its communicative tasks and its significant role in the cultural landscape of the interwar period.

Agitational-Journalistic Forms of French Graphics

The graphics of France actively performed the functions of ideological influence, satirical criticism and mass communication – from Popular Front posters to advertising images of the new consumer culture (Polevoy, 1981, 299). As

Persson (2024, 849) indicates, "indeed, wrapped up in the inveterate axiom that France, plagued by plummeting birthrates, was on the verge of becoming depopulated, the image of the infant occupied charged territory in Third Republican France (1871–1940) and was extensively and repetitively disseminated in political as well as popular discourse".

In the 1920s–1930s, the ideological confrontation in France had a direct impact on visual culture. Here, in the words of Sokolov (1967, 174), "the first cell of socialist culture within bourgeois society" is realised on a national scale. This led to the formation of two opposing campaigns, reflecting the positions of opposite political camps.

Socialist ideas had a significant influence on the graphics of this period, mainly through agitational-journalistic forms: posters, caricatures and illustrations in the left-wing press. The influence manifested itself in the activation of the satirical tradition, tracing back to Daumier and Gavarni, when caricaturists used grotesque and hyperbole to denounce bourgeois morals, corruption and the hypocrisy of the political elite, turning satire into an instrument of class struggle. In parallel, in posters and illustrations of left-wing publications, the image of the "new man" was formed, based on the ideals of solidarity, labour and internationalism, with typical motifs: the muscular worker, collective labour, handshakes and red banners. An important role in the dissemination of these images was played by the party press and publishing houses associated with the French Communist Party and other socialist movements, such

as Clarté and Monde, where a particular style of newspaper drawing was created – laconic, eye-catching, with clear social accents. With the growth of the fascist threat in Europe, especially after Hitler's rise to power, anti-fascist themes became a key direction, expressed in images of resistance, for example, Marianne as a symbol of free France, as well as in satire on fascist leaders and Popular Front posters of 1936, calling for the unity of the population against reaction. French artists of socialist views also maintained international ties, which was reflected in the publication of Soviet posters and caricatures in Parisian publications (Cheblakova & Timofeeva, 2017).

The French Communist Party and trade unions used graphics to disseminate their programmatic theses. During the Popular Front election campaign (1936), posters with slogans such as "Bread, Peace, Freedom" were distributed, featuring images of workers and peasants, as well as red banners. In underground publications of the Resistance period, such as L'Humanité and Les Lettres Françaises, caricatures were published depicting collaborators and German occupation officials, as well as symbols such as Marianne breaking chains (Pisarenko, 2013).

The right wing also exerted significant influence in the field of intense ideological competition, including the monarchist Action Française, nationalist leagues and pro-fascist groupings, which used a different visual language in their propaganda. Their materials featured monarchical symbols such as golden lilies (fleur-de-lis) on posters, as well as images

of torches, swords and Celtic crosses, and Nazi symbolism. In periodicals of the far right, such as Gringoire and Je suis partout, certain population groups, such as adherents of communist ideology, Jews and Freemasons, were depicted using satirical negative stereotypical images (Polevoy, 1981, 296–308).

The analysis of satirical graphics in France during the period under consideration (1920s–1930s) allows for the identification of a number of key artistic means that determine its specificity and evolution in the context of acute political and social struggle:

1. *Narrative method and symbolic metaphor.* French satire often used an expanded narrative approach, saturated with recognisable symbols. Masters created complex allegories where political figures or phenomena appeared in the form of animals, monsters or destructive forces of nature, for example, fascism in the image of an octopus or a mechanical idol.
2. *Grotesque portrait as a weapon.* The political portrait-caricature experienced a flourishing, becoming a central element of anti-fascist and anti-militarist graphics. Artists sought to convey not only external resemblance but also the psychological, moral essence of dictators (Mussolini, Hitler, Franco), hyperbolising their aggressive, predatory or ridiculous features.
3. *Dynamic expressionism and contrast.* Under the influence of German Expressionism and the tragedy of the First World War, many

satirical works, especially from the late 1930s, abandoned the smooth lines of Art Deco in favour of "torn", nervous drawing, sharp chiaroscuro contrasts and deformation of space.

4. *Photomontage as documentary witness.* The insertion of real photographs of destruction, politicians' faces or marching troops into a drawn satirical context created a powerful effect of authenticity, blurring the line between artistic fiction and frightening reality.
5. *Synthesis of visual and verbal impact.* Laconic, often ironic or caustic captions, slogans or dialogues in "bubbles" were an obligatory element. The text not only explained the image but also reinforced the sarcasm.

The types and themes of satirical graphics in France included:

1. *Newspaper and magazine caricatures (operational satire).* The left-wing press (Le Populaire, L'Humanité), as well as independent satirical weeklies (Le Canard enchaîné, Le Crapouillot), responded with caricatures to events in domestic and foreign policy, ridiculing both fascist leaders and the inconsistency of French politicians.
2. *Poster appeals and placards (mass satire).* Anti-fascist and anti-war organisations used a combination of satire and agitation. A striking example is the poster by Métral "Young Workers, Destroy the Military Boot! United Front!" (1932).
3. *Thematic cycles and series.* Artists created series of graphic sheets on one theme, published in newspaper

graphics and individual albums. Examples include J. Barbier's illustrations for Henri de Bréau's book (1930), as well as a number of portraits of famous French writers and bibliophiles by the artist P.-E. Bécot for collector's editions (1920s–1930s).

4. *Allusions and parallels.* Satirists drew parallels with visual clichés and typical subjects, for example, the puppeteer controlling a puppet (Yo Mich's poster "Tous les pays d'Europe ont vaincu le communisme. La France reste seule menacée", 1936) or the octopus extending its tentacles, depicting new dictators in the image of historical tyrants.
5. *Socio-political drawings and international solidarity.* A significant layer of graphics was devoted to support, for example, solidarity with Republican Spain. Satire was combined with the pathos of sympathy and calls for unity (J.-F. Grandjouan, "International Women's Week", 1928–1930).

French Graphics of the Third Republic Period

In the 1930s, France experienced a protracted economic crisis, which differed from the dynamics of other Western countries: a late start, exceptional duration combined with political instability due to frequent changes of government and the polarisation of forces. The authorities' inability to quickly transition to active state regulation, the contradictory nature of anti-crisis measures (for example, protectionism without demand stimulation, cartelisation without

modernisation, and colonial reorientation without technological advancement), as well as diplomatic isolation and the loss of external sources of financing, led to deep stagnation: industrial production had not recovered to its pre-crisis level by 1939, unemployment rose, and investment activity declined (Prostakov & Barsukova, 2021, 140–155).

Economic instability and social polarisation in the Third Republic stimulated artistic journalisticism and experimental searches. Mass printed forms and visual languages ranging from modernism to Neoclassicism turned art into an arena of ideological clashes and the strengthening of the democratisation of culture. At the same time, economic constraints stimulated the development of cheap printed forms such as posters, magazine graphics and mass printing. Drawing on Sigmund Freud's ideas about the unconscious, Surrealism, formulated by André Breton, established itself as a significant artistic challenge.

