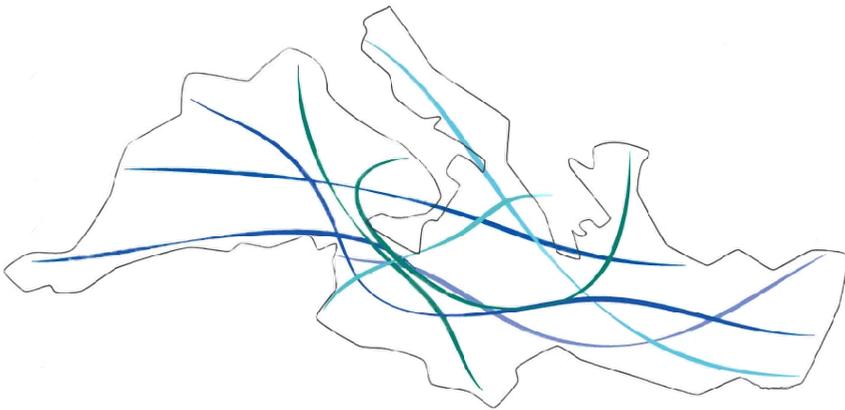


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*Music in exile: Russian émigré
composers in interwar Paris and the
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Music in exile: Russian émigré composers in interwar Paris and the mission of Russia Abroad's musical creativity after the 1917 revolution

Abstract

One century after the massive migratory current following the Russian revolution, music composed in exile has not yet found particular interest in cultural studies. The aim of my essay is to provide historical and sociocultural coordinates to the reality of Russian émigré composers' community based in Paris within the milieu of the so-called Russia Abroad. This cultural category has been the subject of many studies in the last decades. These latter have thoroughly underlined the literary expressions of the Parisian émigré ambient in the light of the links with the homeland, the pre-revolutionary culture and the expectation of the return to Russia. Features that may be summarized in the concept of the *Missija russkoi emigratsii* whose principal domain is to be found in the "free creative work" characterized by a twofold outlook: on the one hand it is aimed at providing continuity to pre-soviet Russia's traditional culture and, on the other hand, it is intertwined with the development of new languages, forms and aesthetics, inextricably bound with the contemporary artistic achievements of the host metropolis, the Ville Lumière. Russian-Parisian composers' production offers a privileged space to observe this cultural interweaving and the other aspects mentioned above.

Keywords: Exile, Émigré poetics, Russia Abroad, Russian-Parisian milieu, Interwar period.

Música en el exilio: compositores rusos emigrados en el París de entreguerras y la misión de la creatividad musical de la llamada "Rusia en el extranjero" después de la Revolución de 1917

Resumen

Un siglo después de la corriente migratoria masiva que siguió a la Revolución Rusa, la música compuesta en el exilio aún no ha encontrado un interés particular en los estudios culturales. El objetivo de mi ensayo es aportar coordenadas históricas y socioculturales a la realidad de la comunidad de compositores rusos emigrados con sede en París, en el ámbito de la llamada "Rusia en el Extranjero". Esta categoría cultural ha sido objeto de numerosos estudios en las últimas décadas. Estos últimos han subrayado las expresiones literarias del ambiente parisino de los emigrados, a la luz de los vínculos con la patria, la cultura pre-revolucionaria y la expectativa del regreso a Rusia. Estos elementos pueden resumirse en el concepto de *Missija russkoi emigratsii*, cuyo rasgo principal se encuentra en el "trabajo creativo libre" caracterizado por una doble mirada: por un lado, tiene como objetivo dar continuidad a la cultura tradicional de la Rusia presoviética, y, por otro lado, está entrelazado con el desarrollo de nuevos lenguajes, formas y estéticas, indisolublemente ligadas a los logros artísticos contemporáneos de la metrópoli

anfitriona, la Ciudad Luz. La producción de los compositores ruso-parisinos ofrece un espacio privilegiado para observar este entrelazamiento cultural.

Palabras clave: exilio, poética emigrante, “Rusia en el extranjero”, ambiente ruso-parisino, período de entreguerras.

