

MINORITY COMPOSERS

The University of Manchester, Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama, Saturday 13 October 2012

ABSTRACTS

Michelle Assay (Université de Paris-Sorbonne) and **David Fanning** (University of Manchester): 'Mieczysław Weinberg: a Polish Jew in Moscow'

As a Polish-born composer living and working in the Soviet Union, Weinberg was in a minority of one (or little more than that). And the fact that he was of Jewish nationality until near the end of his life made his position within Soviet musical culture doubly marginal. Issues surrounding these complex identities were rarely far from the heart of his output.

He had fled from his homeland at the time of the Nazi invasion in September 1939, and one of the first works he composed following his arrival in Minsk was a collection of songs to verses by one of Poland's finest poets, Julian Tuwim. Then from the mid-1950s he produced a spate of song-cycles, cantatas and even symphonies to texts by Tuwim and other Polish poets, while his first two operas, *The Passenger* and *The Madonna and the Soldier*, are set largely or entirely in wartime Poland. Meanwhile his Jewish nationality and family connections led to his being shadowed by the NKVD and eventually imprisoned (briefly) in the Lubyanka.

This paper will explore the impact of Weinberg's background on his place within Soviet musical culture, and in particular to what extent the subject-matter and style of his 'Polish' works are distinct from the rest of his output. We plan to illustrate the talk with examples from Weinberg's hitherto unrecorded Polish songs, including one of his finest opuses, *The Gypsy Bible*, Op. 57.

Jory Debenham (University of Lancaster): 'Musical Expression of Minority Identity in Ullmann's Seventh Piano Sonata'

The composer Viktor Ullmann was no stranger to the complexities of being a minority and combining the seemingly contradictory aspects of his identity, but in the Nazi concentration camp at Theresienstadt he was forced to contend with the harsher realities associated with the nationalist and religious antagonism that surrounded him. Even within the walls of the camp, he was a minority: a German-speaking, secular intellectual surrounded by a Czech-speaking, Jewish majority.

In the final movement of Viktor Ullmann's final piano sonata, composed in Theresienstadt in 1944, some profound statements are offered regarding the divergent and often conflicting identities that were forced upon the prisoners of the camp. Prominent themes from German, Czech, Slovak, and Protestant traditions are interwoven with a fugue that is derived from and held together by a Hebrew Zionist theme upon which it is based. Ullmann's vision would appear to be two things: an image of a diverse yet united community on the one hand, and on the other, a literal portrait of the cramped, close physical quarters of the camps.

A major portion of the population incarcerated in Theresienstadt and the other smaller camps were the educated and prominent citizens of Prague and Vienna. Like Ullmann, many of them were assimilated or converted Jews who had very little, if any, Jewish identity until it was forced upon them by the Nazi policies. For Ullmann, it was not until he was forced to wear the yellow star and was subjected to the various prohibitions and restricted activities proscribed by the Nazis that Judaism became a part of his identity. In Theresienstadt, Ullmann began arranging Hebrew and Yiddish melodies for choral groups in the camp and eventually,

he incorporated these themes into his larger works. Born in Czech lands to Austrian parents who had converted to Catholicism prior to his birth, Ullmann grew up in Vienna and spent a great deal of his adult life in Prague. He married three times, each time to a Jewish woman, but personally subscribed to the Christian-based anthroposophic spiritual tradition.

Ullmann's music brings to light the question of how musicians can represent identities in their music, especially as a minority living under an oppressive political regime. My paper will discuss how his use of musical quotation and cultural references offer insight into his personal philosophy and experience with regards to his minority status both before and during World War II.

Stanimira Dermendjieva (Independent scholar): 'Reappraisal and Rediscovery: Achilles Alferaki and his Works'

The Russian of Greek descent statesman, composer, pianist, writer and talented artist Achilles Nikolayevich Alferaki (born 3 July 1846, Kharkov (present day Ukraine) – died 27 December 1919, Petrograd) has remained in Russian history as a governor (in late 1873) and a mayor (1880-1888) of Taganrog. As a composer he made his appearance at the age of thirty. The English musicologist Richard Beattie Davis (1922 - 2008) in his book *The Beauty of Belaieff* (2009: 50-52, 332) made an attempt to write about the historical importance of Alferaki's work and compile an Extensive Individual Bibliography of the composer and also stress his close relationship to M. Belaieff's circle in Saint Petersburg.