Surrealists and followers of Freud shared a keen interest in dreams and the unconscious, but their goals differed radically. Freud viewed the dream as a cipher to be deciphered in order to understand the patient's past traumas. The Jungian approach was fundamentally different in its emphasis on the autonomy of the creative process and its connection to the deep, archetypal layers of the collective psyche (Lakh, 2025). Surrealists saw in dreams and "psychic automatism" a source of creative freedom and new, unpredictable images for art, rather than material for therapeutic analysis. According to the memoirs of Philippe Soupault, the key idea

of automatism for the movement was borrowed from the work of psychologist Pierre Janet even before acquaintance with Freud's theories. This intersection of ideas and the fundamental divergence in goals created a unique dialogue between art and science, where, as Freud himself admitted in a letter to André Breton, their worlds often remained mutually incomprehensible (Pinkovsky, 2008). Metaphor in graphics acts as a connecting link, translating the hidden impulses of the unconscious into a visual code accessible to aesthetic comprehension. It is through plastic metaphor that the artist finds an instrument for structuring the chaos of psychic experiences, transforming internal anxiety into a meaningful and visually expressive artistic fact (Van Lith et al., 2025).

Representatives of this movement, such as M. Ernst, used methods such as collage, photomontage, automatic drawing and frottage in creating graphic works. The result was the formation of paradoxical dreamlike images that were applied in posters, placards and book illustration to depict surreality (Domaratskaya, 2002). Collage, borrowed from the Dadaists, became an instrument for creating shocking visual paradoxes. This led to the widespread use in graphics of alogical combinations, biomorphic forms, ghostly overlays and poetic grotesque.

Thus, Surrealism significantly expanded the formal and content repertoire of French graphics, contrasting the utilitarianism of the political poster and social caricature with the deeply personal, irrational world of inner visions (Breton, 1986).

During this crisis period for France, the Art Deco style became a significant cultural

phenomenon. Art Deco (art déco), which formed in France in the 1920s–1930s, represents an aesthetic synthesis that emerged as a direct response to the socio-historical and cultural transformations of the post-war era. Its institutional consolidation is associated with the International Exhibition of Decorative Arts and Industry of 1925 in Paris, which became a programmatic demonstration of a new artistic language (Petukhov, 2020, 239–247).

According to Petukhov's (2020, 286–302) research, several key factors influenced the formation of the style. On the one hand, Art Deco offered post-war society a visual manifesto of order, stability and creative revival, responding to the psychological need to overcome the trauma of the First World War. On the other hand, rapid technological progress and industrialisation created a demand for a new visual language – laconic, technological and dynamic – that could visually embody the era of the automobile, aviation, radio and cinema. The Art Deco style is a synthesis of modernist and Neoclassical forms, folk and exotic traditions. It developed in both elitist and mass directions: the former, represented by unique graphics for magazines and jewellery houses, cultivated luxury and refined forms.

In parallel, there existed a democratised, mass version of the style, aimed at the middle class, workers and employees. Examples of this are widely represented in collections of posters and advertising archives of the period: posters for

department stores, transport companies (SNCF) and tourist destinations, cinema and popular cabaret placards, magazine graphics and posters for mass consumer goods (cosmetics, beverages). The visual language here was adapted to the tasks of effective communication and was distinguished by simplified geometric forms, contrasting colour solutions, dynamic compositions with clear diagonals and an emphasis on the functionality and accessibility of the image (Hillier & Escritt, 2005, 26–55).

Consequently, French Art Deco graphics did not represent a single monolith but were a flexible system capable of transmitting the values of prestige and luxury to the elite while simultaneously creating a modern, attractive and functional visual world for the masses. This capacity for adaptation became one of the reasons for its wide dissemination and influence. Graphics were an instrument of public dialogue and a means of recording historical turning points.

Based on the analysis, French graphics of the 1920s–1930s appear as a multi-layered, internally contradictory but integral system that reflected the drama of the era under consideration.

Conclusion

This work extensively presents the theoretical framework of graphic art, drawing on the fundamental definition of A.M. Muratov¹⁸, adapted to the realities of the period under consideration, the theory of the "open structure" of V.M. Polevoy (1981), and the philosophical-theoretical

¹⁸ Muratov, A. M. (2007). Graphics. In Great Russian Encyclopedia. Moscow. (In Russian).

foundation encompassing the concepts of Aristotle, G.W.F. Hegel, P.A. Florensky, B.A. Uspensky and others. The content of the article convincingly and substantively defines the boundaries between "unique" and "printed" graphics. The research methodology is built on a synthesis of classical and modern approaches: source studies and comparative analysis, formal-stylistic and iconological methods are complemented by tools of hermeneutics, semiotics and socio-cultural analysis. The study reveals the specificity of graphics as an instrument of mass communication, ideological influence and the construction of symbolic images of the era, as well as the graphic materials, techniques and expressive means through which these tasks are realised.

The study has revealed the influence of multiple factors on printed graphics, making them a complex and multifaceted phenomenon of the era. The evolution and transformation of graphics were directly influenced by philosophical currents and ideas, for example, Freud's theory of the unconscious, Neo-Thomism and Maritain's ideas, the heritage of Thomas Aquinas and the tendency of *retour à l'ordre*, as well as secular humanism and rationalism promoted by ideologues such as the critic B. Crémieux. Since printed graphics respond well to the goals of propaganda and are also effectively used for mass influence, they were widely used for political purposes. Ideological influence is also reflected in the context of the confrontation between the "left" (Popular Front press, magazine graphics of *L'Humanité*, *Monde*, *Clarté*) and the "right" (graphics of *Action Française*,

magazines *Gringoire* and *Je suis partout*). The socio-economic situation within the country contributed to a deep stylistic rupture: while Art Deco style graphics transmitted ideas of technological optimism and social stability, Expressionism and Surrealism in graphics focused on recording social contradictions. The protracted economic stagnation caused a rejection of expensive techniques in favour of printed forms — posters and magazine illustrations — turning graphics into an instrument of operational social criticism.

The study of printed graphics of the 1920s–1930s confirms the thesis that art in general, and printed graphics in particular, in crisis eras ceases to be "art for art's sake", transforming into a fundamental instrument for the formation of collective identity and public consciousness. As Mateo (2023, 45) notes, analysing similar strategies in 19th-century Spanish culture, "this comparison poignantly encapsulates not only Pérez Villaamil's own assumption of the role of historian-politician, but also the objective, meaning, and agency of the imaginary church within a project of national regeneration". Developing this idea, Farhat (2025, 15) asserts: "les images dues au topographe étaient aussi celles d'un historiographe." This observation indicates that in any turning-point era, the visual image not only records reality but consciously (or unconsciously) participates in the creation of historical narrative, the legitimization of power and the mobilisation of society. Hammond (2023, 2) further reinforces the thesis that visual art (both portraiture and printed graphics) in critical eras becomes an instrument of propaganda

and the construction of social hierarchy: "what becomes apparent from the analysis below is that Vasari is, in some sense, often not talking about the portrait at all, but is actually promoting the sitter. The idea of empirically 'true' portraits supports the stated aims of portraiture (memorial and moral instruction) and also endorses the unstated and somewhat self-aggrandising nature of the genre: it suggests that the sitters are indeed outstanding members of society who embody praiseworthy values". As Galardi (2023, 35) indicates, "entangled with contemporaneous art theories and art discourses, Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen reveals that the thinking of figures such as Adolf von Hildebrand, Heinrich Wölfflin, and Alois Riegl informed examinations of artworks beyond the canonical West. It thus invites a careful reconsideration of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century foundational studies across the discipline". This assumption finds confirmation in the creative fate of Russian émigré artists in France. As Zvonareva and Zvonarev (2024, 77) note, analysing A. Alexeev's path, "an analysis of A. Alexeev's creative activity during the first fifteen years of his Parisian

