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Aram Khachaturian and Socialist Realism: A Reconsideration

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Abstract

Aram Khachaturian remains a neglected figure in scholarship on Soviet music, his work often held as exemplifying Socialist Realism at its most conformist. In this article I suggest that folk music strongly influenced his style well before the imposition of Socialist Realism, and that his musical language and aesthetics have much more in common with those of contemporary composers in the West than has previously been assumed. A central focus of the paper will be to examine the role played by Soviet musicologists in placing questionable critical constructs on Khachaturian's career and creative achievement.

Keywords

Khachaturian, Socialist Realism, folk traditions

Despite his position of indisputable significance in Soviet musical life, the scholarly literature on Aram Khachaturian (1903–1978), especially in the West, is surprisingly sparse. Furthermore, it often tends to be dismissive of (or at best ambivalent towards) Khachaturian's output, and adopts a stereotypical view of it. His work seems long overdue for a comprehensive, more sympathetic reappraisal.

When one examines the manner in which Western commentators have written about Khachaturian in reference works and general studies of Soviet music, it is difficult not to be struck by the tone of dismissiveness and condescension that is consistently in evidence towards him as both person and artist. Almost without exception, these depict Khachaturian as a loyal lackey of the Communist Party, most notably in relation to his perceived contribution to the Stalinist project of creating national musical cultures in the Caucasian and Central Asian Republics of the USSR. Even if the authors do not say so explicitly, one gathers that he is regarded by them as morally culpable for his apparent willingness to collaborate with the regime and artistically culpable for writing bland orientalist kitsch. Andrey Olkhovsky sneeringly described him as having been “kept in

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Moscow by the Committee for Art Affairs as an exhibit for export” (Olkhovsky 1955: 263). Similarly, Stanley Dale Krebs claimed that “Soviet ideological demands fettered Khachaturian as an ‘Armenian’ composer in the mid-thirties” and that he subsequently “travelled a creative path into triviality” (Krebs 1970: 217, 232).

Boris Schwarz could find little better to say than to suggest that Khachaturian “represented socialist realism at its best” – a decidedly back-handed compliment (Schwarz 1980). In his book *Music of the Soviet Age: 1917–1987* Levon Hakobian is frankly dismissive, suggesting that “the critique of our epoch is inclined to ignore Khachaturian [...]” (Hakobian 1998: 142). Francis Maes similarly seems to regard Khachaturian as being a composer who is at best of minor significance: insofar as he discusses him at all, Maes characterises him as the best-known composer to work on the “colonialist” project (Maes’s adjective) of Stalinist musical nation-building and describes his work as derivative of the orientalist styles of Glinka, Balakirev, and Borodin (Maes 2002: 259).

More openly negative views of the composer are encountered in the writings of Richard Taruskin and Marina Frolova-Walker. Taruskin, who unequivocally considers Khachaturian to be a composer of the second rank (Taruskin 2009: 280), contends that he was forced by the Soviet regime to exaggerate nationalist traits in his work and “to compose in Borodin’s patented ‘Polovtsian’ style”, which the broader Soviet milieu regarded with a “pretense of admiration” (Taruskin 2000: xvi). Similarly, Frolova-Walker asserts that Khachaturian’s music “does not even begin to challenge the Russian Orientalist style. He never dissociated himself from the traditions of Russian music, and came to be regarded in Moscow as a mouthpiece of the whole Soviet Orient, sweeping up all the diverse traditions into a grand generalization once more” (Frolova-Walker 2007: 337–338).

These sweeping generalisations about Khachaturian’s work deserve closer examination. Although the influence of Borodin and the rest of the *kuchka* upon Khachaturian’s musical style is not in dispute (indeed, the composer openly acknowledged his indebtedness to both Transcaucasian folk music and to nineteenth-century Russian precedents) (Arutyunov 1983: 15), they seem particularly questionable in two respects: first of all, that the composer’s style can be so casually reduced to a pallid facsimile of this tradition, entirely disregarding his considerable debt to contemporary Western musical modernism; and secondly that his musical language was shaped – either partially or wholly – by the demands of the regime in enforced conformity with the doctrines of Socialist Realism. The possibility that Khachaturian may have felt himself to be exploring an authentic vein of creativity is not considered at all.

