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# Nikolay Sidelnikov's School of Composition

## *Nikolajaus Sidelnikovo kompozicinė mokykla*

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### Abstract

Nikolay Sidelnikov (1930–1992) was one of the leading composition teachers at the Moscow Conservatoire; his pupils include a number of the most noteworthy Moscow composers representing various stylistic directions. The phenomenon of Sidelnikov's school has not been explored yet. His pedagogical method has been called unique. The present article makes an attempt at analyzing wherein lies Sidelnikov's unique methodology of teaching the theory and practice of composition.

**Keywords:** Nikolay Sidelnikov, composition school, composition technique, individuality, Vladimir Martynov, Vladimir Tarnopolsky, Kirill Umansky, Ivan Sokolov.

### Anotacija

Nikolajus Sidelnikovas (1930–1992) buvo vienas pagrindinių kompozicijos pedagogų Maskvos valstybinėje konservatorijoje. Tarp jo mokinių – bene ryškiausi Maskvos kompozitoriai, atstovaujantys įvairioms stilistinėms kryptims. Iki šiol Sidelnikovo kompozicinės mokyklos reiškinys nėra plačiai ištirtas. Savo pamokose jis taikė unikalius pedagoginius metodus. Šiame straipsnyje siekiama išanalizuoti Sidelnikovo dėstymo originalumo aspektus, mokant muzikos komponavimo teorijos ir praktikos.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** Nikolajus Sidelnikovas, kompozicinė mokykla, komponavimo technika, individualybė, Vladimiras Martynovas, Vladimiras Tarnopolskis, Kirilas Umanskis, Ivanas Sokolovas.

The concept of composition school is often related to some 'canon' or a group, generation of composers. It usually embraces particular types of composing technique, genre preferences, and spiritual and aesthetic principles. In this sense, the phenomenon of Nikolay Sidelnikov's school of composition is paradoxical. On one hand, Sidelnikov's composition class was one of the strongest in the Moscow Conservatoire, in a centre of culture, and highly influential because of that. A number of the most noteworthy Moscow composers were his pupils. On the other hand, Sidelnikov's pupils realized themselves as bright and absolutely different individuals. Masters of contemporary musical language, they evolved in different, at times opposite, directions in conformity with the vectors of their interests, as follows:

**Eduard Artem'jev:** the founder of electronic music in the USSR and Russia; electronic avant-garde, later electronic art rock and electronic World Music.

**Vyacheslav Artëmov, Dmitriy Smirnov** (Great Britain), **Vladimir Tarnopolsky, Kirill Umansky, Anton Rovner, Bozhidar Spasov** (Bulgaria, Germany), **Jamilya Zhazylbekova** (Germany): various avant-garde idioms.

**Vladimir Martynov:** post-avant-garde, minimalism, conceptual art, multimedia.

**Tatyana Mikheyeva:** experimental ethno-techno music, World Music.

**Iraida Yusupova:** post-avant-garde, conceptualism, ambient.

**Ivan Sokolov:** happening, neoromanticism.

Naturally enough, a question arises: is there anything that unites so dissimilar and unordinary musical personalities?

Sidelnikov's method of teaching is regarded as unique. In order to grasp its essence, it was necessary to address his pupils, the presently working composers, to read their published reminiscences of their teacher, and to meet with them. As was to be expected, live communication format revealed new information, new details and new issues for discussion. I am grateful for that to Kirill Umansky, Vladimir Martynov, Vladimir Tarnopolsky and Ivan Sokolov.

The reminiscences of my interlocutors are so vivid that they bring into high relief the individuality of each of them, and this is valuable on its own account. At the same time, the recollections are closely allied in key points, which allow their systematization. The following key points were selected: the teacher's personality; his relationships with students; lesson structure; the circle of composers being studied; technical aspects of music composition; individual outcomes.

### The teacher's personality

Sidelnikov studied at the Moscow Conservatory from 1950 to 1957 under Anatoly Alexandrov and Yevgeniy Messner, at the graduate school - under Yuriy Shaporin. From 1958 to 1992, he taught at the Composition Department. Yevgeniy Messner, his composition teacher, produced

a beneficial influence on Sidelnikov's personal development: he provided him with a solid professional base and laid the foundation of his erudition.

