

# Problems of Modern Spiritual Musical Education

Based on the Example of Specialized Departments of Conservatories, Music Colleges and Seminaries

Oksana Evgenyevna Sheludyakova  
 Ural State Mussorgsky Conservatoire  
 Ekaterinburg, Russia  
 E-mail: k046421@yandex.ru

**Abstract**—The article by O.E. Sheludyakova attempts to recreate some of the most important issues of modern spiritual musical education. The most important aspects of the theory and practice of regent teaching in the professional and monastic choirs of Ancient Russia, the pedagogical traditions of the Synodal College, the modern practice of regent schools and departments of Old Russian singing art in conservatories are identified, which makes it possible to put forward a number of practical proposals necessary for the development of modern church and singing education. The tasks of the modern domestic spiritual musical education are defined: To familiarize students with the culture of their native country, to generalize, expand and deepen their knowledge of spiritual music, to systematize and correct the existing Russian spiritual art ideas, to help form spiritual, moral and ethical ideals, values embodied in the philosophy and art of our country. In addition to developing professional skills in comprehending the content and form of a piece of music, mastering a large collection of compositions of different epochs, genres and styles, developing mechanisms of musical memory, creative imagination, activating auditory and thinking processes on the basis of the acquired knowledge, applying cultural-historical, spiritual, moral and symbolic approaches to the analysis of specific works of Russian Orthodox art, it is necessary to develop the skills of comprehensive analysis of the spiritual music phenomena. For the sake of the development of spiritual musical education in Russia it is necessary to fill the gaps in the educational material through the development of an additional range of musical compositions, to attract a wider range of subject specialists, necessary for the implementation of the processes of interuniversity dialogue, the wide use of new technologies, innovative methods of modern pedagogy and computer technologies in spiritual educational institutions, the creation of integration management bodies (such as scientific Councils), comprehensive textbooks and programs, which will undoubtedly enrich both students and the university faculty.

**Keywords**—*spiritual education; music education; regent school; Old Russian singing*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The interest in spiritual culture has grown considerably in recent decades. Icon painting exhibitions and spiritual music concerts take place, and many studies of Old Russian are published. The musicians are charged with the function of accompanying religious rites and studying spiritual compositions, a special development was in mediaevistics.

However, spiritual music has not yet attracted much attention in musical education. For obvious reasons, the tradition of its study was interrupted, and the entire period related to the religious worldview was excluded from the curriculum. However, even now, more than 30 years after the landmark 1988, the situation is changing very slowly.

This is especially noticeable in comparison to religious education. For example, on the eve of the revolution, the system of Orthodox spiritual education in Russia included 4 schools of theology, 57 theological seminaries and 185 religious colleges.

Currently, the complex of educational institutions of Orthodox spiritual education officially includes 2 Academies, 3 universities, 38 seminaries (according to other information, their number reaches 50, including religious colleges that are in the process of reorganization). The goal was to reform and substantially reorient spiritual educational institutions, uniting the best that has been accumulated in pre-revolutionary education and all the most promising that is offered in modern education.

At the Holy Synod of 2001 the strategic task of the state accreditation of spiritual educational institutions was defined.

The educational system of the Orthodox spiritual profile is focused on the Bologna process, which has led to the consolidation of the following levels:

- Bachelor's degree - 4 years of study with a possible additional one-year course (preparatory department) before admission. The diploma of the state standard is issued in the speciality "theology".
- Master's degree - 2 years of study.
- Church postgraduate studies - 3 years of study

Previous educational stages are also present:

- Primary spiritual education - in Sunday schools, interest groups, during the performance of altar and singing church obedience, at classes "Fundamentals of Orthodox culture", etc.
- Secondary spiritual education - in Orthodox gymnasiums, religious schools, colleges, regent and

icon-painting schools, theological, catechism, pedagogical and pastoral courses.

As we can see, a full-fledged multilevel system has been established, which includes educational institutions of all levels, the process of organization and regulation of the educational process is underway, which allows the use of state educational standards and state accreditation.