The first question that should be asked is whether there was a strong causal relationship between Stalinist cultural policy in regard of music and Khachaturian's neo-nationalist musical language. Accompanying the rapid development of national musical institutions in the Caucasian and Central Asian Republics of the USSR after 1934, which saw the establishment of conservatoires, opera houses, and orchestras in these regions, composers were actively encouraged to use native folk-musics as a basis for their creative work, following on from nineteenth-century *kuchkist* traditions. Because of the generally-held perception that Khachaturian sought to adhere to this quasi-official policy of developing nationalist styles (especially in having recourse to oriental elements), and perhaps also due to his own Georgian/Armenian nationality, commentators have consequently assumed that the composer's musical language transpired as a direct response to this policy. However, it is important to emphasise that the surface connections in much of Khachaturian's music with the musical practice of the *kuchka* – features such as drone-like pedal points, modal melodic writing and extended string techniques – should not be taken as proof of a conscious conformism with official policy. Even a superficial investigation of some of the well-known works which Khachaturian composed before 1934 indicates that his style did not differ markedly from those written subsequent to the imposition of Socialist Realism. In his early student composition the *Song of the Wandering Ashug* (1925), for instance, Khachaturian's distinctive neo-nationalist style is already clearly perceptible in the work's modal violin melodies and oriental arabesque-like figurations, and there is no obvious break in style between this work and the works written after the imposition of Socialist Realism (that is, from the First Symphony onwards).

Indeed, this 'nationalist' style was a consistent feature of the works of the pre-Socialist Realist period. Folk influences permeate the Clarinet Trio (1932) to a striking degree: from the first movement's numerous winding arabesque-like figurations giving the impression of an extended improvisation, its use of drone-like pedal points, frequent modality, techniques of developing variation and cadenza-like passages, to the second movement's irregular rhythms and imitation of drone-folk instruments, the work reads as an extremely colourful emulation of *kuchkist* compositional procedures that were held up as models for Soviet composers to imitate. Likewise, the famous *Toccata* (1932) evokes the sound-world of Balakirev's *Islamey* with its rapid repeated notes and short motivic fragments, developed by means of a background-variation technique ultimately deriving from Glinka's *Kamarinskaya*. It is worth reiterating here that Khachaturian himself made no secret of the fact that such material

had always been a great source of inspiration for him, suggesting that he consciously desired to develop the Russian traditions before the imposition of Socialist Realism:

[Russian Oriental music] showed me not only the possibility, but also the necessity of a rapprochement between, and mutual enrichment of Eastern and Western cultures, of Transcaucasian music and Russian music... the Oriental elements in Glinka's *Ruslan*, and in Balakirev's *Tamara* and *Islamey* [...] were striking models for me, and provided a strong impulse for a new creative quest in this direction (Arutyunov 1983: 15).

The student works listed above also clearly betray the influence of Debussy and Ravel in their harmonic vocabulary and piano writing. Khachaturian encountered these composers during his visits to the pianist Elena Bekman-Shcherbina, a professor at the Moscow Conservatoire who hosted frequent musical gatherings and was a noted interpreter of French Impressionist keyboard works. While Grigory Shneerson and Viktor Yuzefovich, the authors of the two biographies of Khachaturian readily available in an English translation (Shneerson 1959; Yuzefovich 1985), make passing reference to this early influence of Debussy and Ravel, other Western musical influences – apparent in Khachaturian's oeuvre both before and after the advent of Socialist Realism – have been significantly played down by Soviet commentators, and this important facet of the composer's music is rarely given sufficient attention. Unlike a composer such as Reinhold Glière, who can be regarded as conforming largely to this quasi-*kuchkist* style (in his famous ballet *The Red Poppy*, for instance) Khachaturian's music is considerably more individual, and is far from being what Frolova-Walker has already been quoted in this article as terming a “grand generalization [of the] traditions of Russian music”.