The Alferaki family appeared in Russia in the late 18th century. Achilles' grandfather Dimitris Alferakis took part in the Russian-Turkish war (1768-1774). Catherine the Great offered him land, located in the Northern seashore of Azov Sea in 1774. The Alferaki family gave Russia many well-known statesmen, scientists, painters, artists, and composers. After studying History and Philology at Moscow University, Alferaki moved to Taganrog. During his chairmanship he carried out a lot of community work, encouraged the town's musical and dramatic activities, the development of elementary education, and took part in establishing different charitable institutions. His proposals to set up a memorial to Peter I of Russia, who founded Taganrog in 1698, and to make a major reconstruction of Taganrog's harbor were realized. The first music classes and a symphony orchestra, directed by the conductor and composer Václav Suk (1861-1933) were initiated in Taganrog. Alferaki handed in his resignation and moved to Saint Petersburg in 1888; he subsequently became Chancellor of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (from 1891), and later Director of the Russian Telegraph Agency. According Alferaki's "Curriculum vitae (18 January 1914)", salvaged in the Manuscript Department of the Scientific Music Library of Saint Petersburg conservatory, Achilles was a "Hofmeister of the Imperial Court, Privy Councillor, and a member of the council of the Ministry of Popular Enlightenment [Ministry of Education]". The composer Alferaki became acquainted with Tchaikovsky, and was well-known in Saint Petersburg. His romances and songs, which include elegy, love lyrics and drama, were printed several times by M. P. Belaieff. But his dream- to see his opera Kupal'skaya noch' (St John's Eve), libretto by A. D. Averkiev (first version 1888, second version 1912) performed on the stage of the theatre Mariinsky one day, never came true.

Steve Downes (University of Surrey): 'Power Play, Seduction and Resistance in the Work of Szymanowski'

This paper explores issues of centrality and marginality, nation and exotic, and the power relations at play in these oppositions through an analysis of Szymanowski's opera *King Roger*. In this opera a cultural cross-roads – Norman Sicily – stands as an example of an alternative

centre, one challenging established cultural geographies of the periphery, in which an encounter with a seductively powerful 'stranger' symbolically turns into a recognition of self identity.

Michael Fjeldsøe (University of Copenhagen): 'Is National Music our "Own" Orientalism? The Case of Benjamin Yusupov and Tajik National Music'

In the post-Soviet Central Asian republics, Orientalist notions of the 19th century have been turned into powerful symbols of national inheritance. This is a challenge to mainstream conceptions of national music being somebody's 'own' music while 'orientalist' notions are applied from outside by more powerful actors. As the notion of 'our' music is established through processes of distinction and identification it is not just a matter of finding the 'essentials' of genuine folk music or of the style of national composers. It is defined against an 'other' from which it has to be different. On the other hand, theories of orientalism consider identities of Western societies to be established by distinction from an Eastern world by applying features of inferiority to the 'other', the Orient, which maintain the Western position of hegemony over the rest of the world (Said). In some cases, though, features defined from the outside as oriental or exotic traits are internalized and applied by the group of people involved in the process of nation building. One purpose of this paper is to discuss whether theories of exotism and orientalism can contribute to our understanding of the processes of distinction and identification in the process of establishing national musics.

