

# Chamber Music Art of Siberia

## Historical Pages and Modern Life

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**Abstract**—The article attempts to look into the distinctive features of chamber music as a performing art in Siberia through the example of the activity of musical bands in Novosibirsk Philharmonic. The author is the first to analyse the current information about the chamber music groups in Novosibirsk Philharmonic in the broad historical and cultural context. As a result, the chamber music performing art is viewed in terms of its role in the musical life of the region.

**Keywords**—Novosibirsk; philharmonic; chamber orchestra; Filarmonica-quartet; repertoire; tours

### I. INTRODUCTION

The issues and state of contemporary art both in general and particularly in Siberia are among the most hotly debated topics that have been analysed extensively [25, 14]. Academic music in Siberia, both in terms of its history and current situation, demands careful attention given the urbanisation processes in the region that have shaped its contemporary form. At present, Siberian musicians have demonstrated outstanding achievements. A number of performers, graduates of Siberian higher institutions, have gained international recognition, such as concert violinists V. Repin and M. Vengerov (graduates of M.I. Glinka Novosibirsk State Conservatory), singer D. Hvorostovsky (graduate of Krasnoyarsk State Institute of Arts), pianist D. Matsuev (studied at a music school in Irkutsk) and many others.

The core of the region's concert life is comprised by the major philharmonic groups—symphonic orchestras of Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, Omsk, Tyumen, Tomsk, and also the capitals of the national republics situated in Siberia. Moreover, the late twentieth century saw the branches of the Russian Union of Composers established in the territory of Siberia: in Novosibirsk (1942) and Krasnoyarsk (1983).

The purpose of the article is to look into the distinctive features of chamber music's development as a performing art in Siberia through the example of the activity of the leading chamber music bands of Novosibirsk State Philharmonic in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century (both the Chamber Orchestra and the Filarmonica-quartet), the revealing of the particulars of their repertoire, and the addressing of issues regarding relations with Siberian composers.

The article draws on the information about bands, solo performers, and composers of Siberia published in the printed press and on the Internet, first and foremost, on the website of Novosibirsk State Philharmonic [1, 13, 21]. The versatility of the research data identified the historical method as a priority and so the various data sources were analysed and compared by way of a comprehensive approach.

### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The earliest studies of the Siberian music culture that looked into the music's academic origins date back to the 1960-70s and were conducted by Siberian music historians [9, 23, 24]. By now there has been substantial evidence accumulated and systematised regarding the key stages in development of academic music culture. Apart from the multi-volume edition by a group of authors from the M.I. Glinka Novosibirsk State Conservatory "Musical Culture of Siberia" [19, 20], there is a monograph on the musical culture of Novosibirsk [18]. The above mentioned books contain important facts and examples of musicians' activities, those of performers (soloists, bands and chamber groups) and composers from Novosibirsk. The history of Novosibirsk Philharmonic is told on the pages of monographs written by S.I. Kravtsov and V.M. Kaluzhsky [11, 15]. The achievements of the Novosibirsk Violin School as an integral part of the Russian system of musical education are given detailed consideration in the article of M.M. Berlyanchik [4]. The issues of pianoforte performance art formation in Siberia are the cornerstone of some dissertations, such as those by M.I. Lozner [16] and L.A. Dyabelko [8], the monograph by N.I. Golovneva [5], and the article by I.V. Belonosova [2-3]. The main stages in the establishment of a composing organisation in Novosibirsk are highlighted in the works of S.S. Goncharenko [5, 6].

The novelty of the present article is that the activity of the chamber music groups in Novosibirsk State Philharmonic is considered over the span of their foundation (early 1990s) to the present day.

### III. RESULTS OF STUDY

In the 1940-50s, Novosibirsk was the home of a string quartet (F. Kopgekker, V. Kopgekker, E. Yanovsky, G. Permitin) and a pianoforte trio (F. Kopgekker, E. Ryabtsev, T. Polyakov). Over the period of the Patriotic War,

Novosibirsk became the place of evacuation for a number of world-class musical groups from Leningrad Philharmonic with their remarkable professionalism and performing capabilities: the symphonic orchestra conducted by E. Mravinsky and the Quartet named after A. Glazunov. The soloist group was represented by D. Shafran (cello), I. Spielberg and S. Shpak (violin), I. Levin (viola), S. Orman and B. Madorskaya (pianists) [19, P. 139-140]. The presence of the musicians from Leningrad was bound to have a favourable impact on the emerging musical culture of the city and on Siberia in general.

