

The World of Child Psychology in Early Mussorgsky's Works

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ABSTRACT

The world of a child as a topic gave birth to a number of Mussorgsky's decisions concerning figurative modes, music style systems, principles of composition and music poetics. The master captured the microcosm of passions, that originally inhabit the soul of a child, and his works presented an embodiment of the deep, ontological nature of any human personality with its typical mixture of good and evil. In his musical works about children the composer also showed us some fundamental laws of psychology: some child entertainments, that are not quite harmless, conceal future repulsive character traits of an adult; and evident aggressiveness of a person is often a result of a former child having been unjustly insulted. All this makes it possible for us to speak of Mussorgsky as a composer and a child psychologist.

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Introduction

The interest of Mussorgsky to the world of a child was intrinsic to his soul capable of understanding children and evoking their love in response. Lonely in his soul, he had a trusting heart, openness and sincerity that are characteristic to children. A.N. Purgold (Molas in marriage) wrote, that he had "such a gentle and poetic soul" (Molas, 1989, p. 100). His character was "so tender, that seemed nearly feminine; so delicate, that sometimes it was naïve", - remembers A.A. Golenishchev-Kutuzov (Golenishchev-Kutuzov, 1989, p. 134).

Surely, he had that nostalgic longing for childhood (the period of life, so wonderful and forever lost, the time, when he had been surrounded with tender

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care). Mussorgsky always had a most affectionate love to his mother and a passion to all that he had done as a child. According to the reminiscences of Alexandra Nikolayevna Molas, “Modest Petrovich was especially fond of walking and gathering mushrooms. It reminded him of his childhood, and he was always so naively glad, when he could find a good mushroom place (...). He hated fishing with a rod. He said that people should use a net in order not to torture fish in vain. He said we should try not to give pain to any living being, not to make anybody suffer either morally or physically” (Mussorgsky, 1989, p. 99).

Throughout his life he had a vivid emotional memory of the early period of his life, when he felt he was a “pet” (that is, a tenderly loved child; an expression often found in his letters), a memory of the natural child’s need to be treated kindly and, of course, loved. (Modest Petrovich never had enough love as an adult person.) He often tried to bring back the emotional state of his childhood both in his life and in his work: in his deep and sincere emotional attachments and in pieces of music that he created. According to the opinion of G.L. Golovinsky, it was Mussorgsky who first embodied a child’s need in affection and emotional warmth in artistic works (Golovinvy, Sabinina, 1998).

Deep understanding of a child’s soul (“understanding of children and seeing them as people with an original inner world, not as funny dolls”, writes Mussorgsky to V.V. Stassov in connection with his vocal cycle “Nursery” (See: Mussorgsky, 1932, p. 261) led him to a number of discoveries mentioned in this article.

He worked on the topic of childhood in his first piano compositions: the piece “Childhood reminiscence” (“Souvenir d’enfance”, October, 1857), “Corners”, from his planned cycle “Childhood games” (“Ein Kinderscherz”; September 1859, first version; May 1860, second version), the cycle “From the memories of childhood”, in two parts (“Nanny and Me”; “The First Punishment”; April 1865). The idea of creating an everyday and at the same time psychological scene appeared again in one of the parts of “Pictures from an Exhibition”: “Tuileries. Children’s Quarrel after a Game” (“Tuileries. Dispute d’enfants après jeux”; 1874). (See: Kholopov, 2002, about the structure of “Pictures from an Exhibition”).

The world of childhood is also presented in his vocal works dated from the end of the 60-s to the beginning of the 70-s: “A Child Song” (poem by L.A. Mey; April 1868); “Evening Song” (poem by A.N. Pleshcheev; March 1871); “A Naughty Child” (December 1867); “The Orphan” (poem by Mussorgsky; January 1868, second redaction – May 1874). Images of children received a conceptualized expression in two chamber and vocal cycles: “The Nursery” (April 1868 – end of 1870) and “At the Dacha” (August – September 1872). (See: Nemirovskaya, 2011, C. 62-77; about the independent meaning of the cycle “At the Dacha”).

