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# Who Killed Classical Music Criticism: Social Strategies of Music Journalism Today

*Kas nužudė muzikos kritiką. Socialinės muzikos žurnalistikos strategijos*

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## Abstract

If music criticism has been killed, who killed it, and which strategies has it developed for survival? First, I should define the most important criteria for an assessment of music criticism and music journalism because the terms do not mean the same thing. Music criticism today is framed within specific topics and has a homogeneous recipient audience. Music journalism is again seeing such a challenge of new time. Its messages are addressed to a wider audience and deal with more problems that have a social, ideological, or political bent. Crucially, the status of music journalism is also defined by how far music journalists take notions of public interest. These new challenges may have “killed” classical music criticism, but they have also revived it and helped it develop. Currently, four fundamental strategies of cultural journalism exist (Stegert) which are also used for music journalism—informatization, personification, exploration, and popularization. These four strategies are compared with basic public relations models (Grunig/Hunt).

**Keywords:** music criticism, music journalism, PR models, strategies of cultural journalism.

## Anotacija

Kas nužudė klasikinės muzikos kritiką ir, jei taip atsitiko, kokios išgyvenimo formos ir strategijos yra susikūrusios iki šių dienų? Pirmiausia turėčiau apibrėžti svarbiausius muzikos kritikos ir muzikos žurnalistikos kriterijus, nes šios sąvokos anaipol nėra tapačios. Nūdienos muzikos kritiką griežtai įremina ne tik labai specifinės temos, bet ir vienalytė skaitytojų auditorija. Muzikos žurnalistika susiduria su iššūkiu, kuris turi nenuginčijamą poveikį žurnalistikos praktikai. Muzikos žurnalistika skirta platesnei auditorijai, ji išryškina socialinius, ideologinius ir politinius problemų aspektus. Labai svarbu, kad muzikos žurnalistikos padėtį apibrėžia ir tai, kiek rimtai muzikos žurnalistai traktuoja viešąjį interesą. Šie naujieji iššūkiai tam tikra prasme „nužudė“ klasikinės muzikos kritiką, tačiau kartu jie suteikia naują būdą atgimti ir plėtotis. Šiuo metu egzistuoja keturios pamatinės kultūros žurnalistikos strategijos (Stegertas), kurios iš principo taikytinos ir muzikos žurnalistikai: informatizacija, personifikacija, tyrimas ir populiarinimas. Šiomis keturiomis strategijomis remiasi pagrindiniai viešųjų ryšių modeliai (Grunigas / Huntas). **Reikšminiai žodžiai:** muzikos kritika, muzikos žurnalistika, viešųjų ryšių modeliai, kultūros žurnalistikos strategijos.

## Introduction

In 1997 Norman Lebrecht asked the rhetorical question “Who killed classical music?” (Lebrecht 1997) and started to search for the roots of the evil within the growing commercialization of music production and re-production. I will try to find answers to the related questions of whether classical music criticism was killed as well, and if so, who helped to do so. I will also mention which forms of it have survived and will summarize which strategies have been developed to maintain it.

First, I would like to define the most important criteria for assessment of music criticism and music journalism because, from my perspective, they do not mean the same thing. Music criticism today is defined within specific topics and has a strictly homogeneous audience. The messages of music journalism are addressed to a broad spectrum of recipients and deal with issues of a more social, ideological, or political angle.

In the context of the presented research the following statements are key: music criticism is a kind of mental activity directed to evaluation and analysis of relevant information about music with its following public verbalization, which can be realized both in published forms of disclosure and outside them. Music journalism may become one of the forms of realization of music criticism in the mass media.

So, music journalism is a special creative activity, directed at the transfer of facts related to events in the world of music into their informational equivalent (the creation of an informational model of the subject). As a form of mass communication, it is aimed, through mass media, towards a large, anonymous, heterogeneous audience. The communication of music journalism is any verbal message—informational, evaluational, or analytical—where connections between society and music are thematized through different genres. The notion of music criticism can be seen as equivalent, in a wider sense, primarily when the matter concerns the evaluation and analysis of works and/or their performances in the mass media.

Because historically the optimal forms of “appearance” of music criticism were in published form, this notion almost immediately became equivalent with any messaging of current importance from the world of music, regardless of whether it contained a critical evaluation component or not. In this sense, music criticism really may be “equal” to music journalism, but in fact the radius of its functioning is much broader: it can be realized both in journalistic forms, both in mass media and outside it. The sphere of music criticism is also artistic salons, discussions, debates, round tables, oral and printed announcements of concerts, musical and theatrical performances, theoretical and critical essays, and special edition publications—in a wider sense, any public form of verbal analysis and evaluation of musical phenomena. Thus, the main task of music critics, notes Gerhard Rohde rightly, is “to be mediators between complicated processes of music and citizens interested in them” (Rohde 2001). While for journalism, even music journalism, the defining feature is orientation toward a public form of presentation, toward poly-systems of mass media.

Under certain conditions, music criticism, primarily its analytical segment, becomes an instrument of music journalism. In turn, journalistic forms allow criticism to fulfil the majority of its social functions. Moreover, according to the goals of journalism as a communicative institute in general, the list of tasks for music journalism also turns out to be much broader; it goes far beyond the limits of only critical evaluation and ascertaining of the historical importance of certain events in the world of music.