life leads one way or another to the conclusion: he, like many other representatives of the creative intelligentsia of the first wave of Russian emigration, preserved in his heart the image of his Homeland, Russia, which he sought to visualise in his works. [...] A. Alexeev remained a patriot of Russia, deeply and devotedly loving his Homeland, preserving in his heart a piece of the Russian world". The integration of Russian artists into France made Paris the centre of Russian émigré culture. In this environment, a specific artistic synthesis emerged: while preserving national expression, artists adapted it to the formal explorations of the French avant-garde. The status of "peintres français d'origine russe" established in criticism clearly demonstrates that the Russian diaspora ceased to be an isolated phenomenon, becoming an organic part of the Parisian school.

In the future, the results of this study may be useful for examining historical mechanisms of influencing society through images, thus providing an understanding of contemporary strategies of visual impact.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Aliyev E. V.: conceptualization; methodology; writing – review & editing, writing – original draft preparation.

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CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTS OF ART EDUCATION

Original article

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Two Concepts of the Electronic Keyboard and Ways to Develop Musical Art and Education

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Abstract. Since the 1980s, electronic keyboards have become widespread in everyday music-making worldwide. This has created a demand for instruction, resulting in numerous teaching methods, training courses, and graded skill requirements for beginners.

Many music colleges and universities in Western countries offer electronic keyboard programmes. Both amateur and professional training emphasise jazz, pop, and rock styles, along with interactive features (auto-accompaniment, arpeggiators, etc.) that rely on the rhythmic ostinato typical of popular music. Professional artists also use these interactive modes, which limits the instrument's presence on the philharmonic stage. The dominant Western concept of the electronic keyboard can be described as applied – it aims to involve young people in the music industry, where mass musical culture prevails. Russia, however, has developed a different academic concept, focused on developing music in its highest artistic forms.

Its key features are:

- priority of original sound material of electronic music;
- reliance on three-part communication (composer → performer → listener);
- pedagogical interpretation of interactive modes;
- emphasis on the musician's technical mastery;
- use of classical and original repertoire.

While the first concept has made electronic keyboards widely accessible in amateur music-making and popular genres, the second can turn these instruments into worthy successors of their mechanical predecessors, thereby giving new impetus to the development of musical art.

Keywords: electronic keyboard, music education, philharmonic concert, mass culture, academic music.

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Две концепции клавишного синтезатора и пути развития музыкального искусства и образования

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Резюме. Клавишные синтезаторы, начиная с 80-х гг. прошлого века, получили широкое распространение в музыкальном быту по всему миру. Возникла потребность в обучении игре на них, что вызвало появление множества учебных пособий, курсов обучения и уровневых требований к формированию творческих навыков начинающих учеников.

Многие музыкальные колледжи и ВУЗы стран Запада также ведут обучение студентов по клавишным синтезаторам. При этом при обучении как любителей, так и профессионалов акцент делается на стилистике джазовой, поп- и рок-музыки, использовании интерактивных режимов, позволяющих опираться на свойственную этой музыке ритмическую оstinatность. Профессиональные артисты также используют интерактивные режимы игры на клавишных синтезаторах, что ограничивает возможности их применения на филармонической сцене.

В целом, доминирующую в странах Запада концепцию клавишного синтезатора можно обозначить как *прикладную*, нацеленную на вовлечение молодых людей в «музыкальную индустрию» с характерным для нее доминированием массовой музыкальной культуры. Между тем, в России сложилась иная концепция этого инструмента, которую можно охарактеризовать как *академическую*, нацеленную на развитие музыки в ее высших художественных проявлениях.

Ее особенности: приоритет оригинального звукового материала электронной музыки; опора на трехзвенную коммуникацию: композитор – исполнитель – слушатель; педагогическая трактовка интерактивных режимов игры и значимость технического мастерства музыканта-исполнителя; опора на классический и оригинальный репертуар.

И если первая концепция послужила основой для широкого распространения клавишных синтезаторов в любительском музицировании и массовых жанрах, то вторая способна сделать эти инструменты достойными преемниками их механических предшественников и тем самым дать новый импульс развитию музыкального искусства.

Ключевые слова: клавишный синтезатор, музыкальное образование, филармонический концерт, массовая культура, академическая музыка

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1. Introducing Musicians to Playing the Electronic Keyboard

The electronic keyboard (EKB) has firmly established itself in everyday musical practice. This is illustrated by export data from China, the world's largest musical instrument manufacturer. In 2024, China exported 6,944,350 EKBs versus 21,475 upright pianos (Upright pianos, 2024) and 3,856 grand pianos (Grand pianos, 2024) (total 25,331 acoustic instruments). Thus, for every acoustic keyboard exported from China, approximately 274 electronic ones were shipped. Globally, the electronic keyboard has significantly displaced the acoustic piano, which had dominated household music-making for over two centuries.

Since the 1980s, when digital keyboards began being mass-produced, numerous teaching courses, methods, and manuals have appeared. This is natural: mass music education is directly linked to everyday practice.

One of the earliest and most influential courses was the Yamaha Keyboard Course (Japan). It aims to introduce the widest possible audience to electronic music-making, typically in groups. Two age categories are targeted: 6–7 years (Junior Play For Keeps) and 9–99 years (Play For Keeps) (Yamaha Music Foundation, n.d.). The course focuses on appealing popular repertoire, allowing students to immediately hear a musically satisfying result. Technical elements (hand position, positional playing, coordination, sight-reading, singing, listening, ensemble playing, arranging and improvisation) are also covered.

The course introduces two special terms: **Keyboard-Style** – technique using interactive modes (auto-accompaniment, arpeggiator, etc.), which facilitates playing and produces a pop-music sound;

Piano-Style – traditional piano technique for those who value continuity with acoustic instruments. A hybrid (approx. 70% piano-style / 30% keyboard-style) is also common.

The Yamaha course became a model for many "from scratch" methods. In the USA, popular manuals by M. Manus, W.A. Palmer, and others appeared:

- Alfred's Basic Electronic Keyboard Course (Palmer et al., 1986) – basic notation, technique, multitimbrality, auto-accompaniment.
- Alfred's Basic Chord Approach to Electronic Keyboards (Palmer et al., 1989) – accompanying songs using letter-coded chords, without full notation.
- Alfred's Teach Yourself to Play Electronic Keyboard (Manus et al., 1987) – self-directed learning from zero to simple pieces and songs.

In Western Europe, similar manuals emerged:

- K. Baker (UK): The Complete Keyboard Player (Baker, 1984) – playing popular songs with auto-accompaniment (pop, rock, ballads).
- S. Walker (UK): Electronic Keyboard Basics 1 (Walker, 1998) – right-hand melody, left-hand chords with auto-accompaniment.
- U. Bye (Germany): Keyboard spielen – mein schönstes Hobby (Bye, 2021).

