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**Musicological Issues
in the Research Works
of Mikhail Kondratiev***

Musicologist Mikhail G. Kondratiev is known in the scholarly circles of Russia as the author of over five hundred publications, as well as a number of monographs. In his research of Chuvash folk music, he developed an original methodology and brought numerous categories into scholarly circulation of Chuvash and regional musicology, such as quantitative rhythm, aphoristic song plot line, musical dialects, polysyllabic form and the Volga-Urals musical civilization. The monographs and articles devoted to professional art examine the musical legacy of the Chuvash composers of various generations — from the founders to contemporaries, and elaborate on questions of style, genre, form, thematicism and musical language. Mikhail Kondratiev is not only an authoritative scholar, but also the creator of the academic school of Chuvash musicology. The author of the article presents the main problem range of his research, also touching upon pedagogical and social activities, along with the scholarly component.

**Проблемы музыковедения
в научно-исследовательских
работах М. Г. Кондратьева****

Музыковед Михаил Григорьевич Кондратьев известен в научных кругах России как автор свыше пятисот публикаций, в том числе ряда монографий. В его исследованиях чувашского музыкального фольклора разработана оригинальная методология, введены в научный оборот чувашского и регионального музыковедения такие категории, как квантитативная ритмика, афористическая песенная сюжетика, музыкальные диалекты, многослоговая форма, Волго-Уральская музыкальная цивилизация. В монографиях и статьях, посвящённых профессиональному искусству, им рассматривается творчество чувашских композиторов разных поколений — от основоположников до современных, разработаны вопросы стиля, жанра, формы, тематики, музыкального языка. Михаил Кондратьев является не только авторитетным учёным, но и создателем научной школы чувашского музыковедения. Автор статьи представляет основную проблематику его исследований, наряду с научной составляющей затрагивая также педагогическую и общественную деятельность.

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musicologist Mikhail Kondratiev, Chuvash musicology, regional ethnomusicology, the art of traditional and professional music, the Volga-Urals musical civilization.

Ключевые слова:

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Over five hundred publications belong to scholar, pedagogue and public figure Mikhail Kondratiev, about twenty of them being monographs about the art of music. His academic activities are connected with his regular participations in international and Russian scholarly conferences in Cheboksary, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tallinn, Yoshkar-Ola, Kazan, Izhevsk, Saransk, Astrakhan, Ufa, and Saratov and his lectures in the leading Russian conservatories. A member of the dissertation boards of the Kazan and Novosibirsk Conservatories, he has demonstrated himself as an expert in questions of the theory and history of the music of Chuvashia and the republics of the Volga-Urals region, and has acted as an opponent in numerous defenses of dissertations for degrees of Candidate of Arts and Doctor of Arts in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, and Kazan. Kondratiev's works elaborate an edifice of scholarly concepts on which researchers of various regions of Russia and the countries of the near abroad rely upon.

His point of departure in scholarship has been musical folkloristics, which has revealed to him, primarily, in the field expeditions he had taken part through the localities of Chuvashia, Tataria, Bashkiria, and the Orenburg Region organized in the 1970s by the Chuvash State Institute for Humanitarian Sciences (previously — the Scholarly-Research Institute for Language, Literature, History and Economics). The

work on recording Chuvash songs, their subsequent deciphering, scrupulous analysis of recordings made by preceding folk music scholars, study and systematization, as well as scholarly summarizations and generalizations comprised the scholar's main forms of academic work from the 1970s to the 1990s. He compiled and prepared for publication such collections of folk songs as "Anatri chävashsen yurrisem" [24; 25] and "Anat yenchi chävashsen yurrisem" [26], which presented compilations of previously unpublished original dialect varieties of Chuvash folk music. Extremely abundant musical material, hundreds of examples of folk songs were elaborately analyzed by him with the goal of disclosing their structural and content-based laws, and the techniques of musical notation and transposition were also contemplated by him. With all the diversity of the manifestations of its constituent components, the Chuvash system of folk music and poetry has found elaboration in hundreds of articles, a number of monographs and dissertational research works.