In light of above, the wide-spread statement that music criticism performs, for example, an informative function, seems to be methodologically wrong. The objection to this statement can be found in the etymology of the concept *κριτική* as consideration or analysis. Thus, the predominant function of criticism in the mass media, criticism as a way of thinking and as an analytical instrument, should remain evaluational and axiomatic, while music journalism also covers other functional spheres. In this context, Gunter Reus’s generalization that the product of music journalism “can be considered any descriptive, analytical or evaluational message about musical events and their relationships in mass media” (Reus 2008: 86) seems appropriate.

So, music journalism can include all materials that are related to cultural themes and also includes the opening or closing of concert halls or musical educational institutions, conflict situations in groups of musicians, issues of copyright, payment of royalties, and many other topics. Writing about these topics in periodicals requires journalistic investigational skills, the skill to work with official documents, knowledge of the basics of content analysis, and direct contact with representatives of authorities in the field of culture. This journalistic routine must not necessarily engage a music critic, though a competent comment from

a specialist for the majority of the abovementioned issues is always appropriate and desirable, and a look from the “inside” significantly strengthens the development of themes.

In the middle of the last century, the well-known theorist and composer Herbert Eimert suggested rejecting the definition “music critic” completely. First, he indicated that this profession should disappear from “registration lists at the police and in hotels, not only because a critic usually performs his duties outside his main work, or, at best, he is an employee of an editorial office, then he should be called a representative of the press, an editor of editorial staff or a *journalist* (italics are mine – L.M.), but also because anyone who feels the most subtle nuances of language will notice the mismatch hidden in the phrase itself” (Eimert 1953: 206). In his somewhat ironic reflections, consciously or not, Eimert reveals the cornerstone issue of the problem: can everyone who writes about music and wider topics be called a critic? Has not the time come to expand and clearly define the boundaries of the concepts?

Another German theoretician of music criticism, Werner Braun added Eimert’s thinking to his arsenal. It is noteworthy, however, that in his “historical-critical attempt to determine the place” of music criticism by describing the three main professional types of music critic, he does not specifically distinguish the journalist, though the characteristics of a journalist may be present in each of the following:

1. *Critic*—the earliest definition of the person who describes (musical) events and identifies and evaluates them. In the same section Braun calls Johannes Mattheson with his *Critica musica* the first musical journalist, obviously interpreting the term “critic” and “journalist” as largely equivalent.
2. *Reviewer and consultant*—the most used terms from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Robert Schumann defined “critics” as “artists” and “reviewers” as “artisans.” Thus, in this context as well, the concept of “reviewing” as a description and the category “craft” spur us to make generalizations in favor of journalism.
3. *Music writer*— this term corresponds to the epoch after 1860. Braun relies on similar reasoning from Hugo Riemann and his *Lexicon*, where mention of this concept occurs most often and where the term describes the work of “reviewers” as well as authors who take part in the process of criticism or, to be more precise, practice music writing about extraordinary, famous personalities, such as writers or composers, or publish articles about music in periodicals or write books.

Mathias Döpfner, one of the most competent researchers of music criticism of our times, instead distinguishes two types of critics—*writers* and *musicians*. The first type (“a journalist or writer knowledgeable in music”) actually

practices their craft because of a love of words and the press. The second type (“an instrumentalist or a composer who knows how to write”) comes to this profession because of a love of music, often after realizing that the framework of their original profession was too narrow. It is interesting that, according to Döpfner, these types are different not only in their form, way of presentation, and thematic interests, but also in their intended audiences: if the “journalist” tries to captivate as wide a readership as possible, while the “musician” is interested primarily in the attendees of the event (Döpfner 1991: 80).

Most appropriate to the “handicraft” understanding of music journalism seems to be in this context the second group in the typology of the authors outlined by Braun (or the first by Döpfner). Mentioned in this connection, Schumann’s antinomy “art—handicraft” was relevant in the period of Romanticism and influenced ideas of a later time.

The status of music journalism is basically defined by how far music journalists take the notion of public interest. This situation “killed” classical music criticism to some extent, but at the same time encouraged it to survive and develop. These processes were especially recognized after World War II, when musical styles and trends separated and became diversified and new ways and styles of writing about music appeared. As Theodor Adorno wrote:

The qualifications for music critics remain irrational. If a man is well-versed and has kept some interest in music, his isolated journalistic writing talent will mostly suffice; the crux— a knowledge of composing, an ability to understand and judge the inner form of structures—is hardly called for, if for no other reason, because there are none who might judge that ability itself, who might criticize the critics. (Adorno 1962, Engl. translation 1976: 151)

With his work, Adorno anticipated one of the most important attributes of music writing in modern times, the growing gap between music criticism and music journalism. Immanent factors in music development in contemporary music culture have contributed to this situation as have new challenges for journalism in general. There was an impressive development of music writing from a tool used to inform people to an instrument forming public opinion, which gradually expanded to include more topics of the social and cultural life, even going so far as to influence music itself. Whenever music criticism increased its isolation, music journalism started to develop new subjects and topics.

As a matter of fact, we can assume three general factors leading to the status of “death” or at least a certain stagnation of classical music criticism after 1945.

The end of the war thus resembles an “hour zero.” For reconstitution, music criticism had to be something completely new and different, both in terms of personnel and content. (Döpfner 1991: 50)

Incidentally, Döpfner is a highly successful journalist and manager, acting since 2000 as CEO of Axel Springer media group and president of the German Federation of Newspaper Publishers (BDZV).