The deviation from *kuchkist* norms is especially true with regards to the composer's harmonic vocabulary, which manifests in a number of ways. First of all, in spite of his utilisation of familiar *kuchkist* devices such as pedal points and octatonic scales, Khachaturian deploys these in strikingly inventive ways. With regards to the former, for instance, this tonal staticity is often maintained for what can seem like almost excessive periods of time – one case in point would be the middle section of the second movement of the Second Symphony (1943). With regards to the latter, a work such as the Violin Concerto-Rhapsody (1961) makes use of octatonic chordal writing as a harmonic tool, rather than the more frequently-encountered melodic octatonicism of a figure such as Rimsky-Korsakov.

Just as importantly, however, Khachaturian's harmonic language itself is often remarkably dissonant, making use of trenchant bitonality and polytonality and sometimes bordering even on atonality. An examination of the Third Symphony (1947) makes clear the lengths to which Khachaturian was willing to go in having recourse to extreme dissonance. The most initially striking features of this score, which is scored for the unusual combination of large symphony orchestra, organ, and fifteen additional trumpets, are the extraordinarily disparate nature of its musical material – a fact that seems to have escaped the attention of all commentators – and the strangeness of this thematic content in a work that supposedly adheres to the tenets of Socialist Realism (it was written for the celebrations marking the thirtieth anniversary of the October Revolution). The first subject group of this one-movement symphony is particularly remarkable. It comprises two principal ideas; the first (bars 1–54) is a fanfare-like idea stated by the massed trumpets. The entire passage is constructed from reiterations of a handful of motifs that are taken up by all of the trumpets in turn, developing into a complex multilayered polyphony. It is noteworthy that this material does not define a stable tonal centre; on the contrary, it is surprisingly dissonant, featuring harsh polytonal clashes and complex chords built of stacks of thirds. Furthermore, the character of this material, far from suggesting a festive mood of celebration, establishes a highly sinister atmosphere in its obsessive rhythmic repetitions and strident timbres. The upper voices are consistently in a very high register, which lends a piercingly insistent sonority to the whole, and the mass of trumpets establishes itself as a loud, steely, unyielding presence, seeking to overwhelm and dominate from the outset (Example 1).

The second idea of the First Subject group is even more surprising. This is stated by the organ, which interrupts dramatically as the trumpet fanfares reach their climax in bar 53. Khachaturian's use of the organ throughout the symphony is most unusual: it is utilised not only as a means of reinforcing orchestral sonorities at climaxes but is additionally allotted a prominent solo part. The intrusion of its timbral character at this point in the music is completely unexpected, and even startling. It presents contrasting material which takes the form of highly virtuosic figurations in turbulent sextuplet semi-quavers ranging brilliantly over the entire compass of the keyboard. Once again, this material does not establish a stable tonal centre, and is highly chromatic and dissonant. The musical temperament remains darkly sinister with a fierce manic energy (Example 2). The trumpet fanfares subsequently return and are superimposed onto the organ music (bar 78), generating even higher levels of dissonance and tension; indeed, as the First Subject group reaches its main climax, the harmonic language becomes virtually atonal.

Example 1. Aram Khachaturian, Symphony No. 3, bars 44–46

Musical score for Example 1, Aram Khachaturian, Symphony No. 3, bars 44–46. The score includes parts for Trombone, Tuba, Timpani, Snare Drum, and a section of Trumets in Bb. The Trombone, Tuba, and Snare Drum parts are marked with *ff* (fortissimo). The Trumets in Bb section consists of ten staves, with the first four staves also marked *ff*. The music features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings.

Example 1. Khachaturian, Symphony No. 3, bars 44–46

Example 2. Aram Khachaturian, Symphony No. 3, bars 53–54

Musical score for Example 2, Aram Khachaturian, Symphony No. 3, bars 53–54. The score is for Organ and features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings, including *ff* (fortissimo).

