

Remarks on the Abstract of the Dissertation
“The Theme of the Holocaust in the Artistic Music of Belarus, Ukraine, Russia”
by Inessa Dvuzhlnaya
submitted for the Doctor of Art History (in musicology)
Specialty 17.00.02 – Musical Art

I have known about Inessa Dvuzhlnaya’s research on Holocaust memorialization in music since 2011, when I attended the international conference “Partituren der Erinnerung. Der Holocaust in der Musik” (Scores of Commemoration: The Holocaust in Music) at the Wiesenthal Zentrum, Vienna. Dvuzhlnaya’s conference presentation, an overview of musical works by composers from the USSR and the post-Soviet space, revealed a repertoire previously unknown to me and (I suspect) a majority of the area specialists in attendance. Dvuzhlnaya has since expanded on her research, producing dozens of articles, as well as two important monographs (*Tema Holocausta v akademicheskoi muzyka*, 2016; *Pamyat o Holocaust v akademicheskoi muzyka Belarus, Ukraina, Rossii*, 2022). Indeed, the main content of the Abstract of the Dissertation is reflected in the latter publication, in which Dvuzhlnaya reaches beyond musicological methods to take a multidisciplinary approach to her topic, drawing on philosophical considerations and works of literary fiction to illuminate the complexity of Holocaust history and demonstrate its impact on artists who went on to create “musical memorials.” The author thoughtfully donated a copy of the first monograph to our Museum library, and I have often consulted its contents when preparing for various commemorative events.

The Abstract of the Dissertation examines the methodologies employed in researching and analyzing the musical works under discussion. Dvuzhlnaya argues that while Holocaust historiography and Jewish victimization were officially disregarded in the USSR, important research on the theme of “the Holocaust in music” was being conducted elsewhere. She identifies two dominant perspectives in musicological studies of the topic. The first focuses on the repertoire of music created and performed in the ghettos and concentration camps (sometimes also including Prisoner-of-War camps) in German-held territories during WWII. This type of research, Dvuzhlnaya emphasizes, was for many years virtually absent from the published works of Eastern European scholars. Dvuzhlnaya’s second perspective focuses specifically on musical reflections on the Holocaust, and how this repertoire functions as a mode of artistic commemoration. As she stresses, this second perspective indeed takes into account creative works by certain

composers from the USSR and post-Soviet territories, noting, for example, scholarly publications that examine commemorative motifs in the oeuvre of Shostakovich or Weinberg. However, her explorations into the topic revealed significant lacunae in this field of research. Hence, her extensive, systematic research, amounting to a mission to fill in this gap in the historiographical record of musical memorialization, and the revelatory findings that resulted from these efforts. The fruits of Dvuzhlnaya's research are fully reflected in the Abstract.

Above all, Inessa Dvuzhlnaya examines the Holocaust theme both in its general cultural context, and within specific musical compositions, pointing out characteristic features of commemorative works, and highlighting individual compositional approaches to the subject matter. I found the musical analysis to be a particularly strong component of the book and Dissertation Abstract, and especially valued Dvuzhlnaya's identification of elements of Hebrew synagogue chant, Yiddish folk song and klezmer music in memorial-themed art compositions.

In sum: the corpus of works chosen for this study encompasses over thirty compositions, representing diverse traditions and genres. Inessa Dvuzhlnaya's contextual approach to the topic went beyond musical analysis (although it incorporated this admirably, as well) to embrace philosophical interpretations, the examination of Holocaust-era documentation, and the close reading of composer memoirs and dedicatory inscriptions. This blending of the personal and the academic greatly enhances the overall impression of the study.

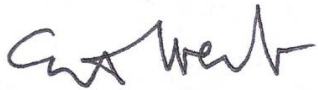
The dissertation "The Theme of the Holocaust in the Artistic Music of Belarus, Ukraine, Russia" is a holistic scientific study that both defines and elucidates its topic. It has made a valuable contribution to our still emerging field of Holocaust-related musicology; in my opinion its author, Inessa Dvuzhlnaya, fully deserves the award of the scientific title –Doctor of Art History (in musicology) in the specialty 17.00.02 – Musical Art.

The Dissertation Defense Council may award a degree for the following research positions:

- 1) For making a serious contribution to the world of musicology through the study of a complex topic such as the music-material of composers from Belarus, Ukraine, Russia. Works by these composers can be heard at memorial events in Europe, the USA and Canada (as evidenced by the projects of the Museum in Washington); they stand as expressions of a civic position to preserve the memory of the Holocaust.

2) For creating an original approach to the study of musical content where allusions to Ashkenazic Jewish musical culture are reflected through different modes of understanding (e.g., general artistic, philosophical, musical);

3) For promoting the works of composers who studied at the Belarusian Conservatory under Professors Vasily Zolotarev and Alexei Klumov. These composers include the celebrated Mechislav (Mieczysław) Weinberg, with whom I personally corresponded in the 1990s, as well as Eddie Tyrmand, Lev Abeliovich, and Heinrich Wagner. Thanks to the scholarly articles of the author of the Dissertation, these names are receiving a broad and positive response.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bret Werb', with a stylized, cursive script.

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