The uncommon features of Chuvash musical literature, its distinctive character and originality were noted by researchers over a hundred years ago. This assertion as a sort of axiom has not been contested by anybody. However, neither have there been any attempts to determine the nature of the phenomenon, to disclose its essence. The scholar's reflections about the metro-



rhythmic system of Chuvash folk songs morphed first into separate articles, and then into the book “O ritme chuvashskoy narodnoy pesni: K probleme kvantitativnosti v narodnoy muzyke” [“Concerning the Rhythm of Chuvash Folk Song: Towards the Issue of Quantitativeness in Folk Music”] [13] and a dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Arts. An elegant and unexpected application of the conception of quantitativeness, — well-known in literature, — to the realm of musical thinking of a presently existing people made it possible not only to explain rhythmically complex figures of national art through the concepts and categories of the overall theory of rhythm, but it also placed the musical culture of the Chuvashes into the context of world culture on a par with the Ancient and Medieval poetical traditions of Asia and the Mediterranean region: India, Iran, Ancient Greece and Rome. The author was supported by the professors of the Leningrad State Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory, where in 1984 the defense of his dissertation for the degree of Candidate of arts took place, — his research advisor being Irina Vyzgo-Ivanova, and his opponents included prominent theoretician of folk art Izalia Zemtsovsky, and other specialists. Representatives of the Moscow musicological school were also responsive to his achievements: according to the most significant specialist in rhythm, Doctor of Arts, Professor of the Moscow Conservatory, Valentina Kholopova, “the proof of existence of a quantitative system not in the ‘Iliad’ and the ‘Odyssey’, ... but in 20th century culture ought to be evaluated as a ‘world discovery’” (cit. from: [19, p. 166]). Presently, as Elena Smirnova notes, the hypothesis once subject to incertitude by local musicians “about the given region as a zone of quantitativeness, uttered by Kondratiev during his research of the rhythm of the Chuvash folksong, with the establishment of quantitative norms in the Tatar musical-poetical tradition receives a convincing affirmation” [27, p. 432]. At the same time, the personal techniques of notation of folk tunes developed by the

scholar, supported as far back as the 1990s by the prominent Russian folklorist Eduard Alexeyev,¹ are in use everywhere, they are acknowledged and relied upon by the folklorists of the Volga-Urals region.²

For more than one decade Kondratiev systematically elaborated the issue of parallels existing between ethnic cultures, having turned his attention to the folk songs of the neighboring peoples of the Volga region — the Mari, the Udmurts, the Mordovians, the Tatars and the Bashkirs, also touching upon the ancient sources of the Bulgarians and Hungarians. His research approach, in the opinion of the well-known musicologist Grigoriy Golovinsky, his opponent during the defense of his dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Arts, which took place in 1995, combines “thoroughness of study... issues and discretion in conclusions” [6, p. 81]. The Chuvash folk system, thoroughly studied in historical evolution, presents a peculiar reference point in the disclosure of centripetal features inherent in various degrees to cultures, and the determination of their “specific density” in the overall regional system. The books devoted to it “O ritme chuvashskoy narodnoy pesni: K probleme kvantitativnosti v narodnoy muzyke” [“Concerning the Rhythm of Chuvash Folk Song: Towards the Issue of Quantitativeness in Folk Music”] [13], “Chuvashskaya savra yurā i yeyo tatarskie paralleli” [“The Chuvash Savra Yurā and its Tatar Parallels”] [18], “Chuvashskaya muzyka: ot mifologicheskikh vremen do stanovleniya professionalizma” [“Chuvash Music: From Mythological Times to the Formation of Present-Day Professionalism”] [17] convincingly prove the deep structured quality of all the components comprising the system and the existence in it of a number of regional traits. In addition to their absolute scholarly merit, scholars see in these work a high spiritual meaning, “a great sensitizing significance,” and fascination [3, p. 83], turning to issues of issues of the non-musical variety: philosophical, moral-ethical, existential and ontological [2, p. 108].



Every one of the scholar's works is unique not even as much by the researched material, each time absolutely new and previously unstudied, as by his original progressive methodology of theoretic reconstruction, which leads the readers onto a universal level, into broad temporal spaces.³ In continuation of research of a rhythmical system of conceptions of the general cultural level the study of the phenomenon of the folk-song poetry of *yoavrayur* =, analogues of which exist in a number of Eastern cultures, first of all, the Tatar, and also in the world traditions of Persian, Japanese, Indian, and Korean poetical aphorisms.