Even if we consider the enumerated Mussorgsky’s works, it is evident, that the topic of childhood in his heritage is presented by multiple aspects: portraits of characters, everyday and psychological scenes, sketches of social life, scenes of nature, games of children. Sometimes the topic is connected with fairy tales, as in his pieces “The Gnome”, “The Ballet of Baby Birds in their Shells”, “The Hut on Chicken Legs”; also “Baba Yaga” from “Pictures from an Exhibition” and songs “With the Nanny” and “With a Doll” from “The Nursery”. There are also



numerous lullabies among Musorgsky's works, that are not at all childish. Ultimately, the topic of childhood is important in the opera "Boris Godunov" in many episodes of which both topics of infanticide and of the love of the criminal tsar to his own children (See: Nemirovskaya, 2016).

Methodology

We should mention that, though Mussorgsky wrote about children in many ways, he wrote nothing for children. And it can be easily explained: the author was bothered not by educational tasks, which mean music composed for children, but by considering a child's psychology, the world of a child's soul, the richness of a child's feelings, thoughts, emotions and inner conflicts (See: Jung, 1995; Hair. 1993 / 1994.).

In his musical pieces about children the liveliness and spontaneity of a child reactions to this world can be seen, that is characteristic of the first years of human life, and characteristic moments of a child's experience are captured. They are changeable and unstable, they interweave fantastically, and they slide by, like stills from a film. An endless chain of moods, emotional shades and psychological states is created: joy and concern, injury and reproach, complaint and hope, pain and despair, play and dream, life's trials and need for a fairy tale... However, the main thing is that an enormous, mysterious and beautiful world is presented, which is (alas!) completely, or almost completely lost by a grown-up person.

The approach of the composer to this world is quite serious; the author seems neither too touched, nor lipping. He sees real aspects of a child's character and presents them artistically; good and evil are mixed here, just as in characters of grown-up people. Nevertheless, as children have not yet developed inner restraining functions, the expression of their emotions, wishes, strives and passions can be extreme. Mussorgsky vividly portrays children's ruthlessness, which is not always unknowing. The "Naughty Child", mocking at an old woman, is an example, also the boys in the scene with the god's fool (the last act of "Boris Godunov").

The aim of this article is to consider the meaningful modes in depicting historically typical and individual in children in Mussorgsky's works, in their evolution and in their connections with the genre system of the master. The principles of creating of specific children's musical poetics can be distinctly seen here. The research of the given topic in this aspect leads us to considering and solving of the problem of a rather rare phenomenon of a composer, who is at the same time a child psychologist.

Results and Discussion

Let us examine the development of forming of childhood imagery in Mussorgsky's works. As a real psychologist, he had seen and shown the extreme conditions of the soul of a small person, that nevertheless contains a whole microcosm of passions: tender softness and violent aggression that can form negative character traits in the future adult. More than that, Mussorgsky emphasizes this contrast. It is not just a contrast, it is an inner conflict of every human personality, in which good and evil, heavenly and earthly, angelic and mundane are interwoven. So it is in the cycle "From the Memories of Childhood" (1865), that consists of only two pieces and presents the contrast/conflict in a

most focused form. In one piece we see positive emotions (“Nanny and Me”); in the other one extremely negative emotions are shown (“The First Punishment”). Later on, the composer will more than once return to such ontological representations of the inner world of a growing child.

A future complex of musical poetics of childhood can already be seen in the first piano piece of the composer, the h-moll “Memories of Childhood” (1857). It is characterized by subtlety of choice of musical means and at the same time by international and genre simplicity of the thematic. There are no typically childish intonations here yet, but the piece in general is characterized by the mood of gentleness, lyric and poetry, elegiac shade of reminiscences about the romantic period of life, warmth of home (See: Forrai, 1997). Its style is close to Tchaikovsky’s piano compositions: lightness of the introductory accords, thoughtfulness of the main topic with its romance intonations (measure 28), G-dur motives of Russian folk dances in the middle part of the composition (measure 72); all this has a shade of tenderness. The tempo (Allegretto, quasi Andante) perfectly corresponds to emotional gentleness and subtlety; warmth of plagal harmonic colors (based on II⁵₆), prevalence of high registers, flexibility of texture and articulation.