Musica in esilio: compositori russi emigrati a Parigi tra le due guerre e la missione della creatività musicale nella Russia oltreconfine dopo la rivoluzione del 1917

Sinossi

Un secolo dopo la grande corrente migratoria russa seguita alla rivoluzione del '17, la musica composta in esilio non ha ancora riscontrato particolare interesse negli studi culturali. Scopo del saggio è di fornire le coordinate storiche e socioculturali alla realtà della comunità russa di compositori emigrati a Parigi all'interno del milieu della Russia oltreconfine. Questa categoria culturale è stata oggetto di alcuni recenti studi che hanno messo a fuoco le espressioni letterarie dell'ambiente parigino *émigré* alla luce dei rapporti con la madrepatria, con la cultura prerivoluzionaria e con l'attesa del ritorno in Russia. Caratteri che possono essere riassunti con il concetto di *Missija russkoi emigratsii* – la missione dell'emigrazione russa – il cui ambito di azione principale va ricercato in una “libera attività creatrice” dal carattere duplice: da un lato essa è tesa ad assicurare continuità con la cultura tradizionale russa presovietica, dall'altro risulta fortemente intrecciata con lo sviluppo di nuovi linguaggi, forme ed estetiche legate ai risultati artistici del tempo osservabili nella metropoli ospitante, la *Ville Lumiere*. La produzione dei compositori russo-parigini offre uno punto d'osservazione privilegiato per esaminare gli intrecci culturali e gli altri aspetti qui descritti.

Parole chiave: Esilio, Poetica migrante, Emigrazione russa, Ambiente russo-parigino, periodo tra le due guerre.

*Music in exile:
Russian Émigré Composers in interwar Paris and the
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Introduction

“And so we are here, abroad, in order to be a voice for all those who are silent there, to restore the polyphonic wholeness of the Russian spirit”. Thus wrote Georgij Fedotov (1935, p. 440), one of the brightest mind of the Russian emigration, in an article dated June 1935 and entitled *Zachem my zdes'* (*Why are we here?*). The “we” (*my*) to which Fedotov gives voice refers to the Russian emigrant community, whereas the “here” (*zdes'*) implies the city of Paris, the main destination of the centrifugal motions began just before the Twenties amidst the turmoil of the Revolution, from the newly founded Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.

Dealing with the Russian diaspora in France one cannot only speak of a generic emigrant community, but rather of a society or, more precisely, the recreation of a precise society: that of the pre-revolutionary era. As pointed out by Marc Raeff:

What made the Russian emigration of the 1920s and 1930s into a society and not merely a group of people who had exiled themselves for political reasons? Two factors contributed to the way that the émigré Russians constituted themselves into a genuine, albeit not perfectly complete, society. First of all, most social classes of prerevolutionary Russia were represented abroad [...] In the second place, and much more telling than their cross-representation according to sociological, economic, or cultural criteria, was the fact that the émigrés were committed to carrying on a meaningful Russian life (Raeff, 1990, p. 5).

1. *Russia Abroad*

Regarding the existence of a Russian society abroad, it would be more appropriate, as Magarotto (2007, p. 132) does, not to “think of a compact and monolithic social organisation, but [...] of several differently understood and differently lived societies, which occupied different parts of the cities territorially”. Indeed, within the perimeter of this particular cultural context, one could find several internal differences, both of an aesthetic and generational nature. Despite these divergences, scholars have coined the term *Russia Abroad* to indicate the cultural category represented by the peculiar *milieu* of Russian emigration outside the boundaries of the motherland. The denomination is a calque from the Russian *Zarubežnaja Rossija* and his social, cultural and anthropological extent has been well clarified by Kåre Johan Mjør:

Russia Abroad is the name for this émigré community used both by the émigrés themselves and by scholarly literature to date. [...] The use of the noun Russia instead of the adjective “Russian” signals the widespread idea among Russians abroad that they “took Russia with them” [...]. Most émigrés strongly believed that they represented the genuine Russia, not the Bolsheviks. The latter, in their view, had destroyed it. [...] the first-wave émigrés saw it as their task not only to preserve their own Russianness but Russia itself. Russian émigrés created an exile community outside the borders of their homeland. Russia Abroad was not a community limited geographically by clearly defined borders. Rather, it comprised various Russian settlements almost all over the world, above all in the major cities of Europe where the largest and culturally most significant communities were established (Mjør, 2011, p. 27).

It can thus be inferred that in the perspective of the emigrants themselves, theirs is not a mere exile community, but Russia itself: no longer able to live in its habitual geographical space, the true Russian nation is in fact subjected to a provisional moment of exile waiting for the return to the motherland.

Consequently, the emigrant community is not to be seen as a subsidiary seat of the homeland, but as the custodian of the true Russian cultural tradition and the only one deputed to carry on its mission and growth.