I will discuss the emergence of Tajik national music and the special case of the composer Benjamin Yusupov. In an interview (published 2011) he stated to me, 'I am Jewish with a background in a Muslim tradition of music and with a Western education from Moscow'. As a musician out of a Jewish family, he is part of a minority group in Tajik society, while the Tajik population was a minority group within the USSR, although the titular nationality of the Soviet republic of Tajikistan. As Frolova-Walker has shown, the Russian model of national music was firmly established by being distinct from Western-European music, that is implying it to be 'Eastern', and this model was once again applied when Central Asian republics were to be distinct from Russian music, now turned into their 'Western' equivalent. Yusupov's music from the 1990s uses this model of integration of Eastern melodies, sounds, and instruments into a Western modern orchestration in works like *Jonona*, *Tanovor*, and *Nola*.

Janna Kniazeva (Russian Institute for Art History, St Petersburg): "'A Little Europe on the Banks of the Neva" and European Musicology, 1920-1940: The Case of Jacques Handschin'

The proposed paper deals with the field of musicological thought that is concerned with the issue of national minorities. The subject of this paper is the Russian/Swiss musicologist and organist Jacques Gandshin (Handschin; 1886-1955). Jacques Gandshin was born in Moscow, but his family originated from Basel. He was raised in the atmosphere of minority - he belonged to a separate ethnic group that was trying to preserve its tradition and identity. The experience of being an individual who belongs to a small group, unwilling to merge with the "majority", was imprinted into him since birth and it formed the basis of his future scientific attitude. In 1905, having completed his education in Switzerland and Germany, Gandshin went to Paris. This is where he fell in love with France, the love that he carried throughout his life. The many-sidedness of his personality was also reflected in the multitude of his native languages (German, French and Russian). In 1907 Gandshin returned to Moscow, and in 1908 he got a job as the head of the organ class at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He moved to St. Petersburg, a city where many ethnic groups interacted - which was one of the central issues

of the history of this city. St. Petersburg in 1910 was a major European metropolis on the same level as Vienna, London and Paris, "a little Europe on the banks of the Neva." Here Gandshin spent ten and a half years of his life (1909-1920) and fully developed as a scholar. How did these (and later) years affect him in terms of the issue of minorities?

Gandshin organised his multi-dimensional linguistic space in a specific way: his primary language (the one spoken at home) - was always the minority language (in Russia, German; in Switzerland, Russian). Aside from this main language he used another two on a daily basis: Greek and Latin - the languages of science, only spoken by a small group of intellectuals. Gandshin's psychological profile was characterised by two opposing tendencies: 1) towards fragmentation and 2) towards synthesis. 1) The example of Jacques Gandshin reflects the "psychology of minority": a constant and deliberate separation from the surrounding context, the experience of being "special" that was acquired throughout the years that he spent "being different." He was a permanent "guest", always an "alien." However, this "alien" produced some feats of undeniable national value (such as the Russian organ school, or Swiss musicology). 2) The psychology of such a synthetic individual was all the more interesting because he was seeking to bring together the cultures that were synthetic themselves: the Swiss culture, and the Russian culture in its St. Petersburg version. Therefore, Gandshin's actions were always individual (but explainable on the basis of the said synthesis). This is what made him a special (and very influential) figure in the context of European musicology in the pre-war and war periods.

Jacques Gandshin did not fit into any traditional configuration of the national, or even a simple plurality of several national traditions. The study of his personality and his output raises questions that are yet to be answered.

Ivana Medic (Open University and University of Manchester): "The Woman Who Wrote Music Like A Man": Galina Ustvol'skaia'

One of the most intriguing Russian composers of the twentieth century, Galina Ivanovna Ustvol'skaia (1919-2006) had to wait for many decades for her oeuvre to get the recognition that it deserved. Aside from being a sole woman of her generation in a traditionally 'male occupation', her status in the Soviet Union was further complicated by the fact that she refused official commissions and decided against joining the Communist Party; but also by the non-commercial and uncompromising character of her music and the fact that her works were inspired by her religious and mystical beliefs. The issue that I intend to discuss here is the common perception of Ustvol'skaia as a composer who wrote decidedly 'unfeminine' music. Here are some typical assessments: 'The surface of her works is sharp and raw as a sandpaper; her music is masculine, self-willed and strict. It has no room for sentimentality, meekness or frivolity.' (Tishchenko 1990); 'There is nothing feminine in this music. It is an amalgam of masculinity, of free will and severe spirit, which relentlessly discards everything superficial'. (Suslin 2002). I will argue that not only Ustvol'skaia's music, but also her rebellious attitude and the events from her personal life contributed to such an oddly genderised reception of her works and her artistic personality in general.