Example 2, Khachaturian, Symphony No. 3, bars 53–54

The idea that a composer such as Khachaturian could deviate so markedly from Socialist Realist stylistic norms escapes many prominent commentators, including Hakobian, who has ironically described Khachaturian’s art as “sane” Socialist Realism (Hakobian 1998: 198), and especially Maes, who notes that “*even Khachaturyan*” [my emphasis] was reprimanded for musical formalism due to

the Third Symphony in 1948 (Maes 2002: 347). Writing about the official condemnation of the work, Maes explains that “Khachaturyan blamed his own temporary deviation from socialist realism on the noxious influence of critics and musicologists who had urged him to overcome the limitations of his strict Armenian national style. He accordingly returned to the folkloristic and heroic style he had developed in his ballet *Gayaneh* (1942)” (Ibid: 312).

However, even if the Third Symphony represents something of an extreme in this regard, Khachaturian nevertheless used such devices extensively in his more well-known works. The famous Piano Concerto (1936) features an abundance of chromatic and tritonal figurations, as well as harmonic progressions which frequently extend past the usual major/minor relations. Similarly, the Second Symphony situates folk-like melodic material over extremely dissonant orchestral backgrounds. A case in point for the latter is the tonally indeterminate opening of the third movement, with a dirge pattern simultaneously stressing the semitonal clash between B \flat and B \natural . Though it has been asserted by commentators such as Yuzefovich that these dissonances arose as a response to the folk instruments Khachaturian heard in his childhood (Yuzefovich 1985: 261), the point should be stressed that such techniques were also employed by contemporary Western composers such as Karol Szymanowski.

Indeed, many aspects of Khachaturian’s style and musical language, if viewed in a wider international context, seem far from exceptional, and one wonders whether Western commentators may be fundamentally incorrect in assuming that the ‘exotic’ and ‘nationalist’ traits of his work resulted from a capitulation to Socialist Realist dictates, and that he could have written very differently under other circumstances – perhaps exploring more avant-garde idioms. It is important to bear in mind that idioms such as atonality or serialism were by no means universally adopted in the West before the 1950s. Indeed, many composers remained sceptical about the value of such idioms. The English composer Arnold Bax, for instance, wrote that it was “improbable that healthy and natural things like the coming of spring, young love, or any gay or happy idea can ever be associated with so turgid a medium [that is, atonality]” (Bax 1943: 63). Figures such as Ralph Vaughan Williams and Zoltán Kodály also represent good cases in point. Such composers not only saw no reason to break violently with tradition, but also had no difficulty writing appealing works of a more accessible nature alongside their more serious compositions. Vaughan Williams, for instance, was capable of writing such popular pieces as his *English Folk Song Suite* (1923), whose sound-world is far removed from that of his violent and dissonant Fourth Symphony (1935). Moreover, many Western composers cultivated neo-nationalist styles of various kinds that displayed continu-

ities with nineteenth-century traditions. It is interesting to recall Kodály's comments made in the 1930s concerning his desire to cultivate a Hungarian national music:

A long series of endeavours in Hungarian composed music was unsuccessful because they were not rooted in folk music but tried to imitate various foreign forms as did literature a long time ago with German, French and Latin schools (Kodály 1974: 222).

Nor is it warranted to assume that scores by Khachaturian such as *Gayane* (1942), though undeniably of a lighter and more conservative idiom than the Piano Concerto or Second Symphony, were not composed with sincerity. Even Shostakovich, frequently held as the model of the dissident composer, was happy to produce lighter works when required, such as the *Festive Overture* (1954). Indeed, to quote Vaughan Williams:

We are too apt to divide our music into popular and classical, the highbrow and the lowbrow. One day perhaps we shall find an ideal music which will be neither popular nor classical, highbrow or lowbrow, but an art in which all can take part (Vaughan Williams 1934: 39).

