



Research

Music in the Life and Works of Boris Leonidovich Pasternak

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Abstract:

This article describes how the life and works of Boris Pasternak were strongly connected with music. Pasternak began his artistic career as a musician, namely a pianist and student of composition. His interest in music was contributed by his acquaintance with the composer Alexander Scriabin, who made a strong impression on the young Pasternak and inspired him to music. Pasternak devoted several chapters to Scriabin in his short prose *Safe Conduct* and *Essay in Autobiography*. A few years later, when Pasternak gave up music, his sense of the musicality of the verse remained in his poetry. Even in his prose work, we can find several passages that mention music or musicians. Pasternak uses musical examples to describe the outer and inner world of his literary heroes. This article focuses on Pasternak's prose work, especially on the novel *Doctor Zhivago* and the autobiographical works *Safe Conduct* and *Essay in Autobiography*, but also gives a very few examples from his rich poetry.

Keywords: Boris Pasternak, Doctor Zhivago, Scriabin, Musicality of the verse.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Artistic environment

The data on life and work of the Russian writer and poet Boris Leonidovich Pasternak (1890-1960) can be found in the foreword within (Pasternak, 1986). Pasternak began his artistic career as a musician. He studied composition and played the piano, but then gave up music and began to study philosophy, only then finding his calling in literature. He was born into an artistic Jewish family, where his mother was the pianist Rosa Kaufmann, a student of Anton Rubinstein, and his father was the painter Leonid Pasternak, a professor at the Moscow School of Fine Arts and a friend of Tolstoy, Rilke and Scriabin, among others. The four-year-old Pasternak had the opportunity to attend a home concert in honor of Leo Tolstoy's visit, which was performed by his mother pianist and professors cellist and violinist from the Moscow Conservatory.¹

Among many others, also the painter Levitan and the composers Rachmaninov and Scriabin visited the Pasternaks' home. So Pasternak grew up in an artistic environment and knew from an early age that he would be involved in art himself, but he did not immediately know which kind of art he would devote his life to.

After deciding to give up music, he studied philosophy in Moscow and in Germany, dropping that too and eventually graduating in law.

Pasternak wrote around five hundred poems and some prose works. He wrote his most famous work, the novel *Doctor Zhivago*, in 1955. It was published two years later in an Italian translation by the publisher Feltrinelli in Milan, as he could not publish it in his homeland. The editors of the Soviet magazine 'Novi Mir' demanded content changes, but later completely rejected them. In 1958, Pasternak was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, but he decided to refuse it due to the hostility against him in Russia.

The music for David Lean's famous film 'Doctor Zhivago' from 1965, based on the novel and later awarded five Oscars, was written by the French composer Maurice Jarre, the most famous of which is 'Lara's theme' (or 'Lara's song'), originally written for orchestra with balalaika.

1.2. Influences

Pasternak was greatly inspired by the poet Alexander Blok. He highly appreciated, among others, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetayeva and of course Russian classics, like Dostoevsky, which he also expressed with the words of Yuri Andreyevich Zhivago, the protagonist of his only novel: *"I've always liked Mayakovsky. He is a sort of continuation of Dostoevsky. Or rather, he is a Dostoevsky character writing lyrical poems - one of his young rebels, »The Raw Youth« or Hyppolite² or Raskolnikov. What an all-devouring poetic energy! And his way of saying a thing once or for all [...]"* (Pasternak, 1958, p. 149).

2. Music in Pasternak's prose

2.1. Music genres

In 1956, Pasternak wrote in his *Essay in Autobiography*: *»I have just finished my chief and most important work, the only one of which I am not ashamed and for which I take full responsibility, a novel in prose with a section in verse, Doctor Zhivago. The poems scattered over the past years of my life and collected in the present book are steps preparatory to the novel. (Pasternak 1919³, p. 119). It seems that the description of the literary creation of the protagonist, doctor Zhivago, is an autobiographical fact with which the writer marked his own artistic path: »Yura had a good mind and was an excellent writer. Ever since his schooldays he had dreamed of composing a book about life which would contain, like buried explosives, the most striking things he had so far seen and thought about. But he was too young to write such a book; instead, he wrote poetry. He was like a*

¹ He describes this event in the *Safe Conduct* and states that they probably performed Tchaikovsky's trio (Pasternak, 1980, p. 125).