## II. IMPORTANT PROBLEMS OF SPIRITUAL MUSICAL EDUCATION

The musical spiritual education is in line with these trends. It is currently present at all levels of education:

- at the primary level of education in the form of children's church choirs and church singing lessons;
- at the secondary level of education in the form of regent schools, as well as church singing courses and training centres for church specialists;
- at the highest level of education in the form of regent departments of academies (Moscow and St. Petersburg) and universities (Moscow); the regent departments of St. Petersburg and Moscow academies carry out the educational process on the specialty of "Regent work" and have the opportunity to simultaneously obtain a state diploma in the specialty "theology".

The Educational Committee of the Patriarchate has developed church educational standards for higher, secondary and additional education in specialties "regent", "singer", "psalmist". However, in general, the situation with musical spiritual education looks much less favorable than with theological education.

In the state system of education in conservatories and other humanitarian higher education institutions there is an opportunity to carry out education on in specially "Old Russian singing art" which is provided by the state standard (FGOS) and possibility of accreditation

It should be noted that this specialization exists only in the St. Petersburg and Ural conservatories; besides, in addition to them, the Moscow Conservatory successfully operates the RDE of Church Music, there are ensembles specializing in the study and performance of Old Russian songs.

It is obvious that all these individual achievements do not change the general situation - secular professional music education has not yet fully incorporated the spiritual art of the Orthodox tradition into the field of its activity.

This is especially noticeable in primary and secondary music education. In most cases, only the art of the New Age is introduced; in the course of musical literature there are no topics related to the singing culture of Ancient Russia. Even in the choir classes the repertoire often includes not domestic, but Western spiritual compositions.

Thus, in the actual children's and youthful period there is no acquaintance with music until the XVII century, there is no active auditory fund. The initial acquaintance with the art

of the Old Russian epoch occurs only in higher educational institutions, which is of course too late.

It is necessary to have a clear understanding of the specifics of related professions: a regent and choir conductor, singer and vocalist, theologian and medievalist. When there is a wide field of common ground, there are fundamental differences that need to be taken into account in spiritual musical education. However, to date, this specificity has not been taken into account due to circumstances. As a result, sometimes musicians with conducting and vocal professional education (college or university) or talented "self-taught" without specialized musical education (especially in monasteries) become regents and singers.

The necessary synthesis oriented to the specialty, which includes all the necessary components is rarely provided.

It should be noted that there have been some shifts in recent years: In the musical literature programs, teachers-examinators introduce topics related to the Orthodox holidays (first of all, the Christmas and holy traditions), which allows to introduce the corresponding singing material. Events are held, and musicians performing in the relevant field are invited.

In the university courses of music history the Old Russian part takes more and more place, its study takes place during the whole semester. Optional classes, theme nights and concerts are held. This allows us to hope for a gradual filling of such a gap.

## III. FEATURES OF OLD RUSSIAN SINGING EDUCATION

First of all, it is necessary to briefly analyze the experience of the Old Russian singing education, which was formed in Russia in the period from X to XVII century. "As a rule, it was entrusted to the most experienced deacons knowing all the subtleties of singing and having pedagogical abilities..."[1].

The educational process in Ancient Russia itself included the following components. The choir conductor was a teacher. It is important to note that the educational impact on the singer was made by the head of the choir, his confessor, and often the general fraternal confessor (who directs the prayer life of the choir and the brotherhood), and the Father Superior or the abbot of the monastery, etc. This led to the formation of a rather complex multilevel system of education. Each student could choose good examples and be guided by them.

The singer felt himself as a pupil, whose main task was his spiritual and professional growth. In Ancient Russia singing became not only a profession, but also a church devotion, a special service, so the training and education touched all the components of the pupil's personality, his intellectual and emotional qualities.

The first and most important moment in the training of singers was the system of morality. Obedience, patience, an ability to listen and perform tasks, respect for comrades, mutual assistance, lack of pride, lying, envy, etc. - all of those are very relevant for today's situation, quality of

character. "Pedagogy, understood in Rus as a 'soul structure', was intended to help a person master Christian virtues, become moral in his or her actions, which was a sign of true wisdom coming from the heart, in contrast to purely cognitive wisdom" [2].