- D. Roux (France): Coup de Pouce – Méthode débutant Clavier arrangeur (Roux, 2009).

In Asia, following the Yamaha course, local textbooks appeared:

- China: Mai Ziyang & Wang Leijia (Mai & Wang, 2011), Zhang Yao (Zhang, 2020).
- South Korea: Dara Editorial Department (Dara Editorial Department, n.d.-a, n.d.-b).

The rapidly expanding global market for keyboard instruction led to the need for standardised skill levels. This task was taken up by **Trinity College London** (a non-governmental examination body). Since 2003, Trinity has offered graded exams in electronic keyboard. Teaching is not provided; candidates may study at institutions, with private teachers, or independently.

Assessment criteria include:

- Fluency & accuracy – rhythmic precision, correct realisation of notation.
- Technical facility – ability to operate digital features.
- Communication & interpretation – convincing artistic interpretation and audience engagement (Trinity College London, 2023).

There are nine levels (Initial to Grade 8). Grades 1–3 cover basic notation and simple playing skills. Grades 4–5 add reading harmonic notation and selecting appropriate auto-accompaniment patterns. Grades 6–8 require confident stage performance, sight-reading, and improvisation. The highest level (Grade 8) is roughly comparable to a graduate of a Russian children's music school.

Trinity also issues diplomas:

- **ATCL** (Associate) – approximately first-year bachelor level.
- **LTCL** (Licentiate) – final-year bachelor level.
- **FTCL** (Fellowship) – master's level (Trinity College London, n.d.).

These diplomas do not confer academic degrees, as Trinity is not a state educational institution. The exams emphasise popular genres (jazz, pop, rock, funk) and the ability to read chord symbols and use auto-accompaniment. In January 2026, Trinity launched a Rock & Pop diplomas track (Trinity College London, 2026).

China introduced a similar grading system (10 grades) developed by professors of the Central Conservatory of Music (Zhang, 2016). These materials emphasise classical and national repertoire, student motivation, and stylistic diversity.

Thus, the Western "applied" concept focuses on mass amateur music-making, group learning, auto-accompaniment, and popular styles. Some modification has been introduced by Chinese educators, who give more attention to classical and national repertoire.

2. Specifics of Professional Training on Electronic Keyboards

In China and other Asian countries (following Japan), the **Yamaha Electone** – a two-manual electronic organ with pedalboard – has gained a place in music education. The Electone is a stage instrument, not a home instrument. International competitions have been held since 1964 (Yamaha, 2025). It serves as a

bridge between mass and professional education in electronic music.

In Japan, China, and South Korea, the Electone is taught as a separate specialisation (Electronic Organ) (Senzoku Gakuen College of Music, n.d.), whereas single-manual EKBs are included in programmes such as Contemporary Instruments, Applied Music, Jazz/Pop/Rock, Composition, Arranging, Music Technology, Sound Engineering, etc.

In the USA, EKB instruction occurs within courses like Synth/Programming Lab, Commercial Music Keyboard, Music Technology (Berklee College of Music, n.d.). Keyboard skills are typically divided into five levels: Foundation, Core (I-II), Intermediate, Advanced, Capstone. The final goal is a specialist who can perform, arrange, improvise, set up equipment, record, and mix.

In Western Europe, as in the USA, EKB teaching combines performance, sound design, and music technology. It is usually integrated into one of three tracks:

- Jazz / Pop / "Contemporary Performance" (keyboardist in an ensemble);
- Composition / Electronic Composition / Sound Arts (live electronics, multimedia);
- Music Technology / Producing / DAW-based studio work (Bern University of the Arts, n.d.).

R. Cremata notes: "Student-centred popular music education demands teacher relinquishment of power. It also challenges facilitators to foster sonic spaces while support[ing] notions of democracy, plurality and diversity" (Cremata, 2017,

75). The profession of electronic keyboardist is predominantly linked to jazz and pop music (R&B, funk, fusion, etc.), with emphasis on interactive modes, rhythmic grooves, chord charts, improvisation, and ensemble playing. Graduates face no employment problems due to the large popular music market.

3. The Electronic Keyboard on the Philharmonic Stage

How are these instruments faring on the philharmonic stage – the traditional arena for high-level musical art?

Western philharmonics (Paris, Berlin, Szczecin) have hosted such electronic keyboard stars as Jean-Michel Jarre (space music, memorable melodies, ostinato rhythms), Klaus Schulze (meditative ambient), Kraftwerk ("machine music"), and Tangerine Dream (rhythmic ostinato for inner contemplation). Contemporary successors include Nils Frahm, Max Richter, Hania Rani, Ryuichi Sakamoto. Common features: blending electronic and acoustic sounds, extended durations, minimalistic ostinato, often supplemented by light, video, and graphics – turning the hall into a "sound theatre".

However, this music is not academic. Improvisation often dominates, with no written scores. Many of these artists are not composers or performers in the classical sense, but improvisers – modern troubadours. The question arises: can such art compete with academic music, which rests on three-part communication (composer → performer → listener)? Since the historical shift from two-part (improviser → listener) to three-part communication, improvisers have been

moved away from the forefront of musical art.

Nevertheless, Western philharmonics also host "Contemporary", "New Music", "Late Night", and "Crossover" concerts, where the public is willing to listen to improvisations built with loopers, arpeggiators, multipads, and sequencers. The musical quality of such products is significantly lower than that of academic concerts, and this does not enhance the reputation of electronic keyboards.

4. Ways to Raise the Status of Electronic Keyboards in Musical Art and Education

It sounds paradoxical: electronic keyboards, with a century-old history and sound potential far exceeding that of mechanical instruments, have not yet achieved equal status. What must be done to raise that status and bring them onto the philharmonic stage as full participants in high-level academic music?

1. *Focus on virtual space and original sound generation* – the true specificity of electronic music, unattainable with mechanical instruments.
2. *Adhere to three-part communication* (composer → performer → listener) – possibly also including a sound engineer and a sound creator (timbral designer), roles that the performer may assume. This is why the computer, which reduces communication to two-part (musician → listener), cannot compete with a keyboard on the concert stage.
3. *Minimise or abandon interactive modes* (looper, arpeggiator, multipad, sequencer, etc.) in professional

concerts. These should be seen as pedagogically valuable (motivating beginners), not as defining the instrument's identity. Their use on stage lowers artistic quality and shifts the style towards mass culture – both contrary to academic tradition. Virtuosity matters: "Liszt or Rachmaninoff-level" keyboardists will always outperform those who merely press buttons.

4. *Rely on classical repertoire*, maintaining continuity with academic traditions. "The principle of focusing on the values of musical art emphasises the organic connection of music with philosophy, emphasises the spiritual, moral and aesthetic, ideological, cognitive significance of musical works" (Smyrnova et al., 2019, 2082).
5. *Build an original repertoire* for the electronic keyboard – works that can be interpreted by different performers. This is a key sign of a concert instrument's high status.

These principles are elaborated in the author's monograph (Krasilnikov, 2008) and teaching method (Krasilnikov, 2011), which have been implemented in many Russian general and supplementary music education institutions (children's music schools, children's art schools). No reduction in artistic quality is observed. From the first lessons, students are immersed in electronic sound through virtual acoustics and original timbres. The student is positioned primarily as a performer, in line with academic tradition. Interactive modes are treated as pedagogical tools to motivate children. Auto-accompaniment patterns are

custom-made to match original recordings. Repertoire includes folk, classical, and the best examples of modern academic and mass genres – low-quality pop/rock are excluded. Russian composers collaborate with teachers to create original works for the electronic keyboard.