² In the Slovenian translation, the comma is missing between the words Ippolit and Raskolnikov, so it looks as if Raskolnikov's name was Hypollite (he was actually Rodion). These are two different people: Ippolit Terentyev, the sick young nihilist from the novel *The Idiot*, and Rodion Raskolnikov from *Crime and Punishment*.

³ Strangely, the date quoted in the book is wrong. Pasternak had finished *Doctor Zhivago* much later (1955) and *The Essay in Autobiography* in 1957.



painter who was always making sketches for a big canvas he had in mind." (Pasternak, 1958, p. 107).

The novel *Doctor Zhivago* begins with a description of the funeral of Zhivago's mother. On it, a song 'Rest Eternal' ('Вечная память') had been sung, which the translator incorrectly put into Slovenian as 'Blagor mu, ki si spočije' (this is a grave poem of Davorin Jenko, set to the text by Fran Cegnar) and 'The souls of the righteous' ('Со духи праведных'). Maybe the translator wanted to bring those songs closer to the Slovenian environment. Even in the work *Essay in Autobiography*, where Pasternak describes how young people carried the coffin with the dead writer Tolstoy at the Astapovo station, where he died, to the train, they were singing the song 'Eternal memory'. That one is again incorrectly stated in the Slovenian translation (Pasternak, 1980, p. 151).

In the novel *Doctor Zhivago*, there is a passage where Lara dreams that she is dead, and on earth they sing the gypsy romance 'Распошёл', which Pasternak quotes with the verse 'Black eyes and white breast' ('Чёрные очи и белая грудь') and a Russian folk song 'Masha must not go to the river' ('Не велят Маше за реченьку ходит') (p. 81). The first poem is a gypsy romance of the "Kursk's nightingale", that was the famous pre-war gypsy singer Varja Panina⁴ (Fedunina, 2011, p. 48). The choice of songs or their lyrics coincide with the mental experience of the heroine. In the next chapter (Pasternak, 1958, p. 81), Pasternak writes about the "inner music" in Lara's life, which is like a kind of connection with religion: "Lara was not religious. She did not believe in ritual. But sometimes, to be able to bear life, she needed the accompaniment of an inner music. She could not always compose such a music for herself. That music was God's word of life, and it was to weep over it that she went to church." (idem). Pasternak also mentions a church psalm, which was sung in the church in Lara's presence (Pasternak, 1958, p. 82).

Two songs that were sung at the Lara's wedding with Pasha Antipov, are also mentioned. One woman sang 'The Vineyard' with the double refrain "God give you love and concord" and the song "Undo the braid, scatter the fair hair." ('Расплетайся трубчатая коса, рассыпайтесь русы волоса'. (Pasternak, 1958, p. 156). 'The Vineyard' is originally called 'Vine Blooms in the Garden' ('Виноград в саду цветет'), this is an old Russian wedding song.

Another allegedly old Russian song is mentioned in the novel, which the protagonist did not know. He thought that it was a possible to be an improvisation, when he heard it from the mouth of a folk witch who used to cast a spell on livestock. Its text is given in its entirety. (Pasternak, 1958, pp. 578-579).

Using the metaphor of water behind a dam, Pasternak artistically describes the characteristics of Russian folk songs. He says that the Russian song "is like water held back by a dam. It looks as if it were still and were no longer flowing, but in its depths it is ceaselessly rushing through the sluice gates and the stillness of its surface is deceptive. By every possible means, by repetitions and similes, the song slows down the gradual unfolding of its theme. Then at some point it suddenly reveals itself and astounds us. That is how the song's sorrowing spirit comes to expression. The song is an insane attempt to stop time by means of its words." (Pasternak, 1958, p. 578). Among the text of the novel, he also quotes part of a song sung by workers in the factories in the Urals,⁵ where Zhivago's family moved, but it is basically a miners' song: "Goodbye, main office, / Goodbye, shaft and mine. / The master's bread is stale to me / And I am sick of drinking water. / A swan is swimming past the shores, / He makes furrows in the water. / [...]" (Pasternak, 1958, p. 428). Pasternak must have heard this song during his two-year stay in the Urals before the revolution, where he worked in the administration of a military factory, and then mentioned it in his novel four decades later.