2. *The mission of Russia Abroad*

Precisely the term *missija* (mission) is one of the most proper keyword to depict the human and cultural experience of Russia Abroad. As a maxim attributed to the émigré writer and poet Zinaida Gippius states: “we are not in exile, we are on a mission” (Rubins, 2015, p. 3). The correlation between Russia Abroad and the concept of mission had already been suggested by the writer Ivan Bunin. In 1924, the Nobel Prize winner entitled his speech *Missija russskoi emigratsii* (The Mission of Russian Emigration), in which the author resorts to a biblical and eschatological vocabulary in order to imbue the subject with a distinctly spiritual connotation:

Indeed we have been acting, in spite of all our weaknesses and falls, on behalf of our Divine image and likeness. And moreover, on behalf of Russia: not the one who betrayed Christ for thirty silver coins in order to gain permission to plunder and murder, and who wallowed in the abomination of all kinds of evil deeds and moral mischief, but on behalf of that other Russia, oppressed and suffering but still not entirely subjugated. [...] The Russian emigration, which has demonstrated by its exodus from Russia and by its struggle, by its marching on ice, that it does not accept not only out of fear but also out of conscience Lenin’s cities, Lenin’s commandments, has a mission which consists in the continuation of this non-acceptance (Bunin, 2000, pp. 150-153).

By drawing a parallel between Russian diaspora and biblical Exodus, the intent of Bunin, along with many other writers, thinkers and protagonists of this cultural context, is to bestow on their émigré life a supernatural and teleological dimension: the aim of Russian emigration is in fact to provide ‘desovietized’ motherland with new cultural structures or, in the words of the author of 1931 essay *The Task for the Emigration*, Fedor Stepun “to create a new ideology for the future Russia”.

Several attempts have been made to put these intentions into practice and particularly noteworthy appear to be those in the political and geopolitical field. In fact, there are various experiences and hues in this domain that have been generated within the émigré circles. The current of thought that has most polarized the attention of thinkers, philosophers and artists is the intellectual movement known as Eurasianism; drawing upon the Slavophil tradition and the messianic thought of Silver Age, this politic and philosophical vision

of the Twenties pursued a worldwide redemption originating from Eurasia, that is the new Russian continent, neither European nor Asian: “Russia has always been neither East nor West and must become neither East nor West, in it there is the meeting of East and West, in it, in its personal destinies, is the symbol of the destinies of all humanity” (Belyj, 1921, p. 27). Deploring the Old World’s decadence and the loss of a religious culture in the apostatised Central and Mediterranean Europe, the Eurasianists found a theoretical support in Oswald Spengler’s *The Decline of the West* in which the author predicted the extinction of the Western civilization.

Despite its theoretical assumptions, the Eurasianist thought did not find its way into the political arena and another field proved fertile ground for the mission of Russia Abroad, that is the cultural production.

3. *The free creative work*

The positive meaning of and justification of the emigration is by no means found in the domain of politics. The positive meaning may be found first of all in the defense of freedom, in the creation of a tribune for free thinking, in the creation of an atmosphere for free creative work (cit. in Mjør, 2011, p. 44).

This quotation by Nikolai Berdyaev, one of the most famous thinkers within the milieu of Russia Abroad, enucleates and summarises what has been discussed so far. The reiteration of the words “freedom/free” is a clear mark of the most important and positive aspect found by emigrants in their exile. It’s nevertheless necessary to dwell particularly on the last utterance: the term *tvorchestvo*, i.e. the creative work, has in fact a long-standing history and a prominent role in the context of Russian culture and aesthetics. The essay *Metaphysics, Aesthetics or Epistemology? A Conceptual History of Tvorchestvo in Nineteenth-Century Thought* by Mjør (2018, pp. 4-21) reconstructs the different phases in the evolution of this concept: the philosopher and theologian Vladimir Solovyov is the first to breathe new life into this ancient term by expanding its realm beyond mere “creative work”. For Solovyov, in fact, the sphere of creation – one of the three “main forms of the all-human organism” together with knowledge and practical activity –

has a threefold dimension: in its material level, it is “technical art”, in the formal level it is linked with “fine arts”, whereas in the absolute level it is “mysticism”. *Tvorchestvo* thus is indeed connected with art, but at his highest level it is has to do with an activity aimed at establishing contact with the divine, and, to use a key term of Solovyiov’s language, it can be designated as “theurgy”. As pointed out by Mjør:

Tvorchestvo [...] is not only to be found in art, but also in knowledge, in the intellectual contemplation of ideas. He [Solovyiov] saw this form of intellectual activity as a precondition for human participation in the realization of world history as envisioned by God in his divine plan (Mjør, 2018, p. 21).

Being the “spiritual son” of Solovyov, Berdyaev inherited the teaching of his master, but at the same time he transposed this concept in the more concrete sphere of practical action and historical context. In the preface of the 1927 edition of *The Meaning of the Creative Act*, one can find this double perspective: reconnecting creative activity to its divine matrix and, at the same time, seeing in creativity an antidote to the upheavals of the early 20th century:

My book [...] was written fifteen years ago. Since then mighty catastrophes have broken over Russia and the world. A new epoch in history has begun. [...] now as then, I still believe that God calls men to creative activity [...] But the crisis through which humanity is passing, which is expressed first of all in the bankruptcy of humanism, to-day seems to me more tragic, and offers no hope for the possibility of an immediate move into religious creativity. We shall have to pass through a period of darkness before the new light beams out. The world must look forward to a period of barbarization (Berdjaev, 1962, p. 1).

