

Discovering Avet Terterian: Armenian Folk Instruments and Their Role in Forming Temporality in Third Symphony

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Poster Abstract

Armenian composer Avet Terterian wrote his eight symphonies (1969-89) during the time when the very existence of the symphonic form was questioned as unfit in a current Soviet social and cultural context. Nevertheless, previously recognized as a vessel for addressing the most important concerns of the time in the works of Myaskovsky, Prokofiev and Shostakovich, not only the symphonic form survived, but a new understanding of its potential was found by Soviet Post-Avant-garde composers, Gubaidulina, Ustvol'skaya, Kancheli, Silvestrov, Schnittke, and Terterian. Terterian's symphonies stand apart from the symphonic works of his contemporaries in representation of the composer's unique concept of "submergence in sound", which is a musical expression of meditation. Terterian's interpretation of sound as a leading structural and compositional force results in the unique features of temporality in his symphonies. For the first time in the history of symphonic form, Armenian folk instruments - *duduk* and *zurna* - were incorporated into the orchestral score in Terterian's Third Symphony. Solving a controversial issue of merging orchestral sonorities with those typical for folklore music, Terterian suggested symbolic interpretation of the vernacular instruments based on their ritualistic meanings rooted in Armenian traditional culture. Such approach resulted in the demonstration of distinctive types of temporality associated with the instruments throughout the development of the symphonic form. This poster will prepare the ground for the future research of Terterian's works by examining the issue of correlation between sound and temporality in his Third Symphony.