

## MUSIC IN THE MUSEUM (THE 70S-80S OF THE 20TH CENTURY, CHISINAU)

### MUZICA ÎN MUZEU (ANII '70-'80 AI SECOLULUI XX, CHIȘINĂU)

**NATALIA SVIRIDENKO,**

Ph.D. in the History of Arts, Associate Professor,  
Boris Grinchenko Institute of Arts, Kiev, Ukraine

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*The opening of the Organ Hall in Chisinau and the acquisition of musical instruments typical of the Baroque era in their modern performance stimulated interest in the ancient arts. There were enough performers who wished to perform the concert programs of ancient music in order to realize their creative projects not only in the Organ Hall, but also in other halls.*

*As shown by the practice of performing ancient music in the countries of Western Europe, the halls of museums and the halls of other ancient buildings turned out to be the most suitable for this purpose. The interest of listeners in the concerts of ancient music initiated the performers to create programs and expand the repertoire of baroque music, and improve their performing skills. Many outstanding Moldovan musicians, whose names are nowadays well-known, as well as those who left Moldova and became famous in other countries took part in the concerts. This process in the cultural life of the country promised to become traditional.*

**Keywords:** museum, ancient music, harpsichord, ensemble, painting, exposition, style

*Deschiderea Sălii cu Orgă la Chișinău și achiziționarea instrumentelor muzicale tipice epocii baroc, în aspectul lor modern, au stimulat interesul față de arta antică. Pentru a-și realiza proiectele de creație, care includeau muzică veche, mulți interpreți solicitau să-și prezinte programele de concert nu numai în Sala cu Orgă, dar și în alte localuri, care ar putea satisface cerințele solicitatorilor.*

*Reieșind din practica interpretării muzicale antice în țările Europei de vest, sălile de muzeu sau încăperile spațioase ale edificiilor mai vechi s-au dovedit a fi cele mai potrivite pentru acest scop. Interesul ascultătorilor pentru concertele de muzică antică i-a determinat pe interpreți ca aceștia să-și extindă repertoriul, să-și îmbunătățească stilul interpretativ și, desigur, să conceapă programe de muzică barocă noi. În virtutea împrejurărilor, foarte mulți muzicieni cu renume din Republica Moldova, atât dintre cei care activează în prezent în țară cât și dintre cei stabiliți peste hotare care au dus faima țării noastre pe alte meleaguri, au participat sau au asistat la asemenea concerte. Cu timpul, în viața culturală a republicii, acest proces s-a extins și a devenit tradiție.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** muzeu, muzică antică, clavecin, ansamblu, pictură, expoziție, stil

During the heyday of the aesthetic trend of romanticism in Western Europe, which was strengthened in the first half of the 19th century, due to the scientific discoveries in the field of culture of the Antiquity period, there appeared a desire to re-create the culture of the past – to revive the ancient art.

Despite the fact that the formation of a historical approach to the works of art, in general, and the musical art, in particular, it can be traced back to 1615 in the compositions of Michael Pretorius, but nevertheless the idea of the progressive development of art prevailed in the aesthetic thought of the 19th century. A new approach was formed in German classical aesthetics that was based on a thoughtful study of theory and art history.

The founder of this approach is Winchelmann Johann Joachim. In spite of the fact that he was an archaeologist, his theory was of key importance in the approach to the comprehension of the whole ancient art. His theory denied the idea of progress in art and it could be applied in another kind of arts [1].

The historical approach to works of art, the comprehension of the essence of their aesthetics as a set of the system of views inherent in this or that epoch, opened the way to their adequate understanding and interpretation in contemporary art.

Regarding this approach to the ancient art in Western Europe at the end of the 19th century, the

interest of musicians in the composers' works of the 16th-18th centuries, which used to be attributed to the baroque style has increased. The performance of baroque music on modern (the late 19th century) instruments and in large concert halls was not a success. The sound capabilities of musical instruments and large concert hall spaces collided with the musical material as well – it seemed to be lost in an unusual space and sound palette.

The study of the aesthetic principles and historical facts of the performance of music of the Baroque era completely rejected the attempts to „modernize” it. For the desired result, it was necessary to have the appropriate tools – if not original instruments, but, at least, their copies and perform music in small rooms, such as halls of palaces or salons of mansions that had a stage and where listeners were seated near the performer and could feel all the charm of the sounding of vintage instruments, *be* the participants of music making, as it is depicted similarly in the picture of Adolf von Menzel – „Flute Concert in Sanssouci”.