Thus, in Russia, teaching the electronic keyboard is based on academic traditions. Extending this approach to higher education levels will naturally produce concert performers capable of appearing solo or in ensembles on the philharmonic stage.

5. Conclusion

Thus, alongside the Western **applied** concept of the electronic keyboard (aimed at involving young people in the music industry with its dominance of mass culture), Russia has developed an **academic** concept (aimed at developing music in its highest artistic manifestations).

The first concept starts from preset sounds and interactive modes. The second treats the electronic instrument primarily as a source of new sound material that

complements the traditional component of musical art.

If the first concept has made electronic keyboards widespread in everyday music-making and popular genres, the second can make these instruments worthy successors of their mechanical predecessors, open the doors of philharmonic halls to them, and thereby give new impetus to the development of musical art.

The classic of electronic music **Eduard Artemyev (1937–2022)**, who highly appreciated the artistic potential of the electronic keyboard, supported the development of electronic music pedagogy in Russia. His words sound as a call to action:

"The enormous sound resources built into the synthesizer remain untapped <...> Especially in popular music. For me, one important rule applies: the instrument must be overcome. What the manufacturer offers is only a DEMO – the tip of an iceberg of huge possibilities that are revealed only through constant work" (Artemyev, 2020, 99–100).

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Authors' Contributions

Krasilnikov I. M.: conceptualization; methodology; writing – review & editing, data curation; methodology; investigation; validation; writing – original draft preparation.

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Presentation of the Morphological System of Classical Dance in Domestic and Foreign Textbooks

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Abstract. The relevance of the research is determined by the increasing intercultural integration in the field of choreographic education and the need for a critical reassessment of national methodological schools in the context of world pedagogical experience. Classical dance, as one of the most refined and technically complex forms of choreographic art, imposes high requirements on teachers and students of creative educational institutions and rehearsal classes in theatres. The findings reveal the necessity to possess knowledge of the history and technique of this dance, the ability to perform movements and their combinations as a single harmonious system, as well as a deep understanding of the basic components and structures they are formed. The morphology of dance considers dance elements as independent units, creating complex forms that develop into a holistic artistic work.

The authors provide the research to study the structural and functional elements of the morphology of classical dance and to conduct a comparative analysis of methodological approaches to teaching presented in textbooks from various countries. Therefor to achieve this goal, comparative analysis and content analysis were used: the former allowed covering various structural elements of the morphology of classical dance, as well as approaches to teaching and techniques presented in textbooks; the latter was applied for the systematic study of the textbooks content. The current study provided identification of the classical dance main elements – positions, steps, turns, jumps – and their interrelation with the general choreographic concept characteristic of various schools. In conclusion, the author points out that a comparative analysis of foreign textbooks with Russian ones opens up the possibility of familiarisation with alternative methods and practices used in the educational systems of different countries.

Keywords: classical dance, morphology of dance elements, movement system, performance technique, dance pedagogy, domestic textbooks, foreign textbooks, comparative and content analysis.

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Изложение морфологической системы классического танца в отечественных и зарубежных учебниках

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Резюме. Актуальность исследования обусловлена усилением межкультурной интеграции в сфере хореографического образования и необходимостью критического переосмысления национальных методических школ в контексте мирового педагогического опыта. Классический танец, как одна из самых утонченных и технически сложных форм хореографического искусства, предъявляет высокие требования к преподавателям и студентам, не только творческих образовательных учреждений, но и репетиционным классам в театрах. При этом необходимым оказывается не только знание истории и техники этого танца, умение грамотного исполнения движений и их сочетаний как единой гармоничной системы, но и глубокого понимания базовых компонентов и структур, из которых он формируется. Морфология танца рассматривает танцевальные элементы как самостоятельные единицы, которые в совокупности создают сложные формы, складывающиеся в целостное художественное произведение.

Целью исследования является изучение структурных и функциональных элементов морфологии классического танца, а также проведение сравнительного анализа методических подходов к обучению, представленных в учебных пособиях различных стран. Для достижения поставленной цели использовались сравнительный анализ и контент-анализ: первый позволил охватить различные структурные элементы морфологии классического танца, а также подходы к обучению и техники, представленные в учебниках, второй применялся для систематического изучения содержания учебных пособий. Проведенное исследование позволило выделить и проанализировать основные элементы классического танца – позиции, шаги, повороты, прыжки – и их взаимосвязь с общей хореографической концепцией, характерной для различных школ. В заключение автор отмечает, что сравнительный анализ зарубежных учебных пособий с российскими учебниками открывает возможность ознакомления с альтернативными методиками и практиками, применяемыми в образовательных системах разных стран.

Ключевые слова: классический танец, морфология танцевальных элементов, система движений, техника исполнения, педагогика танца, отечественные учебники, зарубежные пособия, сравнительный и контент-анализ.

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Introduction

The term "classical dance" became widespread in Russia in the... [Note: the original text is cut off here; the translation continues from the available fragment]. "serious", "noble", and "academic". As the ballet theorist L.D. Blok notes in her work "Classical Dance: History and Modernity", "classical dance represents a system of artistic thinking that transforms the expressiveness of natural human movements at various stages of cultural development. These movements in classical dance are not reproduced in their empirical form, but are abstracted and acquire a formula" (Blok, 1987, 25).

The study of the morphology of classical dance plays a key role in... [Note: the original text is cut off here]. 2023, 85). As the scholars A.M. Aylamazyan and E.I. Tashkeeva focus, "depending on how jointly distributed activity is structured in the course of education, therapy, or aesthetic upbringing, a particular image of a person is constituted" (Aylamazyan, Tashkeeva, 2024, 60).

Moreover, the study of the morphology of classical dance contributes to the development of critical thinking and analytical abilities of students. Working with various educational materials and methodological manuals, they learn to compare different approaches to teaching and evaluate their effectiveness. The acquired skills of analysis and systems thinking will be useful in the field of dance and in other spheres of activity (Giannoulakis et al., 2018, 640). Sarah Pini, in her study of cognitive strategies of stage behaviour, verifies the idea that the phenomenon of presence in dance is not a static quality, but represents a dynamic

process that unfolds in a specific spatio-temporal context and depends on the interaction of all participants in the dance-theatrical action: "presence is to be understood as a process, as a perceptual, cognitive, and cultural phenomenon that is context dependent" (Pini, 2023, 8).