Katarzyna Naliwajek-Mazurek (Institute of Musicology at the University of Warsaw): 'Polish-Jewish Composers and their Identity versus the Holocaust'

The comparison of the identities of Polish composers of Jewish descent of the pre-war period and the era after the Holocaust is a challenging task. The analysis is obscured by several factors, such as the distinct assimilation tendency among the majority of Polish-Jewish intellectual circles or the complete identification with the European and / or Polish

identity. This was a natural process, as these composers were brought up mostly in a non-religious environment and their links to “Jewishness” or Jewish culture were often less evident than their upbringing in a pluralistic society, even if on the one side it was gradually filled with racial tensions and animosities, on the other – it was nurtured by the diversity. Thus, such composers as Szymon Laks, Tansmann and others often left for Paris, Vienna or Berlin to continue their studies, to commence their careers and to explore the music of these vibrant cities. What happened to them during the Second World War led them to confront their identity. The paper will describe the war-time experiences and compositions of such composers as Kassern, Laks or Szpilman, in the light of their pre-war aesthetics and the after-the-war compositions.

Danijela Zdravic-Mihailovic (Faculty of Arts, University of Niš): ‘The Influence of Czech Musicians on Cultural Life in Niš at the End of the 19th and the Beginning of the 20th Centuries’

At the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20-th centuries, Czech musicians residing in the South Serbian city of Niš and its surroundings were significant participants in the process of modernization of the cultural life. They were promoters and proponents of diverse cultural, artistic and pedagogic activities, owing to which the earlier, mostly amateurish music practice was elevated to a higher artistic level. Besides pedagogic work, which was their main field of activity, some of these Czech musicians were conductors, performers and composers. The article reflects on the activities of those musicians and their influence on music and cultural life in Niš.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Michelle Assay was born in Tehran and studied in Kiev at the Tchaikovsky Academy, graduating with a Master’s degree in performance, musicology, pedagogy and criticism. After a year in Canada, working mainly as actress and piano teacher, she returned to Europe to work with Carine Gutlerner at the Erik Satie Conservatoire in Paris, where she recently obtained her DE (Diplôme d’Etat) and was laureate in the Concours international musical de France. Michelle is currently studying at the Sorbonne, where she recently completed her Master 2 with a dissertation on Mieczysław Weinberg’s relationship with Shostakovich, and where she is now engaged in doctoral research on the topic of Hamlet in Russian Music and Visual Arts. She is also collaborating with her husband, David Fanning, on a biography of Weinberg and on a major survey of the Symphony in the Soviet Union.

Philip Ross Bullock is University Lecturer and Fellow in Russian at Wadham College, University of Oxford. He is the author of *The Feminine in the Prose of Andrey Platonov* (2005), *Rosa Newmarch and Russian Music in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century England* (2009), and numerous articles on various aspects of nineteenth and twentieth-century Russian literature and music.

Jory Debenham is a doctoral candidate at Lancaster University. She holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Calgary, and a Master of Music from the University of Alberta. Her master's level research focused on the music of Czech/Austrian composer Viktor Ullmann, presenting her thesis as a lecture-recital in May 2011. Currently she is researching the music of the Theresienstadt concentration camp, exploring ways of deriving and uncovering musical meaning from the scores and texts that have survived, as well as examining the issues surrounding contemporary performance and presentation of these works.

She is also active in the musical education community; in addition to having maintained a private piano studio for several years before moving to Lancaster in 2011, she is in demand as a festival adjudicator and practical examiner for the College of Examiners of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, Canada.

