

PROCESSES OF INTEGRATION IN ARMENIAN MUSIC

SVETLANA SARKISYAN

svetlana.sarkisyan@mail.ru

Contemporary Armenian music is defined by a particular qualitative index which is characterized by the smoothing out of external localized symbols. The principal difference between the new musical culture and the previous culture, which was formed under the aegis of Aram Khachaturyan, lies in the rearrangement of the symbols which represent culture where the dilemma 'ethnography or generalization' is resolved in favour of the latter. The move towards the abstract and the polysemic and the growing transcendentalism of musical thinking which began in the 1960s underwent various modifications as a result of the problems raised by one stylistic formation or another. That these modifications occurred so naturally in many ways reflects the general stylistic evolution of worldwide culture in the last decades.

But there are also other causes which are specifically linked to the development of Armenian musical culture in the second half of the 20th century. The gradual development of professionalism, in the European sense, which for a long time had been hindered by objective historical factors in the 19th century, on the one hand led to inhibition and hence to the amassing of spiritual energy and, on the other hand, led to the dissemination of Armenian musical culture outside Armenia. This was the situation at the turn of the century and in the first decades of the 20th century. It was not until the 1930s that the conditions for the permanent functioning of national culture were established with the creation of a symphony orchestra, a choir school and an opera theater: only then did it become possible to speak of the formation of a national school of composition.

One important detail should be noted: the prominent names in Armenian musical culture had already made themselves known even before the school was formed. These include the father of Armenian operatic music, Tigran Chukhadjyan (1837-98), who was popular throughout the Near East; Armen Tigranyan (1879-1950), the creator of a new type of classical Armenian opera; Komitas (1869-1935), academic, folklorist and innovator in the use of choral polyphony, who took the unique Armenian song and made it famous outside his homeland, particularly in Berlin and Paris; Alexander Spendiarov (1871-1928), the founder of the national symphonic school, whose work was linked first with Russia and the Ukraine and only later with Armenia; and finally Aram Khachaturyan (1903-78), whose individuality had brought forth its first shoots by the 1930s, once again, however, outside Armenia.

The task of this study is not to follow the historical path of professional

creation. However, it is important to emphasize the energy and single-mindedness of the developing process, as a result of which by the middle of the 20th century Armenian music had already acquired uniquely original characteristics and become a pattern of that cultural synthesis which is so characteristic of the 20th century. Representing a progressive direction in music in the then Soviet Union, Armenian music now possessed all the qualities of an authentic and integral culture, capable of self-development.

A wide range of questions present themselves before the researcher of contemporary Armenian music. A portion of them deals with general international musical problems. The other portion is related to national development, including the national interpretation of common artistic and aesthetic tendencies. In this paper we will concentrate on several significant but as yet unsearched aspects of new Armenian music, even though a brief examination of these is more likely to pose more problems than to solve them.

One of the features of culture's 'portrait' - and not just musical culture - at the end of the 20th century is that its *integration* is in line with the phenomenon of synthesis which has prevailed from the very beginning of the century. The possibilities of synthesis are very well known in various 'neo-styles' such as neoclassicism, neofolklorism and so on, and also in music with such diverse stylistic forms as collage, music for tape, theatrical-musical mixtures (M. Druskin's expression) and instrumental theater. Even music so stylistically 'sterile' in its original manifestation, which as affiliated with orthodox dodecaphony, was not lacking in the characteristics of synthetic integration.¹

In spite of the sequential occurrences of synthesis and integration there is an essential difference between them which is dictated by the problems of different historical-cultural periods. The emergence of the process of synthesis is linked with the innovative strivings of the early 20th century, in which tradition in any capacity was never excluded. A study of specific examples will clarify this.