In the D-dur piece “Corners” we see the same complex, but in a quite another genre mode. In this scherzo (the author’s definition of the genre) there is a typical image of a joyful and bright child play; the complex subtlety of the individually constructed form makes for it (three/seven-part, making a free rondo, in which the central episode h-moll (measures 171 – 291) clearly mirrors the general composition of the whole work. The feeling of lightness, flying, subtlety and even some *toy-like* character are created by practically all means of musical poetics: fast tempo (Vivo), high register (up to fis; at the beginning the low register is completely absent), transparency of texture, prevalence of staccato, square structures, etc. In the creation of the general character of this composition, the principle of development of thematic material is extremely important: its deliberate “entanglement” (exact and varied repetitions of the simplest melodies, intonational similarity of the refrain and the episodes, and the already mentioned specific composition of the piece). Endless melodic spins (measures 50 – 71), “roll calls” of descending quint motives in different registers of the instrument (measures 75 – 79), and “running” scale movements up and down. All this is easily associated with agility of children, their chatting and jittering, their running in the playing process.

So, theatrics and obviousness of the depicted scenes are definitely seen in Mussorgsky’s earliest piece. These characteristics are clearly augmented by the end of “Corners” (the code), where the dynamic (ff < > pp < > sf ; measures 390-401), the harmony (triads h-moll – B-dur – h-moll), the register (the highest; up to d⁴) are the most exquisite. The sparkling sound of a flying passage (pp < > sf ; measures 398-401) can make an impression of a real everyday sketch: children are running fast in different directions.

National color is also clearly distinguished by the imitation of playing the balalaika (measures 87-99, 157-167, 362-370).

This work of the twenty-year-old composer was so good, that it became a permanent part of his repertoire. Namely, “Corners” were played many times during his last concert tour with Leonova, a singer.



One more genre variation with the same composition of subtlety and simplicity is found in the G-dur of the cycle "From the Memories of Childhood", "Nanny and Me". The contents of the piece reminds of the first cycle of a later composition, "The Nursery" ("With the Nanny"). The subtle material of a child's psychological state can be expressed as gentle purity of a child, addressing a loving person. Definite characteristics of a lullaby (the effect of swinging with the multiple repetition of little-scale motives), that make an impression of bathing in quiet happiness, of being deep in poetic tranquility, when a child's consciousness is on the brink of falling asleep. At the same time the composition is from beginning to end penetrated by the intonation of gentle request and is to some extent similar to Schumann's "Begging Child" from his "Scenes from Childhood". It is natural that K.V. Zenkin writes about "Schumann's quality of addressing a companion", that is typical for Mussorgsky (Zenkin, 1997). In the piece "Nanny and Me", just as in the "Begging Child" by Schumann, the last intonation of a trusting child's request is especially expressive; we can imagine a little child with widely opened eyes (Schumann's ascending melody of unsustainable harmony D₇; Mussorgsky's VI). It anticipates the end of the songs "The Bug" ("What's happened to it, to the bug?") from "The Nursery" or "The Sailor Cat" ("What a cat, Mum!") from the cycle "At the Dacha".

The secret of subtlety of its mood is not only in the genre and intonational specificity of the piece, but also in the harmonic language of the musical item in general (D₉ - T with the sixth (measures 2-3, 14-15), D₁₁ (measure 20), chromatic slides in the melody with alternation of natural and harmonic major in the organ point T-D, accompanied by D₉ (measure 22), and II^{7#1} harmonic (measure 25)). The simplicity is a result of repetition of the motive of the descending second, the clarity of homophonic harmonious texture, the little scale of the composition and absence of contrasts.

Special attention should be paid to the second part of the cycle "From the Memories of Childhood", because it is here that the new imagery mode appeared. In the a-moll "The First Punishment" we see a difficult state of the soul of a child, deprived of freedom, locked in a dark cellar (the subtitle of the piece is "Nanny locks me in a dark room"). Passions reign here: injury (to the point of helpless rage), despair and anger; the child's soul is full of disharmony. We can see an important artistic discovery of Mussorgsky: children's emotions, though they appear for a trifle, are not weaker (and maybe even stronger) than those of grown-ups.

As for its genre, it is expressed by a rather unusual for music about children permanent "running" of toccata (which is intonationally close to barocco (especially Bach's) organ or clavier toccata, fantasia, prelude or fugue with toccata thematic). Unlike the light, playful scherzo of "Corners", it is connected not with the plot of the scene, but with the feelings of the child, the contrast with the outer situation (the little child is deprived of freedom, locked in a cellar). The psychological contrast (striving for freedom and not being able to achieve it) expresses the feeling of inner "boiling", nervousness, instability, anger and rage because of helplessness. The character of the song "In a Corner" is in a similar situation, but he overcomes it brilliantly, using masterful tactics, that not every skilful politician can use.

