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The place of ‘Russian music’ on the Multicultural Map of Europe

Abstract: Both Russian and non-Russian composers and music critics willingly used the notion of Russian exoticism to differentiate the Russian musical legacy from the (western) European tradition, especially in the 19th century. At the same time, various Russian musical practices were considered to be exotic in Russia itself. In this article it is suggested that these two perceptions of Russian music influenced each other, having an impact on the formation of Russian national music. It is further claimed that Russian music served both as an internal and external tool for defining the country’s musical culture on the multicultural map of Europe.

Key words: Russian music, national music, exoticism in music, multiculturalism

Much has been written on the topic of Russian music and especially about the issue of its identity in the broader, European context. Among chief contemporary authors who have contributed to this ongoing debate, one should single out Richard Taruskin, Marina Frolova–Walker or Marina Ritzareva, whose excellent works dealing with the roots of Russian music and its further development in a dialogue with other European traditions serve as a departure point for this article. Taruskin has especially ventured to define Russia musically without neglecting socio-cultural or political backgrounds, as the title of one of his books indicates (Taruskin 1981; 1993; 1996; 1997; 2009). Ritzareva, on the other hand, may be regarded as a representative of the Eastern European tradition of research: born in Leningrad, she specialises in 18th century Russian music and composers such as Dmitry Bortniansky and Maxim Berezovsky. She has also expanded her expertise into the 19th century Russian musical nationalism and the question of vernacularity (Ritzareva 2002; 2016). Marina Frolova–Walker has bridged these two traditions as a Moscow-educated musicologist who moved to the United Kingdom. There her interests shifted to the historiography of Russian music and, more specifically, the myths surrounding the creation of Russian national music. In her 2007 book dedicated to this issue, she challenged the popular view that the ‘Russian soul’ can be heard in Russian music (Frolova–Walker 2007).

Having in mind this extensive scholarship, my goal in this article is to cast some light on different approaches to reading and fathoming Russian music by (predominantly Western) audiences, especially showing the irregular meanders of its comprehension. It seems that the phenomenon of Russian mu-

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sic has been mostly discussed either with regard to the claims of its national identity (underlining the allegedly ‘national’ traits) or to its celebrated exoticism, connected with alleviating the importance of musical influences coming from the so-called Russian ‘Others’.

Russian Music as National Music

The great 20th century composer Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) asked rhetorically in the year 1939: “Why do we always hear Russian music spoken of in terms of its Russianness rather than simply in terms of music?” (Stravinsky 1959: 95). In other words he diagnosed that music composed in Russia was stigmatized with its ineffable ‘Russianness’ and accordingly labelled as Russian, immediately raising national connotations. Taruskin has drawn attention to this inclination dominating the historiography of Russian music and discussed it very detailedly and profoundly and in great detail. The scholars have never ceased wondering at the persistency of this, allegedly still prevailing, predisposition of closely linking compositions written in Russia with the performance of duties of national character, apparently willingly undertaken by Russian composers (Gasparov 2005). Supposedly, they must have felt some sort of an almost patriotic obligation to contribute to the creation of the Russian national idiom in music, and their sense of this civic responsibility was fulfilled in compositions exhibiting national feelings or aspirations. Moreover, in numerous books on music history, Russian music has often been treated as an internal matter for the Russians, i.e. as their domestic, inner concern, which when appreciated abroad could eventually prove to be of general value. It is sufficient to quote a passage from the monograph by a renowned German musicologist Carl Dahlhaus who observed that “the national substance of Russian [...] music was a condition of its international worth” (Dahlhaus 1980: 84). Taruskin, continuing his discussion on the manner of approximating Russian music to an international audience, eventually concluded (in a rather gloomy tone) that “the habit of speaking of Russian music above all in terms of its Russianness has ingrained many prejudices and lazy habits of thought. It is often taken for granted that everything that happened in Russian music has a direct relationship, positive or negative, to the national question” (Taruskin 1984: 323).