The observations which disclose in the culture of the Chuvashes inimitably original features, which at the same time are also close to other peoples of the world, are well-known to the scholarly elites of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and the Volga-Urals region, they are frequently incorporated by colleagues from other republics, who see in them foundations for their own research.⁴ The significance of the given works is acknowledged in Kazan: "There is no doubt that M.G. Kondratiev is the most cited musical scholar in the region, one of the most cited (first of all, in the sphere of ethnomusicology) in the scope of our country" [4, p. 87].

For the first time in the field of regional folklore studies the scholar brought into scholarly use and substantiated the fundamental concepts of quantitative rhythm, aphoristic song subject matter, musical dialects, the South Chuvash mode, and multisyllabic form. The arrangement of this information and examination of it on a principally new level — as a single integral meta-culture, labeled as the Volga-Urals musical civilization by the example of the abstractions of present-day scholarship — all of this was carried out in his monograph "Chuvashskaya muzyka v zerkale paralleley" ["Chuvash Music in the Mirror of Parallels"] [16]. Among many texts written in line with contemporary folk music studies, the present research work positions music of the Chuvash

people and the entire region in general from a new angle in a weighty and demonstrable manner, presenting "the author as one of the brightest Russian musicologists in the realm of ethnomusicology, possessing his own deeply professional and scientifically original perspective on many questions."⁵

The folkloristic vector of Kondratiev's scholarly activities is endowed with an immense practical issuance. The remarkably estimable material of the anthologies of Chuvash folk songs compiled by him in the 1980s and 1990s, complemented by new books which came out already in the 21st century: a reprint of the pre-revolutionary collection of Chuvash folk songs compiled by Valentin Moshkov [20] and the manuscript legacy of the most talented of folklorist, who was repressed in the Soviet years, Timofey Paramonov "Chuvashskie narodnye pesni" ["Chuvash Folksongs"] [23], — all of this has served as a source for local composers and folklorists. The book "Sër savra yurä" ("A Hundred Verses") has not lost its significance, its second edition in three languages in remarkable polygraph printing, with profound multivalent illustrations by Stanislav Mikhailov-Yukhtar [28] presents in a worthy manner the national branch of aphoristic poetry. Kondratiev has also substantively influenced the movement for the dissemination of folk music: with his assistance in 1989 the Folk Music Department of the Cheboksary Feodor Pavlov Music College was established, a class for instruction of performance on the helmet-shaped *gusli kësle* at the Cheboksary Victor and Dora Khodyashevs Children' Music School No.4 was opened. For several decades he collaborated closely with the Ethnomusicology Department of the Kazan Conservatory, with the Republican Palace of Culture and Folk Art (previously — the Republican House of Folk Art, Cheboksary), routinely conducting lectures and practical seminars.

Nonetheless, Kondratiev is by no means a scholar devoted merely to one single subject, albeit such a boundless one as traditional

musical culture. For quite a long time he worked in one of the most complex genres of art studies: writing annual overviews of the musical events of Chuvashia. The activities of the “chronicler” of the musical culture of the republic has turned out to be remarkably beneficial, it has allowed the musicologist to be aware of everything occurring in artistic life, to know relevant knowledge from the leading musical organizations. As a member of the Composers’ Union of the USSR (from 1978) Kondratiev has taken part in discussion of new compositions at congresses, plenary sessions, and Days of Culture, where everybody waited for his professional evaluation of various musical events. His impressions have expressed themselves not only in scholarly reviews and research articles: his accumulated rich experience has been concentrated in a large number of critical journalistic works — reviews, memorandums, interviews and articles in newspapers and journals.