In the philosophic and psychological aspect, it is important, that the imagery order and the character of the aggressive and strained movement in

this piece with intonations, that do not seem to be interconnected (a kind of “confusion and vacillation”) anticipates many tragic images of Mussorgsky. First of all, the scene of a violent crowd at St Basil, and “Near Kromy” from the last act of “Boris Godunov”. Using purely musical means, Musorgsky accentuates one of the main laws of psychology: aggressiveness of a human character (especially in a rebellious crowd) can generate from a childhood injury (the more so, if it was not just).

The emotional condition of the hero is essentially determined by the texture of rearing octave repetitions that fill practically all the range of the piano, when the meter and the compositional structure seem undifferentiated (which is similar, for example, to the orchestral introduction of the mentioned scene at St Basil). Here Mussorgsky anticipates the XX century principle of the crescendo composition, with its flowing form and disproportionate parts (the expository and the middle parts are blended and take 44 measures, the reprise takes 19 measures, and the coda takes 8 measures), and a strong culmination in the coda (*fff* и *sff*, tritonic, colliding of extreme registers: $a^{cr}-gis^4$). Such a composition in the combination of a broken melody line, sharp jumps (including tritons, decimas, reduced quarts, sevenths and octaves, etc.), with dissonance of harmonic formations (up to VII³₄ with the added quart (d-f-gis-h-c) – T (measures 62-63)) is highly corresponding to strong pressure. Unpredictability, violence and wildness of this force is strengthened by the “forcible” division of the form: sudden sharp cadence accords, which can be perceived as a purely stage effect; trying to escape, the prisoner from time to time knocks the locked door, physically bumping into it (ТАКТЫ 14, 15, 29, 44, 62, 63).

Mussorgsky’s early piano pieces’ present different content modes and genre characteristics including the modes, that had not been used in musical compositions about children before. Features of musical poetics, that are inherent to the world of childhood, are distinguished in Mussorgsky’s works; notwithstanding definite innovations and a variety of all language means, they aim at achieving a synthesis of simplicity and subtlety, and ways of creating this synthesis are endlessly variable, rich as the means of the language of music.

Child psychology is much richer described, when the author’s music is combined with words in the sphere of chamber and vocal music, sometimes with the composer’s own texts. The first songs of this range are “The Naughty Child” (December 1867), “The Orphan” (January 1868) and “The Child” (April 1868). They mark the beginning of a new stage in the development of the composer: psychological approach to a character, observed by the audience, reaches a very high level, which is closely connected with the new and original artistic method that special literature defines as vocal theatre”, thrilling the spectator’s soul. (The problem of Mussorgsky’s vocal theatre was defined by E.E. Durandina (Durandina, 1985).

From the viewpoint of understanding the psychic life of a hero nothing can be compared with “The Naughty Child”; nothing similar had ever existed in music literature before Mussorgsky. Nobody had ever shown before a child’s mockery at an old woman, that gradually becomes impudent. The anarchy of emotions (more of a teenager, than of a child), not limited by restrictive functions, is surprisingly strong. The hero is literally torn by the joyful and unrestricted malice. As C.A. Cui writes, the text and the music are filled with the “pressing comedy, which makes us feel frightened and hurt” (Cui, 1952, p.



210). G.L. Golovinsky writes, that the hero “plays a cruel game with his helpless “enemy”, evading imaginary strikes and attacking from all directions” (Golovinvky, Sabinina, 1998).

We can see the first example of an antihero child in the history of music art in a tragic scene. Dargomyzhsky’s antihero in the song “The Worm” is not only an adult, he is also “practical and wise”. The method of grotesque, used here by Mussorgsky, is so torturing to us, because it depicts a child’s soul, spoiled by life (even if the child is rather big).