The multi-authored monograph "Musical Culture of Siberia", while looking at the formation and development of chamber music over the period of the early 1960s to early 1990s, mentions some chamber orchestras and groups that were founded on the basis of symphonic orchestras, primarily in the philharmonic halls of Irkutsk, Omsk, Novosibirsk, and Tyumen. Some of the chamber groups were short-lived and so can be characterised as "episodic" [20, P. 33]. Even rarer were the examples of concert solo instrumentalists. The best-known were the pianists A. Schwarzburg (Krasnoyarsk), V. Lotar-Shevchenko (Barnaul – Novosibirsk), M. Birman (Tyumen), cellist A. Lapkin (Novosibirsk), violinist A. Rivkin (Krasnoyarsk) [10, P. 23].

#### IV. ROLE OF NOVOSIBIRSK CONSERVATORY IN FORMATION OF TRADITIONS OF CHAMBER MUSIC PERFORMING ART

The opening of Novosibirsk Conservatory (1956), which instructed all musical disciplines, and the foundation of the symphonic orchestra of Novosibirsk Philharmonic (1956) marked significant milestones in the development of the musical culture in Siberia. The brightest and most memorable episodes in the history of chamber music performance art have to do with the activity of the performing department of Novosibirsk Conservatory. The instructors converging on the conservatory combined teaching with concert activities successfully and thus facilitated a full-blown musical life in the city with the chamber music performance being among the leading lot. The remarkable names of those teachers-performers include Z.N. Bron, V.I. Slonim, T.K. Bikis, M.S. Boguslavsky and many others [10, P. 23; 22, PP. 162-165; 18, PP. 484-495]. The history of group artistic performance of Novosibirsk before the early 1990s is marked by a big number of conservatory bands – trios and quartets. Among the best-known around Siberia and beyond was the pianoforte trio "Novosibirsk Pianoforte Trio", or "Trio of the Siberian Organisation of the Composers' Union" (1965-1992). The first line-up of the trio was originally formed in Kemerovo: Igor Yevseyevich Byaly (cello), Vladimir Denezhkin (pianoforte) and Viktor Menlikovich Minasyan (violin) [17]. Later the pianoforte part was performed by Mark Shaviner. The trio was tightly knit with composers of Novosibirsk. Three trios were composed for it, including those of Y.P. Yukechev, "Rococo-Trio" of A.F. Murov, "Devotion" of G.N. Ivanov, the trio of S.I. Kravtsov, "Trio Requiem" of I.M. Heyfets.

Apart from the trio (V.M. Minasyan-I.E. Byaly-M.A. Shaviner), the 1980s saw systematic performances of the conservatory quartet of V.M. Minasyan (violin), M.A. Korn (pianoforte), L.M. Rukhankin (cello), Y.N. Mazchenko (viola) [20, P. 82].

In the 1990s, at the time of so-called perestroika when philharmonic halls at the periphery were on the verge of extinction and the formerly established contacts with touring groups were largely lost, very few philharmonic halls managed to preserve their own musicians and remain intact. Novosibirsk Philharmonic is an exceptional case, as it steadily housed all major professional groups of the city.

#### V. ROLE OF PHILHARMONIC GROUPS IN ESTABLISHMENT OF CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER MUSIC ART

The most stable band of Novosibirsk Philharmonic is its Chamber Orchestra that represents Novosibirsk School of Stringed Instruments. The Chamber Orchestra was directed in various years by Honoured Artist of Russia M.I. Turich, Honoured Arts Worker of Russia A.I. Polishchyuk (since 2001). At present, the chief conductor of the Chamber Orchestra is Alim Shahmamatyev [21].

Starting from the 2000s, owing to the Chamber Orchestra, a number of international events have taken place; the orchestra participated at the opening of the Year of German Culture in Russia (2004), the Year of Russian Culture in France (2010) and the Year of the Russian language in Germany (2014). *Days of Sweden* in Novosibirsk and *Days of English Music* in Novosibirsk (2004) are unimaginable without the Chamber Orchestra.

The international standing of the group stems from the tours they took to the cities of Germany, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Austria and Belgium during various festivals. The performing results manifest themselves in the group's discography. In 2012, the CD called "Crests of Flames", which includes the orchestra's performance conducted by Reiner Helda (Switzerland) according to the Critics' Choice 2012 of the British magazine Gramophone proved to be in the top twenty of all records (the full list of CDs is placed on the website of Novosibirsk Philharmonic where one can also familiarise oneself with the videos of all the bands working in the philharmonic with the Chamber Orchestra and the Filarmonica-quartet among others).

The repertoire of the Chamber Orchestra is varied and includes such pieces as, for instance, Mozart (Overture from the Marriage of Figaro, Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major, KV 543), Reinecke (Serenade for String Orchestra, Op. 242). In 2010, the Chamber Orchestra performed Lamento for Harp and String Orchestra of L. Beethoven – B. Tishchenko (Irina Donskaya – harp). The Chamber Orchestra aims at the offbeat performance of each and every programme. It can manifest itself in the pursuit of a better repertoire or a special way of self-staging. Such was the White Festival-2015, when musicians and solo performers appeared on-stage wearing white gowns. To support the overall atmosphere, the spectators were also suggested following the "white dress-code". The concert programme included Rhapsody in Blue by G. Gershwin (arr. by E. Petrov), Cherry Orchard by M.