Another essential feature of Old Russian pedagogy was a special attitude to singing. On the one hand, it was recognized that it was necessary to fully invest all mental powers and professional skills, and any negligence, lack of attention and adherence to the performance of singing or regent's work was recognized as a grave sin. In the current situation of a sharp decline in professional criteria and a frequent lack of passion for work, it would be very useful to remember the true attitude to the job as devotion. On the other hand, there was no competition between singers, no hyperresponsibility, no psychological issues, so frequent nowadays.

There was no division, on the one hand, into a rehearsal period, where technical parameters were worked out, and, on the other hand, into the stage of interpretation, where the concept and details of the artistic idea were polished. All technical aspects, even in the course of training, were linked to theological, symbolic and moral concepts. Creativity and a reverent attitude to each sound permeated all stages - from the joint folding of the melody frame to improvisation during the divine service.

Thus, the concept of rough work, with the necessary concentration on the technical apparatus, was not characteristic of Old Russian singers. The coloring of sound, phrasing, timbre unity and other vocal and ensemble qualities were lined up not by themselves, but in the process of searching for the best interpretation of God-inspired words.

Such a process created great opportunities not only for creative, but also spiritual growth for all participants of the singing process - both creators and singers. The theologian, teaching character of the texts was supplemented with prayerfully focused, symbolically saturated melody, and each performance (on condition of joining all forces and full immersion in the singing devotion) led to new facets of spiritual content, gave discoveries and sometimes revelations.

By the XVII century it is already possible to speak about formation of three-stage system of singing education. The initial stage included knowledge of the basic prayers, the course of the divine service, and some mode chants. This level was universal and compulsory for all literacy learners. The result of the first stage of training was not only the ability of students to read, write and count, but also the knowledge of basic singing prayers.

The second stage of training was the actual clerical practice - mastering the entire worship, the system of *osmoglasia*, the system of eight church modes and the main singing styles that exist in the area. Here, singing education was provided for those who were recognized by experienced mentors as capable of training, having passed professional selection. The *Book of Eight Tones*, *Heirmologion*, *Menaia*, *Triodion* were consequently studied, a new level of focus was on the reading of the *Psalms* and *Horologion*.

In practice, the second stage of training - the training of the singers - was very diverse, and its level depended on a number of conditions:

- vocal singing tradition;
- the number of students in the singing school and their qualitative composition;
- the level of preparedness of the *didascalos*;
- the qualitative and quantitative composition of the choir in which the singing practice was performed;
- the moral-educational concept in this school<sup>1</sup>;
- the significance of the singing factor in a particular temple<sup>2</sup>.

Obviously, the situation in each singing centre was individual, and any unification would have been impossible.

The third level of singing education is the education of a singer, a headmaster, who is able to make his own variants of singing, to write (assign) new liturgical texts, to supervise the singing during the divine service and singing. Representatives of this level were rare, isolated talents who were brought up in the process of individual lessons with experienced singers. "It was at the third stage that the balance between spiritual and educational and professional educational processes was achieved [3].

While the first two stages gradually saw the appearance of written manuals (although quite fragmented and insufficient to independently master knowledge and skills), the third stage was carried out exclusively within the oral tradition framework.

It can be concluded that the mastering of information of the Old Russian singing art included in the ideal three stages, very close to the triad of "syncrecis - analysis - synthesis". At the first stage, singers (most often from childhood) mastered the general system of worship, tried to immerse themselves in its spirit, quietly remembering some songs, vowels, etc.

At the second stage, separate aspects of singing were analyzed and assimilated - from some *Znamenny* chant compositions to *fita* hooks and varieties of monastic traditions.

Finally, at the final stage of the teachings the heterogeneous information was formed into a complete picture of the history and theory of church singing, synthesized into a systematic idea of the Orthodox device service and its singing component. It was the singers who went up to this synthesis who became chanters, ritualists, and *didascalos*.

Initially the *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, (*Lestvitsa*) was mastered, and together with it starting from the XVII century - the system of *littering*. All designations and their

<sup>1</sup> For example, the tradition of old age and clergy in a particular monastery significantly deepened the educational process.