The author mentions another type of song from the Urals, namely "the indecent song about the silly old woman *Sentetiurikha*, which was well known throughout the Urals, came into her mind,

⁴ Varvara Panina inspired with her talent as well other Russian artists, such as the poet Alexander Blok and the painter Konstantin Korovin (Panina V, 2023).

⁵ Pasternak lived in the village of Vsevolodo-Vilva in the Perm region, which is said to be the prototype for Varikina from the novel. He was also a few times in Perm, which he knew very well, and this city became the prototype for the novel city of Yuriatina (Krasnov Tour Agency, 2023).



but only the first two lines could be quoted: "Sentetiurikha sold her cart / And bought a balalaika..." (Pasternak, 1958, p. 500).

Pasternak also mentions Georgian folk music in Tbilisi, in that time named Tiflis, namely the drums that beat the rhythm of the Caucasian fast dance of the lezginka⁶ and "the goat-like bleating of bagpipes,⁷ and the sound of other instruments." (Pasternak, 1919, p. 111). The writer visited Georgia twice, in 1931 and 1933, and translated Georgian poets in addition to, among others, Goethe, Heine and Shakespeare.

In relation to classical music, the writer mentions an interest in music in a family of intellectuals who were »cultivated, hospitable, and great connoisseurs and lovers of music. They often held receptions and evenings of chamber music at which piano trios, violin sonatas, and string quartets were performed.« In January 1906, they had one of their regular chamber events. »There was to be a first performance of a violin sonata by a young composer, a pupil of Taneiev's, and a trio by Tchaikovsky.« (Pasternak, 1958, p. 90) The performing pianist was César Cui's nephew. »The sonata was known to be dry, labored, and boring. The performance confirmed this belief, and the work turned out to be terribly long as well.« (Pasternak 1958, p. 93).

2.2. Descriptions of different sounds

It is interesting how Pasternak described the cries of babies in the maternity wards in purely musical terms, as if he were describing a piece of music: »"Wa, wa," yelled the babies all on one note, almost impassively, without feeling, as if it were all in the day's work. Only one voice stood out from the others. It was also yelling "wa, wa," and it did not express any more suffering than the rest, but it was deeper and seemed to shout less out of duty than with a deliberate, sullen hostility. [...] For some reason he imagined that the voice he had singled out was that of his son; perhaps it was because this particular cry had its own character and seemed to foreshadow the future personality and destiny of a particular human being; it had its own soundcoloring" (Pasternak, 1958, p. 272).

The description of sounds in the novel is sometimes associated with music. For example, this is how he describes the soundscape in the forest: "The wood echoed to the hoarse ringing of other saws; somewhere, very far away, a nightingale was trying out its voice, and at longer intervals a blackbird whistled as if blowing dust⁸ out of a flute." (Pasternak, 1958, p. 383).

In another passage of the novel, Pasternak, through the words or diary notes of Doctor Zhivago, thinks about bird song, namely the song of the nightingale, and analyzes it a bit. About nightingales, he writes that he "wondered at the difference between their song and that of all other birds, at the sudden jump, without transitions, that nature makes to the richness and uniqueness of their trills. Such variety and power and resonance! Turgenev somewhere describes these whistling, fluting modulations. There were two phrases that stood out particularly. One was a luxurious, greedily repetitive tiokh-tiokh-tiokh, in response to which the vegetation, all covered with dew, trembled with delight. The other was in two syllables, grave, imploring, an appeal or a warning: 'Wake up! Wake up!'" (Pasternak, 1958, p. 458).

2.3 Music as a metaphor

At the end of the novel, Pasternak compares the love between Zhivago and Lara to music: "Oh, what a love it was, utterly free, unique, like nothing else on earth! Their thoughts were like other people's songs." (Pasternak, 1958, p. 799). Lara and Zhivago were so coordinated, united in perfect harmony and beauty like singing.