The tendency to highlight nationalism as the driving force of Russian composers has been revealed in the endorsement of the 19th century group of composers (Balakirev, Rimski–Korsakov, Cui, Mussorgsky, and Borodin) propagated as The Five or Mighty Handful [Могучая кучка/Moguchaya kuchka] which has invariably been presented in music history books as a truly Russian formation. The Five is often described as a nationalist phenomenon, whose main objective was the promotion of Russian music, not only in opposition to Western (mainly German) music, but also by seeking internally to comprehend and define Russian artistic music liberated from foreign influences. Due to their desire “to select from all that has gone before that which is distinctive, ‘truly ours’, and thereby to mark out a unique, shared destiny” (Smith 1998: 43), The Five are even credited to be the “cradle of Russian national

music" (Seroff 1948), the expression itself reflecting Russian attempts to define the sources and characteristics of the so-called 'Russian soul'. The trend to describe The Five as a truly Russian phenomenon corresponds with the 19th century Russian ideals of Slavophilism, in which Russia was perceived as "prototypically Slavic", and was assigned with "all dignified values of humanity" (Gammelgaard 2010: 18). Furthermore, Russia was believed to have "a mission to act in Europe on behalf of fellow Slavs" (Gatrell 1994: 263): being a "leading Slavic nation" it served as "a symbol of Slavic peculiarity and strength [...] against Germanization" (Gammelgaard 2010: 15–16), or broadly understood westernization.

It was Russian art and music critic Vladimir Stasov (1824–1906) who, being an ardent Slavophile, sharply objected to and openly criticised musical compositions he considered to be not Russian enough, fearing that westernization could affect Russian music and present a considerable threat which would "undermine the indigenous development of a Russian national music" (Frolova–Walker 2001: 927). Stasov saw Russian cultural life as a struggle "between two forces: the dominance of western European cultural influences in the capital and the dominance of the indigenous Russian culture in the rest of the country" (Olkhovsky, 1983: 25). He felt almost personally responsible for the promotion of Russian music that could be hailed as national. He vehemently advocated the idea of using native traditions in music conceived by Russian composers. In his opinion The Five were the only true representatives of Russian music, accordingly, any other attempts at music creation were habitually considered as not Russian enough. For example the oeuvre of Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) was under constant attack levelled from composers considering themselves successors of Stasov's ideals. Tchaikovsky's works were criticised for being more European than Russian. However, outside Russia Tchaikovsky was still seen through the prism of the country he was born in, i.e. as a Russian composer. Hence Taruskin pitied him because although Tchaikovsky may have been "implicitly denigrated for not being as 'national' as his 'kuchkist' [i.e. belonging to *Moguchaya kuchka* /The Five/ –AGP] rivals, ... all the same [he] is ghettoised along with them in the inevitable chapter on nationalism" in Russia (Taruskin 1984: 326). Strangely enough, Tchaikovsky, similarly to his colleagues, resorted to solutions that usually facilitated tagging musical works as Russian. Allusions to Russian history, links with Russian literature, as well as the influence of Russian folk traditions are the chief traits that easily persuade most authors to talk about the Russianness of musical works conceived by Russian composers, notwithstanding their actual personal ideals and the usage of musical material.

While "the necessity to construct a national identity emerged with the maturing of the Russian Empire and the beginning of Russia's integration into Europe i.e. from the time of Peter I" (Ritzareva 2007: 3), this desire to create a national identity in the realm of music reflected Russian imperialistic tendencies "to authenticate the past" (Meer & Modood 2012: 189). Indeed, several 19th century intellectuals travelling to Russia, like Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937) who visited Russia in 1887, 1889 and 1910, commented on Russian 'Otherness', saying that it was still indebted to the past, even the Mid-