Stanimira Dermendjieva (Independent scholar, PhD, Ionian University of Corfu, Greece) studied violin at the National Secondary School of Music and Stage Art in Burgas and later in the Higher Institute of Music and Pedagogy, Plovdiv, Bulgaria (now the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts of Plovdiv). She continued her studies in Musicology in the Music Department of the Ionian University of Corfu, Greece and has currently finished her doctoral thesis “Vasily Pavlovich Kalafati (1869-1942): The Life and Works of the Forgotten Composer and Teacher of Russia” in the Hellenic Music Research Lab. She has presented papers at several international musicological conferences. She has collaborated with the Tellogleio’s Foundation of Arts of Aristotle University of Thessalonica in Greece (2006-07) and the Rimsky-Korsakov Apartment Museum (branch of the St. Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music in Russia) (2010) for the exhibition of the archives of the Russian composer Vasily Kalafati. She is presently working at the Primary School education in Corfu and has had her works published both in Greece and Russia.

Steve Downes (University of Surrey)

Stephen Downes is Professor of Music at the University of Surrey. He is the author of *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian* (1994), *Szymanowski, Eroticism and the Voices of Mythology* (2003), *The Muse as Eros* (2006), *Music and Decadence in European Modernism* (2010), and *Hans Werner Henze: Tristan* (2011). He is currently working on a study of Britten, Weill and Henze as 'post-Mahlerian' composers for CUP, and an edited collection of essays on the aesthetics of music for Routledge. In 1999 he was awarded the Karol Szymanowski Memorial Medal.

David Fanning is Professor of Music at the University of Manchester and has a varied career as scholar, pianist and critic. Author and editor of books on Nielsen and Shostakovich, his ongoing research projects include a historical survey of the Symphony in the Soviet Union and completion of the late Per Skans’s life-and-works study Weinberg, both in collaboration with his wife, Michelle Assay. His 2010 book *Mieczysław Weinberg: In Search of Freedom*, is a concise ‘advance’ version of the Weinberg study. He is also active as critic for Gramophone and The Daily Telegraph, and as a BBC broadcaster and public speaker.

Michael Fjeldsøe holds an MA in Musicology and German Culture from the University of Copenhagen (1994) and obtained his PhD on the repertoires and institution of contemporary music in Denmark 1920-1940 (1999). He works primarily in the field of 20th and late 19th century music. Special interest are Central and Eastern European music, Danish music, music between the world wars, music and nationalism, music in its relation with politics, cultures of the Cold War, as well as contemporary music of today and scholarly editing of music. Recent publications include early performance practice in operas of Kurt Weill, changing images in the reception of Béla Bartók, Carl Nielsen and the current of vitalism in art, Danish music and cold war, an interview with Benjamin Yusupov, and the symphonies of Vagn Holmboe and George Enescu. A book on the musical cultures of Danish Neue Sachlichkeit (in Danish: Kulturradikalismens musik) will be published 2012.

Dr. Janna Kniazeva, geboren 1965 in St. Petersburg (Russland). Promovierte 1994 mit dem Thema über Orgelmusik im Konzertleben St. Petersburgs um 1900. 1994-1998 Postdoktoratstudium in München (Institut für Musikwissenschaft) und Wien (Institut für Musikwissenschaft). Seit 2001 ist Dr. Kniazeva wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin des *Russischen Instituts für Kunstgeschichte* (Abteilung für Musikgeschichte) in St. Petersburg. Mitglied von IMS. Dr. Kniazeva nahm in mehreren internationalen Tagungen und Kongressen (davon IMS' 1997 in London und 2002 in Loeven) teil, ist die Autorin der zahlreichen wissenschaftlichen Publikationen (in Russland, Deutschland, Österreich und Schweiz). Im März 2011 erschien bei Schwabe (Basel, Schweiz) eine Monographie von Dr. Janna Kniazeva: *Jacques Handschin in Russland: Die neu aufgefundenen Texte*. Resonanzen: Basler Publikationen zur Älteren und Neueren Musik. Musikwissenschaftliches Institut der Universität Basel. Bd. 1. Schwabe, 2011. 1045 Seiten. ISBN 978-3-7965-2659-6. Kreis der wissenschaftlichen Interessen von Dr. Kniazeva beinhaltet: Geschichte und Methodologie der Musikwissenschaft, das Phänomen Multikulturalität im Musikleben des 19. (bis 1914) Jhs., europäische (Musik-)Metropolen des 19. (bis 1914) Jhs. in ihren Wechselwirkungen, Aspekten der russischen Bach- und Chopin-Rezeption [u. A.].