Morphology of Classical Dance as a Tool for Intercultural Interaction

In the context of increasing globalisation and intensification of cultural exchange, the study of the morphology of classical dance acquires particular relevance as a tool for integrating domestic traditions into the international context. A comparative analysis of Russian and foreign teaching methods contributes to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each of them, thus positively affecting the improvement of the quality of educational programmes in the field of classical dance in Russia. In this context, the role of the teacher-mentor, acting as a facilitator to help students navigate the flow of information, acquires particular significance. The researchers I.A. Korsakova and M.M. Sadritdinova explain that "the teacher-facilitator must monitor the 'purity' (reliability, credibility, coherence) of incoming information and help students in selecting and ranking information, as well as in the adequate interpretation of the collected data (hermeneutics). This will help counteract the so-called 'information noise', avoid 'information fatigue' and disorientation in the vast information space" (Korsakova & Sadritdinova, 2025, 18). As the researchers of Russian musical culture M.A. Antonova, V.O. Malashchenko, A.V. Vyaznikov, and I.Yu. Malashchenko emphasise a deep ethical meaning behind external technical perfection: "Russian music knows no pure

hedonism or abstract play of forms. Even in the virtuoso compositions of S.V. Rachmaninov or A.K. Lyadov, there sounds a touch of inconsolability, and in the best examples – compassion for the 'little man', for the suffering, for the humiliated and insulted" (Antonova et al., 2026, 58). As the researcher in the field of music pedagogy M.D. Kornoukhov observes, "the level and quality of integration in the dichotomy 'music education – national culture' is precisely what gives any state a world educational status" (Kornoukhov, 2024, 3). This criterion is fully applicable to the sphere of choreographic education, where the comparison of methodological principles of different countries also acts as the most important condition for strengthening the positions of the national dance school on the world stage.

Methodological Approaches to the Study of Textbooks on Classical Dance

The following main methodological approaches were used in the work: comparative analysis and content analysis. Comparative analysis looks into a comparison of domestic and foreign textbooks on classical dance and thus makes it possible to identify both similarities and differences in content, structure, and methods of presenting material. Within the framework of comparative analysis, various elements of the morphology of classical dance will be covered, as well as approaches to teaching and techniques presented in textbooks. Content analysis provides an additional method for the systematic study of the content of textbooks. "Labanotation helped illuminate similarities and distinctions between the presentational and the

participatory versions, as well as clearly define standard contemporary, participatory variations and their relationship to related documented dances" (Brodie et al., 2020, 3).

Classical dance is the foundation of the entire choreographic system. It allows to comprehend the subtleties of ballet art, to feel the harmony of movements and music. Despite the fact that contemporary dance styles are very popular, it is important to understand that all new things originate from the dances of past centuries (Qiu, 2019, 15). Classical dance has absorbed the most elegant movements from folk and everyday dances of several centuries, perfecting the positions of arms and legs, the position of the head and body. The use of French terminology to designate movements in classical dance facilitates mutual understanding among dancers from different countries. Classical dance classes contribute to the development of flexibility, coordination of movements, strengthening of the musculoskeletal system, endurance, physical and intellectual development, and also teach one to control one's body. As the researcher of kinesthetic empathy Celia Vara states, "It is precisely through movement (and thus kinesthesia) that the body engages its surroundings to gather knowledge about itself and the world to intervene in it" (Vara, 2024, 5). Thanks to various combinations, even simple movements of the hand, leg, or head acquire beauty and elegance. In children engaged in classical dance, correct posture is formed, and curvatures of the spine are corrected (Kuzmina, 2021, 90). Classical dance training includes the study of the basic positions of the arms and legs, correct positioning of the body, acquaintance with

professional terminology and the history of ballet, the development of musicality, stability, and coordination (Na, Chai, 2021, 37). Within the framework of the classes,

small classical productions are also suggested in the form of études, adagios, or various variations (Table 1).

Table 1 – Description of the main sections of the morphology of classical dance

Section	Description
Leg positions	Basic positions of the feet and legs: first, second, third, fourth, fifth. Visually – lines and angles created by the feet
Arm positions	Various positions of the arms creating lines and harmony with the body. Usually 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th.
Plié	Bending of the knees while maintaining the position of the body and arms. Used as a preparatory element
Passé and arabesque	Positions with a raised knee (passé) and an extended leg backward or forward (arabesque).
Jumps and turns	Include jumps, rotations, development, and pas de deux.
Structure of the dance	Stages – development, climax, completion.

All movements of classical dance are based on turnout – a fundamental element of this discipline, indispensable for any stage dance. Classical dance is characterised by a number of fundamental aesthetic principles that ensure its unique style and beauty (Table 2).

The technique of classical dance, being carefully recorded through educational materials, dance notation, theoretical analyses, historical evidence, critical reviews, and specialised training programmes, has remained insufficiently

studied from a scientific point of view (Zhironova, 2023, 87).

Despite the obvious importance of such programmes as repositories of the history of the development of classical dance technique, they have attracted limited attention from researchers. The pioneering works of V. V. Zhironova, I. L. Kuznetsova, and E. A. Kuzmina, as well as the programme collection "Classical Dance. 100 Years of Improvements" by I.L. Kuznetsov and N.M. Tsiskaridze, are likely to become the first steps towards overcoming this gap in scientific study.

Table 2 – Main aesthetic principles of classical dance

APLOMB (BALANCE)	STRICT GEOMETRIC STRUCTURE	PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS	DANCING ON POINTE SHOES	ARISTOCRATIC STYLE
Smooth and controlled movement of the body from one stable position to another, while maintaining the correct location of the centre of gravity.	Movements in classical dance are built on the principle of "living geometry". Precise observance of vertical and horizontal lines in the pattern of movements, as well as maintaining symmetry of body parts.	Turnout, flexibility, jump ability, stage appearance, harmonious proportions and lines of the body – all these are anatomical prerequisites for the performance of classical dance.	The use of pointe shoes is a distinctive feature of classical dance, allowing performers to achieve incredible lightness and grace of movements.	Classical dance is characterised by a refined, aristocratic style of performance, which presupposes elegance, smoothness, and precision of movements.

Movement programmes are inherently an integral part of the structure of most works of choreographic art. The paper looks into the evolution of pedagogical principles of classical dance, resulting in a structured training programme (Huo, 2023, 445). The sources are examined taking into account the specifics of this point of view, relying on the pedagogical principles of P.A. Silkina and the technical ideas of N.A. Vikhreva.

In the course of the analysis, the concept of "programme choreographic thinking" is introduced, defined as a systematic transition from individual dance movements to a structured sequence of exercises. This sequence is supposed to develop the necessary ballet knowledge and skills, gradually becoming more complex from a basic level to an advanced one. The formal style is achieved by using strict turns of phrase, avoiding slang expressions and emotional colouring (Long, 2022, 177).

Guides on the Technique of Classical Dance: A Panoramic Review

Basic elements of this approach, early elements, described in the pedagogical treatises of the masters of the Italian Renaissance, are likely to be found. These treatises explained in detail the basic dance elements and movements. The most significant texts include the work of Domenico da Piacenza (1455), "Treatise on the Art of Dance" by Guglielmo Ebreo da Pesaro (1463), and "Book of the Art of Dance" by Antonio Cornazzano (1465). These works, intended for adult dancers, included steps, turns, and small jumps that anticipated the movements. Already at this

initial stage, one can trace the principle of programming thought processes. The treatises set out recommended movements for mastering mastery, reflected the structure of the curriculum of modern classical dance (Zhirova, 2023).

In later Italian works of the 17th century, there is a tendency towards increased attention to the structure and classification of dances. The systematisation of movements occurs according to the degree of complexity and method of performance. The works of Fabritio Caroso da Sermoneta, such as "Ballarino" (1581) and "La Nobiltà di Dame" (1600), combine movements reminiscent of modern ones, with performance in the first, third, and fourth positions. A tense rhythm is noted, the use of pas, pas de bourrée, half-circles of the legs on the floor, raised and cut legs, pirouettes, and various jumping movements. As N.A. Vikhreva notes, the historian Ange Feves emphasises the unique ability of Caroso's works to provide an opportunity to compare dance variations over two decades.