dle Ages, and that life there seemed completely removed/very different from that in the modern and progressive West (Gammelgaard 2010: 18). Mikhail Glinka (1804–1857), who was credited with establishing national tendencies in Russian music by referring, inter alia, to the history of Russia, was absolutely idealized by his peers, who saw him as the founder of Russian music (Frolova–Walker 2000: 132). His 1836 opera *A Life for the Tsar* [Жизнь за царя/ *Zhizn' za tsarya*], set in 1612 and originally entitled *Ivan Susanin* [Иван Сусанин] features the heroic Ivan sacrificing his life for the Tsar. The Emperor is endangered by the Poles who represent the Western incursion. This theme of defeating the invading westernization occurred also in other Russian operas; for example the same motif was exploited in *Boris Godunov* [Борис Годунов], composed between 1868 and 1873 by Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881). However, it was Glinka who proved his position as a composer of national operas featuring the glorious past, composing between 1837 and 1842 *Ruslan and Lyudmila* [Руслан и Людмила] set in the times of Kievan Rus'.

The libretti of these operas were based on works by the renowned Russian romantic poet Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837) who is attributed with the formulation of the modern Russian literary language (Lavrin 1947: 18–19). His well-known novel in verse, *Evgeny Onegin* ([Евгений Онегин/ *Yevgény Onégin*), was set to music by Tchaikovsky and is considered to be one of “the best known of all Russian operas and one that maintains a permanent place in the operatic repertoire of the musical world” (Seaman 1999: 29). Also, Pushkin’s drama *Boris Godunov* was the foundation of Mussorgsky’s opera of the same name. Operas based on Pushkin’s works were generally hailed for combining truly Russian subject matter “with an entirely new approach towards form and content”, and devising musical language “novel, distinctive, rich in folk elements, and, at its best, unmistakably Russian in character” (ibid). These operas seemed to embody the spirit of the nation, both in their libretti and music.

Following the example set by successful operas composed to libretti based on Pushkin’s works, several voices appeared claiming that Russian intellectuals were meant to collaborate. One could read that Russian composers “were predestined to cooperate with Russian poets” because in Russia “great composers and great poets were born in clusters, in subsequent waves. It is truly one of the miracles in the development of Russian culture: the Golden Age of Poetry coincided with the Golden Age of Music” (Vernadsky 1943: 7). Vernadsky even talked about clusters of composers like Borodin, Cui, Balakirev, Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky and Rimski–Korsakov coming along with counterpart clusters of poets, e.g. Apukhtin and Golenishchev–Kutuzov (Smaga 1981: 195).

Most importantly, a number of publications on Russian music underline that Russian composers, just like their European contemporaries interested in their native folk tunes, recognized Russian folk music as a symbol of national identity. It was Stasov who vividly, if not radically and tyrannically, adhered to the idea of using folk tunes in professional compositions (Ridenour 1981: 79). This idea also spawned the widespread notion that the figure of a simple Russian peasant embodied the genuine Russian soul. This was connected with an interest in Russian folk–singing dating back to the early 18th century. For

example in 1751 the collection of Russian songs by Grigory Teplov entitled *Idle Hours Away from Work, or A Collection of Various Songs* [Между делом безделье, или собрание разных песен/Mezhdu delom bezdel’е, ili sobranie raznykh pesen] was published. This interest in folk musical traditions initiated the process of converting “burgeoning national consciousness into a more specifically nationalistic consciousness” (Frolova-Walker 2007: 2). In the light of the Slavophile doctrines glorifying peasant songs of supposedly pre-Petrine (Peter I reigned 1689–1725) origin, the search for the Russian national identity intensified, especially in the middle of the 19th century (Frolova-Walker 1998: 343). The strengthening of folk sentiments resulted in numerous expeditions dispatched, among other purposes, to collect folk songs; for example, following the establishment of the polar station in 1882, such endeavors were undertaken by the Imperial Russian Geographical Society² in 1886 and 1893 in the northern provinces of Russia (Swan 1943: 500). By that time anything ‘truly Russian’ (synonymous with old and pure, almost sacral) was opposed to westernisation, which supposedly brought along a contamination and secularization of Russian culture.