In the first decades of the 20th century every musical direction, to some degree or other, absorbed an element from the past and synthesized it with an element from the present.² These 'dockings' were most noticeable in neoclassicism and neofolklorism. In a number of cases - particularly that of Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) - neoclassicism proclaimed the stylistic eclectic as the compositional norm. It is true that the author does not use precisely that terminology, but all the examples of 'recomposition' (*Pulcinella*), merging (the Octet), mixing (the *Symphony of Psalms*), combining (*Oedipus Rex*), and modelling (the Mass), etc. in his works testify to the diversity of the principles of synthesis. The phenomenon of synthesis was especially popular in American professional culture, first in the work of Charles Ives (1874-1954),

whose thinking might be described as constructive-synthetic, and later in that of George Gershwin (1898-1937) and John Cage (1912-1992) - literally polar personalities who were nevertheless brought together by the common aesthetic 'precepts' of North-American culture.³

Thus, synthesis implies the confrontation of elements from various systems (historical, stylistic, linguistic and so on), which reinforces their individual nature. Synthesis always arises as a product of the author's analytical work (particularly true in the 20th century), and therefore, according to the evidence of scholars, if it occurs spontaneously, then it is a sign of changing times.⁴ This last observation is true not only of the evolution of artistic styles but also of the dynamics of culture as a whole.

Although integration is in a sense derived from synthesis, it is based on a different logic. The individual components which are integrated into the whole already qualify as dialectic links. In the first place, these components are mobile in function: therefore, in uniting they give rise to a newly-formed non-partitioned (syncretic) whole. In the second place, the components are polysemic in the semantic respect: they may become the vehicles of different traditions and sometimes different cultures. This is why the 'language of tradition' has a primarily informative function in the phenomenon of synthesis; it briefly 'announces' the chosen tradition (or traditions). In integration the communicative function predominates, i.e. integration adapts the socio-perceptual medium which exists inside every tradition to new, regional situations. Therefore, in contradistinction to synthesis, the purpose of integration is to achieve a higher level of transformation of cultural heritage and a more active change in the meaning of current traditions within the framework of the concept of new thinking. Thus, as a result of integration, artistic creation stood face to face with the problem of universality, absorbing the cumulative experience of past and present.

Developing this idea, one might conclude that integration provided a way out of the crisis in which worldwide musical creation found itself because integration allowed us to determine the standing of the new culture in relation to old and, moreover, within the general evolution of culture. At the end of the 20th century integration was regarded as a method of *self-examination* and *self-knowledge* for every national culture and thus for the heritage of world culture as a whole. This fact, which in no way leads to a standardized solution, can be equally applied to a particular generation of composers or to a person.

Today more than ever before, composers all over the world face the problem of communicating with tradition. In this interpretation 'tradition' is understood as the vast field of cumulative human experience, in which the interweaving of hereditary links is at times so tight that only research is able

to determine the source - and then only partially. The creator or composer does not search for a genesis or source in the literal sense of the word; he inclines rather to the results of evolution, i.e. those achievements which form the concrete phenomena of tradition. Therefore, the contemporary composer regards communication with tradition as the comprehension of cultural values, the selection of phenomena with which he feels an affinity, and their subordination by means of his own artistic system.

The problems raised by these processes in the last third of the century may be observed in examples of work taken from various compositional schools and from individual composers. We turn again to Armenian music, which proposes a variation of integration. Armenian music (naturally not all of it, but the area which interests us) endowed integration with the significance of an original creative platform, allowing it to correlate present-day experience with folk music and sacred vocal tradition, and also with the national classics of the 20th century. The mechanism of this correlation is exceedingly complex - we are not talking about quoted insertions, or about the transfer of stylistic clichés, or even about the eclectic union of genre-stylistic characteristics as was the case with former processes of synthesis. Instead, we are talking about what the eclectic of the compositional norm might be in certain circumstances (such as in neoclassicism). This correlation now implies a different level of functioning of the integrating elements and a different level of generalization and links.

Two factors must be noted here. The first is the phenomenon of diffusion, which is observed during integration. Due to the interaction of elements with different origins, the integrated whole represents a new potential with other constituent discrete values. The second factor is the actual selection of those elements which will take part in the integration. In this case the term 'element' may be understood not just as a material characteristic but also as an abstract ideal, for example a structural principle or a principle of development. Therefore, in referring to the functioning of integrating elements, one should also consider the functioning of integrating principles, which are naturally more significant in culturological terms.

Over the last decades processes of integration have manifested themselves in all possible aspects of Armenian music - from the semantic to the linguistic.⁵ Before examining these in more detail, we should note one peculiarity which is common to various aspects: the search for conformities which generalize a specific historical experience in national culture. It would be very wrong to deny that such a generalization exists in the music of years gone by. However, the level of universalism of one conformity or another has now essentially risen - also a testament to the greater abstractionism of musical thinking. Thus, each conformity - which may be linked with genre or

form, with modal or rhythmic elements, or with the principles of thematic or compositional development - acquires new functions in a new context. This could be put in a different way: the context reveals the potential resources of refrangible conformities. Thus, integration manifests itself in the imparting of *universal meaning* to a concrete element or principle on the one hand and, on the other, in the finding of *contextual links*.