In Western Europe, the concerts of the early music of the first half of the 20th century began to be held in halls, preserved palaces, manors and museums on original, as well as, on copies of musical instruments. Such concerts were a great success. Ancient music was used also as a sound background in historical films and theatrical performances to recreate the fullness of the picture of the epoch (England, France).

The efforts of musicians, who lived at that time on the territory of the Soviet Union, to study and perform ancient music, were restrained by state bodies that ran the development of culture in the country. Ancient art in the country of socialist realism was not encouraged, but nevertheless it gradually spread.

An important shift in this direction was the opening of Organ Halls in the Union Republics. With the opening of these concert institutions, there was a need for appropriate tools, as well as the systematization and expansion of the repertoire with works of ancient composers. Along with this, culture activists were able to travel abroad and share their impressions of the artistic life in Europe. Among other things, they spoke enthusiastically about visiting European art museums where musicians simply play or even study musical compositions and rehearse in museum halls among paintings and sculptures. It created a free atmosphere of the synthesis of arts that complemented each other.

The outstanding pianist Svyatoslav Richter became the pioneer of the *Concerts in the Museum* in the Soviet Union of the 70s of the 20th century, and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow became the first museum which opened its doors to music. Concerts became sensational, but they were not associated only with ancient music. The main element of this event was the realization of the idea – *a concert in the museum*. The idea of the concert in the museum spread and the doors of many museums opened to music.

The centre of cultural life in Chisinau was the State Art Museum of the SSR of Moldova. The museum was located in one of the most attractive one-story buildings in the central street of the capital, it was differed from other buildings of this type with its luxurious decorative elements and the overall harmony of the structure. In such a building one wanted to go in and get to know its inner part. The exposition of the museum was small as compared with other museums of this type in other countries, it was small but interesting and maintained the declared exclusive facade of the building [2].

The musicians' offer to hold concerts in the museum was greeted positively by the directory and staff of the museum. The newspaper „The Soviet Culture” of 27.12.1986 informs: „A famous performer of ancient music, assistant of the Latvian State Conservatoire, named after I. Vitola, Natalia Sviridenko invited the lovers of the harpsichord to the hall of the Art Museum on the first evening of the cycle „Musical Sundays”. The concert featured works by Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, Rameau, Russian music of the late 18th century. Similar evenings in the Art Museum, where painting seemed to complement the impressions of music, would henceforth become traditional in the capital of Moldova” [3].

The first concert in the museum gathered so many listeners that not everyone could be seated

in the small hall of the museum. Further concerts in the State Art Museum were held regularly. The flow of visitors wishing to combine visiting the museum expositions and listening to another program of ancient music with a planned concert repertoire obviously grew on Sunday.

The programs of ancient music included works of never-heard-before and hardly recognizable names of composers, but who were well-known abroad. Music material appeared on the shelves of music stores as a result of the all-European process of reviving ancient music (there was no Internet at that time) – these were well-known editions of Poland, Hungary, and the GDR.

Different works were performed in Chisinau for the first time: Royal concertos and trio-sonatas by François Couperin (1668-1733); Five concertos for the harpsichord, flute and violin by Jeanne Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) (which were recorded in the fund of the Moldovan radio); sonatas for violin and harpsichord, sonatas for flute and harpsichord, sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord, the trio sonata by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), chamber sonatas by George Philippe Telemann (1681-1767); and by many other German authors; sonatas for violin and harpsichord by Arkangelo Corelli (1653-1713); Sonatas for violin and harpsichord by Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741); Czech ancient music, as well as works by Maxim Berezovsky (1741-1774) and Dmitry Bortnyansky (1751-1825). The performers were Svetlana Strezeva (soprano), Nikolay Paranyuk, Boris Nikitenko, Valeriu Bivol (violin), Alexander Chekilov (viola), Vasily Mazuryanov (double bass), Ion Zakhariya (flute), Natalia Sviridenko (harpsichord).

