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ABOUT UNDERSTANDING MUSIC IN RUSSIA

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Abstract. *The article examines the understanding music in Russia, taking into account the existence of music on two levels: the intelligible – cosmic, and the real – actual.*

It is argued that in Russia, music, in the unity of its two dimensions, in the ultimate sense, is a prayer.

Keywords: *music, Russia, understanding music in Russia, prayer.*

In Russia, in the interpretation of music, its levels: cosmic and actual merge. They are one. And this understanding is related to the existence of *angel-like singing*.

Angel-like singing is the singing in the Orthodox church of parishioners together with angels, who by their singing constantly glorify God¹. In Russia, such singing was formed by the 15th century. It was *znamennoe chant* (Church Slavonic: *znamĕnĭe*)².

The most significant expression of angel-like singing is the *Cherubic chant*.

The Cherubic chant is a chant that is sung during the Liturgy. It serves as a preparation for the faithful to the Great Entrance.

In the Russian Church, this chant was established after the 15th century. Initially, it was a one-voice (monodic) chant characterized by a slow unfolding of extended melodic lines and a free, asymmetrical rhythm.

¹ The first mentions of angel-like singing in Russia are found in Metropolitan Hilarion's "The Word of Law and Grace" (11 century), in Kirill Turovsky's "The Word" (12 century), later in Joseph Volotsky's "Enlightener" (15th – 16th centuries) and others.

² The basis of Russian chanting is the Russian folk song. We can say that Russian chanting was born from the Russian folk song [9, p. 63].

Since the 16th century, the Cherubic chant has been performed in three voices (three lines; it was recorded in lines, hence the name “line chant”).

The three-voice Cherubic chant is comparable to the polyphony that occurs when Russian lyrical long songs are performed. The combination of three voices created unique harmonic combinations similar to those found in Russian folk polyphony. The Cherubic chants of the 15th and 16th centuries were usually unattributed.

In the 17th century, an important event took place: the *znamennoe* chant was replaced by the *partes chant* (Latin: *partes*). *Partes* is a Western polyphonic chant that was introduced to Russia through Poland. As a result of this introduction, the *znamennoe* chants of the Cherubim in Russia acquired Western major-minor harmonization. The Cherubim also gained authorship. In the 17th century, V. P. Titov was a well-known composer of the Cherubim.

A special feature of the Cherubim Titovs was that the voices in them did not reunite or “befriend”, but rather represented, as N. P. Diletsky put it, “a struggle of voice with voice” [2, p. 66].

In the 18th century, when writing the Cherubic chants, they tried to bring the Western harmonization closer to the ancient chant. D. S. Bortnyansky achieved the greatest success in this regard. This was especially evident in his most famous Cherubic chant – Cherubic chant No 7. However, even in this chant, the Western style prevailed, proving that Bortnyansky was indeed “aligned with the Italian school of sacred music” [14].

It should be noted that as a result of the *partes* chant that was established in Russia in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Cherubim that were created for the church turned out to be concert compositions rather than works that should be performed during worship [1]. Angel-like singing disappeared from them¹.

The decisive change in the composition of the Cherubim belongs to M. I. Glinka. This change can be described as a “*turn to the origins*”.

Glinka conceived the composition of the Cherubim (which is the only one in his oeuvre) in an effort to revive the original sacred music in the church. According

¹ Believers were deeply affected by his loss. There are many testimonies to this. Here is one. In the “Report on a Trip to Smolensk to See Metropolitan Simeon for ‘Great Spiritual Affairs’” by Ignatius, Archimandrite of the Novospassky Monastery, and Karion Istomin, a printer, poet, and educator, it is stated: “And the bishop said: ... ‘And which verses are added in the liturgy before the Cherubic Hymn, and after the *kynonik*, and they are sung for the sake of wasting time, because the verses are short, and after singing they stand idle, and people are bored standing without singing’” [15, p. 160].

to the composer's own admission, "[he] wanted to test his abilities in sacred music; he wrote the Cherubim..." [4, p. 77]¹.

In Cherubim, Glinka managed to recreate the image of liturgical singing as a language of communion with God. Angel-like singing came to life in it [10, p. 15].

