

OLENA KONONOVA (Kharkiv / Ukraine)

## **On Western European Influences: In the Genesis of Formation and Development of Kharkiv Piano School**

The study of the origins of Kharkiv piano art – artistic traditions, their prolongation and development in the context of socio-historical evolution – is the basis for understanding the degree of influence of Western and Eastern European musical and performing cultures on the formation of the Kharkiv piano school.

Due to the shortage of national professional personnel, there were many highly qualified foreign teachers in music educational institutions of the Russian state, who used to teach students of various specializations. In particular, outstanding musicians from various national schools worked in Kharkiv Music College under the IRMS<sup>1</sup> (1883–1917). For example, the expert on Italian bel canto Federico Bugamelli and the bearer of the German wind academic tradition, an oboist and clarinetist Hugo Heck (later – professors of the conservatory)<sup>2</sup> became the founders of the corresponding performing schools, which were rooted and developed subsequently in the musical educational institutions of Kharkiv.

At the same time, a number of College teachers and students, immigrants from imperial Russia – Ukrainians, Russians, Poles and so on – received higher professional education either abroad or under the guidance of well-known foreign maestros in Russian conservatories. Consequently, Western European performing culture had a significant impact on the dynamics of musical education of the Ukrainian city.

A significant figure in the musical life of Kharkiv at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries was a Polish pianist Andrei (Adolf Andrzej) Schulz-Evler<sup>3</sup> (1852, Radom – 1905, Warsaw). Having received his initial education under the guidance of his father, an organist (organ, piano), he continued his

---

<sup>1</sup> IRMS – ‘Imperial Russian Musical Society’.

<sup>2</sup> The conservatory was opened on the basis of Kharkiv Music College in 1917.

<sup>3</sup> The pedagogical and performing activity of A. Schulz-Evler is considered in the articles and Ph.D. thesis of Kononova O.V. – “A. Schulz-Evler – a pianist, teacher, composer at the turn of the 19th – 20th centuries (details of his portrait)”. – The V.I. Lenin Library: NIO Informkultura, *Muzyka*, 1984, No. 6; Kononova O.V., “Schulz-Evler A.V. – composer”, in: *Problems of arts, pedagogy and theory of practice interaction*. Collection of research papers. Issue. 8. – Kharkiv, 2002. – S. 217–226. Candidate dissertation: *Pianistic culture of Kharkiv in the last third of the 19th - beginning of the 20th centuries*. – Kyiv, 1984.



*Andrei (Adolf Andrzej) Schulz-Evler*



*Carl Tausig*

studies at Warsaw Institute of Music with Rudolf Strobl and Alexander Mikhalovsky. Then Schulz-Evler improved his pianistic skills in Berlin with one of the best students of Franz Liszt – Carl Tausig.

Mikhalovsky studied at the Leipzig Conservatory under Ignaz Moscheles and Theodor Coccius (student of Sigismund Thalberg), and then in Berlin – with Tausig. Communication with Fryderyk Chopin's student Carl Mikuli enriched A. Mikhalovsky with valuable knowledge about the works of the Polish genius, whose compositions were central in his concert repertoire. The fruitful pedagogical activity of Mikhalovsky was noted, in particular, by the names of outstanding artists: Wanda Landowska and Vladimir Sofronitsky. A graduate of the Vienna Conservatory R. Strobl also raised a galaxy of famous pianists, among them were Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Josef Slivinsky, Alexander Ruzhytsky, Heinrich Pachulski.

Thus, Schulz-Evler received a fundamental education from leading European maestros, who left a deep mark in the world piano culture. After graduating from the Warsaw Institute of Music, Schulz-Evler taught there for a year. However, the young pianist devoted next thirteen years to the concert activity: he toured in Germany, where he met Tausig, in Poland, Russia and Austria. In 1883, A. Schulz-Evler returned to teaching, but now in the Moscow Philharmonic Society.

The mature period of Schulz-Evler's creative activity falls on 1889–1904, which passed in Ukraine. Invited as a teacher of the Kharkiv Music College by the headmaster Ilya Slatin, the pianist revealed himself multifacetedly as a performer – the founder of progressive traditions in the city's concert life, an authoritative teacher,

who stood at the origins of the formation of the professional piano school in Kharkiv, and as a brilliant popular composer of the salon-virtuoso direction.

Not limited to the concert halls of Kharkiv, Schulz-Evler toured around Warsaw, Kyiv, Saratov and other cities of the empire. All critics were unanimous in evaluating his performances. “[...] Currently, Schulz-Evler is an outstanding phenomenon in our musical world,” a Warsaw reviewer noted in 1892. The authoritative Kyiv critic, composer and teacher Viktor Chechotte, who was called the “musical chronicler,” stated in 1897:<sup>4</sup>

The concert given by Schulz-Evler impressed those present. The pianist turned out to be one of the first masters of his craft, and if he was not preceded by fame and trumpet fanfares of modern advertising, then this only indicates that this performer belongs to the category of artists who serve art for himself and do not specifically care about popularity and external success [...].<sup>5</sup>

Taking an active part in the concert life of Kharkiv, performing in chamber, symphony, and jubilee concerts, Schulz-Evler preferred Klavier-Abende. His annual solo concerts had always attracted the audience not only with masterfully brilliant performance of programs, but also with their careful selection, largely innovative for that time.

Schulz-Evler was the first to organize in Kharkiv monographic piano nights, the program of which featured works of classical or romantic music. He dedicated such concerts, in particular, to the legacy of Ludwig van Beethoven and Fryderyk Chopin (Schulz-Evler learned the secrets of interpreting Chopin’s works from Mikhalovsky). The pianist also tirelessly expanded his repertoire with outstanding novelties of piano literature, “[...] partially filling this gap in the domestic concert life”,<sup>6</sup> the press noted. The music of Alexander Borodin, Mily Balakirev, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Anatoly Lyadov was widely represented in the Klavier-Abende of Schulz-Evler. He highly appreciated the work of A. Lyadov:

Your works are divinely beautiful! – he wrote to the composer. – How much inspiration, elegant simplicity! And what artistic completeness of your masterfully created wonderful themes, motifs and sincere melodies, in a word, everything is presented in strict forms, which are found only among ingenious composers. [...] I bow [before] your marvellous compositions in which I found a new life for myself, a new world. [...] I am only amazed why your compositions have not yet gained European fame. And your countrymen, even the Russians themselves, do not yet know and do not understand what kind of master in your personality God has sent to them.<sup>7</sup>

Kyiv periodicals also emphasized a special feature that distinguished

[...] A. Schulz-Evler from modern virtuosos. Most of them continue playing pieces that are well-known to everyone, timidly hiding behind the wall of a routine repertoire, –

<sup>4</sup> Cited from the newspaper *Yuzhnyi Kray*, 1892, January 19. (Musical notes)

<sup>5</sup> Cited from the newspaper *Yuzhnyi Kray*, 1897, December 16. (Musical notes)

<sup>6</sup> Musical notes, in: *Yuzhnyi Kray*, 1897, March 1.

<sup>7</sup> Russian National Library, f. 449, reg. 1 unit of storage 67.

the review stated. – Schulz-Evler, on the contrary, appears every time as a bold pioneer of unexplored, untouched areas [...], he is not afraid to play pieces by young composers.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, in the Klavier-Abend of 1897, new works by some Kyiv authors were performed, among which were the works of Nikolai Tutkovsky,<sup>9</sup> which left a “pleasant impression”.<sup>10</sup> At concerts Schulz-Evler often interpreted his own opuses, mainly of small forms: *Nocturne* op. 6, *Melody* op. 5, *Serenade* op. 11, *Revelation* (op. 8, No. 1; op. 9, No. 2; op. 10, No. 3) and etc.

Schulz-Evler, a subtle interpreter of many popular outstanding compositions and an excellent improviser, was not only a consistent populariser of modern piano literature and rarely performed works by the composers of the past, but he also was not without reason known as an outstanding virtuoso, which could not but affect the formation of his concert repertoire. The outstanding virtuoso gift of Schulz-Evler is discussed in many reviews of his performances. “Fluency of fingers, independence of hands, thirds, sixths, octaves, chords, leaps – all this is brought by the artist to amazing dexterity and perfection,” – we read in one of Kyiv’s reviews.<sup>11</sup> Kharkiv critic Grigory Alchevski,<sup>12</sup> who responded to the pianist’s concert, marked, in particular, his performance of *Islamey* by M. Balakirev: “Schulz-Evler showed that such things can be played ‘simply and sweetly’, without overstraining, without inciting any fears of the successful end of the venture.”<sup>13</sup>

Schulz-Evler did not perform only the virtuoso repertoire, which, I think, was largely facilitated by creative contacts with Tausig, who possessed phenomenal technique but opposed external virtuosity. Interpreting highly artistic, pianistically complex works, Schulz-Evler always sought to reveal the author’s idea, subjecting it to all technical effects. This is confirmed by printed reviews of professional musicians who emphasized the artist’s deep penetration into the figurative sphere of music of various styles and genres.

---

<sup>8</sup> Musical notes, in: *Yuzhnyi Kray*, 1897, December 16.

<sup>9</sup> Nikolay Tutkovsky (1857–1931) – Ukrainian composer, pianist, music historian and music teacher.

<sup>10</sup> Musical notes, in: *Yuzhnyi Kray*, 1897, December 16.

<sup>11</sup> Cited from the above mentioned newspaper.

<sup>12</sup> Grigory Alchevsky – a pianist, composer, teacher-vocalist, student of the Moscow Conservatory (piano class of Alexander Siloti; as a composer he improved his skills under the influence of Sergey Taneyev. G. Alchevsky is a member of a family of famous workers of Ukrainian culture. His father Alexey Alchevsky was an industrialist, banker, philanthropist; his spouse Khristina was a teacher, public education activist, who founded in Kharkiv Sunday Women’s School, which was run by her from 1862 to 1919. His brother Ivan studied vocal art under the direction of Grigory Alchevsky, performed on opera stages in St. Petersburg, Brussels, London, New York, Paris, Kyiv, Odessa, Kharkiv, Moscow – at the Bolshoi Theater and in the opera of Zimin. His sister Khristina was a poet, translator and teacher, completed women’s courses in Paris.

<sup>13</sup> Alchevsky G. Musical notes, in: *Yuzhnyi Kray*, 1908 November 25.

The impeccable virtuoso talent of Schulz-Evler was purposefully formed under the influence of his authoritative teachers who had created their own strategy for developing effective piano technique. In particular, R. Strobl wrote piano etudes for didactic purposes, as well as revised similar opuses by other authors, which Schulz-Evler, of course, knew well. In his professional development he could not ignore Liszt's *Technical Exercises*, which, without a doubt, were recommended to him by Carl Tausig. The inventiveness of Tausig, the author of numerous virtuoso arrangements, was highly appreciated even by Liszt, who liked to play Muzio Clementi H-dur Etude No. 22 (*Gradus ad Parnassum*) revised by his student.

Thus, it is not surprising that Schulz-Evler did not leave out the virtuoso direction in his own composition. In particular, he created the *Octave Etude* op. 17, "Daily exercises" in 3 parts, which were popular among listeners, – proof to this is their publication in Soviet times in the series "Etudes and Exercises for Piano" at the State Publishing House 'Music Sector' (Moscow). In addition to instructive opuses, the piano composer wrote a spectacular waltz *Narzan* op. 19, which he repeatedly played encore; skilfully written, inventive in texture presentation *Variations* op. 4; *Russian rhapsody* for piano and orchestra op 14, performed by the author and the orchestra of the IRMS branch under the direction of Ilya Slatin.

However, out of 52 of his compositions only *Concert arabesques on the motifs of the waltz by Johann Strauß On the Beautiful Blue Danube* won true world popularity. The score was published in St. Petersburg by Alexander Bittner with a dedication on the title page: "To dear Ilya Ilyich Slatin from the grateful author." This composition fully corresponds to its genre with rich ornamentation of the thematic material, concert brilliance of presentation and sophistication.

The *Concert arabesques* of Schulz-Evler met the aesthetic needs of those listeners, who at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries welcomed the revival of the salon-virtuoso style. Sparkling, spectacular at first sight pieces, saturated with bravura, bead technique, they captivated the audience, who watched with bated breath the pianistic manoeuvres of virtuosos. In the arrangement of Schulz-Euler, technical 'puzzles' are pouring in a wide stream. Rapid passages in parallel thirds, sixths and eighths, powerful chords, roars of arpeggia and 'pearl' technique – everything that represented the pride of the concert virtuoso was reflected in arabesques.

At the same time, the work of Johann Strauß – Schulz-Evler, clearly designed for an unconditional pop impact on the audience largely due to the virtuoso richness of the texture, is attractive because of its rationality and organic use of the entire arsenal of piano technical means. Here, well-known words of Liszt that technology is created from the spirit, and not from mechanics, are quite appropriate. It is true, the concerto character, that is,

brightness, showiness, contrast of arabesques, naturally arises from the figurativeness of Strauß' waltz melodies. Nowhere virtuoso passages are perceived as a foreign element, but they always emphasize, reveal, develop the character of one or another motive. Therefore, it is not surprising that the arrangement contains an abundance of technical formulas. Each theme, as a rule, is accompanied by the most appropriate skilful decoration – whether it is characteristic singing of a melodic pattern, or an impressive linking element.

*Concert arabesques* are logical and harmonious. Created as a traditional Viennese waltz (introduction, five waltzes and a conclusion), they are a series of various emotional states: from pacified – to triumphant, exultant. At the same time, the mood often changes unexpectedly, unpredictably. The effect of spontaneity of characteristic switching is correctly planned by the author and is aimed at maintaining public interest in the performed work. In other words, Schulz-Evler appears to have an indisputable command of laws of listening perception.

Being a first-class pianist, who absorbed the Liszt traditions thanks to Carl Tausig, Schulz-Evler skilfully applied the knowledge of 'secrets' of mastery in interpreting piano as a symphony orchestra. Using Liszt's inventions — *al fresco* methods and colouristic enrichment (Jacob Milstein) — the composer impressively conveyed the diverse sound of the orchestra, using a large span of keyboard, a sweeping range of chord complexes, crossing hands, which significantly densifies the texture, and so on.

At the same time, Schulz-Evler proved himself to be a keen connoisseur of the piano cantilena, exquisite texture ornamentation, which is so characteristic of the arabesque genre. But unlike, for example, *Arabesques* by Claude Debussy, in the work of Schulz-Evler, in addition to the refined lace weaving and predominance of one texture formula in certain episodes, there is a variety of technical methods which is attributed to the concert character of the opus.

The texture, stroke, dynamic richness presented in the arrangement of Schulz-Evler indicates the undoubted influence of romantic art on his work. Apparently, it was this circumstance and the composer's skill of the Kharkiv musician that made *Concert arabesques* on the motifs of the famous J. Strauß' waltz *On the Beautiful Blue Danube* attractive and so popular in the first decades of the 20th century. It is no coincidence that Sergey Rakhmaninov and Nikolai Orlov, who are famous for their irreconcilable attitude to the salon-virtuoso style, were crammed with this work. However, the inclusion of Schulz-Evler's arabesques in their concert programs is evidence of a compromise policy, without which touring artists can hardly do.

The spectacular piece was included in the repertoire of Joseph Hoffmann, Joseph Levin, Emil von Sauer, Leonard Pennario, Earl Wild, Marc-André Hamelin and many other recognized pianists. A quote from Ernst Salzberg

can be a documented proof of the rare popularity of Schulz-Evler's arrangement. Referring to Robert K. Wallace's book *A Century of Music-Making: The Lives of Josef and Rosina Lhevinne*, he writes:

In January 1907, Joseph performed with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. The next day, the Levins were invited to the White House, where the pianist played for President T. Roosevelt and his family. At the president's request, he finished the hour's concert with the performance of J. Strauss's waltz "Blue Danube".<sup>14</sup>

An explanation is given in the footnote: "The author of the arrangement, which was often performed by I. Levin encore, is Schulz-Evler Adolf (1852, Radom, Poland – 1905, Warsaw), composer and pianist, student of Tausig."<sup>15</sup>

During the twentieth century, a number of audio recordings were made. Today, the brilliant arabesques of Schulz-Evler – Strauß have regained popularity – they are included in the competitive programs, they sound in concerts. For example, at the La Roque d'Anteron International Festival of Piano Music, "the musical gem of the South of France", as it is called, an Argentinean pianist Nelson Goerner, the winner of Franz Liszt Competition in Buenos Aires, after the perfect performance of the Third Piano Concerto by Rachmaninov played encore... what would you think? Well, of course, "the impressive variations of Adolf Schulz-Evler (Polish composer who died in 1905) on the theme *On the beautiful blue Danube* by Johann Strauß".<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the effect was the same as in the good old days: "Brilliant! Complete triumph!" – says reviewer Yves Berger. However, if you failed to listen to this work in the concert hall or in the famous park, YouTube will help, in which the unfading opus sounds, in particular, in the interpretation of Mikhail Pletnev.

Schulz-Evler also left a bright trace in piano pedagogy, educating a string of talented pianists, including his successor Pavel Lutsenko<sup>17</sup> (1873–1934), who was especially noted by Pyotr Tchaikovsky among students of Music School who spoke in front of the renowned composer during his stay in Kharkiv (1893). The manuscript of *Variations* op. 4, G-dur by Schulz-Evler with a touching inscription, presented to a talented pupil: "P.K. Lutsenko, my beloved, dear student, is the pride of my class. Schulz-Evler. Kharkiv, April 9,

---

<sup>14</sup> Ernst Salzberg, "Joseph Levin – 'pianist-aristocrat'", in: *Sem' iskusstv*, No. 7 (88), June 2017. Electronic resource: <http://7i.7iskusstv.com/2017-nomer7-zalchberg/>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Yves Berger. Review. International Piano Festival of La Roque d'Anthéron. Electronic resource: <https://tatarstan-symphony.com/press/show/892>.

<sup>17</sup> Kononova O.V. „Lutsenko Pavlo Kindratovych (Personalities)", in: *Kharkiv I.P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts. 1917–2017. To the centenary of the foundation: small encyclopedia / Kharkiv I.P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts; comp. L.V. Rusakova. – Kharkiv: "Vodnyi Spekr G-M-P", 2017. Part 1. Music Art. – p. 276.*



Pavel Lutsenko

1896." After graduating from college,<sup>18</sup> Lutsenko continued his musical education at the 'Stern Berlin Conservatory', where he studied in the class of professor Ernest Jedliczka, a native of the Ukrainian city of Poltava, and a graduate of the Moscow Conservatory in piano class of Nikolai Rubinstein.

In 1900, having passed an external exam at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, Lutsenko received the title of a 'free artist', after which, at the invitation of E. Jedliczka, he became his assistant and then professor at the 'Stern Conservatory' (until the outbreak of the First World War). A talented pianist gave concerts in Berlin – the centre of musical life in Europe and in other cities of Germany

with classical and romantic music programs, and also popularized the works of Russian composers. For example, in April 1902, Jedliczka wrote to Balakirev: "Last month [in Berlin] P.K. Lutsenko performed your *Dumka* at his concert and was a huge success."<sup>19</sup> He repeatedly performed at symphony concerts; together with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra he interpreted piano concertos by Tchaikovsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Anton Arensky.

The pianism of Lutsenko absorbed the influences of various methods of European piano art both in Kharkiv and in Berlin; his masterful catchy interpretations attracted the demanding Western public. At the beginning of the 20th century Lutsenko, thanks to his intensive performing and pedagogical activities, became well-known in Europe, and gained a well-deserved authority in the musical circles of Germany. Chamber music evenings with the participation of Ferruccio Busoni, Adolf Brodsky, the first performer of the Concerto for violin and orchestra op. 35 by P. Tchaikovsky dedicated to him, and other famous artists, were organized at his place.<sup>20</sup>

At the 'Stern Conservatory', Lutsenko brought up a galaxy of talented pianists of different nationalities. Among his students were: a Canadian Alfred Laliberte (La Liberte), who in the music world gained a reputation of a devoted and inspired populariser of Alexander Scriabin's music; a Pole Stanislaw Lipsky, later a professor at the Krakow Conservatory. In 1914, a Russian woman Nadezhda Landesman left Berlin with her professor.

<sup>18</sup> Pavlo Lutsenko also received a law degree at Kharkiv University.

<sup>19</sup> Balakirev M.A. *Chronicle of life and work* / Comp. A.S. Lyapunova and E.E. Yazovitskaya. – Leningrad: Muzyka, 1967. – p. 429.

<sup>20</sup> Lysenko L.F. *Pavlo Kindratovych Lutsenko and his students: Ways of Kharkiv piano school development*. – Kharkiv: Livy bereh, 1998.



Returning to Kharkiv, Lutsenko began teaching at Music College (1916), which was soon reorganized into the Conservatory (1917).<sup>21</sup> He became the first head of the Piano Department, which he headed until the end of his days. The pianistic traditions formed at the IRMS College were further actively developed in the higher educational institution. Lutsenko significantly enriched them, actively introducing into the educational process the invaluable experience of concert and pedagogical activity, acquired in Western Europe, which brought impressive results, despite the difficult political situation, hunger and devastation.

Kharkiv students of Lutsenko later proved themselves to be excellent highly professional specialists in all levels of music education – in schools, colleges, conservatories. In particular, Maria Itigina was a leading teacher of the Kharkiv secondary specialized music school.<sup>22</sup> Vladimir Krainev, who later became the winner of the ‘International Competitions’ in Leeds, ‘The Vianna da Motta International Music Competition’ in Lisbon and ‘Tchaikovsky International Competition’ in Moscow, studied in her class for eight years. A world-famous pianist who graduated from the Moscow Conservatory (classes of Heinrich and Stanislav Neuhaus), who became its professor (since 1987), and then a professor at ‘Hanover University of Music and Drama’ (since 1992), did not forget his Kharkiv school, contributing in every way to its development. In 1992 the ‘First Competition for Young Pianists’ named after Vladimir Krainev was held. The name of the pianist was an attractive symbol of the new musical competition, which acquired the status of International. For a number of young laureates, particularly Igor Chetuev, Alexander Romanovsky, Nana Kravchenko, Dinara Najafova (Clinton), Ilya Rashkovsky and others, the competition turned out to be a kind of start in their future pianistic career at the international level. The competition continues to live, opening up the opportunity for new generations of pianists to declare their talent and make a crucial step in their own professional life.

Nadezhda Landesman (1890–1949), who studied under Pavel Lutsenko at the ‘Stern Conservatory’, came back to Russia and passed exams for the title of ‘free artist’ at the Moscow Conservatory, after which she actively gave concerts as a soloist and ensemble performer. She achieved particular success in Kharkiv as a member of a trio with Victor Goldfeld (violin) and Joseph Gelfandbeyn (cello), which was organized in 1931. The large-scale and successful performing activities of the musicians received a worthy assessment of

---

<sup>21</sup> In the first years of Soviet power, the Conservatory was reorganized several times, renamed and changed its leaders. At one of these moments Lutsenko was elected as Rector of the university, and he headed the ‘Higher Music Institute’ for a year.

<sup>22</sup> The modern name of the school: KhSSMSh-i (transliterated from Ukrainian: ‘Kharkiv Secondary Specialized Music Boarding School’).



*Nadezhda Landesman, a member of the State Beethoven Trio*

the Government, and the instrumental ensemble was awarded a high status – ‘Beethoven State Trio’.

N. Landesman also achieved success as a teacher. Being since 1933 among the founders of the piano department for a special group of gifted children<sup>23</sup> at Kharkiv Music and Drama Institute,<sup>24</sup> she had trained a significant number of teachers for the university. For some time (1939–1941) she was the head of one of the special piano departments at the Conservatory;<sup>25</sup> upon returning from the evacuation, she received the academic title of professor. The great pedagogical achievement of Landesman was the victory of her talented graduate Vitaly Sechkin<sup>26</sup> at the ‘III International Festival of Youth and Students’ in Berlin (1951). “[Sechkin’s] manner of performance is distinguished by clarity of thought, impeccable taste, fluency in the arsenal of piano technique,” wrote Sergey Dorensky,<sup>27</sup> professor at the Moscow Conservatory, about the musician.

<sup>23</sup> Later, the “special group” was expanded and transformed into ‘Kharkiv Secondary Special (now Specialized) Music Boarding School’ (KhSSMSh-i).

<sup>24</sup> One of the names of Kharkiv Conservatory.

<sup>25</sup> In those years, there were two Special piano departments.

<sup>26</sup> Vitaly Sechkin (1927–1988) graduated from Kharkiv Conservatory – piano class (1947) and composition class (1950; prof. Mikhail Tits), completed postgraduate course at Moscow Conservatory under the direction of Jacob Zack (1954). Sechkin was a member of the ‘Union of Composers of the USSR’, the author of a number of works of small and large forms of various genres.

<sup>27</sup> Grigoryev L., Platek Ya. *Modern pianists*. – Moscow, 1985. – p. 361.

Unfortunately, Landesman could no longer enjoy the international success of her student, whose extraordinary performing skills and all subsequent creative activity became a brilliant peak of the solid professional basis founded by her. The first prize, handed to Sechkin in Berlin, is significant and is perceived as a high appreciation of the pedagogical skill of the talented pianist, whose creative credo was formed in this city.

Having become a laureate of the International Festival, Sechkin received a *carte blanche* for his further concert activities. Of course, under the conditions of the Iron Curtain, he did not acquire the complete freedom of a creative person. At the same time, the young pianist's geography of tours expanded significantly: he visited all the major cities of the USSR, performed abroad – in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Albania, France. The audience was impressed by the artist's large-scale repertoire – diverse in style and genre, encompassing piano literature of the 18<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Both in Ukraine and beyond its borders, the pianist energetically popularized the music of Ukrainian composers from different eras. The reviews noted the originality of his interpretations, deep penetration into the concept of works, enviable virtuosity and artistry.

Sechkin more than 30 years taught at P.I. Tchaikovsky Kyiv Conservatory – he was a professor (since 1971), head of the piano department, dean of the piano department (1972–1985). At the end of his life, for three years he headed the Department of Special Piano of the Moldavian Conservatory named after Gabriel Muzichescu in Chisinau. Having become a worthy successor of the pianistic traditions of Kharkiv school, Vitaliy Sechkin constantly improved his skills and managed to pass it on to several generations of musicians who won prizes at national and international competitions, taught at domestic and foreign conservatories, striving for wide creative cooperation in the name of the development of musical art.

One of the most outstanding students of Lutsenko was Leonid Sagalov (1910–1940), who went down in the history of Ukrainian piano art as a brilliant world-class performer. After graduating from Kharkiv Conservatory in 1930, only a year later he was awarded the prize of the All-Ukrainian Piano Competition, and in 1932 became the laureate of the 'Second International F. Chopin Competition'. In the review of the 22-year-old contestant's performance the Warsaw periodicals wrote: "As soon as Sagalov sat at the piano, after the very first bars it became clear that [...] despite his young age, we are dealing with an outstanding musical personality."<sup>28</sup> After Warsaw, Sagalov

---

<sup>28</sup> Kogan P. *Together with musicians* – Moscow: Sovetsky compositor, 1986. – p. 142.

gave concerts in Krakow and Lviv. Returning to his homeland, the pianist made a tour in the Caucasus region – Baku, Tbilisi, as well as visited music centres of Moscow, Leningrad.

Thus, the name of the young talented laureate gained fame far beyond the borders of Ukraine. The audience was fascinated by his vivid emotionality, impeccable musical taste, subtle sense of style, fluency in all means of artistic expressiveness of the instrument, enchanting virtuosity. Sagalov surprised with scrupulous attention to the details of interpretation, a sincere rendering of the author's intention. In addition to the music of Chopin, the pianist was attracted by the works of Robert Schumann, Liszt, Scriabin, in tune with his romantic mood.



*Leonid Sagalov*

Leonid Sagalov was the successor of Andrei Schultz-Evler's school, which he inherited from his immediate teacher Pavel Lutsenko. It should be mentioned that among the luminaries of Kharkiv piano school the tendency towards romantic art is clearly marked, which is confirmed by the way Schulz-Evler created concert programs, his reverential attitude to Chopin's music, insight into all the subtleties of its interpretation. Therefore, quite high creative results achieved by Sagalov appear due to the preservation and development of performing and pedagogical traditions.

However, the palette of musical styles and genres with which students became acquainted in the class of Lutsenko, of course, was much wider. Of particular interest are the unique series of memorial concerts dedicated to the anniversary of Beethoven's death, organized by the professor and his students.

In the spring of 1927, in memory of L. Beethoven, to the centenary of his death, all nine of his symphonies, transcribed for two grand pianos, eight hands, were performed with great success. This project was realized by students of P.K. Lutsenko – young teachers M.D. Tits<sup>29</sup> and A.S. Jacques, and students V.V. Topilin and L.G. Sagalov.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Mikhail Tits – pianist, composer, musicologist; in 1924 he graduated from the piano department with a “particularly outstanding” diploma and the department of theory of music and composition (class of prof. Semyon Bogatyrev), which he later headed from 1943 to 1970. At 37, he received the academic title of professor (1935).

<sup>30</sup> Pluzhnikov V. N. *Konstantin Leontyevich Doroshenko – conductor, teacher, enlightener.* – Kharkov: Collegium, 2016. – pp. 61–62.

Leonid Sagalov, who received brilliant professional education and earned wide popularity in Ukrainian musical circles not only as a solo pianist, who performed on behalf of the Kyiv Philharmonic, but also as an authoritative teacher of the Kharkiv Conservatory, who received the title of professor at the age of thirty. Unfortunately, that year was the last in his short and bright life ...

The best student of Pavel Lutsenko was Vsevolod Topilin – our pride and our pain. These feelings are succinctly formulated in the metaphorical phrase of Vsevolod Zaderatsky:<sup>31</sup> “Vsevolod Topilin is a roughly torn page from a golden book of world artistic values.”<sup>32</sup> Topilin’s student Vyacheslav Novikov once said about his teacher: “The New Testament says: ‘There are many called, but few are chosen.’ Vsevolod Vladimirovich Topilin was the chosen”<sup>33</sup>...

After graduating from the Conservatory in 1928, Topilin plunged into concert activity, which was in full swing in the then capital of Ukraine – Kharkiv. He worked in the system of the Ukrainian Philharmonic Society and the first Ukrainian Radio Center in the USSR (1929–1932) as a soloist and accompanist. He performed in an ensemble with David Oistrakh<sup>34</sup> and Miron Polyakin,<sup>35</sup> which gained great fame, with one of the best chamber singers of his time Zoya Lodij, a famous French cellist Maurice Maréchal and other popular artists. New creative organizations ‘The Young Philharmonic’ and ‘State Academic Ensembles and Soloists’ (GAANIS), founded in Kharkiv, energetically promoted young artists to the All-Union stage. Among them are Emil Gilels, Nathan Perelman, Leonid Sagalov, Vsevolod Topilin, David Oistrakh, Miron Polyakin, Zoya Lodij and others. Their performance was perceived with enthusiasm by the public and had a wide resonance throughout the country.

Moving to Moscow, where Topilin lived from 1932 to 1941 and worked at the ‘Moscow Philharmonic Society’, the ‘All-Union Radio Committee’, the ‘All-

---

<sup>31</sup> Vsevolod Zaderatsky (born in 1935) – musicologist, prominent music and public figure. In 1967–1980 – Professor of ‘Kyiv Conservatory named after P.I. Tchaikovsky’, vice-rector for scientific work (1968–1977). Since 1980, he taught at the ‘P.I. Tchaikovsky Moscow Conservatory’: until 1990 – at the Department of Music Theory (in 1981–1988 – Dean of the Theory and Composition Department), then at the Composition Department.

<sup>32</sup> Pinchuk E. “Vsevolod Topilin: human intonation (some details of the pianist’ portrait)”, in: *Problems of interaction, teaching and theory of practice*: 36. Art. Issue. 43 /Khark. I. P. Kotlyarevsky Nat. University of Arts; ed.-order. L.V. Rusakova. – Kharkiv: Type of TOV “S. A. M.”, 2015. – p. 70.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid..

<sup>34</sup> David Oistrakh first became a laureate in Kharkiv (1930) at the ‘First All-Ukrainian Violin Competition’.

<sup>35</sup> Miron Polyakin (1895–1941) a student of Leopold Auer. In 1917–1926 he toured around the world, in 1922 he made his debut in New York. Returning to the Soviet Union, he became a professor at Leningrad (1928–1936) and Moscow (1936–1941) Conservatories.



David Oistrakh and Vsevolod Topilin

Union Touring Bureau', he gave concerts mainly with David Oistrakh, as written in his autobiography. During this period, the geography of touring performances of artists expanded significantly. For example, in the 1935–1936 season they had triumphal joint tours in Poland, Sweden and Germany with a famous pianist Grigory Ginzburg, professor of the Moscow Conservatory. At that time this fact was covered by many foreign newspapers.

During one of his concert tours around Ukraine (1933), a significant event took place. In accordance with the long-standing traditions, in ensemble concerts Topilin also performed solo pieces. On that memorable evening, among the audience there was 18-year-old Svyatoslav Richter, who wrote many years later:

I remember his performance in the city of my birth (Zhytomyr) in a concert with Oistrakh. There I heard Chopin's Fourth Ballad, it made a special impression on me and in a way influenced my decision to become a solo pianist. I also remember the cis-moll mazurka (op. 30, no. 4) played in encore. It was a peculiar, refined, full of mystery performance. I loved dear Seva Topilin very much.<sup>36</sup>

Richter's friend (despite the large age difference) Dmitry Terekhov<sup>37</sup> too wrote about this fateful chamber evening, which played such a significant role in the development of world piano art:

Here he [S. Richter – O. K.] decided to try giving his own concert [...] which would include the works of Chopin. He immediately began to learn the Fourth Ballad, then the Fourth Scherzo, preludes, several nocturnes and studies. The work took almost a year. The first concert of Svyatoslav Richter took place at the Odessa Home for Elderly People in May 1934.<sup>38</sup>

What was the level of Topilin's interpretation of Chopin's opus which inspired young Richter, who had never thought of a solo career, to immediately start preparing for the Klavier-Abend?! "In the first part of the concert Vsevolod Topilin (who I later got to know better [...]), – wrote S. Richter, – "performed – and brilliantly performed – Chopin's Fourth Ballad."<sup>39</sup> Perhaps, if

<sup>36</sup> Pinchuk E. *Canto sospeso / An interrupted song: A book about V.V. Topilin* [Monograph]. Kharkiv: Estet Print, 2018. – pp. 66–67.

<sup>37</sup> Dmitry Terekhov, a well-known Russian artist and memoirist, knew S. Richter from the age of 11.

<sup>38</sup> Terehov D. *Richter and his time*. – Moscow : Soglasie, 2002. – p. 64.

<sup>39</sup> Pinchuk E. *Canto sospeso ...* – p. 66.

not for this timely meeting in Zhytomyr, the music world would not have soon learned of the existence of a brilliant pianist Svyatoslav Richter.

Along with the tours, David Oistrakh and Topilin made audio and video recordings of works by Beethoven, Richard Wagner, Mikhail Glinka, P. Tchaikovsky, Henryk Wieniawski, Antonín Dvořák, Isaac Albéniz, Benjamin Godard, Claude Debussy, Fritz Kreisler and other composers. They took part in one of the first radioprograms broadcast in America. They performed with newly created works. For example, Oistrakh before the premiere of the Concerto for violin and orchestra Op. 44 by Nikolai Myaskovsky, played this piece in one of the Moscow clubs as well as at the Moscow Conservatory at a meeting of the String Instruments Department with piano accompaniment of Vsevolod Topilin.

A famous pianist Yakov Flier, who knew him from a young age, testified:

When the music community of Moscow heard V. Topilin in an ensemble with David Oistrakh as early as in the 1930s, it became clear to everyone that the Soviet performing culture received a prominent musician, a great pianist and a rare ensemble performer.<sup>40</sup>

According to many who knew this duet since its birth and later – over the next few years, Topilin, being a more mature and educated musician, made a significant influence on the development of Oistrakh as an exceptional artistic person.

A famous violinist Grigory Feighin, who went on tour with Topilin to Kharkiv in the 1950s, argued that these creative conversations stimulated him to work much deeper with the text, and not only with the violin one, but he also began to study piano parts and scores. Topilin opened up absolutely new horizons for him.<sup>41</sup> The artist of the Leningrad Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, violinist Mark Reznikov, evaluating Topilin's talent and qualifications, called him an outstanding accompanist and ensemble player, emphasizing that in all subsequent years of his concert activity Oistrakh never had such a pianist.<sup>42</sup>

It should be noted that Topilin had been acknowledged unanimously in professional circles even before he entered the postgraduate department of the Moscow Conservatory, which confirms the highest level of pedagogical skill of Pavel Lutsenko, in whose class a talented student acquired truly European pianistic education. Topilin's students Vyacheslav Boykov and Alexander Vitovsky claim that he often, especially in the last years of his life, recalled his youth, his unforgettable teacher – Lutsenko. He talked about friends of youth, distinguishing Leonid Sagalov, and repeatedly emphasized

---

<sup>40</sup> Yushkevich S. "Seva", in: Pinchuk O.H. *Canto sospeso / An interrupted song: A book about V.V. Topilin* [Monograph]. Kharkiv: Estet Project, 2018. – p. 398.

<sup>41</sup> See.: Pinchuk E. *Vsevolod Topilin: human intonation (details of the pianist's portrait)*... – p. 74.

<sup>42</sup> See. Yushkevich S. "Seva": – p. 405.

the enormous role of Lutsenko in the development of national pianism, which at that time was underestimated.<sup>43</sup>



*Vsevolod Topilin and his teacher Heinrich Neuhaus*

In 1938, Topilin entered the postgraduate department of the Moscow Conservatory, class of Heinrich Neuhaus and began to assist his professor even before completing the course (1941). He had a brilliant career ahead under the auspices of the world-famous musical university.

However, the war changed everything. Topilin went to the front as a volunteer, then he was captured and sent to a concentration camp, lived in Germany as an 'Ostarbeiter' (with the possibility of making music), and finally returned to his homeland – Moscow. Here he was arrested "for treason against the Motherland and cooperation with the Nazi occupiers", sentenced to death and then received ten years of hard labour in Siberian camps. A new 'career' began: a lumberjack, paramedic, head of the folk instrument orches-

---

<sup>43</sup> Boykov V.G., Vitovsky O.I. "V.V. Topilin – a prominent student of P.K. Lutsenko", in: *Pavlo Kindratovych Lutsenko and modern times: Proceedings of the international scientific conference*. – Kharkiv: Fact, 2001. – p. 13.



tra at the camp theatre, where he sometimes participated in concerts, accompanying on a modest piano.<sup>44</sup> This brief information will help readers to comprehend the nature of Topilin's post-war ordeals in search of decent work and housing, the cessation of his large-scale concert activity, the severance of long-standing ties, the absence of his name in reference materials and memoirs for many years.

The amnesty proclaimed after the death of the leader, opened up the possibility of free settlement for former prisoners in Siberia. In Krasnoyarsk Philharmonic, in response to Topilin's request to hire him, they suggested playing something. Quite by the way was Robert Schumann's *Kreisleriana*, which he had learned in the camp without an instrument (!!!), the score of which he found in the hospital where he was working as a medical assistant.<sup>45</sup> Topilin also taught piano and musical literature at Music School, played Preludes by Claude Debussy, sonatas of Alexander Skryabin and Sergey Prokofiev, and piano transcriptions of symphonic works. The education of Topilin, who knew several European languages, his broadest erudition, performing and pedagogical talent, as one of his students recalled, "left a bright trace in our memory and in our souls. He was a man of a completely different level of knowledge, a man from another world."<sup>46</sup>



In 1956, after returning to Kharkiv, Topilin taught at Music School for some time, and then, from 1957 to 1962, he worked at the Conservatory and at Music Boarding School, as they called it KhSSMSh-i, where he was allocated a room with a room piano for living. [Fig. 10.] In Kharkiv Conservatory Topilin did not have time to acquire a full-fledged piano class, since his initial pedagogical load was formed at the departments of chamber ensemble

<sup>44</sup> Stepanenko M. „H. Neuhaus' assistant – Vsevolod Topilin (materials for the biography)“. in: Pinchuk O. *Canto sospeso / An interrupted song: A book about V.V. Topilin ...* – p. 282.

<sup>45</sup> In the camp V. Topilin tried to keep his hands in the form 'playing' the table for hours.

<sup>46</sup> Pinchuk E. *Vsevolod Topilin: human intonation (details of the pianist's portrait)* – p. 76.



*Vsevolod Topilin in Kharkiv*

and general piano, which were part of the Special Piano Department. Consequently, Topilin led his own piano class for four academic years. Nevertheless, his solo and chamber performances with Adolf Leshchinsky<sup>47</sup> and Grigory Feigin, close creative contacts with young musicians left an unforgettable trace in piano pedagogy and performance in Kharkiv in those years. Topilin's open lessons, consultations, and regular auditions of students became a reliable basis for further pedagogical activities of a number of leading university teachers, in particular, associate professors Rimma Papkova and Victoria Lozova, professor Valentina Shukailo.

Teaching at P.I. Tchaikovsky State Conservatory in Kyiv, where he was invited in 1962, was the most successful period in the pedagogical career of Vsevolod Topilin. According to his student Mikhail Stepanenko, Topilin was a legendary man, who enjoyed the highest authority among Kyiv musicians.

---

<sup>47</sup> Adolf Leshchinsky (1915–1995) – received his professional education at Berlin Higher School of Music under the direction of Carl Flesch, who characterized him as an outstanding soloist. Laureate of the All-Union competition of musicians-performers (Leningrad, 1935). He performed with solo, chamber and symphonic programs under the direction of Kurt Zanderling, Nathan Rakhlin, Alexander Klimov. Professor of the Kharkiv Conservatory in 1958–1980 headed the Department of String Instruments. He trained world-famous violinists, laureates of international competitions, including Albert Markov, whose name is listed in the book *The Great Violinists* and the *Grove Music Dictionary*, and Grigory Feigin, winner of the International Violin Competition in Prague (1964) and three All-Union competitions; Professor of the Moscow and Tokyo Conservatories (the official name is “College of Music in Tokyo”).

His lessons and consultations attracted pianists from all over Ukraine. Students idolized the master: “Great talent, powerful intellect, gigantic universal skill of a pianist and, perhaps, most importantly – endless devotion to Music – these qualities determined his place in society,”<sup>48</sup> wrote one of them later. The students of Topilin spoke with admiration of his universal virtuosity, which included both filigree and powerful technique, an amazing sense of the form of pieces, the impeccable use of all the colours of the piano – he “possessed everything that the Great Musician should own”.<sup>49</sup>

Kyiv residents remember chamber concerts of Topilin with famous Ukrainian musicians – violinists Oleg Krysa and Olga Parkhomenko, violoncellist Maria Tchaikovsky. The collaborative performance of Beethoven’s and Johannes Brahms’ sonatas demonstrated “the ideal intonational skill of the pianist, whose level sometimes turned out to be practically unattainable for his partners”.<sup>50</sup>

Topilin, as usual, was interested in modern music. It is evident from the fact mentioned in the article of Elena Pinchuk about his interpretation of the Preludes (I notebook) by the Ukrainian composer Nikolai Silvansky, which he had just composed. After receiving the manuscript, Topilin, a few days later, performed the pieces to the author, after which the completely discouraged composer muttered: “Sevonka! I’ve never thought that I could compose something like that!”<sup>51</sup>

The name of Vsevolod Topilin is put on a par with outstanding pianists-teachers, alumni of the Moscow and St. Petersburg Conservatories, who owe the merit of establishing the pianistic school in Ukraine, who worked in Kyiv, – Vladimir Pukhalsky (in 1876–1933), Felix Blumenfeld (in 1918–1922 ), Grigory Beklemishev (in 1913–1935). However, sometimes they forget to mention the name of Pavel Lutsenko, who made a significant contribution to the development of the national piano art. Topilin is also called the successor of Heinrich Neuhaus’ school, with whom he had much in common. At the same time, Vyacheslav Novikov, one of Topilin’s most famous students, wrote:

[...] Neuhaus is an idol. Topilin had no idols, so he sometimes spoke very negatively about Neuhaus, which shocked me at first. And only after long conversations I realized that he (Topilin) would certainly give him credit. Without a doubt, Topilin was a bigger musician for me than Neuhaus.<sup>52</sup>

During eight years of teaching in Kyiv Topilin not only received the academic title of professor, became the head of the ‘Special Piano Department No. 1’, but

<sup>48</sup> Pinchuk E. *Vsevolod Topilin: human intonation (details of the pianist’s portrait)...* – p. 71.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Stepanenko M. “G. Neuhaus’ assistant – Vsevolod Topilin (materials for the biography)”, in: Pinchuk O. *Canto sospeso / An interrupted song: A book about V.V. Topilin ...* – p. 283.

<sup>51</sup> Pinchuk E. *Vsevolod Topilin: human intonation (details of the pianist’s portrait)...* – p. 80.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

also created his own school, raising a great number of talented pianists who worked in different countries of the world. Among them was Vyacheslav Novikov, who a Finnish critic Seppo Heikinheimo wrote about in the *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper: “Novikov belongs to the elite of thinking pianists.”<sup>53</sup> Since 1989, he was a professor at the Sibelius Academy (Helsinki), since 1994, he participated annually in the chamber music festival in Kuhmo (Finland). Laureate of the ‘State Prize for the Development of Finnish Culture’ (2012), Vyacheslav Novikov has been teaching at the ‘Estonian Academy of Music and Theater’ since 1998. He has performed solo and with chamber concerts in Ukraine, Russia and Western Europe, as well as in Japan, South Korea, Brazil. He has collaborated with such conductors as Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Neemi Jarvi, Andres Mustonen, Yuri Alpert.

High respect was won by the student of Topilin – a pianist, composer, musicologist, professor of the National Music Academy of Ukraine named after P.I. Tchaikovsky<sup>54</sup> Mikhail Stepanenko, who also headed ‘Special Piano Department No. 1’ and for many years headed the jury of ‘M. Lysenko Piano Competition’ (Kyiv). As a pianist he has performed in Russia, the USA, Canada, Japan, Finland, and Armenia. He has made several records and CDs. In 1993–2004, M. Stepanenko was the Chairman of the ‘Union of Composers of Ukraine’.

Topilin raised laureates of the Republican contest, who continued the work of their Teacher in Ukraine and abroad.: Vyacheslav Boykov – Professor of Donetsk State Music Academy named after S.S. Prokofiev, Head of the Special Piano Department (1991–2012), Yuri Lotakov, who briefly taught at Alma mater, and then moved to the USA (1977, Los Angeles), where he was engaged in teaching and performing activities. Sergey Silvansky (whose father was composer Nikolai Silvansky) also lives in the USA and runs Los Angeles Arts School.<sup>55</sup>

Among Kyiv students of Topilin is Vladimir Selivokhin,<sup>56</sup> the laureate of international competitions. Many years later one critic wrote about him:

In his interpretation, the coherence of the intention, grandness of performance, [...] the culture and literacy of performance, good technique, strong professional training, and a rely on fundamental traditions. Selivokhin inherited those traditions from his teachers [...] V.V. Topilin and [...] L.N. Oborin.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Vyacheslav Novikov [Electronic resource], in: *Lviv Regional Philharmonic* [official site]. – Access mode: <http://www.philharmonia.lviv.ua/artists/actors-676/?lang=ua>. (27.07.2017).

<sup>54</sup> ‘Kyiv State Conservatory named after P.I. Tchaikovsky’ has been bearing this name since 1995.

<sup>55</sup> Grum-Grzhimailo T. *Russian Empire in California*. – Access mode: [http://moljane.narod.ru/journal/01\\_56\\_mol/mol56\\_gg.html](http://moljane.narod.ru/journal/01_56_mol/mol56_gg.html) (29.07.2017).

<sup>56</sup> Vladimir Selivokhin continued his studies at Moscow Conservatory, class of Lev Oborin. In 1968 he became the first pianist from the USSR to receive the first prize at Ferruccio Busoni (Bolzano) competition.

<sup>57</sup> Grigoryev L., Plateka Ya., Vladimir Vitalyevich Selivokhin. – Access mode: <https://www.belcanto.ru/selivohin.html> (16.02.2020).

Professor V. Selivokhin was the organizer and head of the Department of Musical Performing Art at the 'State Academy of Slavic Culture' (Moscow).

Summing up the work of Vsevolod Topilin as the brightest figure of Kharkiv piano school, rooted in Western European culture, it must be emphasized that the first laconic article about him appeared on the territory of the former USSR only in 1990.<sup>58</sup> In 1992 the anniversary book of Kharkiv 'I.P. Kotlyarevsky Institute of Arts'<sup>59</sup> (former Conservatory) featured names that went down in the history of the university and made up its 'golden fund' – among them was Topilin. His activities were reported in jubilee articles about the Special Piano Department (1992, 2007).<sup>60</sup> In the preparation of the monograph – *"Canto sospeso" / An interrupted song: A book about V.V. Topilin* – four articles by Elena Pinchuk were published, which became the basis of the essay on the musician's life and career. The archival materials collected by her in 2009–2018 and memoirs revealed the identity of Topilin most frankly without cuts and white spots. Thus, the book published in Kharkiv, the city where the pianist developed professionally, became a genuine miraculous monument to the great Musician and Man.

Tracing the long way of the Kharkiv piano school development, we will focus on the fundamental professional features of the leading piano educators who brought West European trends to its development. First of all, it is unlimited devotion to art, manifested in their tireless musical activity, regardless of the conditions that fate had prepared for them. A successful career is the result of many years of honest and persistent work, adequately appreciated in the musical environment and society as a whole. Adherence to the fundamental traditions inherited from the teachers who stood at the origins of the European professional musical education. The ability to independently evaluate artistic phenomena, without relying on external clues caused by social changes and dubious slogans. A deep interest not only in the classical heritage, but also in the work of contemporary composers, which contributes to the further development of musical art. On Ukrainian soil, progressive trends in the dynamics of piano pedagogy and performance have found a worthy continuation – the mutual enrichment of national cultures has always been and remains a powerful incentive for a joint movement to new heights.

---

<sup>58</sup> *Music Encyclopaedia Dictionary*. Ed. G. Keldish. – Moscow: Soviet encyclopaedia, 1990. – p. 549.

<sup>59</sup> Now – Kharkiv I.P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts.

<sup>60</sup> Kononova O.V. „Special Piano Department”, in: *Kharkov Institute of Arts 1917–1992*. – Kharkov, 1992. – pp. 109–133. – Kononova O.V. “Inheritance of generations: special piano department”, in: *Pro Domo Mea: Essays. To the 90th anniversary of Kharkiv I.P. Kotlyarevsky State University of Arts*. // Editors T.B. Vyerkina, G.A. Abadzian, H.Ya. Botunova and others – Kharkiv: Kharkiv I.P. Kotlyarevsky State University of Arts, 2007. – pp. 20–56.