The process of integration brings to the fore the problem of specific stylistic unity. It is no accident that many examples of contemporary Armenian music are perceived as homogeneous in the stylistic respect, in spite of the fact that theoretically they are often easily classified as polystylistic.⁶ It may be observed in passing that this trait is not only characteristic of Armenian music, which again confirms the commonality of the worldwide musical process.

For a detailed picture of the processes of integration one may examine both the characteristics of selected historical periods and the personality of particular composers who are themselves equated with historical traditions with all their characteristic symbols. For instance, the evolution of two traditions - that of Komitas and that of Khachaturyan - which were already of universal significance during the composers' lifetime, may be analysed independently. The question of cultural inheritance flared up with renewed vigour in the last decades of the century, showing that the ideas of Komitas and Khachaturyan are far from being exhausted with regard both to their contemporary adaptation and, in the final analysis, that process of integration in which we are currently interested.

But one can choose to follow yet another path - as indeed I will in this case - whereby problems are classified in relation to various aspects of the music, from the semantic to the linguistic. Of course it is scarcely possible to comprehend all the various aspects; indeed there is no need to do so, since the study of the phenomenon itself is more important than the various spheres in which it occurred. Having limited ourselves to an examination of the processes of integration within the framework of one national culture, we are nevertheless aware that this is a somewhat theoretical view: just as it is unnatural to imagine that anyone of any nationality is isolated from general civilization in this day and age, so it is difficult to imagine a kind of 'emancipated' Armenian artist in the second half of the 20th century.

In the present era culture and reality are not correlated on the level of the traditionally-understood 'reflection of everyday life by culture' (*the theory of mimesis*)⁷ but often conversely, when culture is already a living reality. In other words, culture itself forms reality. Moreover, reality is able to reflect culture by 'transforming itself' through creative work. The philosophical interpretation of contemporary culture as creative reality has entered the

arena of various historico-artistic layers in culture. It is important to note that these layers in no way create a harmonic equilibrium: on the contrary, they are often in conflict or opposition. In such circumstances the mission of art is to search for order, for a logical determinant in the demolished ruins of aesthetic integrity. Is it possible that integration is a variation of regulation? This assumption is theoretical because integration is not harmony. Every composer searches for harmony even though he has his own understanding of the aesthetic essence of balance and the ensemble of dialectic conflict.

THE SEMANTIC ASPECT

The foundations of the new imagery, which could be described as a *method of free association*, were laid down in what was a transitional period for Armenian music - the 1960s.⁸ In the first half of the century a concrete expression of form personified the stability and rather monosemantic psychological direction (often determined by social cliché) which was characteristic of music from that period. From the early 1960s, and particularly in the 1970s, however, this concrete expression of form was increasingly relaxed, giving way to polysemy, conventionality and symbolism. This destabilization and transformation of form developed further, creating the prerequisites for constant inconstancy.

This process did not always flow smoothly or logically: after all, destabilization can also imply figurative cuts, intentional illogicality, and paradoxical changes of meaning. The characteristics of just this sort of destabilization appear to best effect in the case of contemporary polystylistic structures or, of course, in music for the theater. However, in both cases - monostylistic and polystylistic - the form is distinguished by its dynamism. An extensive range of nuances and variations are available in both cases, even when a traditional formal model is used.

This latter observation may be addressed to chamber vocal works which are orientated towards mediaeval musical-poetic or purely poetic works. The principle of static contemplation of an object or the deliberate maintenance of a single state which is inherent in mediaeval art is often observed in these compositions. In addition, the nature of this static contemplation possesses characteristics of internal dialectics of destabilization, common in many Eastern cultures. These characteristics are generated first and foremost by the specific multi-dimensional perception found in the professional art of the East. Here various stages of a single state or various sections of a single form may coexist simultaneously. Such simultaneousness sometimes defines that hidden dynamic or impulsiveness of the internal life of form which distinguishes the art of the East from that of the West, irrespective of historical period.

