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VIEWS ON MUSIC BY RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHERS. BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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Abstract. *The paper deals with the views (thoughts, reflections etc.) on music by Russian philosophers. It is noted that these views emerged in a historical sequence. The historical stages of these ideas are established.*

It is argued that for all the diversity of views on music by Russian philosophers, these views together represent an organic unity.

Keywords: *views on music, Russian philosophers, philosophy of music, philosophy, music, Russia.*

Music has always interested Russian philosophers. There is a whole gallery of views (thoughts, reflections, etc.) on music by Russian philosophers. These views emerged in a historical sequence. The following historical stages in the development of Russian philosophers' views on music are revealed:

1. Before the 18th century.
1. 18th century.
2. 19th century.
3. 1st half of 20 century.
4. 2nd half of 20 century – the present day.

Let us turn to these stages.

Before the 18th century

At this time the greatest thinker who thought about music, more precisely about church singing, was the saint, the venerable Nil Sorsky. As Nil Sorsky wrote, “the gift of tears... those who acquire it... who from what: one – from consideration of the mysteries of God’s humanity (icon painting. – *A.K.*), another – from reading tales of the life and deeds and teachings of the saints (literature. – *A.K.*)... while others are broken from some canons and troparions (chanting genres. – *A.K.*)” [6, p. 168].

XVIII century

In the XVIII century philosophical problems of music raises the original philosopher, “the first philosopher in Russia in the exact sense of the word” (V.V. Zenkovsky), Grigory Savvich Skovoroda.

Skovoroda talks a lot about music. And this is not accidental, because to music he was directly related: Skovoroda composed spiritual concerts and songs, played many musical instruments: violin, flutriver, bandura, psaltery, sang beautifully.

In his ideas about music Skovoroda proceeded from the Pythagorean idea of the existence of heavenly music – the Harmony of the Spheres.

As Skovoroda believes, heavenly music (Harmony of the Spheres) is God. Skovoroda reflects: “Does not God contain everything...? He in the tree is the true tree, in the grass is the grass, in the music is the music” [8, p. 134].

19th century

The 19th century was the establishment of the Russian philosophy of music. A great contribution to this process contributed V.F. Odoevsky.

His ideas about music Odoevsky actively develops in the treatise “Experience of the theory of fine arts with a particular application of this to music” (this treatise, apparently, originally consisted of two sections – “Essence, or Existence” and “Dwarves 19th century”, later broke off from it).

In this treatise Odoevsky expresses the idea that music is the sound embodiment of the harmony of nature – the harmony of living and dead principles. The living and dead principles “in music are in the form of ... consonance and counter-voice (consonantia – dissonantia)” [7, pp. 157-158]. According to Odoevsky, representing the harmony of nature, music conveys the harmony of the human soul.

Odoevsky speaks vividly and passionately about music in his literary works, especially in two stories: “Beethoven’s Last Quartet” and “Sebastian Bach”, which were later included in his novel “Russian Nights”.

1st half of 20 century

In the 1st half of 20 century Russian philosophers show great interest in music, associated with the understanding of its extraordinary possibilities. And each of the philosophers saw these possibilities in his own way.

Thus, with A.F. Losev, music is an exclusive means of ascent to God, a kind of prayer; with P.A. Florensky, it is the life-giving power of liturgical action, based on rhythm and conducted in accordance with the Typikon (church regulations); N.O. Lossky writes that sound expresses the unity of the visible and invisible; I.I. Lapshin emphasizes the fusion of music and philosophy, especially in the work of Scriabin. But, perhaps, the specific character of Russian philosophers’ interpretation of music is best summarized in the works of E.N. Trubetskoy.

Trubetskoy believed that music was a powerful means of reuniting man with God. He came to this conclusion after listening to a concert of Beethoven’s 9th Symphony. According to Trubetskoy, “It is difficult to convey the state of rapture which (he. – A.K.) experienced then (at. – A.K.) the concert... the *real feeling* of (eternal. – A.K.) *peace*, (descending. – A.K.) from above on the universe” [9, p. 157].

The 2nd half of the 20th century – the present day

In the 2nd half of 20th century, in connection with the collapse of Russian philosophy as an original spiritual phenomenon occurs and collapse of the Russian philosophy of music.

And yet in the 2nd half of 20th century, rather at the turn of 20th and 21st centuries, there is a return to the Russian philosophical thought of music. Appear works of the appropriate orientation. These works belong to M.S. Uvarov.

Further development of Russian philosophical thought about music was carried out (and is carried out to this day) by the author of this article.

We have proposed a model of philosophy of music, which we call “New Synergetic philosophy of music” (the model is based on the Greek concept of “synergy”, meaning the unity of energies), which, we believe, today can be seen as the result of the development of philosophical thought about music of Russian philosophers (from the *before the 18th century to the present day*). The model is presented in our book “The Sum of Music”.

About the model

The model has two parts: “Theory” and “Practice”.

Theory

In theoretical terms, music is understood as the perfect embodiment of *the union of the energies of man and the energies of God “in the world”*. This unity is realized as a result of human response to the call of God, perceived by humans “as both disturbing and intoxicating call of music” [5, p. 211].

Practice

In practice we assume that music is the great power capable of freeing man from the burdens of earthly existence: of providing him with what is called “salvation”, or “wholeness”, i.e., *finding wholeness*. “*It is by ensuring man’s wholeness that music reveals God to him*” [5, p. 214].

Based on a short review of the historical development of Russian philosophers’ views on music, we can conclude that, for all their diversity, these views together represent an organic unity. (For more on the subject of this paper, see: [1-4].)

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