Luigi (arr. by E. Petrov), Misty Morning by S. Rachmaninoff / A. Sarpila. The solo performers included: Stanislav Chigadaev – pianoforte, Sergey Yakovlev – trumpet, Dmitry Hramov – percussions, and Vladimir Dranitsa – contrabass.

At the opening of the Siberian Sax Fest-2015 (October 2015), the Chamber Orchestra performed the pieces that comprised the concert the New Masks of Venice (world première): Bignone. Seduction Games, overture; Schittino. Tunguska; Blatti. Rionero; Randazzo. Water Masks; Paganini-Saggio. Carnival of Venice; music by M. Betta, Galeati, Rota (soloists: Mario Ciaccio, saxophone, Italy; Yulia Rubina, violin).

The Filarmonica-Quartet was founded in 1990 and quickly made a name for itself in Germany at The Festival des Horens. After the Filarmonica-Quartet had become a prizewinner at the All-Union Contest of String Quartets in 1991, it was housed by the philharmonic. Currently the Filarmonica-Quartet is composed of People's Artist of Russia V.Y. Karchagin (violin Honoured Artist of Russia O.A. Anisimova (violin), holder of All-Russian and international awards I.V. Tarasenko (viola), S.A. Ovchinnikov (cello). Each member of the band is performing successfully as a soloist in various orchestras [21].

The repertoire of the Filarmonica-quartet encompasses a wide range of quartet literature. There are not only well-known pieces, but also some music of less frequently performed (S. Frank, B. Smetana, D. Verdi), or undeservedly forgotten composers (N. Roslavets, A. Mosolov). The band often performs chamber music composed for different line-ups (trios, quintets, sextets, octets). The performing excellence of the Filarmonica-quartet is well-known in numerous countries of the world: Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Israel, South Korea, the USA, and Brazil. In 2006, at the annual festival Europalia, the Filarmonica-Quartet was honoured to showcase the achievements of the Russian art in the sphere of quartet genre.

The band is also quite close-knit with composers from Novosibirsk. Particularly, with S.I. Kravtsov [7, PP. 33-35; 12]. Over the whole period of creative collaboration between the composer and the Filarmonica-Quartet (since 1994), they have performed all Kravtsov's quartet pieces. His concert cycles "English" and "French" suites have proved to be all-time greats in the tour programmes of the Filarmonica-Quartet. In 2004, the Filarmonica-Quartet performed some unconventional recomposed pieces of Glinka and Mussorgsky at the concert "Contemporary Transcription of Classic": Kravtsov's instrumental cycles "Ruslan and Lyudmila's Pages" and "Pictures from a Showcase". In 2015, during the composer's anniversary concert they played his quartet No.3 made in 2002. Quartet No.3 is dedicated to violist Vladimir Kopylov who used to play with the Filarmonica-Quartet back then.

The repertoire of The Filarmonica-Quartet in 2008-2009 included: Haydn (The Seven Last Words of Christ), Mozart (D minor, K. 421; B-flat major K. 458), Beethoven (No.2, op. 59), Schumann (The Piano Quintet, two violins and cello, op. 44). Pianoforte part – Alexander Paley, pianoforte (USA),

Brahms (Quartet for pianoforte, violin, viola and cello in G minor, op. 25). Performers: Mark Drobinsky, cello (France), Ivan Urvalov, pianoforte (Germany), Franck (D major), Bartok (No.1), Szymanowski (32), Borodin (No.1 in A major), Tchaikovsky (Trio "In Memory of the Great Artist" in A minor), Shostakovich (No.7, 11). While taking part in a most exciting project of the philharmonic – the festival of contemporary music "mARTovsky kod" (March Code), the Filarmonica-quartet played in their concerts the quartet by George Crumb "Black Angel" (2012, 2015) and the quartet by Iannis Xenakis (2012).

## VI. CONCLUSION

The activity of the Novosibirsk Philharmonic chamber music groups at the beginning of the 21st century demonstrates the audience's unchanging interest in chamber music genres. The bands' popularity that goes far beyond the Russian borders proves to stem from the performing excellence of Novosibirsk musicians and the hard work on their repertoire and their image. Thanks to the inclusion of the works of Novosibirsk composers into the repertoire of chamber bands, the region reveals the communication system "Composer – Performer – Listener" in action, which proves the high level of musical and performing composer art in Siberia.

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