This new imagery was the direct consequence of the extended world-outlook of Armenian composers who, in Carpentier's words, were seeking to 'transform reality' through their work. By introducing the metaphorical symbolism of the richest sacred and secular culture of mediaeval times into the spiritual environment of the present day, by renewing their sound through the use of folk instruments and stylized sound, and thus preserving the genetic inclination towards reflection and heightened psychology, Armenian composers established a *principle of multi-dimensional thinking* which was new in national music.

The method of free association, reflecting the different possibilities of knowledge, was directed towards the comparison and semantic rapprochement of spheres which earlier had been distant. Rapprochement could occur in variants which in essence were extraordinarily diverse - for example the simultaneous combination of descriptive imagery with generalized abstract imagery. It is as though the concrete and the generalized were realized simultaneously in a single space. The situation which arose was completely unexpected and unpredictable in its musical development since its components possessed different degrees of meaning and significance. In music linked to a literary text this circumstance may be explained in a more or less logical fashion, but in absolute, non-programmatic and instrumental music the interpretation of the idea of sound objectives is rather broad.

The symphonies of Avet Terteryan (1929-1994) may be taken as an example: in principle the composer uses identical material and compositional methods in every symphony from the Third to the Eighth; nevertheless, the meaning functions of outwardly analogous devices are very different. These devices might include the rhythmic improvisation of the percussion, the imitation of folk players, the micro-intervallic nature of the melody, and glissandi within small intervals in the *kamancha* part, all of which deliberately emphasize the untamed nature of folk material. Or the protracted notes in the woodwind which often fulfil the structural role of a 'dam' (Armenian drone). Or the multi-layered polyphonic structure based on the ostinato rotation of short motifs (the best-known example is the canon of French horns from the Third symphony which is repeated in many of Terteryan's later works). The alteration in the function of these devices occurs firstly as a result of changes in their contextual situation and secondly because of the 'reaction' of context on individualized timbral and thematic structures.

At the same time, free association did not always entail the use of concrete formal structures. In Armenian music the trend towards abstraction of formal expression followed the path common to all cultures: a change in the semantics of musical text developed under the influence of new philosophical and extra-musical concepts and as a result of the general increase in the

philosophical nature of music. This does not necessarily mean that every progressive composer's work was remarkable for its sole novelty of concept. Even on the much wider scale of the worldwide development of 20th-century music, only a few composers can claim to have composed works which have no precedents, analogies or prototypes of philosophical concept in musical practice.

Theoretical thinking on this theme reveals the essence of the so-called 'new philosophical concept'. Its true nature is revealed to be a **conventional logic** which entails successive links with various philosophical, ritual, and artistic theories and traditions. Thanks to the author's individual - one might say 'integrated' - views, they are illuminated in a new way. The presence of conventional logic in the philosophy of new music, including that of Armenia, does not affect the innovation of the linguistic aspect of composition. However, it is a different matter when the choice of the initial concept is determined by the character of the internal organization of the conventional links themselves. For this reason, when speaking of the 'new concept', we often refer to the peculiarity of the organization.

This process does not always occur in a conscious or purely rational manner. The unconscious and the irrational exert an equally intense influence. The polarity of the rational and intuitive categories of thinking, which stand on equal terms in the content of conventional links, imparts an extraordinary sense of scale to contemporary musical thinking. In terms of conventional integrating logic the 'semantic philosophy' of new music is realized in a complex system of semantics and meanings. In Armenian music the positive effect of this movement manifests itself primarily in the success of the collective artistic experience, although the value of a particular composer's individual experience is sometimes no less important, particularly from the point of view of traditional musicology.

THE GENRE ASPECT

The genre aspect closely borders on the semantic, since content is also important here. Strictly speaking, the history of musical genre is the history of transformation of content on a global scale, and in this respect Armenian music is no exception. The genre aspect does not interest us in itself, but from the point of view of the processes of integration, the most significant example for analysis is the sphere of musical theater.

From the end of the 1960s one may observe a tendency towards the synthetic unification of different theatrical forms which are modified by the composer in his own individual fashion in Armenian music. Theatrical forms - both traditional European and folk forms - were combined with characteristic elements from the theater of ancient times and from contemporary dramatic

theater. The ballet *David of Sasun* (1976) by Edgar Hovhannesyan (1930-1998) and Avet Terteryan's ballet *The Monologues of Richard III* (1979) may serve as examples of this trend in synthesis. The literary and theatrical source for the first of these was the national epic 'David of Sasun', which dates from the end of the 9th century. The second composition is based on motifs from Shakespeare's famous tragedy, in whose dramaturgical interpretation the composer freely combined conceptual elements from 20th-century symbolist theater, ancient Armenian theater from the 1st century (its structure has been researched in detail by Armenian theatrical historians, particularly Gevorg Goyan [1901-1982]), and traditional dramatic theater in an original musical concept.