The professional art of music of Chuvashia in all of its main directions, — compositional oeuvres, the field of performance, the sphere of professional preparation, — along with folk music, has received extensive and thorough elaboration in his works.⁶ His extremely diverse works in terms of genre — from extensive monographs to articles, textbooks and booklets — have characterized the main genres of opus-music, the musical legacy of the masters, musical ensembles, and the history of educational institutions. There is not a single composer of Chuvashia who has not been influenced by Kondratiev and his research works. A large number of personalia articles deals with the representatives of the art of performance. A large number of surveying characterizations are devoted to topical issues of the national and the international, the general and the individual, history and contemporaneity, tendencies of development of Chuvash art in the broad musical-aesthetical context. Questions of style, genre, form, subject matter and musical language are touched upon; a thorough analysis of the oeuvres of

masters from various generations has made it possible for him to reveal traits typical for the national compositional school. The scholar has introduced numerous concepts related to style, which are crucial to understanding the music of the masters of the second half of the 20th century (“national-traditional”, “national-non-traditional” and “non-Chuvash”), differentiated according to their intonational sources [15].

While researching the musical culture of the Soviet period, the scholar reconstructs the genuine history of Chuvash music, basing himself on a historiographic foundation and on unique materials which became accessible after the “archival revolution” of the early 1990s. Many things are reinterpreted in already acquired knowledge and the existent “mythology”, and new approaches and evaluations have been found to the contradictions common during the Soviet period. The sphere of examined themes is broad, and it involves representatives of various professions of the Chuvash artistic intelligentsia: masters of literature, theater and the visual arts.

The large stratum of new documents which Kondratiev turned his attention to has lain at the basis of the trilogy of monographs devoted to the biographies and musical output of the first generation of Chuvash professional musicians: Feodor Pavlov [11], Stepan Maksimov [14], and Vassily Vorobiev [12]. The abundantly illustrated editions with large numbers of photograph documents and musical examples which came out in the prestigious series of the Chuvash publishing house “Zamechatel'nye lyudi Chuvashii” [“Remarkable People of Chuvashia”] illuminated massively the period of formation of national professional art and aroused grateful responses from throughout Russia and other countries (see: [7]). Upon the musicologist’s initiative for the first time a compilation of compositions of the outstanding Chuvash composer of the pre-war time Gennady Vorobiev has been published. A whole set of publications of monographic character compiled and

edited by the musicologist are devoted to the composers who asserted themselves during the second half of the 20th century Grigoriy Khirbyu, Filipp Lukin, Victor Khodyashev, Alexander Vassiliev. In them a large amount of materials is disclosed to the attentive reader, while the protagonists of the books, in the opinion of many specialists, present themselves in new light.⁷

The depth of perceptions of national art is solidified by books and booklets which demonstrate the main stages of appearance and development of the oldest musical organizations of the republic: the State Ensemble of Song and Dance, the Stepan Maksimov Children's Music School and the Feodor Pavlov Cheboksary Music College. The sections about the art of music in collective monographs on the history and culture of the Chuvash people, as well as hundreds of articles in encyclopedic editions, belong to the pen of the musicologist. Longstanding observations and facts brought together have allowed him to reevaluate and formulate anew a new integral periodization of the "general" history of Chuvash music. The early historical stages of development, the enlightening transformations of the late 19th century, and observations of the art of the Early Modern Period and Contemporary History have organically fit into it, having been reconstructed by the scholar through the depth of the centuries. Kondratiev's publications and public presentations have amazed his audiences each time by their erudition, the breadth of their culturological context and the originality of understanding of the stated themes. They include many references to the world art of the past and present, poetry and philosophy. He has frequently been invited as an authoritative art scholar to various events: artistic presentations and openings of exhibitions, wishing to hear professionally precise, capacious characterizations in the sphere of art culture. As part of his activities of promoting Chuvash art, Kondratiev frequently appears on the radio, television, in periodical press,

and in conferences devoted to questions of art and culture, where he demonstrates profound competence of understanding of problems, lucidity and argumentativeness of reasoning, enthusiasm and an extraordinary gift of a narrator.⁸ Genuine professionalism, impeccable logic, scholarly reasonableness and forethought of ideas have allowed him to hold and express in many questions his independent opinion, at times running counter to the official point of view.