Russian Music as Exotic Music

The other dominant trend in perceiving Russian music involved associating it with a broadly understood musical exoticism. Various reasons have contributed to describing Russian musical culture in exotic terms – among others the influence of French encyclopaedists’ writings and the impact of the 18th and 19th century foreign travellers who wrote about musical Russia in terms of its uniqueness, or even oddness. Indeed, they would characterise Russia as “different from the West” and position European standards against Russian ones (Gammelgaard 2010: 15). Another important factor that facilitated this perception of Russia being opposite to Western Europe was the Russian inclination to claim Byzantine roots (Sabaneev 1926: 178–180). In the 19th century many observers noted that the country was very much like a ‘Byzantine empire’, using the word ‘Byzantine’ synonymously with ‘Russian’ (Gammelgaard 2010: 21). The romantic elevation of old (e.g. medieval) traditions, was the natural consequence of celebrating everything considered to be purely Russian, such as religious rituals and musical practices. The primeval Russian traditions were especially remembered as the millennium of founding the Russian state approached. The work *1000 Years* [1000 лет/1000 L’et] by Mily Balakirev (1837–1910) called the *Second Overture on Russian Themes* for orchestra, later renamed by the composer as *Rus’* [Русь], was presented to commemorate the power of Russia. Also, in the 19th century musical practices of the Russian Church were willingly kept in their antique form, despite the fact that they had evolved considerably in the meantime. Marina Ritzareva states that “church music, or, more precisely, ancient chant” became “the super-icon of Russian” music since the strong Russian identity rested on cherishing these pro-Byzantine values that looked back to the Greek Orthodox past

² Tsar Alexander III himself bore the expenses since in 1881 he became the protector of the institution. See: <http://www.rgo.ru/en/society/history/chronicle> (accessed 6 November 2014).

(Ritzareva 2007: 12) and thus clearly differentiated Russianness from other European cultures connected with Roman-Catholic or Protestant religious traditions. Some authors even claim that “the reliance on Orthodoxy as a national patriotic force was transformed in imperial Russia into an arrogant great-power formula of ‘Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality’, which became the basis for Russian state nationalism [...] directed not inwards, towards the people [...] but outwards, towards the country’s external enemies since time immemorial” (Shakarov 1998: 11–12).

While fostering within its empire a variety of cultures – also in its musical dimension – the imperial Russia was still looking for recognition from the outside world (Lieven 1983: 22); however, in the eyes of the West “Russia functioned as the Other” (Gammelgaard 2010: 22), and throughout the 19th century easily fell under the category of orientalism because it was associated with geographic Eastern peripheries. However, the East was understood vaguely “as a sign or metaphor, as an imaginary geography, as historical fiction, as the reduced and totalised Other” (Taruskin 1992: 254). In that context Russia with its own ‘Others’ – Cossacks, Tatars or Gypsies (Sabaneev 1926: 29; Friedrich 1998: 90) seemed an embodiment of an exotic faraway land. Hence, in Western eyes Russia was loosely connected with various barbaric peoples and this perception consequently enabled its portrayal as a wild and untamed country. Yet, as Taruskin observed, even nowadays, it is impossible to clearly classify and categorize this imprecisely defined Russian orientalism since “any adequate taxonomy of this richly variegated material would first have to separate it into what we might call intra-Imperial and extra-Imperial categories (which already raises the spectre of orientalism), dividing the intra-Imperial (following the movements of the Russian army) into Siberian, Caucasian and Central Asian phases, cutting the extra-Imperial first into vastly unequal Near – and Far – Eastern shares, and then apportioning the Near –Eastern into Arabian, Persian, Turkish and Levantine strains” (Taruskin 1992: 253).

Nevertheless, for the majority of European intellectuals, any associations with these faraway places seemed simply exotic. Allusions to them – as appearing in multiple Russian compositions so easily incorporated oriental elements – enabled Western commentators to fathom the unique position of Russian culture. In other words, musical works such as Borodin’s *In the Steppes of Central Asia* [В средней Азии/V srednyeĭ Azii] constituted a kind of mental bridge for understanding the Russian inclination to incorporate elements of Asian sentiment. These references – exotic even for Russians themselves – are easily found in the titles of several musical works (e.g. Balakirev’s *Oriental Fantasy* Op. 18 called *Islamey* of 1869). Searching for exotic elements in Russian music may, once again, be attributed to Stasov’s influence on musical historiography. It was him who, while writing in 1882 one of his essays entitled ‘Twenty Five Years of Russian Art’, suggested that “the Oriental element” should be regarded as one of the distinguishing features of The New Russian School (ibid). Indeed this “oriental element” impacted the oeuvre of many Russian composers as well as writers and artists active in the heyday of the romantic era, including Pushkin or Lermontov. The latter’s poem *Tamara*, set in the Caucasus, inspired Balakirev, who composed his symphonic poem of