<sup>2</sup> There were monasteries of various orientations, where obedience to labour, farming and fishing played a greater role.

deciphering had to be memorized. Then the main hooks were learned: their traits and names, the way of intonation, the relationship with other banners, variants of growth, later - the interpretation of their spiritual meaning. According to M. Brazhnikov, the alphabets "were to a large extent, if not completely, what is commonly called "visual aids", and their use should have been accompanied by an oral explanation of the singing teacher" [4].

In general, the learning process was built as a combination of two areas of knowledge:

- from the general moral requirements for their consistent assimilation by the example of specific liturgical texts and the meanings of hooks;
- from concrete practice, from particulars - to general theoretical attitudes, from individual melodies - to a complete picture of the eight church modes of Stolpovoy chant, etc.

#### IV. THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN THE SYNODAL SCHOOL

Another important traditional educational school, which achieved significant results, was the Synodal School - especially at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries, when the director of the school S.V. Smolenskiy and his follower V.S. Orlov carried out a real reform of the educational process. The framework of the article does not allow us to consider in detail the activities of the Moscow Synodal Singing School, so let us list only the moments that are certainly useful for modern spiritual musical education.

S.V. Smolenskiy set a task to create an educational institution where the best professional musical and the best spiritual education would be given simultaneously. The ideal model is called the "spiritual conservatory".

A three-level system of education was in place at one institution: The levels of primary, secondary and tertiary education were joined together. Young talents received knowledge in the college (1st to 5th grades) and university (6th to 9th grades). For the younger pupils, instead of a preparatory class, a full-fledged parochial school with an in-depth teaching of church singing was organized.

Highly professional training programs were developed in the major musical-theoretical and musical-historical disciplines. D.V. Razumovsky, N.A. Gruber, S.N. Kruglikov, A.D. Kastalsky took part in their preparation; N.A. Rimsky-Korsakov and S.I. Taneyev provided consulting assistance.

The training involved both theoretical and, in particular, practical aspects, which made it possible to form in the graduates a set of diverse competences of highly qualified regents and conductors, singers, teachers, often with brilliant piano and vocal training. In addition to the above mentioned specialties, the best graduates received the qualification of spiritual composer, completing their studies at the Moscow Conservatory. "The Synodal School should produce regents with good theoretical training (without such training they are graduated from other schools, from singing choirs), experienced harmonists and talented composers of sacred

music which secular musicians usually pay little attention to" [5].

The studies were not limited only to Orthodox spiritual orientation. Works by J. Arcadelt, I. S. Bach, O. Lasso, W. Mozart, J. Palestrina, R. Schumann and others were performed by the choral class and at concerts. This significantly broadened the students' horizons and created a reliable professional base.

The faculty and students' team worked in four directions:

- as an educational institution that trains students;
- as a choir, taking part in services in the Dormition Cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin and the Chudov Monastery;
- as a concert ensemble performing the most complex works of the world choral repertoire;
- as a creative lab for the "New Music Direction".

#### V. TASKS OF MODERN SPIRITUAL MUSICAL EDUCATION

It seems that a lot of the above is very relevant at the present stage. The reform currently under way in vocational education is aimed at achieving similar goals in a number of ways.

Firstly, both conservatories (at the departments of the Children's Pedagogical Institute) and seminaries aim to combine the best qualities of musical and theological education.

Secondly, the system of three-stage music education (school-college-higher education) is being actively discussed, within the framework of which there would be general main processes, continuity and interrelation of all stages of education.

Thirdly, opportunities are being created for a multi-faceted learning process that combines learning with participation in concert ensembles, singing and rehearsal in clique ensembles, participation in scientific research and creative projects, as well as work as a teacher.

We would like to emphasize that we cannot talk about a mechanical transfer of secular educational programs and technologies. Even curricula that have a brilliant tradition of being tested in conservatories should be rethought. This primarily concerns such disciplines as music analysis, elementary music theory, solfeggio, harmony, musical literature, etc.

The directions of such rethinking in the direction of spiritual education are:

- Changes in the musical material used in the classroom, the widespread use of spiritual works from different eras;
- Greater involvement of Old Russian singing culture;
- The spiritual compositions analysis within the framework of various subjects should be based on the immanent properties of Orthodox liturgical songs: the

purpose, conditions of being, interaction with the rite, corresponding spiritual content;

- the practical performance of the songs and spiritual musical works under study during the divine service.