His style is individual<sup>1</sup>. On the background of the academic school, he was distinguished by his openness to modern language, genres, spheres (jazz), from Stravinsky – neo-folklore, from Debussy – colour, sound recording techniques and spontaneous, figurative-figurative sonics ... Tonality, including free chromatic series, the second functional system, with its fundamental constructive elements, with its monograms, leith-heights, gestalt-constructs etc. – in essence, a new tonality and tonal forms that correspond to it – reprise, high-altitude ones. Style allusions to Scriabin, Medtner, Jazz, Blues, Brahms, Mahler, Stravinsky – the program plan, they are conceptual and therefore combine into a single, multi-layered author's style. His favourite composers were Wagner, Stravinsky, Brahms, Schubert, Musorgsky, Debussy, Ravel, Berg, Bartók, Monteverdi, Mozart, Pärt. He liked jazz. He felt the influence of Stravinsky most strongly. As Tarnopolsky commented: 'Sidelnikov was among the first who revived Stravinsky in Russia.'<sup>2</sup>

A powerful influence of Sidelnikov was formed by Vladimir Martynov's artistic consciousness. Especially in the period of intensive studies, at the age of 14–16, Martynov experienced the magical impact of his teacher's personality ('unique', 'of a grandiose human level') and the scope of his knowledge, as well as, in some way, of Sidelnikov's social network. Which included such great men as pianist Heinrich Neuhaus, philosopher Valentin Asmus, poet Boris Pasternak, and composer Andrey Volkonsky.

Sidelnikov was my guru [...] I had a real teacher. Many do not know what it means [...]. If I have any achievements, they are due to my getting into unique surroundings and obtaining a possibility to enjoy true Schooling.<sup>3</sup>

Each lesson promised most interesting discoveries. At times I left Sidelnikov in a state of intellectual shock. (Мартынов 2001: 111)

Tarnopolsky says:

A lot of stories were told about his remarkable erudition. He often quoted Spengler and Nietzsche; he knew Russian philosophy, the Bible, the Talmud, and the Koran perfectly well. To say nothing of his brilliant knowledge of the history of music – from Dutch polyphonists to jazz stars'. (Тарнопольский 2001: 112)<sup>4</sup>

## The method

My interlocutors found it difficult to define Sidelnikov's method. However, recalling their lessons they actually answered my question about it. 'There was no method at all', said Martynov, but in fact he described it, recalling the

lessons he started to take at the age of 13. Lessons began with an analysis of Beethoven's sonatas. Then Sidelnikov went over to the pupil's compositions.

Those were analyses made by a composer, lessons of communication between him and the author. It was shock and revelation; I couldn't believe anything like this was possible.<sup>5</sup>

He had his own system, different from many others. In addition to a discussion of purely professional matters, we talked on various subjects having to do with culture. Guided by Nikolay Nikolayevich, I discovered for myself the names of such artists and poets as Klee, Miró, Khlebnikov, and other great 20<sup>th</sup> century masters. (Мартынов 2001: 111)

Judging by these recollections, Sidelnikov moulded professionals in his pupils: he taught them to learn from masters, to perceive music as a composer does and to see how a composition has been made. The same as young painters view a master's piece: they come close to the canvas to examine the painting technique in detail. Besides, Sidelnikov expanded the students' knowledge of arts, philosophy and culture, thus developing their personalities. He educated his pupils in many areas previously unknown to them. He was raising artists who were to become mature personalities.

When Sidelnikov saw that Ivan Sokolov was an excellent pianist, he found a special approach to him: he asked Ivan to play at sight Debussy's preludes, the *Adagio* from Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata, Schubert's sonatas, Scarlatti's sonatas, Mozart's variations, and more.

We examined the music. It was important to him that the composer should investigate a piece by fingers – play it rather than listen to a recording. The communication with the composer should do without an interpreter, without a mediator.<sup>6</sup>

Ivan Sokolov expressed a surprising idea: Sidelnikov's method consisted in that he had a separate method for each student. Meantime, all his students were present in the classroom.

Our timetable provided two hours a week, but he wanted us to sit from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. We skipped lessons on other subjects; he managed to arrange it with the dean's office.<sup>7</sup>

One more subtle idea:

The main thing is that he was concerned about the student rather than about music. Students were more important for him than the music they wrote. He "got the feel" of each student. For him, there was no bad music as such. There was music that did not reveal student's individuality. That is why all musicians he taught found themselves. He sometimes said to me quoting Stanislavsky: "I don't believe you". That is, my music appeared insincere to him although I wrote it experiencing genuine feelings. He found it to be not mine. He saw me differently.<sup>8</sup>

Quoting Sidelnikov's statement that the ultimate goal of his teaching is to draw individuality from each student, Iraida Yusupova notes:

He never taught us to write music in the direct, didactic meaning of the word, but he did inspire us immensely. (Юсупова 2001: 116)

Sokolov adds and explains what 'he inspired us' means:

He said: "Listen to yourself. Come to appreciate the uniqueness of your personality. You all are absolutely unique creatures, and you must create your own individual, inimitable styles". That was his primary idea. [...] Sidelnikov fired us up with his intonation, enthusiasm, attitude to work, and his love for music. He stimulated intuition and encouraged us by a glance, gesture, or intonation: "Ah, what a nice use of strings!", "What a chord!", "What a climax!"<sup>9</sup>

The results were achieved not only through such effects. The individual tone of conversation with each student created an atmosphere of confidentiality and informal creative communication. This allowed him to ease diffidence, stiffness or constraint if it inhibited creative freedom.