He also describes Lara's emotional farewell to the dead Zhivago with the help of music: "And now she took her leave of him, addressing him in the direct language of everyday life. Her speech, though lively and informal, was not down-to-earth. Like the choruses and monologues of ancient tragedies, like the language of poetry or music, or any other conventional mode of expression, its logic was not rational but emotional." (Pasternak, 1958, p. 800).

⁶ Lezginka is a dance of the Lezgin people, a North Caucasian ethnic group with their own language (Wikipedia).

⁷ In the Slovene translation, the traducer left the word »bagpipes« in Russian language (»volinka«), which is not right. Etymologically, those bagpipes come from the Volyn region of Ukraine. They are made of goat skin, which is why Pasternak writes about "goat bleating".

⁸ In the sense that he has to uncork the flute and blows it. It is interesting that he associates birdsong with the flute, which is also a common phenomenon in the classical repertoire for the flute.



In the autobiographical prose work *Safe Conduct*, he also describes his unhappy love using musical terms: “*My craving for that one last farewell which would have laid waste to everything was still unassuaged. It was like a craving for a grand cadence such as might shake a great piece of music to the very roots and be strong enough to wrench it right out at last by the heave of that final harmony.*” (Pasternak, 1958, p. 207).

In the *Safe Conduct* he also describes an evening in Venice⁹ with an outdoor concert. He characterizes the fast and furious walking of female walkers: “*allegro irato, was a strange response to the black vibrancy of the firework display between the white furrows of flaming diamonds.*” (Pasternak, 1959, p. 240). Venice was full of sounds, and at night the writer was awakened by a “*guitar arpeggio*” (Pasternak, 1959, p. 241).

Pasternak uses some musical examples to describe cities and nature. This is what he writes about the German city of Marburg, where he went to study philosophy: “*And up on the hill Marburg would break into operatic light.*” (Pasternak, 1959, p. 197). He describes sounds in nature completely musically, even with the definition of an interval: “*Till morning came, the roar of the sluice waters maintained unchanged the deafening note they had assumed as night descended. At the interval of a third, the air-fending whine of the sawmills sang seconds to the bullocks at the slaughter-house. Every now and then something broke, something flared up, something snorted steam, something was overtuned. Something writhed as it drew crimsoned smoke over itself.*” (Pasternak, 1959, p. 198-199).

About Berlin, which he visited with his parents in 1906, he writes that it was full of Russians, including the late Romantic composer and pianist Vladimir Rebikov, who played his 'Christmas Tree' for acquaintances (Pasternak, 1919, p. 60). The mentioned music is essentially a 'Valzer op. 21' from the musical drama 'Christmas Tree', which at that time was being performed with great success from Berlin to Perm (website of the Mariinsky Theater).

3. Pasternak's poetry

Intensive involvement in music in his youth and great enthusiasm for musical art left a strong influence in Pasternak's poetry. This influence is most visible in the “*vocality and vocal structure of the verse*” (Vera Brnčič, afterword in: Pasternak, 1986, p. 9). Russian musicologist Mihail Kazinik wrote about Pasternak's poetry that his excellent musical knowledge contributed to the poet's musicality of verses, which in Russian poetry is comparable only to Pushkin, and with them Pasternak managed to express the musical ideas of Chopin, Beethoven and Scriabin (Kazinik, 2015, p. 504).

Pasternak himself wrote that this musicality is “*not a matter of acoustics or of harmonising vowels and consonants as such, but of relating sound to meaning*” (Pasternak, 1919, p. 68), as considered his poet colleague Andrei Beli. Beli was thinking about poetry in a rather scientific, theoretical way. He conducted a course of practical lessons in Russian classical iambic verse and “*in discussion with his students used statistics to explain its rhythmic figures and variations*” (idem).