It is obvious that the modern spiritual musical education of the Orthodox tradition should have a synthetic character, combining into a new systemic integrity of the feature of the four components:

- of the Old Russian singing education system;
- of the spiritual musical education of the New Age;
- of the theological education of the New Age;
- of the modern professional music education.

The first part is reflected in the general divine service orientation of education, the leading role of liturgical practice, the priority of the moral and educational component, the detailed study of the history, theory and practice of Old Russian singing.

The second part is revealed in the capital study of spiritual music of the New Age, the use of achievements in the musical education of the court singing chapel and the Synodal College, as well as the relevant elements of the programs of the named educational institutions.

The third part is most vividly manifested in the complex of liturgical disciplines - catechism, history of the Church, Church Slavonic language, liturgy, dogmatics, Old and New Testament, etc. It is these subjects that serve as a teaching tool and contribute to the formation of students' worldviews.

Finally, the fourth part is found in the complex of musical-theoretical disciplines (for example, solfeggio and harmony), which becomes the most important professional component in the process of training of regents, singers and medievists.

The very specialization that graduates receive at the present stage also has a complex character. In regent schools on the basis of secondary vocational education, the qualification "regent, teacher" is assigned based on the results of training. On the basis of higher education - "regent, theologian, teacher" are assigned.

Upon completion of training in the field of study "Old Russian singing art" in conservatories, graduates are awarded the qualification of "medievalist, teacher, creative team leader". Students graduated from the conservatory are qualified regents, manage secular and ecclesiastical ensembles, teach in schools and colleges, study and decipher ancient Russian singing manuscripts, prepare concert programs, participate in the reconstruction of Old Russian rites and ceremonies.

Of course, the most important role in this respect is played not so much by knowledge as by living immersion in the spiritual tradition and communication with its bearers. It is especially necessary to emphasize the next point - in the spiritual musical education a very special role in the moral-educational component should be played. The ancient rule - "to sing in a Znamenny chant, you have to live in a

Znamenny way" - has not lost its relevance to the present day. It is absolutely impossible to comprehend spiritual culture without perceiving at the same time the deepest religious content, rich prayer experience, ethical code, etc. they may not be voiced directly in the text, but they necessarily "shine through" in their tone, affect the mental and emotional processes of execution and perception of the melodies.

This phenomenon is multifaceted. On the one hand, the blessed state of the believer's soul, embodied in the sounds of songs, in a convolute form still exists, and can be perceived or left out of sight. It should be noted only that the listeners (as well as parishioners) deeply feel the sense of meaning and warmth of faith of the spoken words, estimating them not as masterfully executed, but as true, truthful, torn from the depths of the heart.

On the other hand, the dogmatic, liturgical, and homiletic aspects of the prayers undoubtedly imply that they must be revealed, because without them, the full performance and analysis of songs cannot be carried out. Finally, the very process of studying and choral singing of prayers influences the soul, enlivening it with the inspired verbs of God, gradually transforming the singers.

"That is why, in order to characterize the spiritual and religious singing standard in comparison with secular standards, it is evidently necessary to look for indicators of the quality of singing that are different from those now accepted. These may be, first, a special Orthodox-oriented spiritual aspiration of the singing sound. Second, a special figurative-emotional 'enlightenment' of the Orthodox singing sound. Third, the special quality of the choral sound of the church choir as the sound of the cathedral one [6].

This is a unique type of culture with a special system of language facilities, a unique genre system, characteristic features of music recording, notation, etc. All the basic concepts - style, genre, composition - are interpreted differently than in traditional musicology. The terminology with an abundance of Greek vocabulary is extremely complex. Therefore, there is a need for a special method of its study, based on syncretic immersion in the atmosphere of ancient Russian culture. Therefore, special specialists are needed, not only knowing the skills of a scholar-medievalist, but also familiar with the basic works on dogma, liturgy, homiletics, asceticism. Outside this context, the position and function of hymns in worship, many substantive aspects, and vocabulary will be unclear.