Subsequently, the geography of the halls for the „Musical Sundays” expanded due to the Exhibition Hall – the museum’s branches [4]. Now that the religious buildings are returned to the ownership of the church, the idea of holding secular concerts there might have angered some people, but at that time it was not as bad as, for example, with many church buildings in other places where cathedrals served as warehouses, KGB archives, sports halls, etc. The exhibition halls were in the Cathedral, then beheaded, situated opposite the arch in the centre of Chisinau, as well as in the Greek Church which was not far from the city hall.

There were exhibitions of contemporary art in the exhibition halls and among the exhibits was placed the harpsichord and the music played there was pleasurable to everyone. The newspaper the „Soviet Moldavia” from 05.04.1987 writes: „On this day, under the arches of the ancient building, where the small exhibition hall of the State Art Museum of the MSSR (Greek Church) was located, the charming sounds of the harpsichord, cello, double bass were heard. There was a meeting that could be called a synthesis of two arts – „Musical Sunday”. ... Its program included the best samples of Ukrainian and Czech music of the 18th century ... the director of the museum I. Taburtse said... – a concert of works by French and Italian composers is on the way ... ” [5].

Thanks to the cooperation with the specialists – the scientific staff of the museum and the musicians we have learned a lot of interesting things. Thus, the amazing life story of Smaragda-Catherine Cantemir, the daughter of Dmitry Cantemir, was opened; her graphic image sitting behind a two-manual harpsichord of the French type with a small dog on her lap could be seen at the exposition in the Exhibition Hall. And so, in this regard, there was an idea to put a harpsichord and under an engraving and at the opening ceremony to perform a piece befitting the occasion, that significantly strengthened the impression of the exhibition. (The original painting of the French artist Van Loo painted in oil is kept in the hall of the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow).

At the end of the 1986-1987 season, a long article, called „Music in the Museum” written by the scientific secretary of the State Art Museum Larissa Mikhailo, was published in the newspaper the „The Soviet Moldova”. The article gave a deep analysis of the museum’s cooperation with musicians: „It seems that many of those, who came to the museum on one of the Sundays of last year, were present for the first time at an amazing concert, the stage of which was one of the halls where the works of the West European masters of the 16th-18th centuries were exhibited – F. Frans, J. Bruegel, J. Goyer, P. Grolleron, G. Rougendas, J. Robert ... the future of these concerts, to a great extent, depends on the non-indifference, insight, spiritual potential of their organizers, on the awareness that

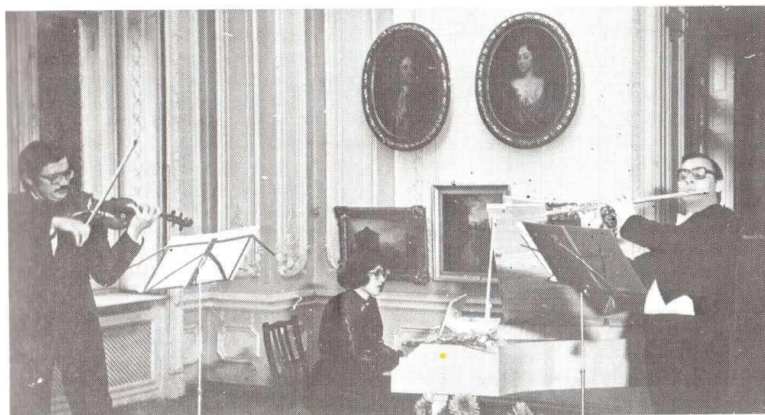
the creative fancy is a must in any creative business ... a modern man ... can not and should not exist without music, fine arts" [6].

In the same year, the building of the State Art Museum was closed for repairs that is still (30 years) expected to be accomplished.

The life river has carried away and brought different things, but it is obvious that the concerts in the museum:

- suggested a new form of concerts;
- raised and studied a new layer of musical culture;
- performance of ancient music gave the musicians new experience in performing previously unknown literature;
- Moldova turned out in the European movement of the revival of ancient music.

Later this process was continued in Ukraine and other countries of the former USSR and it is continuing at present. It is natural to continue giving concerts by the Organ Hall staff in the halls of the State Art Museum, but already in another building, and the concerts probably have not lost their relevance and charm of the unification of cultures – music and art.



„Duminică muzicală” în sălile muzeului  
«Музыкальное воскресенье» в залах музея

„Dimanche musical” dans les salles du musée

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