the same name (1867–1882), considered to be an excellent example of a work employing Caucasian sentiments (Campbell 2001: 514). The fascination with the Orient also affected Glinka, Borodin and Rimski–Korsakov (Vernadsky 1943: 18). Pushkin's *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* (1820–1821) was set as an opera by Cesar Cui and later performed/adapted as a ballet by Boris Asafev (as well as *The fountain of Bakhchisaray*, 1821–1823). Yet, it needs to be stressed that for these composers orientalism also worked merely as a reservoir of exciting musical ideas on a par with Russian folk traditions; often they did not even travel to the regions to whose musical traditions they were referring, or they misinterpreted the sources. Balakirev's *Georgian Song* (1865) alludes to Armenian (even Turkish and Persian) tunes rather than – and contrary to what the title indicates – Georgian influences. Taruskin suspects that “Balakirev knew that perfectly well”, yet even for him orientalism acted as nothing else but a pretext to exploit the ‘Eastern theme’, enabling the ornamentation of the melody with melismas and augmented second progressions (Taruskin 1992: 257). If Russians themselves were so easily seduced by orientalism, it is hardly surprising that abroad they were often viewed through the prism of the East and the ‘Other’ (ibid: 280).

Paths of Inclusion and Exclusion of Russian Music in European Music Traditions

While on the one hand the ‘Russianness’ and the ‘exoticism’ of Russian music are fervently debated, on the other hand it is also fashionable to discuss its perception within the realm of European culture, as if implicitly suggesting that Russianness is some sort of a unique trait, whose inclusion or exclusion from European culture calls for a deeper investigation. Yet, the question which should be asked in this context is whether ‘Russian music’ is an example of ‘European music’? Should we, rather rhetorically, ask if ‘European’ is not a term much larger than ‘Russian’, ‘Polish’, ‘German’, etc.? Finally, is not ‘European music’ a notion that needs to accommodate Russian alongside other national musical cultures? The trap that many authors often fall into is that while writing about ‘European music’ they actually mean ‘Western European music’. In that sense evidently (even geographically) Russian cannot be called Western. However, not being Western European does not mean not being European.

Even the so-called ‘European music’ is an idea agreed upon by (Western) scholars, a concept which is a result of certain cultural practices. At the same time it is solely an artificial construct produced in the laboratories of knowledge, merely a useful term that emerged during scientific debates as a label of strategic importance. The notion of ‘European music’ has become a useful benchmark applied as a heuristic concept facilitating debates on music in academic writings. Furthermore, because musicology as a discipline was affected by the notions of *Ars Gallica* and *Respublica Litteraria*,³ in several scholarly texts the concept of European culture was associated with *Christianitas* and

³ In his 1988 book *Penser L'Europe* Edgar Morin forwarded the thesis that not only did such important ideas as Christianity or humanism play an important role in European culture, but also their opposition.

Latinas referring to the Biblical vision of the world. Consequently, Orthodox Russia or the Balkans were treated as lands whose relation with acclaimed *Christianitas* needed to be carefully considered, if not questioned, resulting in their specific treatment (frequently amounting to exclusion) from the European musicological map. However, impacted by the emerging awareness of ethnic identities, musicology also willingly stressed diversity of nationally differentiated musical cultures (Bielawski 1999: 69). In musicological literature they were drawn into the debate on the hierarchy of the European musical cultures. An attempt was made to define such phenomena as ‘nation’, ‘state’, ‘race’ and ‘folk’ and consequently, within the framework of German dominated musicology, such terms as ‘national schools’ and ‘national style’ were introduced. The development of academic works promoting the Austro–German canon of musical works strengthened their supremacy and promoted the “idea of resilient German musical spirit” (Murphy 2001: 8) deep into the 20th century⁴. Hence there was a tendency to divide the musical cultures of Europe into two streams: of *universal* character (equivalent to musical developments observed in Western European countries) and of *particular* character (associated with national tendencies attributed mostly to Eastern European countries).⁵