Pasternak also described this curiosity of the poet's work in the novel *Doctor Zhivago*, where the protagonist doctor also writes poems. “*After two or three stanzas and several images by which he himself was struck, his work took possession of him and he felt the approach of what is called inspiration. At such moments the relation of the forces that determine artistic creation is, as it were, reversed. The dominant thing is no longer the state of mind the artist seeks to express but the language in which he wants to express it. Language, the home and receptacle of beauty and meaning, itself begins to think and speak for man and turns wholly into music, not in terms of sonority but in terms of the impetuosity and power of its inward flow. In the following, he writes how the poet tried different meters and found a parallel with music in his poetry: “At first he used a broad, spacious pentameter. The regularity of the rhythm, independent of the meaning and inherent in the meter itself, annoyed him by its doggerel artificiality. He gave up the pompous meter and the caesura and cut down the lines to four beats, as you cut out useless words in prose. [...] The task was now more difficult but more engaging. The result was livelier but still too verbose. He forced himself to even shorter lines. Now the words were crammed in their trimeters [...] the right words to fill the short lines came, prompted by the measure. Things scarcely named in the lines*”

⁹ Pasternak traveled to Italy, to Venice and Florence, in 1912 and wrote enthusiastically about them in the *Safe Conduct*.



evoked concrete images. He heard the horse's hoofs ringing on the surface of the poem, as you hear the ambling of a horse in one of Chopin's ballads." (Pasternak, 1958, p. 704). The poems written by the protagonist are also part of the novel. The mentioned poem, written by Zhivago during his last days in company with Lara, contains the motif of the victory of good over evil. The title of this song is 'Fairy Tale', which features a knight on a horse who kills a dragon and thus saves a girl.

Pasternak also mentions Chopin's music in several of his poems. For example, in the song 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' from the cycle Themes and Variations (1916-1922), he mentions Chopin's etudes (Pasternak, 1991, p. 65).

Pasternak compares everything sublime, such as beauty, love and poetry to music. About poetry, in the poem entitled 'Definition of Poetry', he says: "It is Figaro like hot hail hurled / From the flutes on the wet flower bed." (Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive, p. 45). He also wrote a poem entitled 'Music', in which he mentions Chopin, Wagner's 'Valkyrie' and Tchaikovsky's opera 'Paolo and Francesca'.

In the poem 'Winter Nears' Pasternak writes: "A silvered hazel October. Pewter glow since frost began. Autumn twilight, of Chekhov, Tchaikovsky, and Levitan." (Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive, p. 167). When Pasternak quotes Tchaikovsky in these verses, he has in mind his composition 'October' from the cycle 'The Seasons'. As noted by the Russian musicologist Mihail Kazinik, in this composition we find all the characteristics of Tchaikovsky, who was mostly sadly melancholic, but also had joyful moments (Kazinik, 2020).

Among Pasternak's poems, there are several that mention music and musicians or have a purely musical title (for example: 'Paganini's Violin', "Beethoven's bust" in the poem 'Definition of the Creative Art', Tchaikovsky in 'Winter Nears', or a poem that mentions Brahms: 'Sometime at a concert hall, in recollection': "Sometime at a concert hall, in recollection, / A Brahms intermezzo will wound me-I'll start" ('Годами когда-нибудь в зале концертной / Мне Брамса сыграют').

As noted by the Russian politician, literary critic and translator Mark Slonim, Pasternak's poetry can only be roughly translated into English due to its complexity and specific combination of image, music and meaning (quoted from the 'Poetry Foundation' website). In recent times, Pasternak's poetry has mainly been translated into Slovene language by a poet Tone Pavček. Pasternak's prose was translated by Janko Moder, who is also the author of the first Slovenian translation of *Doctor Zhivago* from 1967. Since then, several reprints have been published, but the translation would need updating, as well as the translations of his short prose, which were published in 1980. This fact is also confirmed by the previously mentioned examples of inadequate translation solutions related to music: in the *Essay in Autobiography*, there is a Russian instead of Slovene word for bagpipes, and the song 'Blagor mu', which appears in the novel *Doctor Zhivago* and in the *Essay in Autobiography*, is in fact a Russian obituary poem 'Eternal Memory'.