Umansky:

He had an ability to activate human energy and let it out. He could act as a doctor: he noticed the features that seemed to him negative and hampering creative work. He said to me: "You appear as a youthful buttoned-up old man. But you are really young and it's a pleasure to look at you". He called on natural manifestations of one's self, urged to express oneself spontaneously, "on the level of the first signalling system", as he said, and used to repeat: "We should learn from animals. Look how logical and beautiful is everything in their movements".<sup>10</sup>

All his pupils are unanimous in that Sidelnikov was not striving to train a student in a particular composition technique; he would not provide technological instructions concerning some writing style. He was concerned with individuality. The ways of finding one's own self are inscrutable. Freedom is a no easy thing to get. One has to gain the knowledge of freedom. And the teacher led his students in this direction unbendingly but tactfully and carefully at the same time. 'He threw a human being into some kind of solitude, watched him dangling there and just suggested: "This can be here, and that can be there"'.<sup>11</sup> A Spartan method of education, indeed.

Solitude for a student meant freedom to Sidelnikov. He never tired of watching his students floundering about. He would not interfere much but waited patiently to see where his pupil would emerge, to be more exact, what fairway he would choose to swim freely in the vast space of opportunities.

Umansky:

He said: "You should make abstract categories to become yours." I felt I began thinking in abstract categories as if they were mine. And I saw as if a glade, a gleam of light.<sup>12</sup>

## Lessons

All students gathered at the lessons, but the Professor worked with each of them separately. Severe critical remarks were pronounced openly in the presence of the whole class, which caused discomfort and constraint. Umansky gives an eloquent explanation of the educational function of such a lesson:

Student's individuality was alienated and regarded as something in a state of formation. [...] In this way he, first, eradicated the sense of narcissism in us and, second, let us develop independently, that is, feel ourselves to be self-sufficient'. (Уманский 2001: 116)

The lesson took the form of a spirited monologue. There was a flow of associations, quotations, switching from music to literature, philosophy, fine arts, and vice versa. Umansky again comments eloquently on the expediency of such intellectual attacks:

Sidelnikov strove 'to blow out of us all that was trifle and casual by his philosophical-literary hailstorm. Every time I left the classroom I experienced the same shock that I underwent after my first meeting with Sidelnikov. (Ibid.: 117)

A great part of the lessons was devoted to listening to music with scores. The students listened to Wagner's operas, to the symphonies by Brahms and Mahler, to Berg, Debussy, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Webern and Bartók, to Monteverdi, Beethoven's quartets, Mozart's string quintets, Ligeti, Stockhausen, Nono, and Berio. Listening with score was accompanied by technical, philosophical and cultural-historical comments. Sidelnikov scrutinized each score. His analyses contained an element of mysterious communication between composers, when one makes an analytical study of the other's work. Sidelnikov's analysis touched upon the form, thematic construction, instrumentation, and other music elements. However, there was one more thing mentioned by Ivan Sokolov:

If he liked something, he emphasized it: "What trombones!", "What a chromatic progression in *Non morir* from [Monteverdi's] *L'incoronazione di Poppea*!" He highlighted all that impressed him: the orchestra, part-writing, expression, the beauty and harmony of form; he was enthralled with creative energy and creative fervour.<sup>13</sup>

Creative energy and creative fervour deserve special mention as, in all probability, it was only in Sidelnikov's composition class that such indefinable features of a musical work as composer's creative energy and creative fervour were taken into consideration and held up as an example. Listening to music as a composer meant not only making an analysis of elements of the musical substance, but also seeing the composition in the process of its creation, as it were, that is, both in its integrity and in the course of creative thought

boiling at the moment of creation. This is how Sidelnikov did it! He often repeated his famous expressions: 'to strike against a masterpiece', 'to strike against a genius'.

