

Theory and Practice of Teaching Harmony in the System of Higher Musical Education in the Russian Federation

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Abstract: This paper is devoted to the problems of the current state of Russian research in the field of harmony in music and its influence on musical-theoretical education. The evolution of the doctrines of harmony in the 20th and 21st centuries was determined by changes in artistic practice which did not fit into traditional concepts. In the process of resolving the contradictions that have arisen, the definition of “harmony” either localizes or returns to the original universal sense, but at a qualitatively different level, which became the basis for a gradual transition in higher musical education from a complex of local historical courses of harmony to a single academic discipline, encompassing all the problems of this phenomenon at the modern level of scientific knowledge.

1. Introduction

The Russian system of professional music education in the 21st century is still one of the most popular in the world. On the basis of research on the history of music education [1], we can conclude that it has existed for centuries before the appearance of the first Russian conservatories. Undoubtedly, reliance on traditions has brought to life unique and effective organizational solutions that determined the shape of this system in the 19th century, preserved to this day, and its attractiveness for foreign students. One of the features of the Russian system of professional music education is the compulsory study of musical-theoretical disciplines, first of all - harmony, for students of all specializations without exception. Russian students are well prepared to study this discipline in universities thanks to a three-stage system of music education. They learn the basics of harmony in solfeggio lessons already in the children's music school. The programs of musical colleges include the study of classical harmony in full. Many teachers are trying at this level to give pupils a presentation as well about the main phenomena of modern harmony.

In the system of higher education, the theoretical and conceptual comprehension of previously acquired knowledge and skills comes to the forefront. The study of harmony goes from a practical aspect to a scientific one. But it is at this stage that the content of the academic discipline largely depends on the scientific worldview of the teacher, and is highly variable in different universities. In the context of globalization, which also affects the sphere of education, the Russian system of teaching harmony is becoming accessible to foreign students. However, in order to choose the curriculum of interest, knowledge in the current state of the given field of Russian theoretical

musicology and its influence on pedagogical practice is required. It is to these issues that this publication is devoted.

2. Main Part

2.1 Harmony as a subject of research in contemporary Russian musicology.

A feature of almost all Russian fundamental research in the field of harmony in the 20th century is that musicologists created them as teaching aids for high school students. One of the few exceptions is L. Mazel's work "Problems of Classical Harmony" [2]. In this voluminous work almost all the concepts of harmony of European and Russian authors from the Middle Ages and up to the 70s of the 20th century are summarized. Having carried out a critical analysis of the ideas accumulated over the centuries about the phenomenon of harmony in music, the author made a significant contribution to the development of science.

L. Mazel proposed the solution of a whole series of issues that were posed by the creative practice of the 20th century, but could not be solved on the basis of traditional views on the essence of things. The musicologist researched and substantiated the proposition that it is the system of fixed and ordered pitch-right relations that determine the specificity of music both among other types of art and the phenomena of the entire surrounding world. It should be noted that the scientist treats harmony quite traditionally as a doctrine of chords and their compounds. In turn, it was this book, and not the works of the authors cited in it, that gave the material for subsequent discussions.

The most significant universal concepts of harmony, which can be fully recognized as modern, were proposed by T. Bershadskaya [3] and Yu. Kholopov [4]. These scientists represent two traditional schools of Russian musicology: Petersburg, coming from the pedagogical installations of N. Rimsky-Korsakov, and Moscow, which goes back to P. Tchaikovsky.

Both musicologists clearly realized the actual contradiction between the established system of theoretical concepts, and the real creative practice that refuted them. It can be argued that in the second half of the 20th century the outdated theory was supported not so much by scientific reasoning as by the traditional training course of harmony, almost entirely oriented towards the classical major-minor system. According to T. Bershadskaya's remark, "until now terms that have emerged on the basis of the characteristics of the structures existing in this system continue to be used in science and educational practice as supposedly absolutely effective at all times, with difficulty conceding (and in pedagogical practice, especially in the primary and the middle link of musical education, often not inferior) place terms with a broader meaning" [5]. However, they have chosen in many fundamentally different ways to overcome this contradiction.

T. Bershadskaya followed the path of localization of the traditional concept of "harmony" with respect to those phenomena that fit into it and the expansion of the field of scientific knowledge, as well as the corresponding academic discipline by highlighting other categories. Such an approach, undoubtedly, turned out to be very productive in the scientific aspect and allowed to create a complete, complete author's concept of the training course covering the musical culture from the ancient folklore texts to the Russian musical avant-garde of the era of postmodernism. The most important feature of this research is the priority of musical and creative practice: "It is not the system that gives birth to music, but the musical intonation, the musical utterance gives rise to a system that ... is perceived intuitively by this listener through this living intonation" [6, p. 13]. However, as a result of the information of the musical-theoretical category of "harmony" to the designation of one of the logical principles of the organization of a musical invoice, its connection with the original universal aesthetic sense is lost.

The researches of Yu. Kholopov are aimed at returning to a qualitatively new turn of the dialectic spiral to the ancient integrity of the philosophical-aesthetic and musical-theoretical aspects of the

category of harmony. The scientist believes that “musical harmony is essentially a projection of the general concept of harmony on the field of pitch-related relationships, which includes the artistic means that are most specific for music (that is, distinguishing it from other arts)” [7]. This definition must be understood in the context of a holistic doctrine, in which “harmony as the spiritual substance of a musical work” is considered [8], “as a semantic, aesthetically-meaningful beginning of music” [9], And as an object of study and development in the training course it is assumed “not the universal harmony of the world, but the sound-structure of music” [10].

In the 20th century, the focus of Russian musicologists was the problems of modern harmony, for the description of which special terminology was created. Due to scientific works, which returned the universality of definitions, the priorities in the research subjects also changed. In the 21st century, the problems of “new harmony” are on a par with others. An example is the article by S. Nadler [11], in which the “autographic chord” of D. Shostakovich is realized in the context of the continuation of the traditions of Russian music. In the center of attention of the musicologist is not the individual composer technique itself, which is presented as an already studied aspect of the problem, but its aesthetic, stylistic and structural justifications.

Of equal interest to researchers in the 21st century are theoretical concepts that explain the avant-garde techniques of musical composition for their time, but which have been forgotten beyond the mainstream of science development and for political reasons. Such articles include A. Rovner’s one on the application of B. Yavorsky’s theory of the modal rhythm (in the interpretation of S. Protopopov) to the phenomena of microchromatics [12].

Based on modern ideas of harmony, Russian musicologists also study phenomena related to a very distant past. Thus, in the article of S. Iskhakova [13], logical regularities determining the features of the harmonic vertical of the High Middle Ages are investigated.

The main definitions of classical harmony also become objects of critical reflection in the 21st century. For example, E. Pinchukov [14, 15] examines the categories of mode, minor, mood, diatonic. However, they are considered from the standpoint of scientific knowledge of the 21st century and are aimed at overcoming the stereotypes accumulated over the previous centuries. New ideas about harmony in general make it obvious that even classical harmony still has many mysteries and needs further investigation.

Scientists of the 21st century also study the phenomenon of harmony in philosophical, aesthetic and semantic aspects. Thus, the articles of B. Iofis [16] consider the content of the definition of “harmony in music” and its place a metasystem of means of musical expressiveness.

2.2 Harmony as a Discipline in Modern Russian Music Higher Education.

The achievements of Russian musicology in the study of harmony reflected significantly in the content of musical-theoretical education, primarily at the higher school level. First of all, it concerns the professional training of composers and musicologists, but further this process affected also students of other specializations.

Due to the fact that already at the college level Russian students have a high level of training in harmony, the study of this discipline exclusively in the classical form by the eighties of the 20th century lost its meaning. Updating the content and methods of teaching has become an urgent task. It should be noted that this process was heterogeneous, and it is possible to outline several different trends in it.

The first of them is connected with the desire to limit the range of studied phenomena by those that fit into the notions of harmony that have developed in the classic-romantic era (this includes “tonal” music of the 20th century), and the cutting off of all others as artistically inferior. It is significant that folk music creativity is considered within the framework of this approach through the prism of

compositional processing and “the implementation of tradition”. In actual authentic folklore, attention is given to elements similar to those of classical harmony or supposedly anticipating them. This point of view is presented in S. Grigoryev’s Theoretical Course of Harmony [17]. This direction has not become a main line.

The second trend has become more widespread. It is aimed at the formation of separate specialized courses (“Modern Harmony” [18], “Harmony of the Baroque Age” [19] and others). In turn, the previous "traditional" course of harmony was actually transformed into a course of the history of harmony. However, this approach also has negative aspects. The division of one academic discipline into several independent subjects leads to a violation of the theoretical, including the terminological unity of musical-theoretical education. In the conditions of modern Federal State Educational Standards introduced in the 21st century, the tendency towards the integration of training courses becomes predominant.

Based on the analysis of the situation in the teaching of harmony that developed by the end of the 20th century, E. Trembovelsky [20] comes to the conclusion that this phenomenon has different definitions, including even mutually exclusive ones. This also negatively affects other concepts: interval (sound) system, scale, harmony, chord, tonality. The article gives examples of terminological homonyms and synonyms that are actually represented in modern science. Thus, the problem of the content of the Russian musical-theoretical education in the field of harmony at the present stage is due not only to the redundancy of information, but also to the diffusion of the main definitions. As an alternative, the author offers a training course "Modern problems of harmony", in which the subject of study is the harmony of all historical epochs, from the standpoint of modern science.

3. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of Russian musical-theoretical studies in the field of harmony and publications devoted to the teaching of this academic discipline, we can draw the following conclusions:

1) in the Russian studies on harmony in music, the tendency to form a universal doctrine that encompasses all aspects of this phenomenon prevails, from this perspective we can consider its local manifestations in a historical context;

2) in the teaching of harmony at the level of higher musical education in the 21st century, pedagogical ideas leading to the integration of disparate elements of content into a single universal training course become leading.

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