All of these considerations raise the question of why Khachaturian's music was singled out for much dismissive criticism by Western commentators. Arguably, this problem has its source in the fact that Western views of the composer have been deeply influenced by Soviet writings about him, many of which present a highly tendentious image of him as a dutiful adherent to Socialist Realism. A further obstacle for the Western scholar is the fact that, as previously noted, there are only two readily-available substantial biographies on Khachaturian in English,² both of which are themselves translations of Soviet sources. Despite the fact that both Shneerson and Yuzefovich knew the composer personally, these works nevertheless display the typical shortcomings of Soviet musicological publications. As Patrick Zuk has observed:

Even the best of these have significant limitations (Soviet biographies, for example, mostly present their subjects in a highly idealized manner); and

² Other works in the English language do exist, but these are not detailed enough to warrant the title of biography; indeed, Geoffrey Norris' entry in *The Oxford Companion to Music* quotes entirely from Yuzefovich (Norris 2011). Of note, however, should be mentioned Svetlana Sarkisyan's writing in *Grove Music Online* which consults an extensive bibliography of foreign sources (Sarkisyan 2001), Hakobian's aforementioned Soviet history (Hakobian 1997), and Stanley Krebs' work in his *Soviet Composers and the Development of Soviet Music* (Krebs 1970).

at worst, they are not only of poor quality, but written from tendentious perspectives. Not infrequently, such publications are more notable for what they omit to mention than what they reveal. As Detlef Gojowy observed, the advent of perestroika confronted musicologists with nothing less than the task of thoroughgoing and radical reassessment: “How many allegedly established ‘facts’ that have been reiterated as certitudes in book after book must now be called into question and revised?... Entire biographies must be rewritten afresh.” Until new biographies and studies of individual composers’ outputs grow considerably more numerous, there is a danger that the music of this period will continue to be appraised on the basis of questionable assumptions (Zuk 2014: 358).

This is not to overlook the genuinely valuable aspects of the major Soviet publications on Khachaturian; for instance, Shneerson’s monograph (Shneerson 1959) makes a number of insightful observations regarding technical features of Khachaturian’s compositions: the significance of the composer’s innovative contribution to symphonism (Ibid: 7) via “an organic unity of the two sources of music coming from the East and from the West” (Ibid: 99), in particular in the “conflict between free improvisation and a deep sense of the laws of classical sonata form” (Ibid: 60) is noted, for instance, as is the use of taut motivic development in the First Symphony:

The melodies of the introduction, ‘the quintessence of the entire work,’ to quote Khachaturian’s own words, play a very important part in the further development of this musical epic. Thus the agitated and impassioned melodic elements of the introduction give rise to a majestic and manful, if somewhat elegiac, theme stated for the first time by the cellos and basses. Then this theme is elaborated in a variety of ways and followed by contrasting themes whose melodic and rhythmical elements – curious to say – are derived from the main theme itself (Ibid: 35)

Similarly, Georgi Khubov’s monograph (Khubov 1962) contains an entire chapter demonstrating Khachaturian’s extensive indebtedness to stylistic features of Armenian folk music, and features reasonable discussions on a variety of musical topics such as the formal plan of the first movement of the First Symphony.

Unfortunately, however, these publications have consistent recourse to questionable arguments in an attempt to show that Khachaturian’s body of work is closely aligned with the core tenets of Socialist Realism. This is perhaps most notable in their frequent application of phantom programmes, a term coined by Frolova-Walker to describe an imaginary ideological programme given to an abstract work by a commentator (Frolova-Walker 2013). Such