These, therefore, are the philosophical, theological and historical presuppositions of creating art within the framework of the Russia Abroad, whose mission had not only the task to preserve the Russian tradition, but also to re-create a new world.

What are, then, the concrete transpositions of these doctrines in the field of emigrated Russian culture? In what way have these instances occurred or had to collide with reality? Before approaching the musical declension of this discourse, it will be more appropriate

to start from a much wider and more investigated field, that is the literary domain.

4. Letters

The predominant expression of modern Russian cultural creativity [...] had been in the form of literature. In its manifold modes, the word was the mainstay of Russian cultural identity [...] In emigration, literature became even more crucial to the émigrés' collective identity, for language is the most obvious sign of belonging to a specific group. The Russian language, both written and oral, bound the émigrés together despite their geographic dispersion (Raeff, 1990, pp. 10).

This assertion by Marc Raeff contains in a few lines several relevant points of analysis about literature and language – two of the three “cementing ideas” of *Russia Abroad*, together with Russian Orthodoxy, according to Margarita Kononova (2007, pp. 142-156) – which cannot be developed in this contribution. Nevertheless, many studies, especially in recent years, have started from these propositions and have offered valid and convincing models of analysis.

Here we will focus on just a few aspects and interpretations that shed light on the relationship between emigrant and host Parisian culture and the transnational intersections between the two. In fact, the literary field offers much broader cases of study, both from a qualitative and quantitative point of view, than the musical one.

Hitherto, we have been treating *Russia Abroad* as a closed space, detached and isolated from the host milieu. This is certainly noticeable in many aspects of emigrant culture, but it is not an accurate representation of the multifaceted reality of Russian-Parisian men of culture.

There have been, in fact, many attempts to bring these two worlds together. In his important monograph about the interactions between émigré literature and French modernists in the first post-war period, Livak (2003, 2004, 2005) examines the *lieux de rencontre* where these approaches have taken place.

Probably the most peculiar of these common spaces is the so-called *Studio franco-russe* (Franco-Russian Studio), an initiative of regular exchanges occurred in the triennium 1929-1931 between

Russian émigrés and their French peers “in order to bring out, from successive exchanges of views, the essential points of moral rapprochement and possible intellectual collaboration between the elites of the two countries” (Livak, 2004, p. 109). The first session opened with these words:

The Franco-Russian Studio is the result of a unique situation in history. France, and more particularly Paris, has for some years been home to most of the leading intellectual figures in the Russian diaspora, including, with a few exceptions, all the well-known writers, as well as large groups of young writers. Yet, surprising as it may seem in our time, in the presence of a Europe that aspires to reunite, no direct contact existed, until recently, between them and French intellectuals (Livak, 2005, p. 45).

This peculiar reality offers thus a privileged point of observation to explore the cultural interweaving between the two intellectual communities. What were, then, the positions and considerations of the ones in relation to the aesthetics of the others?

From the beginning of émigré experience in France, exiles contrasted Russian and French esthetics. Seeing Russian works as formally unsophisticated, they insisted that Russians could not match the style and structural organization of French literature. Russian "amorphous emotionality" clashed with "Latin clarity"; "French intellect" was a far cry from the irrationality of "Russian depth" and "chaos," whose lack of order betrayed an anti-French mindset. Unlike the French, Russian writers strove for spirituality and humanism at the expense of formalism. [...] Russian writers were "formally inferior" to the French because the "Russian literary tradition had an entirely different orientation". This contrast of traditions brought about value judgment, whereby "Russian" qualities were marked as high and "French" as low (Livak, 2004, p. 14).

As is evident from Livak's analysis, the initial positions of the two parties were rather heated and were exacerbated by acrimonious prejudices. Nonetheless it is interesting to note that, albeit in a short period of time, the experience of the *Studio* helped to blunt these heavy judgments. This is evident, for instance, in the change of perspective of one of the most relevant émigré writer, Georgy Adamovich: he initially denounced the French "emptiness and vanity of speech" and an esthetic gap due to a spiritual split between the Russians and the French, only to change his mind later by stating that his evaluation had been superficial and hasty. Furthermore, he

suggested that the French letters also had a good influence on Russian literary products.