First, the increasing delineation between “classical” and “popular music,” led to its death, as predicted by Adorno and his school.

The second main factor was the growing pace and speed of information transmission. In the past, music criticism was never a high-speed process, as every analysis required a certain amount of time and here the question “how?” is significantly more important than the questions “who?,” “where?,” or “when?”

The third factor of its destruction was the growing quantity of publicly available information, which does not always go hand in hand with quality. Having fast access to valuable information became a challenge for our time, but music criticism was never before prepared for acute social challenges. Which means actually lead to the renewed relevancy of the music critic and how can music journalism support this process?

### Strategies and models

Currently, three fundamental strategies of cultural journalism are known, which also can be used for music journalism, to make it significantly more attractive to recipients in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

The concept of media strategies, developed by German theorist Gerhard Maletzke in the 1970s, is still relevant and regarded today as a benchmark for further approaches in this field of research.

The statements that are published by the media must achieve certain goals. Some want to inform the recipients, educate, instruct; some try to influence their opinions and attitudes, through patterns and values; and some want to induce them to take certain actions and join certain behavioral systems. All these aspirations are summarized with the collective term of goal-oriented or intentional mass communication. In terms of strategy, we understand the rational, planned setting of goals as well as the determination of the ways and means to reach the set goals. (Maletzke 1976: 1)

In 1998 German publicist and media theorist Gernot Stegert published his comprehensive study of strategies in cultural journalism, partly based on the Maletzke concept. He, however, extended into the field of cultural journalism through further conclusions and observations, which we can use and expand upon. Stegert generally identifies three main strategies of cultural journalism: personalization, popularization, and feuilletonizing—the latter refers to the traditional German term used for such media as the

cultural sections of newspapers. Further, I'll propose differentiating three additional strategies to complement this topic (Stegert 1998).

For greater descriptiveness in respect of each period of journalism history (Klaus Meier's identification of periods was used with additions and more precise definitions by the author; see Meier 2007) one strategy is defined as dominant, but other strategies also played their role at various stages.

As an apt supplemental instrument for structuring the following summary reflections, we should consider Grunig-Hunt's four models of public relations. In this case, the model acts as a sort of ideal scheme of the result achieved due to the application of a certain strategy.

Renowned American media researchers James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt in 1980s generalized four models of public relations (Grunig, Hunt 1984), taking into consideration a number of factors of a socio-communicative and historical character. The schemes of media influence on mass consciousness they formulated are related to the main periods of mass media development. These models, considered to be classic today, also show high topicality in the context of the conclusions of the presented study because they clearly reflect the strategic relationships and targets of texts about music in daily media outlets at different stages of its development.

The most important achievement at the stage of the formation of periodical press is called "correspondent journalism." This stage lasted from about 1600 to 1750 and demonstrated an awareness of weight of words and the price of information in different spheres of social life. The dispatches from these areas had a mostly dry, informative character, were free of the author's opinion, and served the exclusively utilitarian goals of certain social groups.

A special feature of musical themes in the first periodical publications is complete non-autonomy or subordination to the general context. That is, music (performances, the work of composers, the appearance of music publications, etc.) in terms of the tasks of the journalism of the correspondent phase still cannot be seen as information important in its own right, since it is relevant to the public by way of being complementary or supplemental information. Specific information about performances of musical works appear exclusively in the context of reports about public events of a secular or spiritual nature (a reception, ball, religious service where politically important persons were present, etc.) as a reference. Even short special announcements (advertising, chronicle notes) about an appearance or performance of musical works do not exist at this time.

The strategy of providing unbiased information and supplying the audience with the knowledge necessary at the appropriate moment remains relevant for music journalism in the following historical periods, including at the stage of "writer's journalism" (1750–1850). At this time, the gradual

introduction of culture in periodicals was a trend, first in the so-called "moral journals" and later in the daily press. For example, in Germany, thanks to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and the father-and-son pair Johann Carl Friedrich and Ludwig Rellstab, theatrical and music journalism in daily newspapers gained traction.

The beginnings of music journalism are noticeably influenced by changes of public musical life in general, where a new class—the bourgeoisie (burgers)—begins to play an increasingly active role. So, it [musical journalism] becomes primarily dependent on public concert practice, gradually doing away with court insularity and becoming increasingly oriented to the needs of the third class. (Seeger 1966: 9)

Therefore, it would be appropriate to suggest that the appearance and establishment of varied types of information about music in the daily press was a direct response to a social requirement: at that time, the situation of the public performance of musical works underwent profound changes and ceased to be the prerogative of a limited circle. A more broadly educated audience, the petty bourgeoisie also required other forms of finding orientation in cultural situations: information about cultural events and including musical ones became "utilitarian" and essential, as in the previous decades what was most important was stock news or the reprinting of decrees.

The development of a new, descriptive-analytical direction was encouraged by the general atmosphere in music journalism in the period of early Romanticism and directly impacted the phenomenon of "writer's" journalism.

During the period of 1750–1850 it is still too early to talk about the establishment of the full-fledged review as the central analytical genre in music journalism. Most of the varieties of writing that go beyond the provision of dry information relate to the subjective preferences and experiences of the author and/or protagonists of his publications. It was indeed the reason that the genre of reportage achieved true prosperity at that time: in fact, comprehensive reports from operatic performances or concerts contained significant subjective details and impressions and served the wholesome effect of presence but rarely gave a skilled analysis of the performance itself. Besides this kind of "review," genres associated with detailed coverage about the activities of a media personality, typically a performing virtuoso or a composer, become widespread. We should not forget that in the nineteenth century both of types of professionals were granted equal attention, while in the following epochs authors gradually began to prefer performers. Biographical articles, reviews of comments, and historical anecdotes were often published in the press before the arrival of the important figure to a certain city.