There were also his ecstatic remarks concerning superior mastery with provocative absurd associations, for instance:

What a modulation! Look, Schubert passed from A minor to A flat minor in one touch, like Maradona.<sup>14</sup>

### The tasks

Group lessons, with each student attended to personally, included a separate assignment for each student. That is, he 'drew' (as he used to say) something individual from the student precisely by giving him or her full freedom. Then he would offer his comments to help remove the shortcomings. Umansky:

For me, it was to become less "hermetic". It was different with Yusupova; in her case, there was distortion of another sort – too much intuition and emotions – and he led her away from it.<sup>15</sup>

Sokolov:

If a student immersed himself in some single trend, he came under a severe critique. For instance, if a person started writing dodecaphony. Not for any other reason but just because it is easy to hide oneself behind dodecaphony. Or if a person started writing à la Sviridov. He said: "It's not your face. You hide behind Sviridov. It's a mask. It's easy to hide behind a mask and forget your individuality. Try to find yourself". And the man wrote wonderful music. I remember that all was licked clean. But he [Sidelnikov] rejected it.<sup>16</sup>

Students were to bring to the classroom their own music. Sidelnikov would turn down a borrowed style. That is why he did not teach techniques in the habitual sense of the word. To teach techniques means to form the pupil's style from the outside. That is, the teacher shapes the pupil's style. Sidelnikov held that "to teach techniques means to cover up the lack of talent",<sup>17</sup> to hide behind technique or style means to harm one's individuality. In his view, technology excludes the *ferveur* of a creative personality, which reveals the latter's natural uniqueness. Sidelnikov nurtured personality.

Technique is something rudimentary; it comes before authorship. Harmony and polyphony techniques were studied with Yury Kholopov. His course covered historical techniques from the Middle Ages to the present day. Assimilating those techniques, the future composer could try various paths, find his bearings and choose a path conformable to his nature using his own musical language and technical arsenal. Young Martynov treated dodecaphony with much ingenuity proceeding from the idea of a piece and finally brought it nearly to minimalism. The language of his twelve-tone String Sonata was so individual that Sidelnikov accepted it unconditionally.

### Technical details

Sidelnikov required natural material from his pupils – something that cannot be learnt. When such material was produced, he urged them to find ways of developing it that stemmed from its nature. He then helped unobtrusively. The material must be unique; the teacher barred self-repetition. He required new material as well as new quality of working with it. Sokolov:

Copying devices is the same as hiding behind somebody else's style – he struggled against it like a tiger. If the music was rough or somewhat strange, he accepted it. But if it was smooth, glossed over and sounding nicely, next to being readily published, he would most likely reject it.<sup>18</sup>

This might be rather offensive for such vulnerable persons as composers but, as we see, his pupils drew proper conclusions.

Summarizing the above, we can distinguish three points of his work with the students.

1. The choice of material is an individual path (avoiding clichés and stamps).
2. Development of the material.
3. Feeling of form.

**The choice of material** was a strictly individual course of action. This is the stage for the search for free material. At this stage, the teacher took the position of an observer. This Spartan method of education forced the student to "flounder", at all costs to swim and survive; or to find the strength to fly off with a free fall, having managed to balance the earth's gravity with repulsive forces, and soar - soar, depending on its own wings.

Samples were offered without limits by any ideology: Beethoven, Wagner, Monteverdi, Debussy, Schoenberg, seditious in those years Stockhausen, Boulez, Nono, and others.

**Material development.** At this stage, the main thing is always a new quality of work with the material. Sidelnikov did not allow repeating and replicating the reception as such. He taught his students to feel the material from within, its individual properties, to find an organic development for him.

It is perfectly understandable why Sidelnikov did not deal with writing systems, technicians; he instilled a taste for searching for individual ways. Therefore, he avoided inertia, proceeding from the predetermination of the system and the threatening loss of the individuality of the material in the course of its development. At this stage, Sidelnikov already connected the students to the process and showed possible options for working with the material. His own skill in cutting sparks from the resistance of the material, the ability to get vital energy from the victory over the material clearly showed the students how to make development tense and lively, natural, rather than entropic and faceless.



**The form.** The form could not be prescribed in advance, from outside. He brought up a sense of form from the student - he demanded each time to find a unique form, organically derived from the properties of this material.

The passage of all these steps could be successful under the general condition of freedom and breadth of humanitarian knowledge.

### Teacher's personality continued

**Psychologist.** Individual attitude to a pupil, his emotional state and spiritual constitution was of primary importance for Sidelnikov. Remember Umansky's words that he, like a doctor, was able 'to activate human energy and let it out'.