ideological motives wholly permeate the books, attempting to portray Khachaturian as the model Soviet composer which many Western commentators have subsequently appropriated. Shneerson claims, for instance, that “[t]he theme of love of his country, of his people, is manifest in all of his work. His full-blooded and joyous music is imbued with the spirit of our days, of the novel features of socialist society” (Shneerson 1959: 10), and that “[w]ith each new work grew the popularity and fame of the composer, whose works vividly and optimistically portrayed Soviet life” (Ibid: 79). Though writing many years later, Yuzefovich nonetheless sought to portray the composer as a committed Communist (Yuzefovich 1985: 2) and an exemplary model for younger Soviet artists. In some passages, this idealised portrayal borders on the ludicrous: Yuzefovich claims Khachaturian was able to predict that Arno Babajanyan would have a “wonderful musical career” while the latter was still in kindergarten (Ibid: 35). Moreover, Yuzefovich deliberately downplays Khachaturian’s significant debt to contemporary Western classical music, to the point of distorting the evidence. When discussing his reminiscences of his composition teacher Nikolay Myaskovsky, for example, Yuzefovich stresses that Myaskovsky brought his students up on the Russian classics (Ibid: 43), but omits to mention that Myaskovsky also introduced his students to the work of contemporary Western composers such as Bartók, Stravinsky, Hindemith, Berg, and Schoenberg (Myaskovsky 1964: 301–302). As Khachaturian explicitly remarks, “[Myaskovsky] encouraged curiosity in his pupils” about *Western modernism* (Ibid: 302).

Despite the usefulness of the interviews with Khachaturian in Yuzefovich’s book, others written around the same time such as Georgi Tigranov’s 1987 book are content to rehash earlier publications and resort to familiar clichés and stereotypes about Khachaturian’s work without examining the music closely. The opening paragraph of Tigranov’s book illustrates the tone and general tenor of the work:

The history of art knows many artists whose creations shine like sunbeams. Through storm and stress they carry faith in life, an exultation of freedom and happiness. Such a creator was our marvellous contemporary, the outstanding Soviet composer Aram Il’ich Khachaturian. [...] He could melt down the multifaceted phenomena of life, complex social and moral problems of the epoch, thoughts and feelings of his contemporaries in truly living music, displayed concretely, expressive and clear to the nth degree. His music is thrilling, sincere speech, addressing the people. Khachaturian is one of those artist-enthusiasts, composer-narrators, of which all his versatile activities asserted [...] the lofty ideals of Communism. All of his life and creative path was inseparably connected with the fate of his country [...] the thoughts and aspirations of the Soviet nation (Tigranov 1987: 5).

On the whole, these Soviet publications devote far more space to discussing Khachaturian's supposed ideological commitment than to musical analysis (Khubov's monograph apart); Shneerson's book, for instance, confines itself merely to superficial description of the Violin and Cello Concertos, and Khachaturian's return to a more diatonic musical language in the former is interpreted as a direct response to Socialist Realism:

Khachaturian's Violin Concerto is extra proof of the fact that modern music (modern in the strictest sense of the term) can win popularity with broad democratic audiences and yet remain original and new. A searching and original composer, Khachaturian does not strive to obey the dictates of modernistic fashion. He is fully aware of his duty as a humanist artist, of his responsibility to his people and to his art. That is why, unlike some composers who, faced with the audience's indifference to their work, haughtily declare that they are writing the 'music of the future,' Khachaturian composes for his contemporaries. He addresses himself to them and from them he expects a response. (Shneerson 1959: 53).

The appropriation of phantom programmes is most clearly discernible in discussions of the Second Symphony, which is presumed to have a programmatic basis reflecting the composer's artistic response to the events of the Second World War. Shneerson asserts that Khachaturian sought "to depict the heroic struggle of the people fighting against a terrible and cruel enemy, to glorify the spiritual beauty and grandeur of the people defending their music" (Ibid: 62). Writing about the first movement, he claims that the "tempestuous development section, filled with acute conflicts and reminding one of the tragic days of war, is interrupted by short episodes of calm – reminders of the carefree past. But the visions of peace are all too short-lived; we hear again the mournful tread of the main songful theme bringing us back to the thoughts of our suffering country, of the fierce battle with the forces of evil" (Ibid: 65). Though the work is undoubtedly suggestive of conflict, these hermeneutic strategies are highly dubious.

