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## REPORT

### **on the Author's Abstract of the dissertation by Inessa Fyodorovna Dvuzhlnaya, 'The Theme of the Holocaust in Belorussian, Ukrainian and Russian Concert Music', presented for the degree of PhD in the research area 17.00.02.**

I am happy to supply the following report on the Author's Abstract by Inessa Fyodorovna Dvuzhlnaya concerning her PhD dissertation 'The Theme of the Holocaust in Belorussian, Ukrainian and Russian Classical Music' (Minsk, 2022). (I have chosen the adjective 'classical' as a more accurate translation of the Russian 'akademicheskiy' than 'academic', which to most English-speaking readers would imply music of a dry, elitist nature, halfway to the Soviet mis-use of the term 'formalism'.)

As the Abstract effectively summarises, the literature on the topic has concentrated on two fields: music produced in Terezin (Theresienstadt), which has been extensively covered in Western musicology, and music composed elsewhere in memory of those who perished. The latter topic is itself so vast that the author has wisely concentrated on an in-depth presentation of music concerning the Holocaust composed in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia, which comprises more than 30 concert works, some of them unpublished and here brought to scholarly attention for the first time.

The dissertation, which is richly supplied with appendices and bibliographical materials, represents the culmination of 18 years of engagement with the topic on the author's part, as the impressive list of approximately 60 of her publications and public contributions testifies. She has presented her research at numerous international conferences, including several in which I myself have participated. As part of my own research I have read her book *The Theme of Holocaust in Concert Music*, Grodno, 2016, along with a number of her articles touching on the music of Mieczysław Weinberg. One of her most recent articles, 'Mechislav Weinberg in Minsk', is in preparation for a volume I am editing for the British Academy, London.

The dissertation's aims and questions are set out lucidly on p. 6 and elaborated logically in the remainder of the Abstract (see below). The definitions and classifications are clear and effective. However, I wonder if they sufficiently engage with Western scholarship and philosophical thought on the topic, not least with fundamental objections to the aesthetic appropriateness of presenting the topic in artistic form. Although music by Schoenberg, Nono and Stockhausen is referenced further on in the Abstract, the contributions of those composers are only the tip of an iceberg. I would hope that the dissertation would evaluate such important and well-known contributions as musical works by Penderecki and philosophical writings by Adorno and others. While the originality and thoroughness of the dissertation are beyond question, I would

hope that the author could elaborate a little on the global context, drawing comparisons with art-works and trends of thought from beyond the three countries selected for study.

The round-up of literature identifies two phases, dividing around 2011, when East European scholars began to show rapidly increasing interest. Full account is given of the socio-political circumstances within which musical Holocaust-related works were composed, with the appearance of Shostakovich/Yevtushenko's *Babi Yar* symphony taken as a watershed and Gnesin's Piano Trio and Weinberg's first volume of Jewish Songs (1943) cited as the earliest examples. Works commemorating individuals such as Anne Frank and Janusz Korczak are analysed, alongside those dedicated to the broader Jewish community. The author's far-reaching researches enable her to draw well-founded conclusions regarding the fluctuations in both the number and content of Holocaust-related compositions in her chosen countries from 1943 to the present day, with separate phases identified from 1961 and 1991.

The author traces the historical roots of Jewish music in the work of composers studied and distinguishes effectively between the various 'existential' principles (e.g. hope, pain, isolation, freedom) embodied in those works. The structure of the main commentary chapter – Chapter 3 – breaks the topic down into primary geographical sites (*Babi Yar*, Zmiyovskaya balka, Warsaw Ghetto, Auschwitz, Terezin), modes of commemoration and their musical means of representation. Chapter 4 goes into details on stylistic elements of Jewish sacred and secular musical traditions, as referenced by composers in their commemorative works. Chapter 5 seeks musical articulation of various existential sub-topics. The dissertation strikes me as original, important, and likely to be widely read by scholars from a variety of disciplines.

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