**Severe critic.** A merciless critic, one may say. To Umansky: 'Never do it again'; to Martynov: 'You distressed me greatly', etc. Umansky:

That was a 'healing' devaluation of what seemed valuable to you.<sup>19</sup>

Sokolov:

He was utterly tough. When I fell for Denisov's style in the third year, I wrote the first movement of a Violin Concerto, and I got a grandiose reprimand. In very sharp words. I played my piece to him and he said to me: "You know, Vanechka [pet name of Ivan], you have very good music paper". I was hurt. I had had a recondite, a purely cerebral idea. I proceeded not from sound but from the number, from the series. Boulez-like structuralism, as it were. Sidelnikov rejected it sharply, and he was right. Later I wrote ten pieces in Denisov's style. These he liked. There was live music in them.<sup>20</sup>

**Father.** Liberal creative contacts were maintained both in the classroom and in everyday life without any particular bounds between the two spheres. Sokolov:

Sidelnikov showed us his new compositions and played excerpts from them.<sup>21</sup>

Tarnopolsky:

Students visited him at his country house, where they were treated generously and listened to Stockhausen, Berio, Xenakis [...], whom they could not listen to at the Conservatoire.<sup>22</sup>

Sidelnikov did not train his students for exams; his main task was to raise free artists. Yet, they had to pass tests and write something for exams. Nurturing a free creative personality, he was at the same time fully aware of the problems the students might encounter at tests and exams. He cared for his pupils and their study progress and advised them to write different things for lessons and exams. It was a dual situation. There was full freedom in Sidelnikov's class. Vladimir

Bitkin wrote a cantata with a Hebrew text (in the 1970!). But something like this was clearly inappropriate for exams. Something 'placid' was needed for a student to be promoted.

On the one hand, he reared some moral principles in his pupils, while on the other he would encourage them to betray these very principles for the sake of smooth progress towards the graduation. Dmitry Smirnov called this 'double standards'.

A deep conflict about it occurred between Sidelnikov and his favourite pupil Martynov. How come discussing Klee, Miró, Khlebnikov, Guillaume de Machaut, playing the *Goldberg-Variationen* the one hand, and writing a diploma on a Lenin-related topic, on the other?<sup>23</sup> Martynov judged such tactics harshly as a kind of Soviet conformism.<sup>24</sup> However, his teacher's forced tactics was a protective one: in the 1960s and 1970s, a retreat from academic composition, to say nothing of allusions to political subjects, could entail administrative consequences. Sidelnikov safeguarded the destinies of the young against such consequences to the best of his ability.

**Tutor.** As concerns high ethics, Sidelnikov would not teach his pupils to become their own image-makers. That was not his nature (he never promoted himself either); image making was outside the sphere of his moral values. This is evident from the performance history of his works. His pupils note that Sidelnikov as a truly grand composer deserves more attention.

Tarnopolsky:

Sidelnikov was one of the most talented composers of his generation – by his artistry, his melodic gift, the inimitable plasticity of his intonation, and his true musicianship. (Тарнопольский 2001: 112)

Martynov:

It's disappointing that the place given today to Sidelnikov in Russian music does not correspond to the real nature of his talent – an utmost important vertebra has been removed from our history, and so much the worse for us... (Мартынов 2001: 111)

### Personal outcomes

The essence of Sidelnikov's composition school, in fact, consists in the combination of all the below mentioned aspects.

Umansky:

I would have been different not only in music composition but in life too.<sup>25</sup>

Martynov:

I was taught art in the highest sense of the word, not only that of composition.<sup>26</sup>

He had a great influence on me. First, his 1968 composition *Russian Fairy Tales* gave me a most powerful spur to minimalism. Second, [...] Sidelnikov found an absolutely new conceptual approach to the problem of finale – with the help of sudden modulation to a different style. [...] The transition to extramusical categories was effected in this way. (МАРТЫНОВ 2001: 111)

Tarnopolsky:

Paradoxically, my communication with Sidelnikov led me to a few absolutely contrasting thoughts:

1. Not to be a distilled purist irrespective of whether it is serial purism or the dogmatic socialist realism.
2. Not to become eclectic at that!
3. To master composition techniques thoroughly.
4. Not to write profusely. Write only what definitely has to be written. Not to engage in hackwork in the cinema, which, in my view, exerted a negative influence on nearly all composers of Sidelnikov's generation.
5. Not to be a slave of some 'musical ideology'.<sup>27</sup>

Sokolov:

He opened up freedom to us. The sense of freedom, the sense that we live in some terrible fettered state where this is allowed and that is prohibited. This sense had been weeded out of us during five years of studies. I remember I felt myself comfortable in my creative work.<sup>28</sup>