Such predominance of personalities as one of the three major subjects covered in journalism (an event, a process,

a personality) allows us to state that it is at the writer's stage another media strategy, personification, gains special weight in music journalism. It is interesting to note that the main features of this strategy, described by Gernot Stegert from the point of view of the realities of the present time, correspond to the methods used in the nineteenth century. Stegert marks out the following techniques as key:

- *Personification by way of choosing the author*: when the material is written not by a member of staff, an obscure journalist whom nobody knows, but by an outstanding personality that attracts the attention of the readership.

As a matter of fact, in the nineteenth century, communication to readers about a publication's personalities becomes widespread. This communication could come in the form of a lively, heated argument with the reviewer or invitations to performances and gratitude to the public: a few such examples are presented in the historical part of this work. They can be interpreted not only as the spontaneous responses of the recipient, but also as ways to attract other reader groups.

At the end of the nineteenth century this strategy gained other significance when eminent writers (in this case—music critics) were able to provide larger resonance to the subject presented on the pages. Instead, another highly significant form of personification of the recipients of these messages was directly linked with the tradition of “romantic journalism,” which lasted until 1850, that is, *personification by an appeal to the audience*. The “dear,” “beloved,” “most precious,” “highly respected readers” are already addressed less warmly at the turn of the twentieth century: whole genres fade into the past (such as, for example, the prospectus) associated with the actual “recruitment” of the audience to participate in a particular art or music event. However, the custom of a personal appeal to the reader has never been lost, because it is a surprisingly effective technique and it highlights the fundamentally dialogical nature of journalist text.

The *method of personification through subjectivation of the content and/or evaluation* that acquires extreme forms in the period of “I-criticism” in the early twentieth century has its roots in the Romantic epoch. The problem of “criticism” as a synonym of “subjective analysis” remains relevant throughout the entire history of the phenomenon's existence. At the same time, it should be regarded as a factor in its dynamic development. Without intense discussion and the writer's exposure to readers of different points of view, without precise, though often bitter comments, without the writer's willingness to assert their own opinion regardless of its appropriateness to music criticism in periodicals, it would be an extremely bland phenomenon and hardly interesting for a broad circle of readers.

- *Personification by choosing the main theme* provides a personality as the center of a journalistic dispatch. In this case, it did not matter what its informational purpose was. Often, it could be a description of a performance or even of a musical work carried out through the prism of broader reflection about a composer, the dominant role being given to that person and not to a concrete event.

The closest to the personalization strategy seems to be techniques peculiar to the historical first model of public relations, mentioned above as the press agency model and connected with efforts to provide the broadest public divulgence (it does not matter whether it is positive or negative) of a specific event or personality. Hence, the model is also called the publicity model. “No matter what they say about me—the important thing is not to make a mistake in my surname”—this phrase of Phineas Barnum, a legendary showman and the founder of the “circus of miracles,” is often quoted as the motto of this model. Means to achieve the goal, as well as the principles of objectivity and impartiality, usually play a minor role here.

Using modern terminology, a key factor for the model is the media presence of an important personage. Even today, this model is often used in showbusiness and sports PR strategies. It plays the same role for music journalism, where “divulgence” is one of the main features. We are persuaded about this every time we look through the pages of “glossy” or “tabloid” publications: scandalous stories—true or invented—from the life of “stars,” shocking interviews, and provocative photos are primarily intended to encourage public interest in a personality and consequently to attract attention to their work.

The second half of the nineteenth century is significant in the history of music journalism because of the fact that the distinctions between journalism as an informative medium and criticism as an axiomatic one were more clearly defined and deepened towards the end of the century. These processes turned out to be connected with changes in the press landscape as well as in the wider historical context. The gradual growth in the independence of periodicals from the government, constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech in certain countries, and the establishment of editorial staff as a collegial form of guidance of a press organ allow us to define a new turn in the history of the press from about 1850 called “editorial journalism.”

In cultural journalism, this period also important for formation and development of the comprehensive review (“feuilleton”<sup>1</sup>). Highlighting the three main components of the “feuilleton” narrative (to entertain, to teach, and to enlighten), Reus notes:

In the middle of the nineteenth century, feuilleton also becomes established in music journalism. Since then it—relevantly and informatively—accompanies artistic events of the time,

trying to attract the broadest audience to “educate them” (Reus 2009: 319)

Strengthening of feuilleton as a genre, and even as an entire editorial section, allowed Stegert to define the strategy of thematization as a key strategy of cultural journalism:

Thematization as a strategy is used when they begin to write about cultural events of current importance, about figures or works of art in a special, sophisticated language in order to draw attention to the text—or the journalist or the print organ—of a greater number of readers, make it more efficient. These texts go beyond the framework of a simple act of providing information. (Stegert 1998: 167)

In summary, we can assert that it is due to the strategy of thematization the fact becomes an event, the play becomes a box office success, and the soloist a prima donna. Reviews, without doubt, remains the most characteristic for the thematization strategy genre. Its inherent features include specific language often enriched with professional terms, a characteristic structure of the text, and several set goals: to inform, to entertain, and to educate.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a new function of journalistic writing was realized. Authors of articles about music tried to move away both from strict attachment to dates and facts and from the excessively poetic language of the previous epoch. Information became more concrete, more objective, and more appropriate and the analysis more competent. At the same time, the audience was expanding and the range of demands for this type of writing grew. So it would be no exaggeration to say that it was in this period when all three forms of review were equally relevant: the composer’s, the performer’s (interpretational), and reviews of the activities of a certain music institution. This was also the time when differences between the qualitative and gutter press were becoming more acute, though they were especially relevant as early as in the early twentieth century.