Other Soviet commentators followed suit. Khubov described the Second Symphony as embodying "[t]he idea of the life-asserting fight, binding at the start the tragic and the heroic [...]" (Khubov 1962: 239), and "[...] a dramatic poem of war, executed with connected hatred to the enemy, the high ideals of freedom trampling them, of love, beauty and justice; we hear sorrow, calling to vengeance, and an exciting son about the spirit of great national heroism, overcoming grief, sufferings and laborious death, in thorny paths to victory over the grim forces of evil..." (Ibid: 237). Tigranov writes in a similar vein:

Created in the years of the Great Patriotic War the Second Symphony – a heroic-tragic episode narrating of the fight for freedom and independence of the Motherland, about the greatness of the spirited exploit of the nation, about the patriotism of the Soviet people. [...] Like the Seventh and Eighth of Shostakovich, the Fifth of Prokofiev, the Second Symphony of Khachaturian is permeated with a genuine humanism, with the belief in the victory of the Soviet nation (Tigranov 1987: 64).

By way of conclusion, it is worth noting the composer's own writings on the matter of official interference in musical matters. One of the most interesting of these indicates that the composer was not in slavish conformity to the dictates of Socialist Realism, and was far from uncritical of that doctrine. Writing shortly after the death of Stalin in the November 1953 edition of *Sovetskaya muzika* he remarked:

So-called 'monumental' works were produced for choirs and grand orchestras, and with nothing in them! But one had to put up with it just because the title had something about 'Love for the Soviet Homeland' or 'Struggle for Peace' or 'Friendship among the Nations'. But in the end life itself gave a proper estimate of these works: they were forgotten overnight. [...] no good art is produced by people constantly afraid of 'saying the wrong thing' (Frank 1954: 80).

As Alan Frank has observed, it seems remarkable that these intriguing comments were published at all. Further research on Khachaturian, drawing on previously unconsulted archival documentation available since *glasnost* may well offer a very different view of the composer than the obedient conformist depicted in Western writings.

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Џозеф Шулиц

АРАМ ХАЧАТУРЈАН И СОЦИЈАЛИСТИЧКИ РЕАЛИЗАМ: НОВО РАЗМАТРАЊЕ

(Резиме)

Премда се, на први поглед, највећи део опуса Арама Хачатурјана приклања нормама соцреалистичке естетике, посебно када су у питању његове стилизоване евокације грузијске и јерменске фолклорне музике, као и коришћење тропâ оријентализма и егзотизма, западноевропски аутори који су писали о овом композитору обично су превиђали чињеницу да су ови стилски елементи били присутни у његовом опусу много пре успостављања социјалистичког реализма као званичне естетике. Нема неких упадљивих разлика у композиторовом музичком језику пре и после 1934. године, што опонира тврдњама изнетим у стандардној литератури коришћеној на Западу да се Хачатурјан добровољно приклонио стаљинистичком „колонијалистичком”

пројекту стварања националних музичких култура на Кавказу и у централноазијским републикама Совјетског Савеза. Претпоставка да је Хачатурјан био у обавези да пише бледа неоромантичарска дела по узору на традицију *Њејорке* представља драстично погрешно тумачење његове композиторске естетике.

Хачатурјанов музички језик је далеко сложенији него што је сугерисано оваквим квалификацијама. Мада је руска музичка традиција играла значајну улогу у формирању његовог стила, чак и рана дела попут *Трија* (1932) и *Плесне свиће* (1933) рефлектују широк дијапазон западноевропских модернистичких утицаја (а нарочито Равеловог опуса); њих одликује смео третман хармоније и звучних боја. Ова тенденција је настављена у Хачатурјановим наредним делима; чак је и у остварењу попут Треће симфоније, премијерно изведене 1947. године тј. на врхунцу Ждановљеве кампање, приметно одступање од конвенција социјалистичког реализма у неколико веома важних аспеката. У овом чланку заступа тезу да Хачатурјаново стваралаштво заслужује једно објективније разматрање, мање оптерећено предубеђењима него што је досад био случај. У закључку анализирам на који начин су вредносни судови о његовом опусу рефлектовали актуелну естетику и стилске предрасуде из доба Хладног рата.

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