

Materials of Conferences

**ACTIVITIES
OF MUSICAL-ETHNOGRAPHIC
COMMISSION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE
FOR MODERN RUSSIAN
ETHNOMUSICOLOGY**

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Ethnomusicology developed in collaboration with other scientific sectors involved in the study of traditional culture, such as anthropology, ethnography, in Russia in the early XX century. The synthetic nature of the Russian ethnomusicology was largely determined by the prevailing during the XIX century traditions of collection and study of folk songs. Relying on a wide area of human knowledge is reflected in the general trends emerging in related scientific fields. Ethnomusicology and ethnography are representative examples.

At the beginning of XX century these sciences:

- have studied a single set of problems (this includes, questions the historical development of folk culture, the structure of people's poetry, musical rhythm, song of variance);
- were focused on solving applied problems associated with increasing the accuracy of records and obtaining reliable material in the field of collecting;
- cover a single area of research expedition, sought to master all the new stylistically regional traditions, the search for new centers of folk art;
- studied increasingly broad layers of oral folk tradition (from the Archaic, up to the present).

Of great importance was the work of education, popularization of folk samples to a wider audience in the work of ethnographers and musicians.

The transition to the collection and study of songs from individual enthusiasts to the newly created scientific societies accomplished in Russia in the second half of the XIX century. Scientific societies carried expedition and field research, published works, have organized demonstrations of song samples from the scene.

The largest folklore center last third of the XIX century was the Ethnographic Department of the Society of Natural Sciences, Anthropology and Ethnography (OLEAiE) at the University of Moscow. This department is united around a specialists of different directions. It consists of well-known scientists – historians, anthropologists, linguists, and later they were joined by musicians. Ethnographic Department was of great importance in the development of ethnomusicology in Russia. This department was the progenitor of the Musical-ethnographic Commission (MEC). The Commission was the largest scientific center in Russia in the early XX century. Activities of MEC (1901–1917)

concentrates the most important areas of study, collection and enforcement of a folk song.

There are three main directions in the activities of the Musical-ethnographic Commission:

- research direction (study the structural features of the folk song, keeping the tradition of lighting problems, criticism of previous collectors);
- collecting direction (fixation of folk music, the use of advanced technologies such as the phonograph, photography, filming);
- educational direction (popularization of folk music, expanding audience and its involvement in the learning process).

Musical-ethnographic Commission is a scientific and educational organization. MEC was engaged in fixing the musical-ethnographic material, its study and dissemination of folk songs. Particular importance was given to the reliability and accuracy of publications of songs [4, 115].

Started recording in the collecting work was accompanied by numerous public lectures with demonstrations of phonograms and displays samples of folk music in its original form the largest members of the intelligentsia, such as L. Tolstoy [1, c. 325–326].

The emergence of the first phonograph publications («The Great-songs in the folk harmonization» by E. Lineva [2, 3], «Proceedings of the Musical-Ethnographic Commission» [5, 6]) proved the possibility of using sound recordings for scientific purposes. All this was accompanied by a wide public response.

Comparison of the Ethnographic Department OLEAiE and educated in the subsoil MEC suggests the presence of a general trend of development of ethnomusicology and related disciplines, directed towards increasing specificity studies, staging professional problems at the same time with increasing specification.

There is a continuity between editions of the Ethnographic Department OLEAiE and MEC in the study of song in close connection with the other parties of national life.

The interest in musical folklore problems increases significantly in the works in the field of ethnography. Ethnographers working on issues of application (method of musical notation) and scientific and theoretical nature (problems performing style, the study of musical perception of folk singers, issues of communication and professional folk music, etc.).

Continuity between the Ethnographic Department OLEAiE and MEC also manifested in the activities of musicians of the early XX century. They continued to use the well-established method for the study of oral folk tradition with correspondents in the field. Musicians published gatherer program,

bibliographies (for example, «Bibliography of books and articles on musical ethnography», published in the «Proceedings» IEC [5, 6], to cover a wide area of the humanities, including work on the musical folklore, history, dialects, ethnography). They wrote reviews, which were considered to become traditional ethnography questions.

At the same time, the musicians, that were part of the MEC, have developed purely musicological problems. In reviews they considered particularly meaningful song collections formed the basis of the beginning of XX century standards of ethnomusicology. They have been raised both general and more specific issues about the state of individual aspects of musical folklore of science in specialized scientific and music publications. These include questions of rhythmic and modal structure of folk music, folk and professional interaction between musical cultures, traditions of inter-ethnic cooperation.

With the advent of phonographic recording musicians have raised questions about the extent to which phonograms and notations, about the perfection of a technique of musical notation, about the need for corrective action in the course of decoding phonograms, based on rhythmic patterns, structural and modal structure of the songs.

Some works suggest the emergence in the late XIX century, the first samples of analytical notation and thus call into question the firmly entrenched in contemporary ethnomusicology opinion about the origin of this method in the middle of the XX century in connection with the works by E. Gippius.

In the activity of MEK crossed several lines. The first line is determined by the continuity in the study of musical characteristics of folk songs, by traditions, its embedded in the publications of XVIII–XIX centuries. Thoughts outstanding predecessors, such as N. Lvov, V. Odoevsky, A. Serov, P. Sokalsky, have organic implementation of the early twentieth century.

The second line is due to the continuation of the traditions of the Ethnographic Department OLEAiE, with the development of the proposals put forward by historians, ethnographers, linguists. Using the documented material and its interpretation was the impetus for the emergence of new ap-

proaches in the study of folk songs, which are characteristic of modern science.

The third line is due to the presence of multi-lateral ties between Russian and Western European ethnomusicology.

The inclusion of quickly developing domestic ethnomusicology in the context of the era led to the fact, that the Commission is like a snapshot of the diverse phenomena not only in Russia but also worldwide in its structure and working methods. All of this allows us to state on the fundamental position of MEC in the development of Russian ethnomusicology.

The multi-faceted and versatile activities of the Commission represents the result of all previous work on the collection and study of folk songs in Russian and is a synthetic character.

Assessing the activity of MEK, it should be emphasized that at the beginning of XX century folklore as a science in the modern sense is just beginning to take shape. Terminology remains undeveloped. However, the beginning of the twentieth century is replete with bright discoveries in the field of scientific thought, the methods of collecting, notation and interpretation of folk music.

At this time, the main thing was the realization of goals and objectives of ethnomusicology and as a consequence, formulation of such problems, which is still relevant to today. All this allows us to talk about succession in the study of folk music and to consider the development of the Russian ethnomusicology in a historical perspective throughout XVIII–XX centuries, as a single progressive process.

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