Glinka's Cherubic chant became the starting point for the composition of Cherubic chants by Russian composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including P. I. Tchaikovsky, N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov, S. V. Rakhmaninov, A. D. Kastalsky, A. T. Grechaninov, P. G. Chesnokov, V. S. Kalinnikov and many others².

Perhaps the most openly followed Glinka A. D. Kastalsky. His Cherubim (first of all the Cherubim of the znamennoe chant) Kastalsky, focusing on Glinka, sought to transform "into something musically sublime, strong in its expressiveness and close to the Russian heart" [7, p. 60].

Kastalsky's Cherubim became the true "Castalian source" for Russian composers in the 20th and 21st centuries to write similar compositions: Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeev), Archimandrite Nafanail (Bachkalo), Archimandrite Matthew, Fr. Sergius Trubachev, A. A. Tretyakov and others.

They found an exceptionally vivid manifestation in the Cherubim of Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeev) (one of which was even written on the theme of J. S. Bach!).

The achievement of the Metropolitan's Cherubim was the expression of the unfathomable depths of the spirit. It is significant that, when commenting on the figurative structure of the Cherubim (its archetypal appearance), the composer cites a passage from the description of the mysterious vision of the prophet Ezekiel:

"The Cherubim stood on the right side of the house... and a cloud filled the inner court... And the noise of the wings of the Cherubim was heard even in the outer court, as the voice of God Almighty when He speaks. And the Cherubim had the appearance of hands under their wings. And I saw four wheels near the Cherubim, one wheel near each Cherubim, and the wheels looked like they were made of topaz stone. And all four looked similar, as if a wheel were inside a wheel. When they walked, they walked in four directions; they did not turn around during their march, but they went in the direction of their heads. And all their bodies, and

¹ The composer's desire to create works for the church was inspired by his conversations with St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov). The article "The Christian shepherd and the Christian-artist" [6] became a kind of monument to the communication between two great people.

² The liturgical music of these composers has been called the "New Direction of Russian Sacred Music". The term was proposed by S. A. Rachinsky in his article "Folk Art and Rural School", which dealt with the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom by P. I. Tchaikovsky (1878) [16, p. 357].

their backs, and their arms, and their wings, and their wheels, were full of eyes...’ (Ezekiel 10:3, 5, 8–12)” [5, pp. 425–426]¹.

Thus, Glinka’s Cherubic chant became the seed (“acorn”) of the development of Cherubim in Russia. It is important to emphasize that this development, in general, was expressed in the filling of Cherubim with angelic-like singing.

Indeed, the angelic-like singing in the Cherubim became more sublime and beautiful and finally reached its full power [11; 12]². This moment marked the birth of Russian music³.

But what is Russian music, which has absorbed the angelic-like singing? It is a prayer. With this in mind, we can confidently say that *in Russia, music, in its true form, is a prayer*⁴.

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¹ Do these images of Ezekiel not evoke the mystery of the Russian spiritual poem “The Dove / Deep Book” (15th – 16th centuries)?

² Not everyone was pleased with this. I. A. Gardner expressed his negative opinion about this trend [3, p. 495].

³ Yes, Russian music was born in the church. And, most likely, in the works of composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, who received the appropriate impetus from Mikhail Glinka. At the same time, it should be noted that since Glinka’s time, composers who wrote music for the church have incorporated the vibrations and breath of this music into their secular compositions. This was done by Glinka, Musorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov... Here, for example, is what V. V. Medushevsky writes about S. V. Rakhmaninov’s “Vocalise”: “In the tender lament of repentant love... The vocalise... (on.– A.K.) the melodies’ descents are answered by ascents, and in the coda, the broken lament is illuminated by a counterpoint that leads to the Heavenly world, according to the promise (cf. Matthew 11:28)... Here... is the essential beginning of the music of the Orthodox civilization... The Heaven accompanies the soul, and the soul listens to the encouragement of the Heaven...” [13, pp. 352–353].

⁴ This is the understanding of music that Russian thinkers and philosophers, starting with Nil Sorsky to N. O. Lossky, I. I. Lapshin, E. N. Trubetskoy, P. A. Florensky and others, have expressed in their works. See the article: [8].

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