The end of “The naughty child” clearly reminds us of the chorus “Our strength and boldness rampage” from “Near Kromy” (“Straighten, shoulder, strike, stick, go away, your old crone”; from measure 55). V.V. Stassov compared (other) scenes in the end of “Boris Godunov” with people mocking at boyar Khrushchov and the boys in the scene with the god’s fool. “The people that are going to do away with the boyar, - writes the critic, - play with him like a cat with a caught mouse, honors him and bow low” (Stassov, 1977, p. 130). Mussorgsky shows, that childish funs can predict some repulsive features of a character (not only that of a child) aggression, hatred, anger, cruelty and cynicism. They become much bigger, when people form a crowd, obsessed with ideas of mockery, revenge and destruction.

The genre image of “The Naughty Child” is complex; it is a mixture, containing rapid speech, childish tease, something of a tale (“You walk in a wood, and beasts dash around”; from measure 26), something of a greeting choral (“You skinny old crone”; from measure 19), and an allusion to maidens’ lamentations (“Following you, my dear”, from measure 38). We can see that it looks similar to the lamentations of maidens in the first act of Borodin’s opera “Prince Igor”: “Have pity on us, don’t be angry with us, or offended by us”.

All parts are accumulated into a kind of a scherzo, the image and ethics of which were assessed by C.A. Cui: “the torturing scherzo” (See: Golovinvky, Sabinina, 1998). E.A Rouchievskaya accentuates the sources of a “tease”, and wider, of the speech intonation in general (Rouchyevskaya, 1993). E.E. Durandina accentuates transitional forms of folk art (also in other Mussorgsky’s vocal patters, “Hopak” and “Going to pick mushrooms”), the source of which are counting rhymes, bywords, teases (Durandina, 1985).

In this song the theatrical and acting character of the composition is stressed more than in piano pieces. In fact, we can easily imagine the old woman, who several times tries to strike the fellow (the refrain “oh, don’t beat me”). Maybe, she even manages to hit him with her stick at last (“oh, don’t, don’t, don’t hit!”). In the foreground are the actions of the “Naughty Child”, which construct his vivid psychological portrait. He is becoming more and more envolved in his wicked game (when a joke is no longer a joke), he revels in his natural strength and impunity, admires himself (and, maybe, the spectators who watch him, also do). He speaks maliciously, he insults her (e.g. “sharp-nosed, pop-eyed, kiss me”). According to the true words of Golovinsky, he uses common tricks, that accompany teasing: mimicking, gestures, grimaces (Golovinvky, Sabinina, 1998, p. 252).

Like the piano piece “The first punishment”, “The naughty boy” is constructed according to the principle of crescendo composition, anticipating musical norms of the XX century (See: Skvortsova, 2009). Flowing forms, disproportionality of compositional parts and culmination at the end (typical of

it) are surely prompted by the contents: they show the growing impudence of the “hero”. The last phrase “oh, granny, oh, dear, oh, nice, don’t hit me”, is marked with chromatics in the mid tones, accords of the fourth and the sixth, augmented fourths, and of dynamic, its last sound is sf.

Though the scenic action in “The Naughty Child” is so rich, the psychological portrait of the boy is presented in just one emotional and meaningful aspect (mockery), but its range is very wide: from boldness to reveling in his superiority.

The song “The orphan” is the next stage in presenting child psychology. Not only does it present a wide range of the character’s emotional state (as in “The Naughty Child”). The process of this state turning into another one under the influence of strong emotions is shown; and this state is contrary to the first one. Sorrow and begging for help turn into despair fraught with menace. The song in general evokes a strong feeling of compassion; as we see not just a hungry person, but a hungry child. The child is absolutely helpless in his misery; he has lost hope for people’s mercy. More than that: he has lost hope in the justness of the world. Nobody loves him, he is suffering greatly, because he still has human (and Christian) values in his soul. The hunger that is shown here is not only physical, but also psychological, which makes the scene even more heartbreaking. Mussorgsky’s skill of a psychologist and a dramatist creates the effect of our personal presence and deep compassion. Maybe no one in the history of music culture had ever expressed such a tragic picture in a child’s mind, when the world is crumbling, when a soul is dying of sorrow.

All this can remind us of Stassov’s article “Perov and Mussorgsky”: “An expression of desperate suffering and traces of constant beating can be seen on their pale and tired faces; we can see their whole life in their rugs, their postures, positions of their heads, their weary eyes... (Stassov, 1977, p. 129). Y.D. Engel wrote about “The Orphan”, that it presented “tan everyday tragedy of ruthless poverty” (Engel, 1971, p. 97). I. Y. Vershinina wrote about “fear and reproach, that is not childish” (Vershinina, 1959, p. 76), and Golovinsky wrote about “a cry of a little creature driven to ultimate despair” Golovinvky, Sabinina, 1998).

There had been no such a content mode before Mussorgsky. Though strong tragical expression of suffering, pain and even madness had appeared in chamber and vocal lyrics at the beginning of the XIX century (Schubert, Schumann, Dargomyzhsky), this very topic had not been mentioned. “The Cegging child” from “Child Scenes” and “The Poor Orphan” from Schumann’s “Album for the Young” vividly express addressing of a naïve child to a loving creature; refuse is not expected here. Their intonational profile is very convincing; it reflects various shades of sadness, not desperate injury and sorrow, not a danger of dying of hunger.

The genre basis of Mussorgsky’s song is not simple either; it combines recitative, lamentation, epic (in its middle part), a lullaby (the initial regularity and repetition of motives). Such a blend (except epics and the intonation of entreating in the volume of the descending third) is considerably similar to the characteristic of the god’s fool in the scene with tsar Boris. This similarity is natural, as in both cases we see the purity of a child’s soul, it’s not being able to suspect and anticipate evil, and after all, its complete helplessness when it faces evil.



As in other highly emotional pieces or theatrical and dramatic compositions of Mussorgsky, we can see the same crescendo composition in "The Orphan", that is connected with the contents and expresses the child's growing sorrow. (We can mention similar compositions, such as the chorus "Asking for Bread", outer sections of the choirs "Who are you leaving us to", "Rampaging" and Boris' monologue "I have achieved power" from the opera "Boris Godunov", etc.) Both its structural profile and expressive strain, and the plot similarity make it very similar to the chorus "Help me for Christ's sake" from "Boris Godunov". It seems that the begging child is one of the prototypes of this scene. In both cases the complaint gradually turns into a demand and a hidden menace, that is waiting for its time (though its degree is different). Both culminations sound hard, the genre of lamentation gradually gives birth to strong and menacing chant, that remind us of some images of folklore and the Mighty Handful, images of free songs of mighty men. In the culmination of the song ("A hungry death is frightening, blood's becoming cold when you're cold") we can see some features of a folk dance, that are intonationally similar to the topic "Oh you, my strength" from the scene "Near Kromy".

The genre, stylistic and compositional similarity of the song with the scene from "Boris Godunov" evokes a number of ideas concerning the concept of the chamber piece. The intonation of the fool's crying (very much like that of the orphan in its purity) turns into motives of the great strength of a hungry crowd. In the sense of genre and meaning we can also compare the culmination phrases of the song and the choir. It is a request that turns into a menacing demand: "Give bread to the hungry" (choir) - "A hungry death is frightening" (song). The child's personality becomes rebellious, it cries because of injury, and this humiliation of the child can naturally make him ready for a future social rebellion.

A new aspect of the topic of childhood, characteristic of the developing art of Mussorgsky, is found in the song "The Child" ("With the Nanny"). There were some variants of the title: "The Child", "A Child with a Nanny", but the ultimate one was "With the Nanny" (№1 in the "Nursery" cycle). It is unlike the previous vocal scenes; we see a comfortable world of a nursery, safe from social conflicts and tragic events, in the house of a prosperous family. A little girl asks her nanny to tell her a fairy tale "about the terrible brownie"; she remembers the episodes that had impressed her. Remembering the frightening tale, she becomes so anxious, that it is difficult for her to cope with the feeling and listen to a funny story. So the composer analyzed a child's soul and came to its purely psychological examination. He showed the worldview and impulsivity of children, that shows itself in different circumstances (even in good living conditions), emotional outbursts "out of nothing". As a result, we see not only a vividly painted portrait, but also a psychological sketch of changing moods due to the ability of the girl to feel both for human beings and for fairy tale characters.

The subtlety of artistic presentation of a child's characteristics can be seen in the genre genesis of the piece: sudden, unpredictable changes of various types of intonation make for showing the spontaneity of a child's thought and the unexpectedness of changing of a child's emotional condition (epic, song and declamatory motives are literally broken by intervening of speech). The same can be said of the innovative musical poetics (especially the metrics), that aims

at expressing the natural speech of the heroine. Breaking the traditional norms of composing music, the meter of this song made puritan critics angry. For the first time this anger appeared, when critics Ferenc Liszt's "Nursery". Adelaide von Schorn was there, and she vividly described the discussion of the author with Otto Lessmann, a famous musical critic of that time. "The critic, - she wrote, - looked at the rhythms of the first page with a weak smile. He was ready to triumph; the meter on that page changed at each measure, beginning, as I could make sure, with 7/4, going on with 6/4 and 5/4, and after all it was 3/2, 3/4 and 4/4, changing seventeen times in 24 measures. But what made Lessmann angry, made Liszt delighted" Mussorgsky, 1932, p. 497).

Let us examine some expressive characteristics of the song. Remembering and repeating episodes from her nanny's fairy tales, the girl naturally imitates her intonations. But their respectable character is broken by the girl's spontaneous and emotional style of story-telling. Irregular interchanging motives (choree, amphibrach, dactyl, etc.) interfere with the long lines and break them. Balancing between adult speech, which the girl can remember, and the need to express everything in her own way shows us the individuality of the little heroine, her "childish philosophic thought", according to B.V. Astafyev (Astafyev, 1955, p. 101)

"The individualizing of the strange" gives us a special possibility to feel all the nuances of what the child feels in every separate moment, listen to her intonation, "see" what she is speaking about.

Tenderness, warmth and heartiness, and loving trust are expressed through the characteristic change of the line of the tonic verse that specially accentuates the word "dear":

Instead of: "Tell me, nanny/, tell me, dear" (ordinary epic accentuation)

We hear: "Tell me, nanny/, tell me/, dear" (irregular accentuation).

A mixed feeling of captivating fear is created by sudden stops (pauses), log sound in the word "scary", and descending (tritonoc) motives/ We can imagine the child's facial expression, the widening eyes, full of fright:

Instead of the nanny's words: "Of that /brownie, scary" (ordinary accentuation) we hear: "Of that/ brownie/, scary" (irregular accentuation).

The fear caused by the brownie's actions is primarily expressed by many additional (to the ordinary story line) accents, that make for our feeling fear and emotional strain:

Instead of the calm intonation "And he gnawed their white bones/, and they cried and wept, like little ones" (ordinary accentuation)

We hear: "And he gnawed their white bones/, and they cried/ and wept, like little ones" (irregular accentuation, directly connected with the melody pattern, exceeding the top levels with each new accent in the motive).

Ultimately, all this vividly portrays a child. (See: Nemirovskaya, 2016, p. 38-62; about the genre sources and musical poetics of this song, as well as other songs from the "Nursery" cycle.)

Mussorgsky had created this song, and, maybe, felt the desired capability to express the complex world of a human soul the deep reasons of human actions and moods, in music. He had demonstrated child psychology, that constitutes



the basis of all further human behavior, and now he decided to dedicate his piece “The Child” to the musician, whom he worshipped, and whose artistic principles he thought the most productive. The presentation copy has a solemn inscription on it: “To Alexander Sergeyevich Dargomyzhsky, a great teacher of musical truth”.

The second song from the “Nursery” cycle, “In the Corner”, is a real masterpiece of examining child psychology. Its hero is a good boy, who has nothing to do with the Naughty Child. The fact is that he did some insignificant mischief, and his nanny made him stand in a corner. First he tried to excuse himself saying that a kitten was guilty, not he. Then he thought that he was right, and the punishment was unjust. Now he feels offended, he nags, he accentuates the nanny’s injustice and badness (“Nanny is bad, nanny’s nose is dirty”). Gradually he becomes surer of his moral superiority. The whole chain of arguments is worth a good diplomat; but the boy is as sincere, as no adult can be. Thus Mishenka has successfully (and intuitively at the same time) mastered and exercised all techniques of adult demagoguery. Let us accentuate once more: he is not a monster, he is a good, kind boy. The punishment he invented for his nanny, in particular, proves it: “Mishenka will not love his nanny anymore!”

The difference between good and evil, that is so difficult to see, shown by the composer in the soul of a child, had no analogy in the art of his time and anticipated both discoveries of child psychologists and modern research on how music influences a child’s soul (Shcherbakova, 2014; Anufrieva, N.I., et al., 2015). The complex psychological collisions in the soul of this child, the instinctive and quite safe tactic of his inner struggle with his nurse, the four stages of this struggle see in: Nemirovskaya, 2016, p. 51-62.