Kondratiev's research work is successfully combined with pedagogical activities. For a long period of time he taught at the Cheboksary Feodor Pavlov Music College. At the present time the professor transmits his rich experience of accumulated knowledge to the students of the Chuvash State Ilya Ulyanov University and the Chuvash State Ivan Yakovlev Pedagogical University, and to post-graduate students of the specialization "The Art of Music" of the Music Theory and Methodology of the selfsame educational institution. As the research adviser of Candidates of Art Irina Danilova [8], Svetlana Ilyina [9] and Lyubov Bushuyeva [9], he is spoken of as the creator of the academic school of Chuvash musicology.

Doctor of Arts, Professor Kondratiev is full of artistic ideas and does not perceive himself outside of the realm of musical scholarship. The author of unmatched discoveries in the field of research and the master of original solutions of new problems is engaged in work the essence of which is in minimum routine, the inimitability of each new goal and the opportunities for new discoveries.





NOTES

¹ Back in 1990 Alexeyev noted in regard to the musical notation of folk melodies: “As far as the means of indication of the original sounding pitches, several of them exist. Certain musicians cite the real pitch of the initial tone of the melody immediately after the first key indications as a whole note placed in parenthesis or a rhombic note-head (sometimes shaded, as in the two-volume collection ‘Pesni nizovykh Chuvashy’ [‘Songs of the Lowland Chuvashes’] compiled by M.G. Kondratiev — Cheboksary, 1981, 1982)” [1, p. 64].

² A similar notation system with the use of square-shaped note-heads is used by the specialist in Udmurt folk music, Doctor of Arts Irina Nuriyeva in her compilations [21; 22].

³ Abram Yusfin, his research adviser during the years of study at the Kazan Conservatory, reflecting on the method discovered by Kondratiev, evaluated it in the following manner in his letter from 2010: “Your Chuvash history struck me not only by its most interesting facts and testimonials, but, above all — by the methodology, disclosing great opportunities for immersion into the history of musical culture, virtually ‘from its depths’. I perceived in this methodology something similar to what was elaborated by paleontologist Cuvier, who was able to reconstruct an entire organism with one discovered bone. Maybe it would make sense to describe the technology of work on reconstructing the seemingly forever departed past elaborated by you? However, one may presume that each different culture would also require its own respective methodological version as well. And, of course, I was extremely happy about the bibliographical reference book. As far as I can judge, few scholars from your generation are capable of displaying something similar to that. I wish you to continue adding to it” (from Kondratiev’s personal correspondence).

⁴ From the letter of Candidate of Arts Khatira

Gasanzade (Baku): “I have read your book about ‘savra yurä’ with great interest. As you note, there exist parallels with the Azerbaijani song texts as well <...> Your research works are well-known in Baku, Azerbaijani musicologists frequently cite them” (from M.G. Kondratiev’s personal correspondence).

⁵ From Alexander Maklygin’s review of the publication: [16].

⁶ In this regard Kondratiev has undoubtedly demonstrated himself as the successor to the first Chuvash musicologist Yuri Ilyukhin (1925–2014), researching on a new round and in a different scope the issues touched upon in the works of his predecessor.

⁷ Irina Mitta. Review of the book “Filipp Lukin. Muzykant. Obshchestvenny deyatel’. Sbornik statey, vospominaniy, materialov” [“Philip Lukin. Musician. Public Figure. Compilation of Articles, Memoirs and Materials”] (from M.G. Kondratiev’s personal correspondence).

⁸ Kondratiev is engaged in broad public activities as a counselor to the head of the Chuvash Republic, a member of the Commission for State Premiums in the Sphere of Literature and Art subservient to the head of the Chuvash Republic, and a member of the directorate of the Composers’ Union of the Chuvash Republic. He was awarded many honorary titles: Honored Activist of the Arts of the Chuvash Republic (1991), Honored Activist of the Arts of the Russian Federation (2001); Laureate of the Premium of the Komsomol of Chuvashia in the Fields of Science and Technique (1982), Laureate of the State Premium of the Chuvash Republic in the Field of Literature and Art (2004); Academician of the National Academy of Sciences and Arts of the Chuvash Republic (1994), Academician of the International Academy of Sciences of Pedagogical Education (1999). He was awarded the medal of the Order “For the Merits before the Chuvash Republic” (2008).

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