It is no accident that Hovhannesyan and Terteryan should have composed such works. On the one hand, they are linked with their previous works – Hovhannesyan's ballet-cantata *Antuni* and Terteryan's opera-oratorio *The Ring of Fire*. On the other hand, they prepared the way for the theatrical works of the 1980s: Terteryan's opera *Erdbeben* (based on ideas from Heinrich von Kleist's novella *Das Erdbeben in Chile*) and Hovhannesyan's *A Journey to Erzurum* (based on the tale by Alexander Pushkin). In subsequent compositions concert choral forms are used as genre elements: for example, traditional operatic arias and ensembles; choreographic numbers; pantomime; and several devices characteristic of cinematic music, particularly cinematic 'stills' and the horizontal and vertical montage of highly individual sound areas (in Terteryan's work this is also emphasized by stereo-acoustic factors and by the mixing of natural and mechanical sound). In addition, the characteristic cinematic 'split-screen' technique is introduced, although this technique, which is used as a consistently developing dramaturgical device, is more characteristic of Hovhannesyan's *A Journey to Erzurum*.⁹

The genre aspect of the processes of integration led to a number of poly-genre phenomena which extended not only into the theatrical sphere but also into the sphere of Armenian instrumental music. Thus, the typical symbols of the concerto genre often play a very active role in symphonies, compositions for different orchestral groups and in string quartets. This interest in the concerto genre led to the increased function of individual instruments, separated groups of instruments, or the orchestra as a whole as a solo or virtuosic resource. The interpretation of the typical rules of the concerto varies in each case. The composer may interpret the whole cycle or a separated part of it:

- 1) through the preservation of the classical canons of concerto grosso;
- 2) in such a way that the correlation of the various sections produces a confrontation of virtuosic thematic material and texture;
- 3) by consistently applying the principles of dialogue disposition to both

individual instruments and orchestral groups throughout the composition.

Examples of the use of these methods in work, other than concertos include: the Fourth Symphony by Grigor Hakhinyan (1926-1991); Avet Terteryan's Third Symphony; the Third Symphony by Edgar Hovhanesyan; the Symphony for soprano and orchestra by Martun Israelyan (born in 1938); Levon Astvatsatryan's (1922-2002) *Melogolie* for solo trumpet, orchestra and tape; *Pentimento* for chamber ensemble by Vahram Babayan (born in 1948); Ashot Zohrabyan's (born in 1945) *Offering to Metsarents* for string quartet and chamber orchestra; and string quartets including the Fourth Quartet by Edgar Hovhanesyan; the Second and Third Quartets by Levon Chaushyan (born in 1946); the Fourth Quartet by Arzas Voskanyan (born in 1946) and *Quattro* for four cellos by Isabella Arazova (born in 1936).

Another trend in inter-genre integration is the penetration of the symbols of the solo sonata into the concert forms, which leads to the domination of instrumental monologue and devices more typical of chamber music. When the trend towards monologue and chamber writing is examined more closely, one can detect the unique reflection of 'monism', now popular in minimalism and conceptualism - the view that the world is made up of a single common substance and may be seen in one dimension - and the compulsory concentration of consciousness on the phenomenon of personality and the element of confession. As a result of this trend, one may observe the use of mainly moderate and slow tempi, which are not traditionally typical of instrumental concertos, a calm tone which excludes contrasts, and animation of concert 'game'. Although it would be inaccurate to talk about a complete absence of contrasts, the essence of these contrasts has changed. They are not used to animate the movement but as a comparison of the various moods dictated by the immanent conformities of the musical development. It is no accident that the majority of compositions of this sort are written in the form of a single movement.