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Sidelnikov wrote three operas: *The Scarlet Flower* by Sergei Aksakov (1974), *Chertogon*, the opera diologia for Nikolai Leskov's *Zagul*, *The Hangover* (1978–1981), and *Running* for Mikhail Bulgakov (1987); ballet *Stepan Razin*, 6 symphonies, 3 oratorios, a lot of choral, chamber and instrumental music. The first international success in 1971 on the rostrum of UNESCO composers in Paris brought him his *Russian Fairy Tales*, a concert for 12 musicians. The concert was listed among the ten best works of the world concert season 1970/71. His works were triumphantly performed in Prague and Bratislava, Zagreb and Berlin, Milan, Amsterdam, Paris and Beijing. I would like to especially note the performances of his music in Concert Merkin Hall, New York: Chamber Symphony *DUELI* for cello, double bass, 2 pianos and percussion, written by the request of Rostropovich was performed at the on 11 March 1990; Symphony for Lermontov's *Rebel World of the Poet* for the baritone and chamber orchestra, with a great success was held on February 7 1991; and the premiere of his spiritual concert at the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary under Andrew Goodman.
- <sup>2</sup> From author's interview with Tarnopolsky, 10 September 2016.
- <sup>3</sup> From author's interview with Vladimir Martynov, April 1996.
- <sup>4</sup> To add to this: Sidelnikov was keen on history, studied chronicles and was a connoisseur in fine art and poetry. His personality is described by his pupils in such terms as 'unique', 'of grandiose human level', 'strict', 'tough', 'careful hands of a tutor', 'unshakable spiritual creative attitude', 'a Russian futurist', 'impetuous', 'explosive', 'almost physical protest against any form of coercion, against everything that impedes creative

freedom', 'mask of irony and bravado concealing a tragic face', 'a guru arousing admiration and veneration', 'tremendous efficiency', 'sparkling humour', 'inward sense of freedom and utmost sincerity', 'a man of the future'...

- <sup>5</sup> Interview with Martynov, 10 August 2016.
- <sup>6</sup> From author's interview with Sokolov, 15 September 2016.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Interview with Sokolov, ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> From author's interview with Kirill Umansky, July 2016.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Interview with Sokolov, ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Interview with Umansky, ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Interview with Sokolov, ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> Interview with Umansky, ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Interview with Sokolov, ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> Interview with Umansky, ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Interview with Sokolov, ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> Interview with Tarnopolsky, ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Martynov and Kondorf graduated from the Conservatoire in 1970, the year of Lenin's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary. The rector's office and the composition department demanded that all graduates of the composition department present cantatas devoted to Lenin at the exams.
- <sup>24</sup> Interview with Martynov, ibis.
- <sup>25</sup> Interview with Umansky, ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Interview with Martynov, ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Interview with Tarnopolsky, ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> Interview with Sokolov, ibid.

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## Santrauka

Nikolajaus Sidelnikovo kompozicijos klasė buvo viena stipriausių Maskvos konservatorijoje. Čia studijavo keletas žymiausių šiuolaikinių Maskvos kompozitorių – labai skirtingi, išsaugoję ryškų individualumą, visiškai nepanašūs vienas į kitą.

Visi jie – šiuolaikinės muzikos kalbos meistrai, pasukę skirtingais kūrybinių ieškojimų keliais. Edvardas Artemjevas – elektroninės muzikos, elektroninio avangardo, vėliau – elektroninio artroko ir elektroninės pasaulio etninės muzikos (angl. *world music*) buvusioje Sovietų Sąjungoje ir Rusijoje pradininkas. Viačeslavas Artimovas, Dmitrijus

Smirnovas, Vladimiras Tarnopolskis, Božidaras Spasovas, Jamilia Jazylbekova atstovauja skirtingoms avangardinės muzikos kryptims. Vladimiras Martynovas – postavangardistas, minimalistas, konceptualiojo meno kūrėjas, multimedijų menininkas. Tatjana Michejeva kuria eksperimentinę etnotechno, taip pat pasaulinę etninę muziką. Iraidos Jusupovos muzikai būdingi postavangardizmo, konceptualizmo ir ambientinės muzikos bruožai. Ivanui Sokolovui artimi hepeningai, neoromantizmas. Kas jungia šias itin skirtingas asmenybes? Klausimas natūraliai kyla apie metodiką. N. Sidelnikovo pedagoginė metodika laikoma unikalio. Norint ją perprasti, reikėjo surinkti ir palyginti keletą kompozitoriaus studentų – Kirilo Umansky, Vladimiro Marynovo, Vladimiro Tarnopolsky ir Ivano Sokolovo – prisiminimus.

Nepaprastai gyvi mano pašnekovų pasakojimai atskleidžia kiekvieno jų asmenybės savitumą, o tai jau savaime vertinga. Visgi jie turi ir daug ką bendro. Šias sąsajas būtų galima susisteminti atsižvelgiant į šiuos aspektus: pedagogo asmenybė, jo santykiai su studentais, pamokos struktūra, studijoms pasirinkti kompozitoriai, techniniai muzikinės kompozicijos aspektai, pedagogo asmenybė ir asmeniniai rezultatai.