Despite “such direct confrontation forced many exiles to ‘rehabilitate’ the French literary tradition” (Livak, 2004, p. 21) and reflected also in the émigré production, we cannot yet speak of transnationalism. It is only with the youngest generation of Russian writers that the results of the first meetings between the two cultures took place. In fact, it is by no means inappropriate the title the Maria Rubins has given to her recent essay *Transnational Writing in Interwar Period* (2015): discussing the Montparnasse circle of Russian writers and “the transnational and translingual nature of the Russian Parisian corpus”, Rubins notes that:

These migrant writers spoke from the place between cultures, estranging local material by showing it from an extra-local perspective. By the same token, they defamiliarised Russian classical authors by reading them in a “foreign voice” and recasting canonical texts in new ways. Likewise, they practiced a *métissage* of fictional and nonfictional genres, fusing the novel, human document, and *autofiction*, and even of languages, writing in a hybrid franco-Russian “dialect.” Through this exercise of hybridity, younger Russian writers established important points of aesthetic (if not personal) contact with the Western modernists, sharing their “poetics of bricolage and translocation, dissonance and defamiliarisation,” and defying attempts to construe their narratives mono-nationally and ethnically.

The author demonstrates these statements by examining texts by young émigré writers. It is precisely in a generational perspective that the author situates the two types of aesthetic approach of Russia Abroad: the conservative style peculiar to the older generation – whose guidelines were inspired by “the goal of preservation of the classical legacy” from the “corrupting influences of contemporary Western art” and avant-garde – and on the other hand the modernist experimentations of the younger ones, who “attempted to transform the experience of deracination into a source of creativity, to renegotiate their identity, and to find new roots in the cosmopolitan cultural space of Montparnasse” (Rubins, p. 4).

This is undoubtedly true and well reflected in the reality of the situation. However, the boundaries between the different approaches are often blurred and it is not uncommon to find further differences within the simple division by age. In *Russian Émigré Culture: Conservatism or Evolution?* (Flamm, Keazor, Marti, 2013),

Christoph Flamm suggests for instance a tripartite typology of the Russian emigrants:

first, the keeper of traditions who seeks refuge in a poetic past that has been irretrievably lost; second, the developer who does not want to erect a monument to his own tradition, but rather takes it across the borders as an embryo, where his future development will reflect to some degree the experience of his new surroundings; third, the cosmopolitan who shakes off old traditions and acquires new ones (Flamm, Keazor, Marti, 2013, p. 9).

Although even this subdivision may be simplifying, it is useful to depict many of the experiences, both human and artistic, lived by the protagonists of *Russia Abroad*. We will now see how this tripartition can be helpful in interpreting also the musical creation of Russian Parisian composers.

5. *Fine arts*

In the sentence quoted at the opening of the previous paragraph, Marc Raeff maintained that: “the predominant expression of modern Russian cultural creativity [...] had been in the form of literature”, and then further stated that:

The cultural life and creativity of *Russia Abroad* was preeminently, if not exclusively, verbal. Other artistic and intellectual expressions of culture for which a national linguistic form was not essential could, and frequently were, integrated and assimilated by the international or host cultures (Raeff, 1990, pp. 10-11).

This hasty statement should not be taken as an axiom; indeed, it requires problematisation and a closer look. It is interesting in the first place to note how the aforementioned evaluation of the literary “Russian character” – “amorphous emotionality”, depth and chaos – was also extended to other artistic fields. Particularly in the domain of the figurative arts, this judgment took on heated tones of a xenophobic nature. In fact, the difference in aesthetic taste between the French “sophisticated and refined” and the Russians “primitive, violent and somewhat ecstatic” (Lazzaro, 2018, p. 118) was later interpreted in a racist way.

At the 1923 art exhibition at the Salon des Indépendants, the journalist Louis Vauxcelles was quick to criticize the emigrant artists, and in his article of *Artistes français et étrangers aux indépendants* he expressed his disappointment with the "colony of turbulent young people, who are not from Île-de-France, and think they represent the French art". Once again, the "turbulence" of the "'Slavs disguised as representatives of the art of France" was radically contrasted with the "virtues of here [...] tact, measure, decency, finesse".

Federico Lazzaro comments as follows the words of the journalist:

Heretical, turbulent, rebellious: Vauxcelles, in the worst xenophobic tradition, paints these foreigners as dangerous both for art and for society. [...] [they] threaten not only the "art of France, *opus francigenum*", but France itself. [...] Vauxcelles refers to the painters of Montparnasse as if he were talking about the "savages" of the colonies, "those beings devoid of culture, whose education is the antithesis of ours, who abhor everything we love" (Lazzaro, 2018, p. 116).

The assimilation or integration in the host culture mentioned above by Raeff it was not a path without obstacles and many artists had to defend themselves against labels and accusations of undermining the host culture.

6. Music

Things were not different in the field of music. Migrants and exiles were labelled as "métèques", *metic* (from Greek term μέτοικος, «foreigner who changed residence»), as in the volume *Les métèques contre l'art français* by music critic Camille Mauclair. In the chapter entitled "Jews and foreigners", the critic writes as follows:

You don't have to be xenophobic to be concerned about the growing proportion of metics who, sometimes brandishing a naturalization decree whose ink is still fresh, settle in our country to judge our artists without having an intimate sense of our race. [...] It is true that the life of images has always been, like music, comprehensible to all above countries and dialects: but it still retained the profound characters of the Italian, French, Russian, Dutch, Spanish races, etc. Here we are dealing with a form of

integral internationalism, a negation of subjects, of territories, of homelands, of feelings, in favour of an exclusively mental construction, whose promoters are arid logicians (cit. in Lazzaro, 2018, pp. 117-118).

Characters, internationalism, negation, mental construction; the concerns and fears that gripped Mauclair are quite evident: the foreigner artists belonging to the *École de Paris* “settled in our country to reform the French taste”. Similarly, Waldemar George shifts the criticism to the formal level by stating that the language of the School of Paris is not living and organic but it is a fabricated language just like Esperanto.

Not all reactions to this new blend of artistic languages were of this type, however. In his essay entitled *Les tendances actuelles de la musique*, Henry Prunières, the founder and editor of *La Revue musicale*, offers an overview of the Parisian music scene of the Thirties:

Recent events tend to make Paris the most important centre where the music of the future is elaborated. [...] The freedom enjoyed in Paris and the ease with which artists can make themselves known have attracted a large number of foreigners who constitute what might be called the “School of Paris”. After the war, Stravinsky has settled in France and has just become a naturalized French citizen, the Russian Prokofieff, Igor Markewitch, Obouhow, Wischnegradsky, Nabokoff, Arthur Lourié, Alexandre Tcherepnine, Julien Krein, the Czech Martinu, the Polish Alexandre Tansman, Jersy Fitelberg, the Swiss Honegger and Conrad Beck, the Romanian Mihalovici, the Hungarian H. Neugeboren, Tibor Harsanyi, etc., habitually reside there. Several German refugees, including Kurt Weill, have just settled there. Thus, antagonistic doctrines will confront each other more closely, but they will end up being reconciled in a new aesthetic. Perhaps the elements of a new international language are being developed? (Prunières, 1936, p. 84).

This rundown is extremely helpful in understanding the multiform reality of the Parisian musical *milieu* in the interwar period. Nevertheless, we will remain focused only on the Russians.

7. The Russian-Parisian school

Leonid Sabaneev, composer and musicologist who fled Russia in 1926, is the author of one of the first and most relevant document on musical Russia Abroad. His 1927 volume *Modern Russian*

Composer contains a chapter entitled *The Russian-Parisian School* that reviews some of the most important Russian composer settled in Paris and the bond between them. The essay begins with a historical contextualization:

The great dispersion which, in the years of the Revolution from 1918 to 1922, scattered a considerable part of the Russian intelligentsia abroad, affected the composers also. Many, including composers as prominent as Prokofyeff, sought to find their musical fortunes outside their native land and succeeded (Sabaneev, 1927, p. 235).

The musicologist gets right to the heart of the matter, seeking to identify the nature of the so-called Russian-Parisian School that gives the name to the chapter. Sabaneev's argumentation could be disorienting at first:

Naturally the "type" of these fugitives was utterly accidental, for they fled not as exponents of certain definite "musical" convictions, but to escape the discomforts of life and out of fear of the social explosion. Small wonder hence that the group of Russian emigrant composers who settled in France did not possess any "tendency" as a unit. Consequently this "Parisian Group" is not a musical band of persons holding similar views, but merely a geographical one. Bringing them under a single heading is again justified by the technical conveniences of exposition rather than by any inner unity among these composers.

The atomization of Russia's musical nucleus could mean a setback in identifying those common lines that have guided this treatment so far. Without any intellectual, aesthetic or poetic ties, it might even be idle to consider these composers as a unitary group. Nonetheless, Sabaneev goes on with his consideration:

Nevertheless, there is some inner connection among them to justify our grouping them together in this way. Finding itself in France, this group came fatally and unavoidably under the heavy and despotic hand of the musical god of our time, Igor Stravinsky. His authority was so all-embracing, his sway over musical minds so absolute, that even those became Stravinists who had previously perhaps no desire to do so. And as another master of contemporary Russian music, Prokofyeff, also happened to be in Paris, the Russian musical emigrants, who count in their ranks many cultured, gifted and brainy men, organized under the aegis of these two mighty musical individualities. But it is still difficult to say how strong the group is in genuine powerful talents.

It is thus now clear the reason why the musicologist decides to collect these authors in a single perspective: that of the Parisian Russian composers is a school inasmuch as there is a master, or rather two masters, Stravinsky and Prokofiev, towards which the writer addresses pungent words.

Apart from their historic veracity, these statements allow us to explore the internal dynamics of a group that, despite its inner differences, can still be treated as a unitary entity.

It is now necessary to wonder how the *missija* and the other categories of Russia Abroad described above intersect with the musical production of the Russian-Parisian composers. In order to do this, it is worthwhile to consult another document which, owing to the prominence of its author within the group, is of extreme interest and can be considered as one of the first form of self-representation of the musical Russian community in Paris.

8. Arthur Lourié's Perspectives

In 1931, Henry Prunières, the already mentioned editor of the journal *La Revue musicale*, asked Russian composer Arthur Lourié to collect information about Russian contemporary musical scene in a report to be published in an issue entitled *Géographie musicale 1931, ou essai sur la situation de la musique en tous pays*. Lourié wrote thus an essay under the title *Perspectives of the Russian School* which deserves to be quoted in extended form.

The author begins his paper by providing the historical and cultural coordinates of the subject:

Before the war there existed three elements in musical culture: the German, the Latin, and the Slav. [...] Slav musical culture, the only real exponent of which was Russia (just as France was of the Latin culture), served as an ally of Latin Europe. Its forces contributed to the overthrow of the authority of German music, which hitherto had firmly dominated every other. [...] The bond between French and Russian music was not so much a matter of the composers' aesthetic tenets and leanings in any particular direction; it was rather a consequence of the conflict between two cultures – the Latin and the German – radically opposed to each other in both material and aesthetic process. Russian music, young and vigorous, with its barbaric novelty freshness, was drawn into the contest (Lourié, 1932, p. 519).

Three belligerents – the German, the Latin, the Slav – and the alliances or contrasts between them: rather than cultural and musical, this introduction seems to paint more a war scenario. Lourié’s perspective closely reflects the theses of the Eurasianists, especially in its condemnation of Germanic dominance in the cultural sphere and the role of Russian thought in the spiritual rebirth of European continent. This appears clearly from a private note in his personal diary: “All that is European in me is dead, decadent, schism, disintegration, doubt, skepticism and weakness of will. All that is Asian is alive, authentically vital, joyous and bright. What a strange vision: Christ in Asia!” (Taruskin, 2016, p. 217).

The reason of this common understanding is to be found in the proximity and intimate friendship of the composer with Pierre Souvtchinsky, key figure in Parisian musical life until his death in 1985 and, among other things, co-founder of the Eurasianist movement.

After this general introduction, Lourié continues his analysis by retracing the development of the Russian music school and its progressive detachment from German influence in favour of a more national style. Lourié’s greatest concern, however, is the situation of Russian music at the time:

Russian music is now in a very complex period of its existence. Many questions of great interest are involved. In dealing with style, form and language, the Russians have to reckon with the fact that such matters are closely connected with the fundamental contemporary political problem of their country. Therefore, in attempting to define the present state of the Russian school, we must treat the two sections of it as independent bodies: we must consider what is happening in the musical world of the U.S.S.R., and what is being accomplished by Russian music in the West.

The author highlights here the already mentioned distinction between Russia-URSS and the *Zarubežnaja Rossija*, the Russia-out-of-Russia. Still, this is not just a territorial differentiation, but rather an aesthetic one. Lourié’s verdict is in fact lapidary – “Russian music as a school has ceased to exist in the U.S.S.R” – and he can therefore only focus on the Russia Abroad:

The Western group consists of the following composers: Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Lourié, Dukelsky, Nabokov, and Markevich. Also Lopatnikov, Tcherepnin (Alexander),

Berezovsky, Obukhov, and Vishnegradsky. Is this group representatively Russian? It seems to me so evident, that I should not ask the question were it not frequently raised in Russian emigre circles with regard to Russian literature. But literature is in another position, since a rupture with the national territory is almost a rupture with the national language upon which literature subsists. This is not so with music, since the language of music is not necessarily connected with any country.

For the first time, Lourié compiles a list of names that which will later be followed by Prunières in his 1936 essay.

The treatment immediately turns to another important issue: is the group a genuine representation of Russia? The question is quickly settled by the author who begins to draw a parallel with the literary domain that will prove to be not without contradictions: unlike the literary language, musical grammar is not strictly linked with the national territory.