After all, the analysis of any piece of music must assume the ascent to its integrity. The integrity of the spiritual composition is extremely complex, as it includes, in addition to the musical component, theological, dogmatic, philosophical, ethical and other aspects, outside of which an adequate perception and study of spiritual music is impossible.

The study of the national spiritual musical culture is possible only on the basis of well-established inter-object relations: Studying the relevant topics in the course of history, philosophy, and aesthetics gives the necessary depth

and volume of ideas about the art of singing, will allow to find the necessary context for adequate perception.

The use of musical samples of the Russian Middle Ages in musical-theoretical and musical-historical courses acquires special importance. This is fundamentally important, as the course problems cannot be considered either within the framework of music history or in the course of music theory. With solfeggio it would be very expedient to read from the sheet, auditory analysis and writing samples of the Znamenny chant and early Russian polyphony.

In addition, the study of Old Russian music should be continued at the senior courses. In the course of harmony, two topics could be the subject of special study: "Harmony in string polyphony" and "Principles of harmonization and processing of canonical chants in Russian music of XVIII-XX centuries".

In the polyphony class, two themes could be successfully developed that continue to introduce spiritual music. The first of them is the "Voice polyphony" on the material of early samples of polyphony and creative work of composers of "New Direction". The second one is "Techniques of polyphonic processing of the original source in Russian music on the example of a party concert and spiritual compositions of the XIX-XX centuries".

Many universities have already introduced the theme "Genres and forms of Old Russian singing art" in the course of analyzing musical works, but in my opinion, the material of Russian music can be used in the whole section of topics: like "Musicwork," "Melody Thematicity", "Music Style", etc. It is easy to make sure that the proposed and already implemented forms of introduction of new material in the Mussorgsky conservatoire do not require a significant number of hours, but allow to extend the study of the ancient Russian musical culture at the senior courses, and to deepen significantly the knowledge acquired at the initial stage.

In children's music schools, it would be possible to get acquainted with such topics as peculiarities of musical writing, everyday sound, and some traditions of the ancient Russian holidays.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In general, it can be concluded that the following steps would be appropriate to ensure the activities of educational institutions in this area:

- Organization of boards of trustees, supervisory or extended scientific councils, which would include specialists of spiritual and secular structures, scientists, clergymen.
- The invitation of professors and teachers from other fields; in conservatories at the departments of the Children's Pedagogical Institute - theologians and priests, in seminars - specialists from conservatories.
- Creation of joint training programs authored by specialists of different profiles.

- Conducting joint activities in which students and faculty of secular and spiritual spheres take part.
- Formation of collections, articles, conferences devoted to the problems of spiritual musical culture.
- The organization of a single library network, the possibility of using musical and theological literature of a wide scope and the most modern level.
- Conducting training practices on the basis of seminaries and temples (for Old Russian singing), and on the basis of children's music schools, children's school of Arts and colleges (for regent schools)
- Signing of cooperation agreements between religious and secular educational institutions.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Parfentyev N. N. Professional musicians of Russia XVI-XVII centuries. Chelyabinsk, 1991. – p. 43.
- [2] Kometov G. B. Humanistic education: traditions and prospects. Grown. Acad. of education, Institute of theoretical pedagogy and international. research. in education. - M. : ITEMI, 1993. - p.73-74.
- [3] Polotskaya E. E. Professional music education in Ancient Rus: studies.-method. manual / Yekaterinburg; Ed. Ural state PED. UN-TA, 2002. – p. 18.
- [4] Brazhnikov M.V. Old Russian music theory. - L., 1972.– p.36.
- [5] Russian sacred music in documents and materials. T. II. kN. 2. Synodal choir and school of Church singing: Concerts. Periodical. Programs [Electronic resource] / S. G. Zvereva, A. A. Naumov, M. p. Rakhmanov, State Institute of art, State center. Museum of muses. culture them. M. I. Glinka .- M.: languages of Slavic culture, 2004. — p.1095.
- [6] Nikolaeva E. V. History of Music Education: Ancient Rus: Late 10th century – mid-17th century: Textbook for Students of Higher Educational Institutions. - M.: Humanitarian Publishing Center VLADOS6 2003. – p. 37.