## Appendix

In the Appendix, I present the information on four students of Nikolai Sidelnikov, participants in the interview for this article. These are Vladimir Tarnopolsky, Cyril Umansky, Vladimir Martynov and Ivan Sokolov. Four unique composers and four different ways in which they are realized in music. Nevertheless, they came from one “nest” – the school of composition of Nikolai Sidelnikov.

**Vladimir Tarnopolsky** (b. 1955, Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine) since 1973 studied in Moscow Conservatory, including composition with Sidelnikov, instrumentation with Edison Denisov and theoretical subjects with Yuri Kholopov. Symphonic and chamber works by Tarnopolsky have been performed at international festivals of contemporary music in Europe and the United States, the premieres of his scenic works took place in Russia, France, Germany, Holland, Norway. Among the performers of his works are – Rozhdestvensky, Rostropovich, Gutman, Bashmet, Lazarev, Sinai, Jurowski, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Modern, Ensemble InterContemporain, Schönberg Ensemble, Ensemble Recherche, Musikfabrik, Ensemble of soloists of the Bolshoi Theater, etc.

Tarnopolsky – one of the founders of the Association for Contemporary Music (1989), Ensemble “Studio for New Music” and the Centre for Contemporary Music at Moscow Conservatory (1993). Since 1994, he has organized the annual international festival of avant-garde music *Moscow Forum*, which has received widespread recognition in Russia and abroad. He is one of the initiators of the International

Competition of Young Composers named after P. I. Jurgenson (since 2001).

Professor of the composition class at the Moscow Conservatory (since 1992), where he founded and headed the Contemporary Music Department (2003). Among his students are laureates of international and All-Russian competitions. Tarnopolsky's compositions have been awarded with the Dmitry Shostakovich Prize and the Paul Hindemith Prize (in 1991).

**Kirill Umansky** (b. 1962, Moscow) is a composer and organist. In 1986, he graduated from the Moscow Conservatoire in composition class with Sidelnikov, organ with Roizman and Bodyl. He has been an member of the Moscow Association of Contemporary Music (since 1997). Laureate of the BBC Radio contest in 2000, 3<sup>rd</sup> prize at the Orpheus Radio competition and International Competition “KlingendeKirche” (in 2002). Since 1991, Umansky has acted as an organist, mainly as a performer of contemporary works for the organ. Since 1995, he teaches at the Department of Instrumentation of the Moscow Conservatory.

Umansky is an author of musical compositions of various genres, mainly instrumental for chamber original compositions, as well as chamber-vocal and choral ones. His works are performed in Russia, the Netherlands, Austria, Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, USA, and South Korea. His music performers include – Pekarsky, Spencer (USA), Association of Contemporary Music (under the direction of Kasparov), New Music Studio, Da capo (USA), Pekarsky Percussion Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble State Academic Bolshoi Theater, Spiritual Revival Choir, cooperation with conductors Ponkin, Krimets, Korobov, Kondrashev, Annamamedov, Skripka, Dronov, Vinogradov, Kontorovich.

Umansky is a regular participant of the following festivals *Moscow Autumn*, *Moscow Forum*, *Alternative*, *Friends' Music*, *Russian Music Academy*. One of his works was dedicated to his teacher, *Fantasy of the memory of Nikolai Sidelnikov* for a solo organ (composed in 1992, published in 1997, Moscow: Composer).

Composer, philosopher, artist, and poet **Vladimir Martynov** (b. 1946, Moscow) graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in the composition class of Nikolai Sidelnikov in 1970 and piano class of Mikhail Mezhlumov in 1971. In 1973–1980, he attended the Moscow Experimental Studio of Electronic Music. The author of over 10 books and many articles on culturology, philosophy of music, and the history of spiritual singing. He has collected and explored Russian and Oriental folklore, published collections of works by Machaut, Gabrieli, Dunstable and Dufay. In 1977–1978, he organized and directed the rock band *Forpost* (composer, keyboard player). In the 70s-80s, he took part in avant-garde festivals in Riga, Tallinn, St. Petersburg and Novosibirsk. He taught at the Theological Academy of the Trinity-Sergius Lavra (1979–1997). Since 2005, he has been lecturing on Musical Anthropology at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Moscow



State University named after Lomonosov. Laureate of the State Prize (2003).

Martynov is one of the founders of the festival *Alternative* (1988), the initiator of creative projects *New Sacred Space*, *Opus posth* (also of the eponymous instrumental ensemble directed by Tatyana Grindenko), *Searches for a new situation*. He has taken part in various international actions, festivals, multimedia exhibitions-installations. Since 2000, the annual festival of works by Vladimir Martynov has been held in Moscow.