The Cello Concerto by Ruben Sarkisyan (1945-2013); the Cello and Violin Concertos by Martun Israelyan; Eduard Hayrapetyan's (born in 1949) Sixth Concerto for violin and chamber orchestra, which resembles a large sonata; Tigran Mansuryan's (born in 1939) Concerto for violin and string orchestra, Second String Quartet (in memory of E. Khaghagortyan), and Third Concerto for cello and chamber orchestra are amongst those concertos based on the monologue technique of the instrumental sonata. In general, Mansuryan made wide use of the monologue technique: it may be observed in *Tovem* (meaning "I recite" in ancient Armenian) for 15 instruments.

THE STYLISTIC ASPECT

The stylistic aspect is the most developed in terms of method and diversity.

It is natural that this should be the case as the stylistic aspect absorbs that total integration which characterizes the music of the late 20th century. The unique character of music of the present moment lies not so much in its interweaving of artistic-aesthetic and stylistic norms as in the versatility of that interweaving and interaction. As a result, the stylistic evaluation of a contemporary composition often excludes its monosemantic interpretation. The composition is evaluated by the presence of so-called primary and secondary stylistic symbols. The 'primary' symbols are the characteristic stylistic symbols of the composition which carry the fundamental stylistic material. 'Secondary' symbols fulfil a background role; they are found at some distance from the primary symbols, which in itself isolates their function. Now and then these secondary symbols bring pressure to bear on the behaviour of the primary symbols. In terms of research, a detailed structural analysis of these or other symbols does not always lead to the sought-for answers since a particular stylistic symbol will acquire a new significance in the context of the work as a whole, where it is subordinate to any unexpected aesthetic philosophical problems.

Thus the integrating nature of contemporary musical styles is based on the more complex and non-equivalent functioning of phenomena of various origins. One is linked with thought; others are linked with the selection of resources; others assimilate concepts of preceding eras or proclaim the supremacy of 'crude' information taken from the music of the past (by means of collage or quotations).

In the interweaving of styles seen in present-day Armenian music - where there is an obvious tendency towards the free treatment of elements from late European romanticism and early expressionism - the ever-widening sphere of artistic contact with ancient authentic traditions acquires a special significance. The ideas behind this wide-scale movement - which can be described as 'culturological' in that composers' interest in individual traditions gradually focused the need for research into certain cultural layers - appear well defined.

The rich heritage of the mediaeval Armenian masters - sacred, folk and especially ritual music - served as a stimulus for the revival of the national traditions of antiquity. The individual nature of the methods of communication with the past, which remain active to this day, is a significant characteristic of this revival tendency. In other words the Armenian composer carries out analytical work unseen, selecting the necessary characteristics of genre and style from ancient music and poetry and painstakingly differentiating various historical periods. Thus, the periods from the 5th-7th century, the 10th-12th century and the 16th century are independently isolated in Armenian culture. Specific differences in the genres of ancient monodic music, such as the

psalm, sharakan, tagh and other stylistic forms, also undergo typological differentiation: the *tagh* is an extensive, multi-sectioned vocal composition based on ornamented syllabic chant, whose principle exponent was Grigor Narekatsi - a leading philosopher, poet, and musician of the 10th century.

Incidentally, the masterpieces of Narekatsi attracted the attention of Armenian composers for several decades. It is widely known that Edgar Hovhanesyan used the *tagh Havik* in his First Symphony (1957), taking a constructive approach to the melodic *tagh* which was significant for future compositional practice. New perspectives were opening up. The music of Sergei Aghajanyan (born in 1929) was original in its technique, as might be observed in *Polymonodies I and II*, which were written in the 70s, and *Polymonodies III and IV* from the 80s. Here various sections of Narekatsi's *taghs* are polyphonically superimposed, merging into the monochromatic timbre of the string orchestra. This interesting work by Aghajanyan, which preserves the classical unity of both the whole and its component parts, is still the only testament to the melodic and structural perfection of Narekatsi's *taghs*. It corroborates the sacral idea 'pars pro toto' - in this case the integrity of each section of *tagh*. One might also note that the principle of artistic creation 'pars pro toto' is characteristic of many Eastern peoples and is prevalent in poetry, the art of book miniatures and particularly in architecture, as well as in music.