The invention of Cesare Negri Di Balli in 1604 made a new-brand quality to the development of ballet art. His work defined five positions of the legs and described in detail various types of jumps, including jumps with the arms, turns in the air, cabrioles, and trampoline jumps. Originally published under the title "Le Gratie d'amore" in 1602, the work also included ten types of virtuoso turns. The next stage in the development of ballet is connected with the founding of the Royal Academy of Dance in Paris in 1661 with the support of Louis XIV. Under the guidance

of Pierre Beauchamp, who did not leave his own written works, the teaching methodology was recorded in the book by Pierre Rameau "The Dancing Master" (1725). This finding shows a set of the rules for positioning the legs and arms, which became fundamental for classical dance. In essence, this can be considered as the structure of a curriculum, although it was not designated as such.

During this period, dance notation emerged. The work of Thoinot Arbeau "Orchesography" (1588) was an early attempt to record dance sequences, with an emphasis on French dances. The choreography of Raoul-Auger Feuillet (1700) integrated notation with certain rules for the positions of the legs and arms, turns, and jumps. Similarly, in the "New and Curious School of Theatrical Dancing" by Gregorio Lambranzi (1716), both academic and grotesque dance techniques were recorded, including cabrioles, chase, and swinging (Ramadanova, Filiz, 2023, 120).

John Weaver, a pioneer of English ballet, applied a biomechanical approach in "Anatomical and Mechanical Lectures upon Dancing" (1721), analysing motor skills. Subsequently, Carlo Blasis examined this aspect in detail in "The Code of Terpsichore" (1830), an expanded version of his "Practical, Theoretical, and Historical Treatise on the Art of Dancing" (1820) (Ulitkin, Ivanova, 2017, 630). The latter work included methodological recommendations, exercises, and descriptions of poses, positions, arabesques, and jumps, related to representing a classical dance lesson of the 1820s (Ivleva, 2005, 12).

The work of Jean-Georges Noverre "Letters on Dancing and Ballets" (1760) is fundamental for establishing ballet as an independent art form, going beyond simple technical performance and exploring deeper choreographic principles. Noverre criticised the Academy of Dance for its apparent indifference to artistic progress and the lack of published works related to the subject.

Though the famous dancer Auguste Vestris did not leave written evidence of his teaching, it was preserved by August Bournonville in the book "The Method of Vestris" (circa 1826). In this manuscript, referenced by Fredericia, Flindt, and Jürgenson, 105 exercises are described in detail, divided into eight series, reflecting the gradual complication of classical dance.

Bournonville, a key figure of Danish ballet, is also the author of "Choreographic Studies" – an extensive guide to dancing for teachers and students. There are three versions of this work (1848, 1855, 1861), with the second edition focusing on the classical dance technique. Inspired by the notation system of Saint-Léon, Bournonville also conducted experiments with methods of recording dance movements (Sherkhan et al., 2023, 160).

The work of Leopold Adice "Theory of Theatrical Dancing" (1859) illuminates the pedagogical approach of Filippo Taglioni. This work presents a sequence of exercises reminiscent of a classical dance curriculum, with an extensive vocabulary of movements, requiring, however, more repetitions than in modern practice.

"Letters on Dancing" by Edward Thélour (1832) contains a system of instruction integrated with a unique dance notation.

Théleur's work demonstrates a deep understanding of the history and anatomy of dance, which makes it an outstanding contribution to the development of ballet art through the combination of movement classification with a special notation system (Pyzhikova, 2014, 67).

Despite the significant influence on the methodology of Italian ballet, the teachings of Enrico Cecchetti were recorded by his son Grazioso Cecchetti in "A Complete Manual of Classical Dance", as well as by Beaumont and Idzikowski in "A Manual of the Theory and Practice of Classical Theatrical Dancing" (The Cecchetti Method). Cecchetti's exercises were performed in a structured, daily order.

In his work "The Grammar of the Art of Dancing and Choreography" (1887), Albert Friedrich Zorn identified inconsistencies in the terminology of classical dance, proposing his own standardised system of notation. This example demonstrates a rare combination of practical experience in the field of dance with knowledge of musical notation.

In "The Alphabet of Movements of the Human Body" (1892), Vasily Ivanovich Stepanov presented a biomechanical approach to dance notation. The beginning of the 20th century became a period of flourishing of ballet studies as a formal discipline. Fundamental historical works appeared, such as "The History of Dance" by Khudekov and "The World History of Dance" by Sachs. At the same time, professional ballet criticism was formed, for example, "The Old and the New Ballet" by Levinson. Dance theorists, such as Alexander Leonidovich Volynsky, the author of "The Joy of Dancing". "The

Alphabet of Classical Dance" (1926), began to analyse dance technique, focusing on its emotional impact. In his book, Volynsky presented a six-year programme of classical dance training, developed for his School of Russian Ballet.

In the works of domestic specialists of the 20th century, there is a striving for systematisation and deepening of the theoretical foundations of classical dance. Thus, in the book by Lyubov Dmitrievna Blok "The Origin and Development of the Technique of Classical Dance", included in the posthumous edition "Classical Dance: History and Modernity", a comprehensive analysis of historical sources and iconographic materials was carried out. A. Vaganova in her fundamental work "Fundamentals of Classical Dance" (1934) summarised her rich pedagogical experience, insisting on the need for a scientific approach to the study of classical dance. In the preface to this work, Sollertinsky emphasised the historical evolution of exercises in classical dance (Vaganova, 2007, 114).

In "The Methodology of Classical Coaching" (1940) by Moritz, Tarasov, and Chekrygin, a detailed programme of classical dance training developed for the Moscow school is presented. Early training programmes, including the curriculum of the Imperial St. Petersburg Theatre School of 1895 and the programme of the Leningrad State Choreographic School of 1928, were transformed into comprehensive methodological manuals, similar to the 1936 programme based on Vaganova's system.

The study of historical documents of the 16th–20th centuries indicates that even

early theoretical works on classical dance contained elements of programming and conventional forms of programme movements. In addition to the evolution of ballet technique, particular importance is given to the tradition of transmitting pedagogical methods from teacher to student, revealed in theoretical works.