Daily newspapers after 1850 demonstrated how the review genre in particular, and the strategy of thematization in general, flourished. The gradual pull away from romantic exaltation and poetics meant that writing from different areas of musical life began to occupy a more stable position in publications of general information. People became more aware of the importance of properly presented information: from now on, it would not only attract attention to a certain event, a fact, or a personality but also create a wider poly-semantic context and play an educational or even propagandistic role.

At the stage of editorial journalism, the next model of the public relation comes evolutionarily and chronologically into being—the public information model, especially relevant from the early twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> I can add that the spread of the public information model coincided with

the establishment of the qualitative press which, in turn, corresponded to the main principles and requirements of this model.

In the following periods of mass media history, the review, along with thematization, would have its ups and downs caused by both aesthetic and ideological factors. At the same time, thematization becomes an important vehicle to attract attention to an event and consequently to make it interesting for contemporary people and preserve it for posterity. However, the review ceases to be the only “weapon” to achieve this goal. Today, we often hear complaints that this genre has become obsolete and is not interesting except to those who write and those about whom it is written. Some wags even call the pages dedicated to culture in respected newspapers “the cemetery of reviews” (Spahn 1992: 105).

The problem lies not only in the “conservatism” of the genre, in the fact that it, or rather its authors, was not ready for the challenges of modernity, but also in the profound changes in the audience as well as the media itself: for centuries, reviews were the prerogative of the mass print media. Other forms of thematization, typically of a narrative but not an axiomatic nature, involving the appropriate audio and video illustrative material dominated radio and television. In the Internet space with its ability to present stable informational pages—“publications,” which by their structure and principles are not much different from print media and new forms of communication, such as through blogs and social networks.

The stage of landmark political shifts in the first half of the twentieth century, associated primarily with the two world wars and changes in the system of major European powers, as a rule does not stand out in the history of journalism, which is unusual because this period is marked by a significant reorientation of professional vectors, the establishment of new goals and strategies, and even new media (primarily radio). So, below we highlight the period of 1900-1950, conditionally calling it the stage of “armed journalism.” Not without a good reason the Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovsky wrote at this time about the bayonet and equated the pen to it: the case in point here is not only about specific forms of journalism generated by the military reality, such as war journalism, front-line newspapers, and a whole corps of underground press, but also about the fact that information becomes a weapon, a means of struggle, and an element of strategy.

In 1925, criticism in the Soviet Union, according to the resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) “About the policy of the party in the field of belles-lettres (literature)” became “one of the most important educational tools in hands of the party” (Журышева 2007: 57). Classic examples of “taming of unruly” musicians include the publication in the newspaper *Pravda* in 1936 of “Chaos instead of music,”

an article about Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mt-sensk District* or the resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party "About Vano Muradeli's opera *The Great Friendship*" that became the beginning of a large-scale persecution of composer-"formalists." Gradually, Soviet music journalism and criticism became powerful weapons of influence on mass consciousness, since conclusions about certain phenomena published in the official publication often became admission to the stage and gained the attention of the public.

We can see similar techniques in the music journalism of Nazi Germany, which after 1933 (when Adolf Hitler dissolved the Association of German Music Critics), was "smelted" into an ideological weapon. In 1936 Reich Minister of Propaganda Josef Goebbels officially banned art criticism: since then, the review was replaced by "art survey," written according to strictly prescribed parameters. The intent of such writing was exclusively educational, not evaluative-narrative, and the themes were limited to the creativity of contemporary "mass" authors or prominent German composers of the past. Among events of current importance, preference was also given to the description of musical events of an educational nature for a mass audience or activities of amateur, mainly military ensembles (Lovisa 1993: 200).

Needless to say, contemporary modern music and jazz found themselves behind an information blockade on both sides of the frontline for several decades. Fabian Lovisa, a researcher of this period, emphasizes, "It should be emphasized that the prohibition of criticism primarily concerned not professional magazines, but the daily press" (Ibid.).

Obviously, these ideological opponents realized the specific power of the printed word, in particular in the daily press. It is in them we see the consistently used strategy of ideologization, the most characteristic features of which are a major emphasis on the educational functions of music journalism (with the intention to broadcast the only correct, in the opinion of the authority, point of view), lack of openness for discussion, the creation of a perfect schematic image of an artist or a composer, and "art survey" instead of "reviews."

In the period of "armed journalism" the review undergoes its first stages of decay. That which was popular in the previous period of the personal narrative genre, including reportage, profiles, and informative historical articles, replace it.

At the same time, according to Grunig and Hunt, it was just after the First World War when the two-way asymmetrical model of public relations was being developed, where for the first time the reaction of those who received information and the factor of feedback are taken into consideration. After all, it is not difficult to notice that the two previous historical models mentioned above do not

take into consideration the reactions of the recipient and correspond to the linear source-recipient scheme.

The originator of the two-way asymmetrical model is thought to be Edward L. Bernays, the nephew of Sigmund Freud and the author of a key work in the field of public relations *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923). The model tries to understand the needs of the recipient and to take them into consideration in the process of informing; furthermore, forms of manipulation of the public consciousness are based on the study of the preferences and tastes of the audience and the media utilizing them. The asymmetric aspect of the model consists in the fact that the main role still continues to be played by the source, the provider of information.

During the reign of totalitarian regimes, which carried out strict control of the mass media, the use of the model was realized primarily in taking into consideration the tastes of the masses, in trying to write comprehensibly on popular themes, and often also organizing deliberately positive feedback, publication of the "voice of the people," prepared accordingly. However, attempts to attract the broadest audience by simplifying the content was inherent to the mass media of democratic countries as well. Thus, in the second half of the twentieth century, the strategy of popularization becomes firmly established as a dominant one in art journalism (Beniger 1968).

Unprecedented rapid development of the mass media and communications since the 1950s, the growth of both transmitted and received information, as well as the social importance of that information, welcome the entry of a new historical phase of development of civilization—the information society. At this stage, of course, media strategies are also changing, including those that are directly related to the spread of information about music in all its varieties.

A sequence of metamorphoses in this sphere was connected both with the attempt to expand the audience of music and journalistic texts mentioned above and with the changes in concept about the thematic palette. The processes of renewal primarily impacted plots: the entertainment genre and pop and rock music begin to figure in mass media reports, and also reflection on modern and classical music returns. These processes, as well as the development of mass media, contributed to the appearance of new genres, such as reviews of audio recordings. The post-war period is also significant for the establishment and spread of the interview as a mass media genre.

At first glance, this class of text in fact could be most closely related to the personalization strategy. However, at the time when it becomes established, the very nature of the society's desire for information is changing. That is why the mass media, especially print publications, tried to win and keep as great a number of readers as possible: the strategy of popularization became important, being equally important to the "clusters" (Stegert) of both elitist culture and pop

culture. The center of gravity of the messages shifted again from “evaluation” to “narrative”: not to criticize, but to be read and to inspire readers to listen became the objective for the music journalist.

From this survey, the interview is a genre that most corresponds to such psychological qualities of humans as curiosity; along with providing information, it is characterized by strong cognitive and entertaining aspects that are necessary for a new strategy. In the elitist culture the interview very quickly acquired the features of a creative portrait, a comprehensive analytical-biographical sketch with the most valuable thing—reflections about the main character—as central to the composition. Popular culture also often turns to this genre, using it in the tradition of a press agent. But in any form of presentation, the interview effectively attracts an audience.

In general, Stegert highlights several techniques of the strategy of popularization. These techniques may coincide with those already mentioned above, but in this case they will serve other purposes (Stegert 1998: 167–171).

- *Popularization by selection of the theme.* In this case, the researcher has in mind the aspiration of the majority of modern publications to cover as large a range of topics as possible, relatively speaking, to write “in breadth” rather than “deeply,” to attract the reader by a large range of information. At the same time, we may consider this strategy as taking two directions: due to selecting one of the informational purposes the popularization of the reflected phenomenon takes place, converting it into a media event.
- *Popularization by selecting the genre* involves, according to Stegert, the use of selected informational genres for purely “promotional” purposes. They inform and seek to attract attention to a certain product, such as an announcement, an overview-forecast, or a calendar of events. Expanding Stegert’s thesis, we can remember the popularity of “announcements” and “booklets” in the nineteenth century, when the corresponding media preparation for operatic performances or concerts, not to mention the celebration of anniversary dates, was often more consistent and careful than today.

Another aspect of this technique is the introduction of genres alternative to the review and their subordination to both informative and analytical (critical) purposes. Today, the interview or news report could prove to be much more effective from the point of view of analytical capacity than traditional “criticism.” New forms of reviews, such as the review of an audio recording, are widespread.

No less important is the visual form of material presentation—the strategy of presentation— according Stegert. If

the first pieces of musical journalism as a rule did not even have headlines and only in half of the cases were displayed graphically separated from other streams of information (the tradition of general cultural “chronicles”), at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, we notice the first attempts to emphasize the importance of certain articles by visual presentation: information emphasized by a box, the headline introduction (headline complex), and even—an exceptional thing—publication of illustrations or photographs.

In proportion to the increased competition in print mass media in the twentieth century and its struggle to gain readership, the means of attracting attention also changed. One of the factors that directly influenced the changes in the nature of information in the twentieth century was speed of transmission.

In the information society, visualization of information acquired special importance because the recipient makes a decision in a few seconds, and it is very important to attract their attention either by an unexpected title, or for example, by an expressive illustration (photo) or an appropriate graphic or color accent.

According to Grunig and Hunt, the two-way symmetrical model of public relations became relevant in the 1960s–70s, that is, the stage of information society which presupposes the equal right to share information between the source and the recipient, while communicators acted exclusively as intermediaries (mediators). It is important that in this case, the feedback factor here is already taken into consideration: the recipient actively responded to information from the sources supplied by the communicator. However, the two last mentioned models have proven to be the most relevant for advertising, both commercial and political, and have played a lesser role in informative and analytical journalism or even in music journalism.

## Conclusion

According to the majority of researchers, in the last few decades, cultural journalism in general has been going through a crisis connected with the general loss of interest in “high” art (the elitist culture), as well as with the gradual decline in newspaper readership and newspapers’ dominance as an important source of information. Nevertheless, most print publications continue to dedicate sections to cultural themes, where both traditional reviews and materials of an “alternate” character are published. The attachment to the dates and specific facts, the advantage of practicing criticism over that of a composer’s one, as well as the stratification of authors: a wide range of writers, from barely competent to highly qualified, are featured in the majority of publications inhabiting the sphere of music journalism.

A general theory of communication and its role in the functions of mass media reveal another approach to the problem. It is the convention here to interpret *multifarious relationships and mass media contributions to the formation of the modern public system* as functions (Saxer 1974: 22–33). From this perspective, the most important features of music journalism seem to be informational and educational. Because articles about music in the mass media usually report as well as try to explain, to deepen knowledge, and to grab the reader's attention. This way of presenting information is concerned with the nature of music itself as the most abstract medium among the arts, which requires verbal explanation, as well as with the requirements of cultural journalism in general. Dieter Heß, a theorist in this field, also observes:

Actually, in themes from the sphere of culture, journalists rarely can limit their functions to "informational brokerage." Interpretation and evaluation of cultural events and products belong to the most important elements of cultural journalism. (Heß 1992: 24)

So the educational function as the most important function for music journalism, after its intent to inform, is restricted only to explanation and expanded ways of presenting themes and often attempts to evaluate and form public opinion. It is not by chance that in the 1970s, a new vision of four main mass media tasks appears: alongside "information" is, quoting Ulrich Saxer, "comment," "education," and "entertainment" (Saxer 1974: 25). Ryszard Kowalczyk, a Polish specialist of mass media, tends to combine the first two concepts as functions of social orientation and social motivation (mobilization) (Kowalczyk 1999: 11).

In fact, information about music in the mass media is very often carried by a motivational or mobilization element, such as announcements of concerts or performances, the task of which is attendance, or reviews of music publications or recordings designed to attract a buyer. However, the task of social orientation within the framework of the educational function of music journalism is not limited to the distribution of the respective cultural product. It is also a matter of forming public opinion about it, about the assessment and prediction of the social significance of musical events.

In different epochs the educational function of music journalism was equally important: only the tools, ways to achieve the goals, and the genres have changed. If in the nineteenth century virtually every publication connected with musical subjects served to socially orient and motivate and the desired effect was often achieved by rather subjective means of evaluation, at the beginning of the twentieth century there were more articles of a general educational nature. Their impact on public consciousness appears to be more moderate, and at the same time the goals more

global, including assertion of national identity and certain political ideas.

In today's information society the function of social orientation has taken on special significance again. The range of cultural, including musical, events and phenomena is almost boundless, and the mass media play a crucial role in the preferences of the public.

The entertainment (recreational or gratificational) function of music journalism is often overestimated or falsely identified as predominant. Music as art is an important form of mental recreation; it promotes spiritual rest. Information about music may also be a form of entertainment: it will never belong to the breaking news, which includes reportage on natural disasters or political or economic upheavals. However, to limit its role only to entertainment would be wrong in principle.

In their perception of information about music (unlike music itself) the recipient usually connects with expectation of pleasure as well as, just like with any other receipt of mass media, with the search for information and a reference point. Therefore, the comments made by Heß about cultural journalism in general seem to be relevant for music journalism:

Cultural journalism must satisfy informational demand and help in orientation. After all, from the point of view of "active leisure" the choice has long been made not only by the public. And it is this "active leisure," which could mean both the usual curiosity and desire to learn, to study something more, requires the critical-informative support of cultural journalism. (Heß 1992: 11)

Therefore, in the discourse of entertainment, the concept of the critical approach actualizes again when the matter concerns music. In this context, we can mention another function of journalistic messages commonly attributed to information on political or economical themes, namely the function of criticism and control.

In the case of music journalism, we are dealing with a bilateral process: the formation and articulation of public opinion, and the influencing of the tastes of the audience as well as subordination to them. An event not articulated in the mass media may be completely lost and go unnoticed, consequently losing importance.

Furthermore, we can develop these strategies as well an additional strategy, which I suggest defining as the strategy of motivation. It is probably one of the most important strategies of our time. I'm sure that this strategy can revive both music journalism and music criticism. One of the most important challenges today is to motivate the public, not only to reflect, appreciate, or criticize. And how can that be done? In this case all the enumerated strategies become very useful. Personalization is very important in the time of globalization. Feuilletonizing could be helpful for an

analysis of “serious” media performance. And of course, popularization as a call for cooperation and coexistence in the multisided stage of contemporary music culture is also important.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> From the point of view of another connotation that this genre acquired in the post-Soviet school, we are inclined towards the definition of “review” when the matter concerns “feuilleton” as a genre, and characterize this strategy as the strategy of thematization.
- <sup>2</sup> It is associated with the name of New York journalist Ivy Lee, who followed his own slogan “Tell the truth.” Ivy Lee was one of the first journalists to introduce the practice of linking materials to competent sources and presenting reliable, accurate, and undistorted information in newspapers.

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### Santrauka

Nūdienos muzikos kritiką griežtai įremina ne tik labai specifinės temos, bet ir vienalytė skaitytojų auditorija. Muzikos žurnalistika susiduria su iššūkiu, kuris turi nenuginčijamą poveikį žurnalistikos praktikai. Ši žurnalistika skirta platesnei auditorijai, ji išryškina socialinius, ideologinius ir politinius problemų aspektus.

Remiantis pristatomu tyrimu galima išskirti keletą svarbiausių argumentų. Muzikos kritika – tai protinė, į aktualios informacijos apie muziką analizę ir vertinimą nukreipta veikla, kurios rezultatas – viešas įžodinimas įvairiomis publicistinėmis ir šio žanro ribas peržengiančiomis formomis. Muzikos žurnalistika galėtų tapti viena iš muzikos kritikos realizavimo formų masinėse informacijos priemonėse.

Muzikos žurnalistikos padėtį iš esmės apibrėžia tai, kiek rimtai muzikos žurnalistai traktuoja viešąjį interesą. Šie naujieji iššūkiai tam tikra prasme „nužudė“ klasikinės muzikos kritiką, tačiau kartu jie suteikia naują būdą atgimti ir plėtoti.

Galima daryti prielaidą, kad klasikinės muzikos kritikos „mirtį“ arba mažiausiai – tam tikrą stagnaciją po 1945-ųjų nulėmė trys veiksniai. Pirmiausia šią mirtį lėmė didėjanti takoskyra tarp „klasikinės“ ir „populiariosios“ muzikos. Antroji priežastis – spartėjantis informacijos perdavimas ir augančios jo apimtys. Trečiasis muzikos kritikos nykimą nulėmęs veiksnys susijęs su tuo, kad viešojoje erdvėje daugėja informacijos, kuri ne visada kokybiška.

1998 m. vokiečių publicistas ir medijų teoretikas Gernotas Stegertas paskelbė išsamią studiją apie kultūros žurnalistikos strategijas, iš dalies remdamasis Gerhardo Maletzke koncepcija, bet praplėsdamas ją ir pritaikydamas kultūros žurnalistikai. Šioje studijoje pateiktai pastebėjimais ir išvadomis galime vadovautis ir šiandien bei toliau jas plėtoti. Stegertas suskirsto pagrindines kultūros žurnalistikos strategijas į tris grupes: suasmeninimas, populiarinimas ir feljetonizavimas (pastaroji susijusi su tradiciniu vokišku terminu, įvardijančiu kultūrai skirtas laikraščio skiltis ir pan.). Šią apžvalgą puikiai papildė Grunigo ir Hunto apibrėžti

keturi viešųjų ryšių modeliai. Šiuo atveju modelis – tai savotiška ideali schema, apibrėžianti rezultatą, pasiektą taikant tam tikrą strategiją.

Taigi informavimo strategija, kurios tikslas – suteikti auditorijai nešališkas, objektyvias, atitinkamu momentu reikalingas žinias, išlieka aktuali muzikos žurnalistikoje šiais istorijos laikotarpiais, ypač „rašytojo-žurnalist“ klestėjimo laikais (1750–1850).

Šiuo laikotarpiu iš visų trijų žurnalistikos sudedamųjų (įvykis, procesas, asmenybė), ryškiai vyraujant asmenybės komponentui, muzikos žurnalistikoje ypatingą svorį įgauna kita žiniasklaidos strategija – personifikacija (suasmeninimas). Minėtas tyrėjas išskiria kelias technikas kaip pagrindines:

- suasmeninimas pasirenkant autorių;
- suasmeninimas apeliuojant į auditoriją;
- suasmeninimas suteikiant turiniui ir (arba) atitinkamai – vertinimui subjektyvumo;
- suasmeninimas pasirenkant pagrindinę temą.

Geriausiai suasmeninimo strategiją išreiškia kompleksinis priemonių rinkinys, ypač būdingas istoriškai pirmam viešųjų ryšių modeliui – jau minėtam „atstovavimo spaudoje

arba viešinimo“ modeliui – ir skirtas kuo platesniam konkretaus įvykio arba asmenybės išviešinimui (net nesvarbu – teigiamam ar neigiamam).

XIX a. antra pusė muzikos žurnalistikos istorijai svarbi tuo, kad šiuo laikotarpiu išryškėja ir baigiantis šimtmečiui stiprėja žurnalistikos, kaip informavimo formos, ir kritikos skirtis. Kultūros žurnalistikoje šis laikotarpis ne mažiau reikšmingas dėl to, kad susiformuoja ir plėtojasi išsamios recenzijos („feljetonas“) žanras. Kadangi šis gerai įsitvirtino ir netgi ėmė užimti visą redaktoriaus skiltį, Stegertas tai apibrėžė kaip vieną pagrindinių kultūros žurnalistikos strategijų – „tematizaciją / temos suaktualinimą“.

Žurnalistikos evoliucijoje redakcinių straipsnių etapą chronologiškai keitė kitas viešųjų ryšių modelis – viešojo informavimo, ypač aktualus XX a. pradžioje.

Vėlesniais žiniasklaidos raidos etapais recenzijos žanras, kartu ir temos suaktualinimo strategija, išgyveno estetinių ir ideologinių veiksnių nulemtus pakilimus ir nuosmukius. Tačiau pasirodė, kad siekis pritraukti platesnę auditoriją paprastinant turinį neatsiejamas nuo demokratinių šalių žiniasklaidos. Taigi XX a. antroje pusėje meno žurnalistikoje įsigali ir ima vyrauti populiarinimo strategija.

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