Communication with ancient national traditions led to interesting intersection with regard to the formation of new modes in contemporary music. The anhemitonic modes of Israelyan and Ashot Zohrabyan, which are genealogically related to the mode tunes of Armenian sacred music, are examples of this kind of intersection.¹⁰ The melodic structures of late monody and of Orthodox chant seen in the works of Avet Terteryan, Zohrabyan and Stepan Rostomyan (born in 1956) served as prototypes for chromatic modes with semitone, microtonal and glissando movement. I should like to caution against seeing this process as one of restoration. Rather, it is about new constructive formations which are created either consciously or intuitively but are historically significant in either case: these constructions represent yet another attempt to comprehend the secrets of the past.

LINGUISTIC CONFORMITIES

The positive meaning of the links between new Armenian music and national traditions of the past cannot be restricted to just one particular area of **linguistic conformities**. Each of these linguistic conformities may be individually subjected to independent study. They include: the dynamics of tonal development; the constant functions of modes in adjacent sacred genres (this exceeds the limits of the purely 'linguistic', coming closer in meaning to

the traditional 'musical-language'); the reflection of poetic accentuation or quantitative rhythmic in musical development; and syllabic and improvisational structures. These and other conformities are prevalent in both the vocal and instrumental work of contemporary Armenian composers.

The language of form represents a special aspect of linguistic conformity. It is understood as the functional, as opposed to the structural, development of form and the revealing of one of the fundamental principles of musical logic - the principle of the link. We may recall that, according to Webern, the link is the most concise correlation between parts. Consequently, the principle of the link is the realization of these correlations. Therefore, one might conclude that the object of analysis of the language of form is not strictly the form itself but its concept.

In this respect medieval music preserved the positive characteristics of a series of ideas which reveal a similarity with several of the formal principles found in new music, principally that of the second half of the 20th century. Based on the logical and legal procedures of ancient Armenian music, the compositions of Avet Terteryan, Ashot Zohrabyan, Levon Astvatsatryan, Martun Israelyan and Eduard Hayrapetyan demonstrate the most interesting reworking of the concept of form. As a rule, these authors incline towards one-movement compositions which allow them to renounce the canons of the traditional European cycle and to propose a new canon - a slowly developing structure based on the gradual revelation of the potential of internal tension. It must be emphasized that the new concepts of form stimulated the realization of unique spiritual aspects in Armenian music. Consequently, the resulting compositions were far from unifying their concept. The construction of 'spiritual space' is unpredictable. Only certain general logical conformities are preserved since the internal nature of sacred and musical material is revealed in a different way each time, even by the same composer.

In attempting to evaluate the processes described above it is probably appropriate to observe the all-embracing comprehension of the laws of national thinking and the revelation of its typical ontological, historical-cultural, psychological, artistic and genre-stylistic features. Thanks to this comprehension the energy of folklore traditions is seen in a completely different light, and the methods of interpreting the laws of folklore in professional composition are significantly refined. It is true that here, more than in any other sphere, continuity with previous compositional practice is observed. It is natural that the *dialogue between 'folklore and composer'* is infinite in its historical perspective. The Armenian author also uses the experience of other national schools in the study of folklore; this enables him/her to sense local national problems more strongly and to emphasize the unique character of his/her own cultural heritage.

It would be appropriate to mention several of those composers whose aural experience and artistic potential furthered both the revival of contemporary musical practice as a whole and the new function of folklore in contemporary musical life. They include Edgar Hovhanesyan and Yervand Yerkanyan (born in 1951), the authors of numerous reworkings of folk songs (Yerkanyan is the author of polyphonic arrangements of mediaeval monodies for the early music vocal-instrumental ensemble 'Tagharan'), and Arzas Voskanyan, who turned to folklore relating to everyday life in the towns for his inspiration. Geghuni Chitchyan (born in 1929), Stepan Babatorosyan (born in 1957), Anahit Palyan and Vard Manukyan realized the general change in neofolklorism in their choral music; Gagik Hovunts (born in 1930), Armen Boyamyan, Vagharshak Zakaryan, Artem Kazaryan, Yuri Galstyan – in their instrumental music. Thanks to the comprehension of these standard symbols the potential of Armenia's national classical heritage – first and foremost the legacy of Komitas and Khachatryan – was also interpreted in a different way: they are perceived by grateful descendants as symbols of the integration of Eastern and general European culture even though their chief merit lies in belonging to the truly Armenian tradition.