The components of his style are conceptualism, rituality, culturology and related actualization of historical language paradigms, he works at the junction of music composer and "traditional streams". His creative method combines the principles of avant-garde and postmodernism, neo-traditionalism and contemporary art. His style was formed under the influence of multiple interests and developments in the field of folklore, music of the West-European Middle Ages and Renaissance, oriental cultures, Christian singing traditions of the West and the East, rock culture, electronic music, conceptual poetry, contemporary art.

In the early 1970's, Martynov was a representative of the radical avant-garde. Dodecaphonic and sonorous compositions demonstrating conceptual programming, interaction of musical and non-musical principles, and culturological accent. In 1974–1978 in his aesthetics, there was a turn to the new simplicity, the concept of minimalism and rituality. The works of the 1980s–2000s combine post-minimalism, bricolage (allusions, quasi-citations), intertextuality, borderline style and genre situations, synthesis with visual arts, theatre, new performing strategies, multimedia, art media objects.

Operas, choral and chamber works of Martynov are performed at numerous international music and theatre festivals and stages in Germany, France, Italy, England, Holland, Estonia, Latvia, Japan and the USA. Martynov collaborated with theatre directors Vasilyev, Lyubimov, Epelbaum, Isahakyan, film directors Khrzhanovsky, Gerasimov, Abdrashitov, Lungin, and poets – Moscow conceptualists Prigov and Rubinstein. Among the performers of his works are such ensembles as the Mariinsky Theater Orchestra, the State Russian Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hortusmusicus ensembles Andres Mustonen, the Kronos Quartet, Opus posth, the Academy of Early Music, the Mark Pekarsky Percussion Ensemble, the Victor Popov Chorus, the Dmitry folklore ensemble Pokrovsky; conductors – Rozhdestvensky, Gergiev, Yurovsky; musicians – Bashmet, Kremer, David James, Mark Tucker, Lyubimov, Grindenko etc.

Pianist and composer **Ivan Sokolov** (b. 1960, Moscow) graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in 1983 and post-graduate studies in 1986 in Sidelnikov's class on composition and Naumov on piano. In addition he was a chess player and

at the age of 13 he achieved the 1<sup>st</sup> rank in chess. He teaches at the Moscow Conservatory. Since 1995 he lived in Cologne, since 2003 – in Bornheim (near Bonn), remaining a Russian subject. Sokolov is one of the founders of the Moscow music festival *Alternative*. As a composer he writes in various genres, giving preference to chamber music. Many of his chamber-vocal works were based on the verses of Pushkin, Baratynsky, Tyutchev, Blok, Bunin, Khlebnikov, Platonov, Zabolotsky, Aigi and other poets. Sokolov wrote two operas *Cryptophonika* (in collaboration with Yusupova and Nevraev, 1995) and *Miracle likes to warm his heels* (on the verses of Vvedensky, 2000).

In composing and piano performance, Sokolov embodies his understanding of artistic creativity as a spontaneous game. Sokolov is interested in developing the directions indicated by Cage and Kagel. He declares absolute freedom in the choice of material: from the primary elements of music, such as a note-point, chord, passage or even some finished work (in performing). Often his works combine performance of the piano and verbal communication with the public.

Sokolov calls himself a speaking pianist – this is his invented method of artistic behaviour on stage: he not only plays the piano, not only prefigures the performance with a foreword, but also includes in the fabric of his works a program or improvised verbal text, as well as movement..

Beginning with the second half of the 1990s (1994–1996), Sokolov's compositions, in spite of the external impression of turning to traditional forms (to opera, chamber-vocal lyricism, to melody, tonality, verse rhythm), in essence, keep in touch with game aesthetics, giving a new result. Conceptualism or features of absurd aesthetics are intricately and in different proportions combined with the elements of new sincerity and new simplicity as part of a pluralistic language or, as the composer defined it, "a stratification of style into several styles".

In the concert repertoire of Sokolov, the music of the 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries – Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Brahms, Mussorgsky – occupies a permanent place. However, most of the music belongs to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sokolov often includes in his programs world premieres of the works of Pelecis, Gubaidulina, Martynov, Grabovsky, Raskatov, Tarnapolski, Karaev, Ekimovski, Smirnov, Firsova, Yusupova, and others. As a pianist, he performs a lot in the cities of Russia, the whole of Europe and the USA, performing solo or with orchestras. As well, he is a regular participant of the festivals of contemporary music (*Alternative* and *Moscow Forum* in Moscow, *Icebreaker* in Seattle, and others). As an author and performer, he participates in the Russian-German Quartet of Composers, composed of Alexey Aigi, Dietmar Bonnen, Manfred Niehaus and himself. Moreover, Sokolov participates in art exhibitions and in the projects of the contemporary art of sculptor and artist Vadim Zakharov.