Faith in the particulars of national cultures, so celebrated in the 19th century, coincided with the popularity of Slavic mythology, deepening the division between Western and Eastern Europe (Wolff 1994). At the beginning of the 20th century it was still believed that the musical cultures of Eastern Europe preserved “wisdom, songs, and dance as an exotic collection, ethnological jewels” (Bie 1920: 345). Larry Wolff convincingly proved in his 1994 book *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of Enlightenment* that the distinction between the industrialized West and more natural East of Europe began to be shaped as early as the era of the 18th century Enlightenment and was only developed later due to the emergence and popularity of the concept of ‘civilization’. Wolff shows that it was, among others, Voltaire’s writings on Russia (as well as Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s on brave Poles, etc.) that helped to create an image of Eastern Europe in the eyes of Western intelligentsia. Mentioning the music of Russia in his 1785 *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (published posthumously in 1806) Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart described it accordingly as savage and primitive, comparing even Russian folk songs to the sound of birds (especially wild ducks). Even in the 21st century opinions underlining Russian difference from the ‘common’ European legacy are not that rare. Ritzareva states for example that “Russia was not a member of the big West European family. The feudal, agrarian reality, together with the Greek Orthodox tradition and Cyrillic alphabet, has always segregated Russia from the West” (Ritzareva 2007: 4). She adds that Russia “lacked a cultural legacy that creditably could be compared to the Western one. In order to achieve such a legacy, all the forces of the Russian Enlightenment gathered. Scholars, literati, and publishers worked hard throughout the 1760s–90s to make a national cultural legacy available to

⁴ According to the composer Arnold Schönberg (1874–1951) the concept of European music remained connected to the great German musical tradition. See: Schönberg 1984; Mersmann, 1934 [1955]; Eggebrecht 1991.

⁵ As attested among others in: Brendel 1852; Fetis 1869–1876.

the public” (ibid). Yet, despite such efforts in the 19th century travellers often still “characterised Russia as belonging to the East, or tended to include Russia in the categories of Asia and Byzantium” (Gammelgaard 2010: 33).

In the 18th century Russian cultural trends orbited around the axis of secularization and westernization. Contacts with Western music traditions were regular, starting from the times of Ivan the Terrible (1530–1584). This was especially true in the year 1703 when Peter I founded his ‘window to Europe’, Sankt Petersburg and radical changes took place, affecting musical life too, by opening up new possibilities of inviting foreign musicians to the city. Even a great master of Baroque music such as Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) supposedly inquired about the possibility of obtaining a position at the court of Empress Catherine I, widow of Peter I (also called Peter the Great), alas with no success. Among musicians working in Russia at that time one finds internationally renowned names like Giovanni Paisiello (1740–1816) who arrived in Petersburg in 1776 at the invitation of Catherine II, or Domenico Cimarosa (1749–1801) who came there in 1787. In the 18th century many German musicians also went to Russia (Schwab 2005: 30–50).

However, Russian music has always been meant to be ‘ipso facto *coloured Russian*’. Furthermore, it has been generally agreed that “nationalism, or national character, or the striving for a native idiom, [...] was something unique, or at least especially endemic, to Russia, or if not to Russia, then to Eastern Europe (Taruskin 1984: 329). Yet, the political situation of Russia in the 19th century was entirely different from those of the other nations of Eastern Europe, be it Poland or Hungary. Consequently, musical cultural development there was aimed at achieving different goals. Nevertheless, in musicological writings Russian musical development has been traditionally viewed through the prism of nationalistic tendencies, without attributing features characteristic for other Eastern European musical cultures, such as the influence of progressive politics or national liberation. Although considered as “a powerful and independent nation” even “an increasingly xenophobic and [...] increasingly imperialistic one” (ibid). Russia was usually discussed in the same chapters as other Eastern European countries and – consequently – with the same methodology of interpretation applied.