The interpretation of tradition in the context of contemporary processes of integration testifies to the dynamic changes which occurred in the evolution of 20th-century Armenian music. Even today this path is being developed and improved and at times renounces the former variations of integration. Yet this path is itself important, imparting an artistically rich, multi-faceted character to Armenian music and striving – again in Carpentier's words – 'towards the rare illumination of treasures which melt away in reality'.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ For example, the preservation of the symbols of genre in the classicist origins of Schoenberg (Concerto for piano and orchestra), Webern (the Symphony, and Variations for piano), and Stravinsky (*Agon* and *Canticum sacrum*). These are only a few examples – there are many more.
- ² Only Webern is an exception: even the correlation of different kinds of musical information present in his work – for example canonic forms of mediaeval polyphony and the intonational or intervallic characteristics of dodecaphony – is achieved through integration and not synthesis. This also demonstrates Webern's gift of foresight.
- ³ It is significant that Cage preserved his partiality for the method of synthesis-montage to the end of his life: its culmination was marked by his serial *Europera* – a collage of operatic excerpts over three centuries of history.
- ⁴ For example, Hans Mersmann studied the question of synthesis on the stylistic experience of Mozart and Beethoven. See H. Mersmann, *Kultur geschichte der Musik in Einzeldarstellungen*, Berlin, 1921-5.

⁵ We are using the term 'linguistic' and not the traditionally accepted 'language or idiomatic' as the latter is more metaphorical and is often understood as 'meaning', as well as 'symbol'. *Lingua* is always a *symbol*.

⁶ *Homogeneous* here means *uniform* or *tending towards uniformity*.

⁷ This reflection does not exclude the active transformation of reality, regarding which one might recall the colourful statement of the writer Alejo Carpentier: 'The world of the miraculous only becomes absolutely real when it arises from the unexpected transformation of reality, from the heightened comprehension of reality, from the unusual illumination of treasures which melt away in reality'.

⁸ Although we have used one of the definitions from André Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism*, 1924, we are in no way appealing specifically to surrealist imagery.

⁹ This is discussed in more detail in S. Sarkisyan, 'Genre-Stylistic Syntheses in the Theatrical Works of Armenian Composers' in *Musical Theater: Events, Problems*, ed. M. Sabinina, Moscow, 1990, pp. 109-20.

¹⁰ This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 "The Lessons of the Second Viennese School".

ՀԱՅ ԵՐԱԺՇՏՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՀԱՄԱՐԿՈՒՄԻՆ ԳՈՐԾԵՆԹԱՅՆԵՐԸ (Ամփոփում)

ՍՎԵՏԼԱՆԱ ՍԱՐԳՍԵԱՆ

svetlana.sarkisyan@mail.ru

ԺԹ. դարի վերջի մշակույթի առանձնայատկություններից մեկը՝ Համարկումը, դասում է դեռևս դարասկզբին տարածում գտած համադրական երետյոթների շարքին: Ի տարբերություն համադրության, համարկումը պայմանատրուած է նոր մտածողության հայեցակարգի շրջանակում մշակութային ժառանգության առանել բարձր մակարդակի հասնելով եւ ասանդոյթների վերաիմաստատումամբ:

Վերջին տասնամեակների հայ երաժշտության մէջ համարկման գործընթացներն ի յայտ են եկել տարբեր՝ իմաստաբանական, սեռի, ռեական եւ լեզուական օրինաչափութիւնների ոլորտներում: Հեղինակը փորձում է ռաումնասիրել այդ տարբեր ոլորտները դիմելով առաջատար հայ յօրինողների՝ Աւետ Տէրտէրեան, Էդգար Յովհաննիսեան, Մարտուն Իսրայէլեան, Լեւոն Աստուածատրեան, Աշոտ Զօհրաբեան, Էդուարդ Հայրապետեան եւ այլք: Առանձնայատուկ նշանակութիւն է դրում այն տեսակէտին, որ համարկման գործընթացների շնորհիւ հայ յօրինողները հաստատեցին ազգային երաժշտութեան համայր համակարգային մտածողութեան նոր սկզբունք: Այն որոշ չափով պայմանատրուած էր Հին Արեւելքի արիեստաւարժ ստեղծագործութեանը քնորոշ գեղարուեստական աշխարհի որոշակի բազմաչափ ընկալման հետ: Հայ յօրինողներպն արդի արուեստի հոգետր մթնոլորտը հարստացրել են միջնադարեան մշակույթի եկեղեցական եւ աշխարհիկ խորհրդանշութեամբ:

