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# King David and the Frog

## Kralj David in žaba

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### IZVLEČEK

Prispevek raziskuje odnos med liturgičnimi in izvenliturgičnimi žanri duhovne glasbe, tako v vsakodnevni praksi kot v preteklosti. Odkriva vzporednice med rusko duhovno glasbo 18. st. in sodobno hebrejsko. Avtorica je svojo teorijo govornega jezika v glasbi uporabila za pojasnitev stilistične odprtosti izvenliturgične glasbe (podobno kot v ljudski glasbi).

### ABSTRACT

The interrelations between the liturgical and paraliturgical genres of sacred music in both live practice and in historiography are explored. Parallels are found between eighteenth-century Russian and modern Hebrew religious music. The author's theory of the vernacular in music is applied to explain the stylistic openness in paraliturgical music (as a parallel to onto-vernacular folklore).

The antinomy of sacred and profane in music ostensibly separates the two spheres clearly, and these major genres are indeed independent in their lives. Musically, however, they are far from having a black and white demarcation. There is a huge buffer zone between them where they merge and overlap, leaving little space for their pure cores. Widespread stories of contrafacta, when tunes from one side infiltrate into the other, mostly from the secular to the spiritual, reflect a vital practice, and whether they are exceptions or the rule is well worth a discussion.

It will be helpful, from the beginning, to note that religious music in many societies is subdivided into the liturgical and paraliturgical genres, which constitute its internal antinomy. Stylistically these genres usually (not always) differ. While liturgical music tends to stability, is usually canonized, and serves to symbolize its ontological essence,

paraliturgical music is stylistically open, freely interacts with popular music, and is essentially changeable. It is thus on the paraliturgical sphere, with its laws of give-and-take exchange between the sacred and the profane, that we will focus (leaving aside paraliturgical art music like masses, oratorios, passions etc.).

The reason for this choice is the striking similarity between this internal division within sacred music<sup>1</sup> and that within folklore, which has long occupied my mind. In developing a theory of the vernacular in music, I arrived at a sub-categorization of folklore, dividing it into phylo-vernacular and onto-vernacular spheres, to which I shall refer in greater detail below.<sup>22</sup> Here I just note that phylo-vernacular refers to ancient (authentic, ritualistic, basically unchangeable) folklore, and onto-vernacular refers to its changeable (urbanized, influenced by popular genres) part, which despite its massivity is often overshadowed by the phylo-vernacular and has remained remarkably less popular as an object of research.

The two subcategories of the two major antinomies (sacred music and folklore) match well: liturgical music is a counterpart to the phylo-vernacular folklore, and paraliturgical music is a counterpart to the onto-vernacular folklore. This paradigm offers a promising tool in the present approach to paraliturgical music. However, before I proceed with generalizations, I shall present and analyse some historiographical episodes from the Russian musical culture in order to justify the necessity for the above qualifications.

## Tchaikovsky's disappointments

Tchaikovsky, in the 1870s, experienced two disappointments in relation to Russian national music legacy. The first was associated with Ukrainian ("Little Russian" as it was referred to in the nineteenth century) folklore. Preparing for his first trip to Kamenka where the estate of his sister was located, he anticipated hearing and collecting a treasury of folk songs. Instead, what he found was far below his expectations:

*He had heard so much of the beauty of the Little Russian folk-songs, and hoped to amass material for his future compositions. This was not to be. The songs he heard seemed to him artificial and retouched, and by no means equal in beauty or originality to the folk melodies of Great Russia. He only wrote down one song while at Kamenka – a tune sung daily by the women who worked in the garden. He first used this melody in a string quartet, which he began to compose in the autumn, but afterwards changed it into the Scherzo à la russe for pianoforte, Op. 1 No. 1.<sup>3</sup>*

1 While the term "sacred music" sometimes implies religious music outside the liturgy, which is in fact paraliturgical, I use here the words "religious" and "sacred" as synonyms embracing both liturgical and paraliturgical genres.

2 Among the articles on this topic see my "Conceptualizing the Vernacular in Music", *Garment and Core: Jews and their Musical Experiences*, eds. E. Avitsur, M. Ritzarev, E. Seroussi (Bar-Ilan University Press, 2012), 31–40; "Between the Field and the Salon", *A Network of Significations: texts on music semiotics in honor of Raymond Monelle*, ed. by Esti Sheinberg (Ashgate, 2012), 35–45; "A Singing Peasant: An Historical Look at National Identity in Russian Music", in *Min-ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online*. [http://www.biu.ac.il/HU/mu/min-ad/07-08/Ritzarev-A\\_Singing.pdf](http://www.biu.ac.il/HU/mu/min-ad/07-08/Ritzarev-A_Singing.pdf), ed. by Adena Portowitz; "The Augmented Second, Chagall's Silhouettes and the Six-Pointed Star", in *Musica Judaica*, vol. XVIII, 5766 (2005–2006): 43–69.

3 Modest Tchaikovsky, *Life and Letters of Peter Tchaikovsky* by Modeste Tchaikovsky edited from Russian with an Introduction by Rosa Newmarch. (London-New York, 1904; reprint University Press of Pacific, 2004), 59.

Tchaikovsky's second disappointment related to Russian sacred music. He was playing with the idea of composing a liturgy and, naturally, he compared the style he envisioned with that of two of the classics of Russian spiritual music – the eighteenth-century composers Maxim Berezovsky (1742-1777) and Dmitry Bortniansky (1751-1825). Their music, however, did not correspond to his idea of what Russian sacred music should be. He wrote: "I recognize some merits in Bortniansky, Berezovsky and so on, but how little their music harmonizes with the Byzantine style of architecture and icons, with the entire tone of the Orthodox service!"<sup>4</sup>

The composer was thus upset by the non-original sources of two basic elements of the national culture: folklore and chant. These were the two main symbols that constituted the *sanctum sanctorum* of "Russianness." At least so Tchaikovsky might have thought, influenced by Russian nationalism of the 1860s.

The composer-folklore relations in Russian culture have been widely discussed, and I focus here on the historiographical aspect of understanding Russian religious music. (Tchaikovsky is just a point of departure.)

## Where is Russian paraliturgical music?

Tchaikovsky approached eighteenth-century Russian religious music according to the standards of his own time. Hence, his opinion as noted above was derived from a web of misunderstandings. First, he did not know that Dmitry Bortniansky, who had headed the Court Capella from 1796-1825, wrote his music not during that period, as had been considered until recently, but much earlier, mainly in the 1770-80s.<sup>5</sup> Second, most of Bortniansky's music was paraliturgical, and it is thus only natural that it featured an early classical style. Third, the secular spirit of the Enlightenment era at Catherine II's Imperial court was so strong that it created preconditions for the new style of liturgy. A new corpus of liturgical music composed in the gallant style had been generated, and from then on it existed alongside the canonical plainchant. Fourth, this unusual proliferation and secularization of religious music in eighteenth-century Russia provided a certain compensation for educated society, which, having become familiar with contemporary Western music and highly enjoying it, realized how sadly undeveloped their own national secular music was.<sup>6</sup>

Tchaikovsky's (like his contemporaries') idea of the relatively recent past of Russian religious music, therefore, was totally wrong. This, however, was only part of the matter. The other part was that his idea of the real state of affairs in his time was that of an insider

4 P. Tchaikovsky, letter to N.F. von Meck. Kamenka, 30 April 1878. In Polina Vaydman, ed., *PI. Chaikovskiy – N.F. fon Mekk, Perepiska*, in four volumes: 1876-90. Tchaikovsky's State Memorial Museum in Klin, Tchaikovsky Academic-Editorial Board, vol. 2 (Chelyabinsk: Music Production International, 2010), 170.

5 Marina Ritzarev, *Kompozitor Bortniansky* (in Russian, Leningrad: Muzyka, 1979); *Eighteenth-Century Russian Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 159.

6 The reasons for the belated development of secular instrumental music in Russia were mainly associated with Orthodoxy's prohibition of instrumental music in the church and the persecution of Russian minstrels (*skomorokhi*) who were the main presenters of instrumental music. Russian paraliturgical music, on the contrary, had a huge repertoire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The most popular genres were popular songs on psalm texts – *kanty* and *psalmy*, and highly developed polyphonic motets – the so-called *partes concerti* or – later – simply *concerti*.

who could not envision it from within a broader context. In view of the current complete picture, the situation in regard to religious music was quite strange, to put it mildly.

The fact of the matter is that from the beginning of the nineteenth century (Alexander I's reign) and onwards, two crucial changes took place in Russian social life. First, Russian secular genres now included the widely available instrumental music. A fashionable religious repertoire, that served once as their surrogate was no longer needed. Second, whereas in the eighteenth century state ceremonies were accompanied by paraliturgical music, the nineteenth century developed a secular official music and, consequently, the ceremonial function of the old pieces became irrelevant. Third, the generally reactionary mood that defined Alexander I's rule after the Vienna Congress affected the religious style in general. The aging Bortniansky had to revise his works and to reduce elements of the eighteenth-century gallant style. Further into the nineteenth century, the relations between State and Church changed in such a way that the church service became more ascetic in style, while the synod censorship became very strict, forbidding the performance of Orthodox paraliturgical music in concerts and sometimes not even endorsing for publication the eighteenth-century paraliturgical music by Bortniansky, Berezovsky, and their contemporaries, which was too Italianated for its taste. Tchaikovsky's relation to these composers was, thus, formed by the prevailing ideology of his time and little differed from that of the Holy Synod's censors. Finally, the ban on the appearance of Christ's image on the theatre stage on the one hand, and the still existing prohibition against musical instruments in church on the other hand, made oratorical music on biblical themes decidedly impossible, leaving Russian composers to envy their West-European counterparts. What arises from all the above circumstances was that, in nineteenth-century Russia, paraliturgical music ceased to exist and became erased from the cultural memory of nineteenth-century Russian society, having been substituted by other values.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, not knowing either the history or the full legacy of Russian religious music, and not being aware of State-Church policies in the religious sphere, Russian composers were unable to analyse the situation and could only take their reality for granted, being unable to introduce any changes.

## Nationalism and religious music

What decisively contributed to the nineteenth-century Russian composers' estrangement from Berezovsky, Bortniansky, and their contemporaries, was nationalism in its narrow sense, based on a lack of historical knowledge. People knew that both Berezovsky and Bortniansky had studied in Italy, and hence perceived them as musical foreigners. Although their beloved Mozart, Gluck, Handel, and no less beloved Glinka, had studied in Italy too, this disturbed the public less. Mythologized figures were (and perhaps still are) somewhat immune to nationalistic extra-musical prejudices.

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<sup>7</sup> Although the repertoire survived in Count Sheremeteff's cappella as a relict of the old tradition, it did not change the general state of affairs. See more in detail on the problem of nineteenth-century Russian paraliturgical music in my *Tchaikovsky's Pathétique and Russian Culture* (Ashgate, 2014).

There were thus at least three misunderstandings working together against the sacred music of eighteenth-century composers – mostly that of Bortniansky and Berezovsky.<sup>8</sup> The first concerned the nature of the genre in which they mostly worked: their paraliturgical music was misinterpreted as liturgical, and their liturgical music was not understood in its cultural context. The second misunderstanding related to the common-practice idiom of the eighteenth century. It is true that Berezovsky's and Bortniansky's music was essentially Italian, but there was little music in the eighteenth century that would not sound Italian, be it by Mozart, Mysliveček, or J. C. Bach. The third misunderstanding was due to historical-aesthetic inaccuracy. Tchaikovsky should have compared eighteenth-century religious music with the elegant eighteenth-century church architecture and devotional painting, both of which were Italianated to the same extent as the repertoire of the contemporary musicians. If the composer took medieval icons as a model of authenticity, he should have looked at medieval Russian chant, which, alas, was only just beginning to be studied.

### In search of authenticity

Such disappointment in the Russian national symbols reflected a common nineteenth-century phenomenon which is still at work: an underestimation of two vast entities in which dynamically changeable music exists – that of what Tchaikovsky called the “artificial,” “re-touched” part of folklore, and that of paraliturgical music. Without going too deeply into historiography, we can summarize that the search for authenticity in sacred music – in different cultures – is very similar to that in folklore. In both genres the cultural ideal lies in the ancient/original/unchangeable or, in other words, it has an ontological foundation. Anything that introduces new music realities is often ignored or reproached as cultural waste, but rarely accepted as value, studied, and respected. As Judith R. Cohen notes: “The traditional repertoire, [is] generally favored by scholars over more recently developed types.”<sup>9</sup> This state of affairs seems unacceptable to me. If professional musicians do not like such music because of its “non-authenticity,” this does not mean that this repertoire is not vernacular for the ordinary folk. Why then should it be less valuable, less “authentic”? Can one be sure that what is considered today as “authentic” was always such, and had not at one time been borrowed from another culture or another genre? When talking about a liturgical corpus as canonized praxis, we rarely ask ourselves *when* it was canonized: When did it emerge, or at some indefinite time later? Here I switch to the issue of the complexity of the vernacular.

8 Contrary to the Russians, Berlioz, who happened to listen to Bortniansky's music during his visit to Russia, was deeply impressed. See Hector Berlioz, *Evenings with the Orchestra*, trans. and ed., with Introduction by Jacques Barzun at the request of the Berlioz Society (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), 238–40.

9 Judith R. Cohen, “‘Ya Salió de la Mar’: Judeo-Spanish Wedding Songs among Moroccan Jews in Canada”, in Ellen Koskoff, ed., *Women and Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 56. The same holds true in Renaissance studies. As Maria Rika Maniates notes in her *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture, 1530-1630*, “the situation with paraliturgical music, as always, is somewhat more fluid. Because musical innovations are associated with unruly attitudes prevalent in secular music, ultraconservative and mildly progressive thought naturally gravitates to sacred music. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1979, 489).

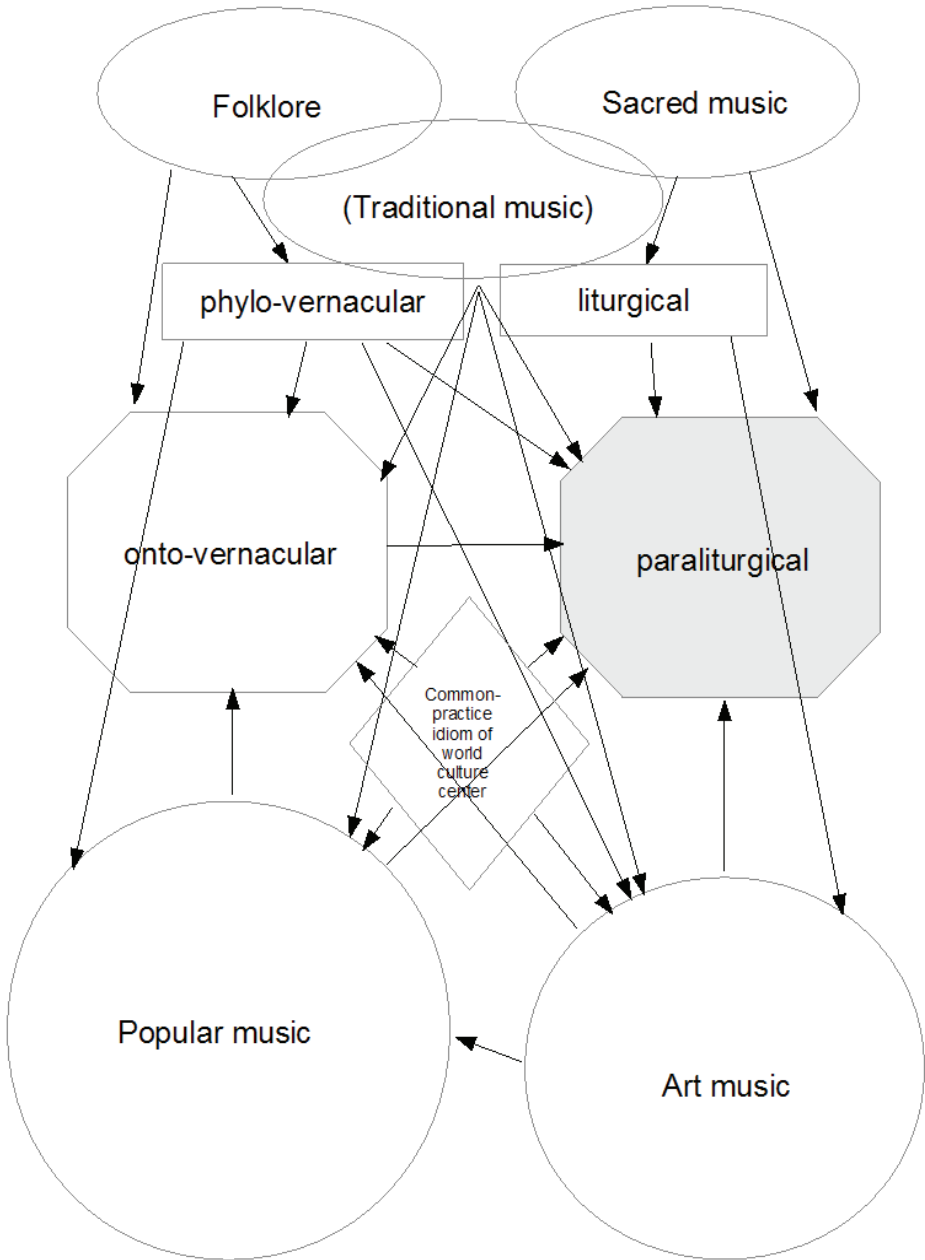
Vernacular is a relative concept, being relevant to the environment in which an individual develops. As environments differ, hence I suggest that “vernacular” needs sub-categorization. There are groups of people who mostly maintain a tribal or closed-community life, whose music is attached to ritual, folkways, language, and landscape, and its performers and audience comprise an inseparable and syncretic whole. Their repertoire changes very slowly if at all, strongly resisting external influences. It is very stable, by definition, and of the same nature as liturgical chant, a canon. I call this kind of music *phylo-vernacular*. “Phylo” is taken from *phylogenesis* in the sense of a basic genetic code inherited and passed on by each generation in turn.

In contrast, there are, and they are immeasurably more, open societies where music is detached from ritual, language and landscape, and its performers are often separated from the audience. It is influenced by and subject to fashion. It is changeable by definition. I call this repertoire *onto-vernacular*, derived from *ontogenesis*, which refers to features acquired by some being during its lifetime as a result of adaptation to the environment. It is neither popular music, although it possesses some of its properties, nor is it “authentic folklore,” although it may sometimes seem to exist as such. It is a kind of urbanized folklore circulating between the canonized corpus and popular music, and nourished by both. It presents a vibrant laboratory, in which give-and-take processes are always active. The vernacular thus embraces both stable and changeable layers of folklore.

It is no wonder that the phylo-vernacular core is usually recognized as the most precious element of national cultures. Such a view is directly associated with the ethos of agrarianism, cultivated through many generations, societies, and cultures since Antiquity (John Lock and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are only milestones). It is generally perceived as a social environment for human beings, in which people of the land constitute an ideal self-sufficient society and possess such high moral qualities as prudence, courage, humanity, and so on. The antithesis to this is, of course, an urban society that corrupts the human soul, and hence is traditionally demonized. This antinomy is embedded in educated society so deeply that it inevitably casts its shadow on the perception of folklore and religious music and it determines the clear preference for “authentic” sources.

## Defending paraliturgical music

As mentioned above, if we compare correlations between phylo- and onto-vernacular folklore and between liturgical chant and paraliturgical music, we see a basic similarity of these antinomies. Chant is very much like phylo-vernacular folklore in its stability, which is hardly surprising considering their connection with ritual; while paraliturgical music shares all the main properties with onto-vernacular folklore. As can be seen in Example 1, which reflects the interaction of major genres, paraliturgical music is an immense pool in which various styles of the epoch are collected and reflected. They are invariably based on the popular common-practice idiom of the world’s cultural centre during any particular epoch, and they are influenced by other genres more than any of them.



Example 1: Interaction of major genres as give-and-take process.

The establishment of any paraliturgical repertoire is a spontaneous process, which, if not restricted, occurs similarly in different countries, religions, and epochs. People sing spiritual texts to whatever tunes they like from their soundscape, irrespective of their generic, ethnic, social, confessional, gender, or whatever other kind of affiliation. Many of the restrictions pertaining to the liturgical context are lifted. Whereas, for example, women singing and the use of instruments are forbidden in the liturgy, they are permissible in the paraliturgical genre. Judith R. Cohen describes such a case in a Canadian community of Moroccan Jews in the 1990s,<sup>10</sup> which vividly resembles the ways of existence of Bortniansky's pieces.

The young Bortniansky composed both paraliturgical and liturgical pieces in a style as openly pleasurable as the female fashion of the time. Their tunes were sisters to popular songs and based on minuet and other dance rhythms. Even his liturgical pieces, amazingly, existed in a paraliturgical way. They were highly fashionable, advertised and published for domestic music-making alongside his French romance "Dans le verger de Cythère"; they circulated with Russian Orthodox and Latin (!) texts,<sup>11</sup> were arranged for clavicembalo, as well as for vocal ensemble, and could be so embellished with fioritures that their melodic outline was hardly distinguishable. It is probable that Bortniansky's reputation was saved in the eyes of nineteenth-century composers by their unawareness of such "sacrilege" as that of his youthful pranks in a frivolous era.

Such a stylistic shift to secularization of the liturgy can only be possible, however, if and when the paraliturgical drive is so strong that it begins to influence the stronghold of the liturgical service. The example of the late eighteenth-century Russian liturgical music did not remain a unique phenomenon. A similar trend can be recognized in modern Jewish music. As Philipp V. Bohlman writes:

*Modern liturgical traditions increasingly opened themselves to external influences, such as the variants of the same song appearing in the nineteenth-century anthologies of cantorial music... In the course of modernity it was necessary for musical leadership in the liturgy to expand, with soloists, chorus, and instruments enriching the texture of worship—and raising new anxieties about what Jewish music might or might not be.<sup>12</sup>*

Lorraine S. Brugh depicts an even more dramatic range of changes in the modern American church services. Studying the repertoire of the three congregations in and around Chicago (Fourth Presbyterian Church, Holy Name Cathedral of Chicago's Roman Catholic archdiocesan centre, and Valparaiso University's Lutheran Chapel of the Resurrection), she found the following:

*Borrowing from each other's traditions was common to all three services. The Presbyterians were singing a hymn with Roman Catholic origins: The tune originated in a 1631*

10 Cohen, "'Ya Salió de la Mar': ...", 55.

11 Manuscripts of this kind can be found in Boston University (USA): Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, box 5, folder 5.

12 Philip V. Bohlman, *Jewish Music and Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), xxv (with the reference to Heidi Zimmermann, *Tora und Shira: Untersuchungen zur Musikauffassung des rabbinischen Judentums*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2000: passim, but esp. 91–108).



*German hymnal, the Gross Katolisch Gesangbuch (The Large Catholic Hymnal). The Catholics were listening to a seventeenth-century Lutheran text and tune arranged by a twentieth-century German Lutheran. The Lutherans sang a hymn from the Sunday School Movement, an evangelical nineteenth-century North American revivalist movement. Each of these hymns is still sung in its tradition of origin as well, adding to the multiplicity of each hymn's use.*

While this does point to a common ecumenical practice among major North American church bodies, it also raises questions about what it is that church bodies are holding on to as their own traditions. Are Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, and Lutherans also singing their own traditions' sacred song? Another look around those worship services shows that, in each of these three cases, indeed they are.

The author concludes:

*Taken together, these three worship experiences show similar tendencies in using music of their own tradition while borrowing freely from other church bodies. They each have their own traditions, draw on them deeply, yet also cross into other traditions to expand their own musical corpus or canon. Looking into these services shows that all of them are drawing their musical materials from multiple musical canons.<sup>13</sup>*

Unarguably, paraliturgical experiences are more attractive to people than liturgical ones, because they feel 'modern', social, free from censorship, and their spiritual expression is more personal and sincere than within a canonized framework. Hence, the paraliturgical sphere is stronger than the liturgical; it does not need canonization and preservation; and in the interaction between the two, it is usually the paraliturgical that influences the liturgy and causes it to change from time to time.

The paraliturgical repertoire is eclectic in its sources. While Bortniansky used motives of the minuet, Ukrainian folk song, Italian opera seria, French romance and so on, the community of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn or Mexico City incorporate tunes from Arab folklore, Beethoven, and Broadway.<sup>14</sup>

There are many spheres of peoples' activity in the traditional arts, crafts, and skills like performance / interpretations of the old music repertoire, or cuisine, in which purists struggle for authenticity, often applying their demands (criteria) to the wrong genres. In addition, there is a widespread opinion that all "corruption" or deviation from the canon is usually considered as something entirely new. I would argue, however, that today's canon could once well have been a fashionable novelty or even an unacceptable daring attempt. Lorraine S. Brugh rightly perceives the twenty-first-century rejuvenation of American hymnology as a crisis of canon, but this is a natural crisis like those accompanying different stages of human life: infant, toddler, five-year old, adolescent, quarterlife, midlife etc. Due to such crises today's hymnology differs from the medieval

13 Lorraine S. Brugh, "The Canon within the Canon: Sacred Song and Liturgical Music in the Twenty-First Century", in *Pastoral Music*, vol. 33, no. 2 (December 2008) (provided by ProQuest LLC): 39+.

14 Kay Kaufman Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down: Song and Remembrance among Syrian Jews* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), 115.

one. Someday it too will be canonized, just as the two-and-a-half-century-old Bortniansky's pieces are now canonized.

As in typical Russian "comparative" anecdotes, which must contain at least three competing protagonists, one Russian, another (one or more) – foreign, and the last – mandatorily a Jew, who usually suggests some Columbus's-egg-like solution, there is indeed a smart solution that developed in the Lubavich Hassidism HABAD as early as in the eighteenth century, by Bortniansky's contemporary, the Lithuanian Rabbi Schneur Zalman (1745-1813).

As can be understood from his doctrine, while borrowings for paraliturgical music are taken for granted, they must nonetheless undergo a procedure of purification. First, the tune as phenomenon is elevated into some cosmic dimension that makes it ownerless. No matter who composed it (or thinks that he did), or played or sang it, it belongs to nobody. Hence it cannot be compromised by any inappropriate origin (generic, ethnic, or social). If the tune is emotionally expressive, it is good for a spiritual experience. It receives a spiritual text and after being performed in the presence of a rabbi, it becomes initiated into the corpus of Hasidic *nigunim* [melodies]. There is a developed argumentation, including philosophical paradigms, stories metaphorizing the process of tune's absorption and so on. As Ellen Koskoff summarizes:

*Lubavitchers believe that one of the most effective vehicles for achieving devekuth [an ecstatic experience during which the Hasid receives divine knowledge] is through the vocal performance of specific melodies (nigunim, sing. nigun) in correct social/religious contexts. The term nigun signifies any paraliturgical or non-liturgical melody performed by Lubavitchers on a variety of occasions, including farbrengen (gatherings), weddings, Sabbath meals, certain joyous holidays, such as Simhat Torah, and often during individual moments of prayer and contemplation... Nigunim can be either originally composed by a member of this group or brought into the repertoire by the traditional practice of borrowing and subsequent textual change...*

*Lubavitchers see music, in general, as existing at a both higher and deeper spiritual plane than words, so theoretically, any melody can be used as a vehicle for spiritual communication. Music not composed by a Lubavitcher, however, may convey an improper intention through its "mundane" text or its association with the non-religious world. Such a melody, perceived as containing trapped properties of simhah and hitlahavut, though, can be adopted and "freed" from its mundane setting, thus preventing its harmful influences from having an effect on the performer or listener. Further, its composer, presumably a non-Lubavitcher, is also elevated to a more appropriate spiritual level by losing his/her association to the music. Although this sort of appropriation is a general compositional practice among many Jewish groups, it has especial value in Lubavitcher life...<sup>15</sup>*

15 Ellen Koskoff, "The Sound of a Woman's Voice: Gender and Music in a New York Hasidic Community", in Ellen Koskoff, ed., *Women and Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 214; for more detail see also Ellen Koskoff, *The Concept of Nigun Among Lubavitcher Hasidim in the United States* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1976).

## Whose privilege is it to praise the Lord?

I titled my paper “King David and the Frog” according to one of the exegetical legends of the Bible (the collection is called *Yalkut Shimoni*).

*Our sages of blessed memory said that when King David completed the Book of Psalms, he had a feeling of self-satisfaction. He said before The Holy One Blessed Be He, “Is there any creation in Your world that says songs and praises more than I do?” That same hour, a frog appeared to him, and said to him: “David! Don’t be complacent, for I say songs and praises more than you do. Not only that, but three thousand parables are said about every sonnet that I recite, for it is said (Kings I 5:12), “And he spoke three thousand parables and his songs were one-thousand and five.”<sup>16</sup>*

I see here an allegory of liturgical and paraliturgical music. King David’s psalms, by right of their author’s authority, are a canon for the expression of the religious feeling of the community. The Frog, if not a “religious anarchist,” is at least not burdened by the King’s responsibilities, and so proclaims more songs and praises, and this is true: the paraliturgical repertoire is always much broader than the liturgical.

It is not by chance that liturgical and paraliturgical genres have coexisted for centuries, if not longer. The canonized prayer as an element of everyday life gives people a sense of stability, so necessary for moral survival. Sometimes the slightest deviation from the canon makes people feel as if the ground is slipping from under their feet. The updating and unification of the liturgical corpus undertaken in seventeenth-century Russia was one of the strong contributing factors to the Split (*Raskol*) – one of the most tragic episodes in Russian history, when the Old Believers left official society and fled to the unpopulated far reaches or self-immolated by fire in protest. The canon, nevertheless, does not prevent people from expressing their religious feelings in a non-canonical and individual manner. The Frog challenged the King and proclaimed the right of every creature to praise the Almighty in its own way.

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<sup>16</sup> Translation by Rabby Lazer Brody, [http://www.breslev.co.il/articles/family/breslev\\_kids/king\\_david\\_and\\_the\\_frog.aspx?id=11643&language=english](http://www.breslev.co.il/articles/family/breslev_kids/king_david_and_the_frog.aspx?id=11643&language=english). Accessed October 14, 2013.

## POVZETEK

Članek se osredotoča na protislovnost med dvema vrstama duhovne glasbe: liturgično in izvenliturgično. Čeprav se je ločnica izoblikovala v 19. st., je ostala prisotna vse do danes. Danes, ko je vsesplošno sprejeta, lažje opazimo omejitve mislecev 19. st., ki so izvenliturgično glasbo presojali z enakimi merili kot liturgično. Žanra se namreč bistveno razlikujeta, zavedanje o tem pa nam omogoča prevrednotenje izvenliturgične glasbe. Medtem ko liturgična glasba teži k nespremenljivosti, se upira vplivom od zunaj in stilističnim novostim, je izvenliturgična glasba odprta za vtise živega zvočnega sveta svojega časa in se zato spreminja iz roda v rod.

Ta ključna razlika vzpostavlja podobnost med nasprotjema "liturgično" proti "izvenliturgično" in "avtentično" proti "popačeno" (ali urbanizirano) ljudsko izročilo. Tudi slednje je izpostavljeno podcenjevanju, kakršno je značilno za izvenliturgično glasbo, in vedno znova potrebuje kulturno in estetsko "opravičilo".

Ko opazujem razliko v vlogi "avtentičnega" in "urbaniziranega" ljudskega izročila, predlagam razdelitev pojma "ljudskega" (ang. *vernacular*) v dva diferencirana koncepta: rodovno-ljudski (ang. *phylo-vernacular*) in bitno-ljudski (ang. *onto-vernacular*), skladno s pojmom filogeneza

oz. ontogeneza. Rodovno-ljudsko zajema stalni (počasno spreminjajoči se) korpus glasbe (*plemenski* v terminologiji Bruna Nettla), ki je povezan s krajevnim obredjem, jezikom in pokrajino ter ga ohranja več generacij. Pri njegovem izvajanju ni delitve na izvajalce in občinstvo. Bitno-ljudski pa je ločen od obredja in hitro vsrkava vplive iz splošno znane sodobne prakse. Izvajalec se loči od poslušalca, ki postane pasivni spremljevalec dogajanja. Podeželsko prebivalstvo odhaja v mesta, tako da rodovno-ljudski repertoar postaja bitno-ljudski. So pa tudi primeri obratne poti, ko migrira urbano prebivalstvo in oblikuje zaprte skupnosti. Tu lahko nekdanji bitno-ljudski repertoar v dveh ali treh generacijah postane rodovno-ljudski.

Če primerjamo izvenliturgično in urbanizirano ljudsko glasbo, lahko opazimo podobnosti v vlogi in dinamiki njune spreminljivosti. Njuna kategorizacija v bitno-ljudsko ter s tem njuna upravičenost, nam pomagata sprejeti oba žanra kot enako pomembna in vredna. Pouči nas lahko svetopisemska žaba, ki je okarala kralja Davida, ko se je hvalil s svojimi čudovitimi psalmi: "David! Ne bodi samovšečen, saj jaz pogosteje prepevam pesmi in hvalnice, kot ti." Če upoštevanost sporočilo hebrejske prisposodbe, morajo torej raziskovalci in ustvarjalci spoštovati vsako zvrst glasbe, ki odraža katerokoli plat človeške duše.

*Prevod naslova, izvlečka in povzetka Aleš Nagode*