Although Taruskin rightly observed that most musicologists hail “national substance” of Russian music as the main “condition of its international worth” (ibid), at the same time scholars insist that Russian music “represents a successful blending of European methods and traditions with Russian material and an essentially Russian spirit” (Seaman 1999: 29). In other words, what is valued is quintessentially marrying two traditions: one of Russian folk (revealed in alluding, among others, to Russian folk tunes and dance rhythms, manner of singing, etc.) and one of Western European heritage. This trend, especially in the 19th century, was shaping the Russian musical landscape. It is a well-known fact that many Russian composers looked up to Western patterns and for example by 1856 Glinka thought of using Russian chant in art music (Ritzareva 2007: 12). Perhaps then it may come as no surprise that in Russia Glinka is seen as a universal composer from Russia while in the Western historiography he is willingly depicted as a national Russian composer (Taruskin 1984: 325).

The tension between Russian and foreign influences was so strong in Russia that even the term ‘German music’ generally meant ‘foreign music’, and these notions were treated almost synonymously (Sabaneev 1926: 17). Furthermore, complying with such foreign influences was stoutly opposed by Balakirev and his circle of nationally oriented composers. Others, like Anton Rubinstein feared that Russianness in music might bring the danger of favouring dilettantism (Barenboim 1957: 181–184 and 236–239). The fact that nationalism was generally viewed positively as a phenomenon in the 19th century Europe seemed to have been forgotten, and the interest and care of Russian intelligentsia to cherish their own musical nationalism might be, ironically, interpreted as a result of implementing this European tendency and “a foreign import” (Taruskin 1984: 329).

Acknowledging European Multiculturalism Vis-à-vis Russian Music

The unique position of Russia in Europe, conditioned geographically, politically, and culturally, has continued to contribute to a multitude of possible explanations as to the reasons for its distinctive image, with respect to art music. Music, after all, can be considered a “*cultural form* – that is, a collection of texts and a product of crystallized culture. Like other cultural forms, it functions in the social field and is part of a *culture* in the anthropological sense of the word” (Stites 1998: 187). Leaving aside discussions about the ambiguous situation of Russia, it remains certain that Russian art music has always constituted a relevant part of European musical traditions, considerably contributing to its multicultural identity (Barry 2002: 205). Given that Europe is a cultural structure that stands for the “tolerance between cultures” (Wood, Landry & Bloomfield 2006: 7) it is exactly its cultural diversity and pluralism that need to be regarded as its “intrinsic value precisely because they challenge people to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their own cultures and ways of life” (Meer & Modood 2012: 184). Although the term ‘multiculturalism’ was originally first applied in the 1960s and 1970s to describe the state of affairs in Canada, Australia, Britain and the USA, and despite the fact that multiculturalism is sometimes accused of being illiberal and relativist (ibid: 180, 190) I would argue that its usefulness while talking about the reception of Russian music cannot be overestimated. It is multiculturalism that seeks to address such issues as ethnic and national representations within larger contexts, treating them as desirable and valuable. The musical map of Europe cannot then be sketched without Russia and without taking into consideration its uniqueness as well as its strong ties with Western European traditions. Multicultural Europe provides plenty of space for ethnic minorities, national diversity, and cultural variety: understanding the essence of European ethno-cultural differentialism (Neumann 2004: 120–128) and multiculturalism also encourages us to look more carefully into the past and to reinterpret cultural, academic and political practices or modes.