Scientific and educational literature plays a crucial role in the development of the theory and methodology of classical dance. It contributes to the generalisation of the experience of masters and teachers, and also facilitates the assimilation of material by students. Modern research in the field of ballet pedagogy should focus on the creation and application of scientific literature as a key factor in the development of both theoretical foundations and practical skills in classical dance. This article examines the problem in the context of the history of Russia in the 20th–21st centuries. To present the understanding of the role of textbooks as system-forming elements of pedagogical practice, it is indicative to turn to modern theoretical and methodological approaches that consider the nature of such objects. As J. MacCallum and T. Naccarato note in their work, devoted to the analysis of collaborative practices, "something people (or, in computer science, other objects and programs) act toward and with. Its materiality derives from action, not from a sense of prefabricated stuff or 'thing'-ness. So, a theory may be a powerful object" (MacCallum & Naccarato, 2019, 9). Developing this idea, the authors of a bibliometric study in the field of higher education pedagogy, K.E. Ortiz-Ordoñez, D.C. Burbano-Gonzalez, and J.A. Suarez-

Muñoz, point at an existing gap in systematic reviews that overlook the ethical and humanistic significance of certain technological and pedagogical aspects: "Existing bibliometric and systematic reviews tend to examine fragmented dimensions of the field, such as AI adoption, digital competencies, or online learning during COVID-19, without integrating their broader pedagogical, ethical, and humanistic implications. <...> This provokes a conceptual and methodological gap: the field lacks a bibliometric synthesis that critically maps pedagogical trends while engaging with ethical, humanistic, and sociocultural perspectives" (Ortiz-Ordoñez et al., 2026, 3). According to the fair observation of the researchers S. Anril P. Tiatco and Jonas Gabriel Garcia, turning to the true essence of performative practices, "performance is [history] based on memory, rather than just documents. These alternative histories are always enlightening [because] embodied practices always surpass the limits of written knowledge because it cannot be contained in documents or archives" (Tiatco, Garcia, 2026, 15).

In the 1930s, A. Vaganova, the future first professor of choreography, actively promoted the idea of higher education for figures of ballet art, especially emphasising the importance of advanced training for specialist teachers. Vaganova strove to create a unified, standardised system of instruction that could form a unified performance style. In her opinion, this was possible only with the presence of specialists possessing a common methodology.

Isaac Ivanovich Sollertinsky, as early as 1934, pointed out the need for theoretical substantiation and scientific analysis of classical ballet. He expressed regret about the absence of a science of dance and called for the systematisation and description of elements of classical choreography technique, taking into account modern achievements. In his opinion, the work of Agrippina Yakovlevna Vaganova should be attributed to as the first step in this direction. Vaganova emphasised that her textbook represents a presentation of personal experience and teaching method, intended for novice teachers and all who are interested in classical dance. In the book, the material is systematised by species concepts, from simple to complex, which facilitates easier assimilation (Vaganova, 2007, 35).

Further development of the methodology of classical dance was carried out by V.E. Moritz, N.I. Tarasov, and A.I. Chekrygin in their joint work "Methodology of Classical Training" (1940). The work of the authors, especially Chekrygin and Tarasov, who experienced the influence of the St. Petersburg school of ballet art, largely echoed the pedagogical ideas of A.Ya. Vaganova, although it was structured differently. This manual examines various elements of classical dance, from exercise to finger technique, with detailed methodological recommendations for various age groups of students (Blok, 1987, 246).

The Great Patriotic War interrupted scientific research in... [Note: the original text is cut off here]. "The Alphabet" is structured by classes, indicating the goals and objectives of each stage of training,

significantly facilitating the work of teachers, especially beginners. The book was repeatedly reprinted and translated into many languages, thus ensuring its significance in the world community of ballet pedagogy (Trofimov et al., 2021, 17).

In 1968, a fundamental work for ballet pedagogy was published – the book "School of Classical Dance", created by leading methodologists of the Vaganova Academy, V.S. Kostrovitskaya and A.A. Pisarev. The book was divided into two parts: sections I–VII were written by A.A. Pisarev, and VIII–XII by V.S. Kostrovitskaya.

In the preface, V.S. Kostrovitskaya emphasised that this work reflects the structure of A.Ya. Vaganova's "Fundamentals of Classical Dance", a fundamental work in the field of Russian classical dance. She also mentioned A.Ya. Vaganova's desire to create a more detailed manual and noted her unique opportunity to realise this intention as a student and assistant of the great teacher. A distinctive feature of "School of Classical Dance" was the description of the evolution of each movement, from simple variations to complex ones, in contrast to A.Ya. Vaganova's book, where movements are presented in their finished form.

While Vaganova, Pisarev, and Kostrovitskaya developed methods of classical dance for both sexes, Nikolai Ivanovich Tarasov in his textbook "Classical Dance: School of Male Performance" (1971) analysed in detail the specifics of male technique. Rudolf Vladimirovich Zakharov noted the significance of this work, especially in the context of the emergence of ballet

performances of heroic themes. Tarasov's work represents a unique description of the educational process for male dancers, covering musical education, the relationship between a teacher and a student, as well as criteria for evaluating performance. The second part of the textbook expands the structure of Vaganova's dance, focusing on the specifics of male performance, which was highly appreciated by Sergei Sergeevich Kaplan (Tarasov, 2005, 157).

In 1999, the book by Evgeny Pavlovich Valukin "The System of Male Classical Dance" was published, striving for a comprehensive analysis of dance technique using a new systemic approach. However, the book was complicated by contradictory ideas and terminology, which made it difficult to understand and practically apply for teachers. In particular, the discussion of tempos and the introduction of new terminology caused difficulties for readers.

On the contrary, the book by Lyudmila Nikolaevna Safronova "Lessons of Classical Dance", published in 2003, was a practical guide for teachers of junior classes. The book identified key movements, based on the author's rich experience. Despite the obvious benefit for practice, the work did not introduce significant scientific innovations and mostly revealed well-known facts from classical works (Safronova, 2003, 25).

In addition to these main publications, other works devoted to classical dance were also introduced: "100 Lessons of Classical Dance" by Valentina Sergeevna Kostrovitskaya, "Lessons of Classical Dance in High School" by Svetlana

Nikolaevna Golovkina, as well as "Lessons of Classical Dance". In "The First Course" by Pyotr Alexandrovich Pestov, examples of lessons were presented.

In 1991, the Vaganova Academy opened a postgraduate programme related to developing scientific research in the field of ballet. However, during its existence, only one candidate's dissertation was defended, devoted to the technique of jumps by Marina Konstantinovna Osipova.

Conclusion

The study of Russian textbooks on classical dance reveals key principles and methodological approaches in teaching students. A comparative analysis of foreign textbooks provides familiarisation with alternative methods and practices used in the educational systems of other countries. The author E.V. Neborsky points out that the prognostic approach in pedagogy "focuses somewhat differently on the object of research, <...> putting forward as a key logical premise that the object under study develops prospectively intends to possess different characteristics than in the current situation, focusing attention on those expected changes that will occur with it, and, consequently, on the basic 'triad' (trends, potential, and risks)" (Neborsky, 2025, 77-78).

Thus, the comparison of various theoretical and methodological educational systems within the framework of historical retrospect suggests both identifying their strengths and predicting possible trajectories for the further development of world pedagogical practice.

Unlike Russian sources, foreign publications offer innovative and diverse

teaching methods more often. This is due to cultural and historical traditions, as well as modern trends in the field of education. "The civilisational code of Russian musical culture is a kind of 'regulator' for the process of dialogue between 'one's own' and 'foreign', forming the historical paradigm of 'Russian Europeanism' of different types, interconnected and complementary" (Rapatskaya, 2023, 18).

The use of visual materials, illustrations, as well as an emphasis on stagecraft and emotional interpretation contribute to the development of students' creative approach to dance. The current research addresses the importance of integrating such methods into domestic practices, thus improving the quality of training of dancers and contributing to the development of their artistry.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Authors' Contributions

Portnova T. V.: conceptualization; methodology; writing – review & editing, data curation; methodology; investigation; validation; writing – original draft preparation.

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