Katerina Levidou is External Scientific Collaborator at the University of Lausanne (supported by a grant from the Igor Stravinsky Foundation), where she previously held a Swiss Federal Scholarship (2011-2012). She has been Junior Research Fellow at Christ Church, University of Oxford (2007-2011), where she also taught undergraduate classes and tutorials. She studied musicology, the piano and music theory at undergraduate level in Greece (University of Athens and National Conservatory). She received an MMus from King's College London (2003, funded by the Onassis Benefit Foundation) and a doctorate from the University of Oxford (2009, St Antony's College, funded by the Ismene Fitch Foundation and a Vice-Chancellor's Fund Award). Her doctoral thesis explores the intersection of Stravinskian neoclassicism with Russian émigré Eurasianist ideology. She has published numerous book chapters, articles and book reviews on Russian and Greek music. She is co-organiser of seven international conferences as co-convenor of the Russian and Eastern European Music Study Group of the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies (since 2008). Her current projects include: co-editing a volume of essays on the reception of Greek antiquity in music since the nineteenth century (forthcoming with Cambridge Scholars Publishing) and a monograph on the relationship between Stravinskian interwar Neoclassicism and Eurasianism. Her research interests include Russian and Greek music, modernism, nationalism, emigration, music and politics, music and spirituality, musical constructions of identity and aesthetics.

Dr Ivana Medic is an Associate Lecturer with the Open University (North West) and teaching assistant at the University of Manchester. She graduated musicology from the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade, Serbia, where she also obtained her master degree. In 2010 she completed her Ph.D. at the University of Manchester, funded by the Overseas Research Award, Graduate Teaching Assistantship and School Award. Her doctoral thesis, supervised by Prof. David Fanning, focused on Alfred Schnittke's symphonies nos. 1-3 in the context of Soviet music. Dr Ivana Medic has published two books and over 20 studies and essays. Her research interests include Russian music (Schnittke, Scriabin, Prokofiev), Gesamtkunstwerk, Darmstadt avant-garde, Stockhausen, piano music, gender studies, popular music and Balkan music. Prior to moving to the United Kingdom, she worked as Music Editor and Editor-in-Chief at Radio Belgrade 3.

Katarzyna Naliwajek-Mazurek, PhD, is member of the faculty of the Institute of Musicology at the University of Warsaw. She works on Polish contemporary music and interrelationship between music and politics in the 1930s and 1940s. Recipient of the Paul Sacher Foundation scholarship (2005). Her doctoral dissertation (2009) received the Feicht Award of the Musicologists' Section of the Polish Composers' Union. For her exhibition Music in Nazi-occupied Poland presented in France (June-July 2010), Germany (2010 and 2011) and Poland (2010- 2011) she was awarded the Hosenfeld/Szpilman Gedenkpreis at the Lüneburg University in 2011. She has collaborated with the Polish Radio and Polish National Audiovisual Institute and is currently on board of the Witold Lutosławski Association and member of programme committee of the International Contemporary Music Festival "Warsaw Autumn".

Danijela Zdravic-Mihailovic was born in Brus in 1974. In 1998 she got a degree in Music Pedagogy from the Academy of Art in Priština (Music Pedagogy). In 2005 she obtained a MA in music analysis from the University of Arts in Belgrade with a thesis on the types of recapitulations in Haydn's and Mozart's String Quartets. Author of a number of papers in the field of music analysis. Danijela is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš. She teaches Music Analysis at the Faculty of Arts, Niš.