Conclusion

Thus, artistic penetration into the world of childhood in many respects made for new, non-standard decisions of Mussorgsky, being seen in different aspects of his style. They directly appeared in the compositional structure of his works, in his using of a crescendo composition, or in a deliberate confusion of form. This confusion seems to be a result of incompetence and lack of skill, but it is necessary for the creation of an image. Using any means of musical poetics, even the most difficult ones, were combined with simplicity and special subtlety that characterizes child portraits of different artists, different epochs and national cultures. For example, we can mention masterpieces of Russian artists: Borovokovsky, Levitsky, Rokotov, Bryullov, Tropinin, Venetsianov, Perov, Makovsky, etc.

Mussorgsky’s genre system was also new. It often synthesized typical intonations of folk and everyday music and specific child folklore genres: counting rhymes, teases, bywords. Quite unexpected genre mixtures appeared, that combined epic, patterns, child teases, mocking chorales, maidens’ lamentations, recitative, etc.

Maybe, the content modes that had not been used before in musical literature, are among the best innovations of the composer. Injury, gradually turning into hopeless rage, despair and anger (“The First Punishment”), mocking at an old woman by a boy, spoiled by life (“The Naughty Child”) hopelessness of a starving human being, a child soul dying of despair (“The Orphan”)...

The modes, which had been used by Mussorgsky's contemporaries, are treated by the author of the "Nursery" cycle with a deeper psychological analysis. Childish games ("Corners"), a punished child ("In the Corner"), retelling of the nurse's tales ("With the Nanny"; "With a Doll"), enjoying a quiet happiness, the depth of psychological peace on the brink of falling asleep ("Nanny and Me"), etc.

Ultimately, the images of children in the "Nursery" circle show us the world of a child in a concentrated form, as a microcosm. We see important aspects of life: care and tenderness ("With a Doll"), compassion ("The Bug"), injury and trying to preserve one's dignity ("In the Corner"), a dream, in which the funny triumphs over the fearful, and good triumphs over evil ("With the Nanny"; fairytales), concentration during a prayer ("Before Going to Sleep"), facing death ("The Bug"). This cosmos is depicted dramatically; we can say that it is presented theatrically, when every image, condition and situation is tangible.

However, the main artistic discovery of the Russian master is the astonishing depth of his understanding of child psychology, of the complex world of logic, conclusions, emotional impulses and moods, of the inner reasons of the behavior, stimuli for this or that action, the process of forming of the views and the character of the child. With accuracy of a real psychologist, he showed the spontaneity of thinking, characteristic of children, their high impulsivity, instability and unpredictability of sudden changes of their emotions and emotional outbursts "out of nothing". He showed the great amplitude of their feelings, up to a violent anarchy, not restricted by the inhibitory centers of the brain; up to the desperation of the world that is breaking down in a child's mind.

Not only did Mussorgsky present extreme poles of the inner conditions of a small human being, he also showed the microcosm of adult passions in a child soul; he showed the deep ontological nature of any human personality with the mixture of good and evil, inherent to it.

In his music about children the composer exposed some fundamental psychological rules: some childish plays, that are not at all harmless, can signify repulsive qualities of a future adult person, and distinct aggressive character traits of an adult are often the result of a child's injury.

The basis of the author's treatment of his heroes is respect of their personalities and complete seriousness regarding their childish (and sometimes not childish) problems. The author looks at them not from the position of a kind old man or a wise elder brother, but from the position of the child, deeply understanding the child's complex psychological life.

All this makes it possible to speak about Mussorgsky as a rare phenomenon in the history of art, a composer and a child psychologist.

However, the author approaches to the studying of child psychology not as a separate topic, isolated from all other topics, but as to a separate layer of human life, that is as important, as all the other layers. Considering the world of childhood enables him to get a new understanding of general human and social problems, to see all the world through a child's soul, as if through a drop of water.

This quality marks him in the context of Russian art, for which the main stimulus of artistic research has always been not any special search for new genres, topics or heroes, but the reading of a human life as a whole. This makes



Mussorgsky close to his great contemporaries and compatriots, - Nekrassov, Turgenev, Grigorovich, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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