With the doubt hastily resolved, the Parisian group can now receive the baton and become the true representative of the Russian national school:

The nucleus of the Russian composers in the West is formed by the Paris group and, taken as a whole, it may undoubtedly be considered the modern representative of the national Russian school. Politically and formally it is separated from Russia and has been thrust into Western culture. Hence the dual qualities of its activities. On the positive side we see that it has mastered provincialism and has acquired a formal and technical equipment equal to that of the West. On the negative side, the rupture with Russia has created among some of the younger members a decadent ideology and a kind of reactionary aestheticism; they nourish creative powers on memories of the old Russian culture, which already accomplished its course and to which there can be return. Particularly characteristic of them in this sense is musical aesthetic based on the stylization of the 1830s, which hope, will be overcome, as it often causes their efforts to create a new culture to result in mere feeble reproduction of the past.

The “dual qualities” of the Parisian group described by Lourié outline the ambivalent approaches of the émigré poetic within the metropolis’ context: the receptiveness to the host culture or the nostalgic isolation characterised by the return to the pre-revolutionary past.

Two examples of these two aesthetic positions in musical domain can help to clarify Lourié’s thought. For the first case, a figure such

as Alexander Tcherepnin, whose life was punctuated by relocations both in West and Far East, is emblematic:

Russian composer

Georgian composer

Composer of the School of Paris

Chinese composer

American composer

Is this a handicap or an advantage? [...] I wandered around in forty countries, was at home everywhere and really felt home nowhere. My only home is in my inner self, which remains the same and follows its own development (cit. in Korabelnikova, 2008, p. 114).

Aware of his cosmopolitan identity, Tcherepnin stated that exile “not only had not impeded the development of a national expression in the music of emigrant composers, but it had in fact encouraged it” (Korabelnikova, 1999, p. 194). Moreover, it is not out of place to describe Tcherepnin’s production with the adjective of transnational: the use of different scales and modes in his music is only a small example of a vocabulary enriched by biographical experience and contacts with the most disparate musical grammars.

At the other extreme we find authors such as the already mentioned Sabaneev; according to Rebecca Mitchell, the composer is a “case study to analyse how music's symbolic importance continued to be interpreted within intellectual categories developed prior to 1917” (Mitchell, 2018, p. 233). His nostalgia and resignation towards the émigré reality led him, from being a convinced modernist, to conceive his poetics in an *apocalyptic* perspective:

Sabaneev, once one of the most outspoken supporters of modernist musical progress, offers a particularly striking example of this temporal shift from progressive time to nostalgic memory. From envisioning a world of constant human progress [...] Sabaneev gradually dissociated himself from the very idea of progress, retreating uncomfortably into a not-quite-idealised memory of Russian Silver Age culture, a past that he embodied in both his music criticism and in many of his stil [...] compositions, most notably *The Apocalypse* (Mitchell, 2018, p. 234).

9. *The tenets of musical Russia Abroad*

Returning to the text that served us as a guide in exploring the musical Russia Abroad, after crowning the Russian-Parisian group as the unique heir of the Russian national tradition, Lourié provides an explanation:

Our justification for regarding the Paris group as representing the evolution and continuing the work of the Russian school is based on the fact that the language employed – the Russian musical language – is common to both. I cannot here dwell on the nature and meaning of this language and must limit myself to a statement of the fact.

The elusiveness of these few lines is the consequence of the contradiction with the previous statement in which the author did not recognize the relevance between musical language and territory. Unable to describe the “Russian musical language”, Lourié is content to close the discussion providing a final *paraenesis* to exhort Russian émigré composers to be faithful to their essential task:

Brotherly cooperation and an inward sense of responsibility to one another have always been the watchwords of the Russian school; spiritual solidarity, and not the disintegration and indifference so characteristic of the Western Europe of today. So long as this principle of national cohesion – not for self but for Russia – exists, so long will the school endure.

A brotherly solidarity against the individualistic decadence of the West, together with a spiritual dimension of the artistic *tvorchestvo* are thus Lourié’s prescription to implement the *missija* of the Russia Abroad through the music channel.

A century after the artistic experience of the musical Russia Abroad we are not so sure that these intents have been respected and, over the years, much dust has settled on the works of these composers.

History, in fact, has not been particularly generous with these authors, as it has been with two prominent figures such as Stravinsky and Prokofiev, who even though they actively participated in the life of the emigrated community in Paris, had a substantially different artistic and biographical experience: the

former was soon projected into an international dimension, whereas the latter returned to the USSR in 1936.

This double “betrayal” jeopardised the creation of a proper Russian-Parisian school. Nonetheless, the musical creativity of the Russia Abroad composers is significant to understanding a twenty-year period – the one that goes from the first exile in Paris in the Twenties to the second exile in the USA in conjunction with the outbreak of the Second World War – in which the encounter between two cultures and worlds so different as Russia and France allowed the creation of a very special milieu and, for the exiles, the possibility to make art abroad “to be a voice for all those who are silent there, to restore the polyphonic wholeness of the Russian spirit”.

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