Conclusion

When Serge Diagilev presented his famous Ballets Russes in Paris, during the first season (1909–1910) he deliberately distanced his viewers from Russia, presenting it as an exotic milieu and including in his programme –

among others – Arabian and Polovtsian dances, Persian themes, etc. In fact Diaghilev referred to a tendency, long and well established in the European tradition, of “defining Russia musically” in the light of its acclaimed exoticism, since such an oriental appeal was already attributed to music composed in Russia throughout the whole 19th century. While on the one hand Russia was perceived as exotic by the rest of Europe, on the other hand several musical practices were considered to be exotic in Russia itself. I suggest that these two ways of perceiving Russian music influenced each other, having also a strong impact on the formation of Russian national music. It can be claimed that Russian music served – especially in the long 19th century – as an internal and external tool for defining the country in various dimensions.

More specifically, Russia was associated with musical multiculturalism in various respects, including (but not confined to): 1) perceiving the music of Russia as being closely connected with Caucasian, Siberian as well as other ‘uncivilized’ musical traditions (e.g. Gypsy). Stressing the close links with remote places was especially privileged in operatic works (e.g. *Demon* by Anton Rubinstein). The appearance of Gypsies among Russian folks also became one of the trade marks in numerous operas and ballets; 2) underlining the pre-Byzantine roots of Russian culture. Moreover, references to old Rus’ as an emanation of exoticism were frequent in works by, for example, Borodin or Rimski-Korsakov; 3) establishing the symbolic function of a singing peasant – the primitiveness of Russian serfs was musically expressed in their singing practices; 4) introducing the notion of *negra* understood as ‘*sex a la russe*’.

Among various roots of defining Russia musically one of the most obvious was the influence of Voltaire’s writings. Secondly, Russian composers themselves, while contributing to the creation of the Russian national idiom in music, relied on the late 18th century legacy (established deliberately under Catherine’s II rule) hailing the role of a singing peasant. Furthermore, the same composers willingly depicted Gypsies, Caucasians, etc., as well as often setting their works in old Russia (for example Glinka, Musorgsky and others). Those who resisted the general tendency (e.g. Tchaikovsky) were not treated as truly Russian composers. Finally, the image of musical Russia in the writings of 19th century travellers and music critics stressed its uniqueness. Such an attitude towards Russia resulted in the production of many instrumental miniatures, whose titles included innuendos to Russian exoticism (e.g. *Les Bohémiens*, *Chanson populaires Russes*, or *Air Bohémien Russe*, etc.) without including any distinctive musical features.

The aspects underlined above as well as their sources can be read as strategies enabling the incorporation of Russian music culture into the mainstream European heritage, but at the same time as tactics aimed at excusing it. In this article I have attempted to show how, mainly in the 19th century, both Russian and foreign i.e. European composers and music critics used the notion of Russian exoticism to differentiate it from (western) European tradition, yet at the same time how Russian folklore – still considered exotic enough to be an attractive source of inspiration for musical production – served as a tool facilitating the inclusion of Russian music into general European tendencies.

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МЕСТО „РУСКЕ МУЗИКЕ” НА МУЛТИКУЛТУРНОЈ МАПИ ЕВРОПЕ

(Резиме)

Полазна теза овог текста јесте да су појам руског егзотизма користили руски и инострани композитори и музички критичари посебно у XIX веку, да би раздвојили руско музичко наслеђе од (западно-)европске традиције. То су чинили свесно, али често без дубљег промишљања. У исто време, различите руске музичке праксе су у самој Русији тога доба сматране „егзотичним” – конкретно, реч је о руском фолклору који је у то време био атрактиван извор инспирације за настанак нових музичких дела. С друге стране, присуство фолклора у композицијама олакшало је укључивање руске музике у главне европске токове. У чланку заступам тезу да су ове две перцепције руске музичке традиције утицале једна на другу, као и на формирање руске националне школе. Теме којима се бавим у тексту јесу: 1) руска музика као национална музика; 2) руска музика као егзотична музика; 3) приступи инкорпорисању, односно, изопштавању руске музике из европске музичке традиције и 4) улоге руске музике у настанку свести о мултикултурном устројству Европе.

Сматрам да је појам „руска музика” имао улогу у дефинисању места руске музичке културе на мултикултурној мапи Европе, како интерно (тј. од стране самих руских музичких писаца), тако и екстерно (тј. са становишта иностраних писаца који су се њоме бавили).

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