4. Pasternak as a composer and his acquaintance with Scriabin

Pasternak was intensively involved in music for six years, from the age of thirteen to nineteen. His composition teachers were Reinhold M. Glière and Joel D. Engel, under whose guidance he prepared for the exam at the Moscow Conservatory. His idol who had the greatest influence on him was Alexander Scriabin, who was a friend of Pasternak's family.¹⁰ With Pasternak's father, Leonid Osipovich, Scriabin "argued about good and evil and life and art, he attacked Tolstoy and preached Nietzsche's superman and amorality. They agreed only in their conception of the essence and problems of craftsmanship, in everything else they differed." (Pasternak, 1919, p. 44). Pasternak writes that he was twelve years old¹¹ at the time and did not understand their disputes, but Scriabin conquered him "by the freshness of his mind." He "worshipped him." (Pasternak 1919, p. 45). Pasternak closely followed Scriabin's compositional activity "of his middle period, roughly between his third and fifth sonatas." (Pasternak, 1919, p. 49).

¹⁰ The Pasternaks and Scriabins were neighbors in their summer cottages (dachas) in 1903; the two families met that year. Pasternak writes that the melodies of Scriabin's 'Third Symphony' and 'Divine Poem', played on the piano, spread throughout the forest where they were vacationing (Pasternak, 1919, p. 42).

¹¹ At that time (in 1903), Pasternak was already thirteen years old, as he was born on February 10, 1890.



Pasternak was musically talented and Scriabin praised¹² his compositions and encouraged him; he writes about this in more detail in the *Safe Conduct* and in the *Essay in Autobiography*. Pasternak loved music deeply, but he doubted about his talent, and since he had no absolute pitch, he gave up music completely, gradually stopped playing the piano, and then even stopped going to concerts and avoided meeting musicians. In his *Essay in Autobiography* he writes: “For six years I had lived for music. Now I tore it up and flung it from me as you throw away your dearest treasure.” (Pasternak, 1919, p. 48). At the time of his transition from music to literature, he was a member of a circle called “Serdarda” and at the beginning of their evenings, when the guests were arriving, on the piano he “improvised musical sketches of each of them.” (Pasternak, 1919, p. 66). The opera singer Guryev from Saratov, whom the writer remembers in the same autobiographical work, also participated in this circle: “he had a deep, gentle, powerful voice and the art of bringing out every tonal and dramatic subtlety of anything he sang.” (Pasternak, 1919, p. 65).

Pasternak wrote about Scriabin in his prose works *Safe Conduct* and *Essay in Autobiography*. In *Safe Conduct*, he mentions, among other things, how Scriabin came to Pasternak's family before he left for Italy. At that time he had dinner with them and played the piano (Pasternak, 1959, p. 170). In another place (in the *Essay in Autobiography*, Pasternak 1980, p. 46), it is written that Scriabin travelled to Switzerland for six years at that time. According to the Scriabin Association website, Scriabin lived outside of Russia between 1904 and 1909. He moved to Switzerland, and in 1905 he resided with his second wife¹³ in Bogliasco, near Genoa, Italy. Upon his return to Russia, concerts of his compositions were immediately organized, namely in St. Petersburg and in Moscow at the Conservatory. The Moscow concert evening at the Conservatory and the performance of 'Ecstasy' are mentioned by Pasternak in the *Safe Conduct*. After Scriabin's return from abroad, the young Pasternak took his composition to him for evaluation. At that time, Scriabin “talked — about the harm of improvisation, and of when, with what purpose and how to compose. As models of the simplicity at which I should always aim he offered his latest sonatas, famous for their brain-racking character. Examples of the complexity to be condemned he drew from the most commonplace sentimental romances.” (Pasternak, 1959, p. 176). At that time, the composer advised Pasternak to enroll in philosophy instead of law, where he had planned to study, and Pasternak followed his advice, enrolled in philosophy studies in Germany, and then abandoned this too and devoted himself to literary creation.

According to the website of Boris Tarakanov's sheet music archive, two of Pasternak's compositions have survived, namely two preludes and a piano sonata.

5. Conclusion

The role of music in Pasternak's life was highly important for his work. His poetry is characterized by a musical perfection of the verses, and the musical examples themselves play an important role in describing the atmosphere. Even in Pasternak's prose we can find many examples that relate to music and musicians. A special part of his prose are the passages where he describes his meetings with the composer Scriabin and the influence that the composer's strong personality had on the teenage Pasternak. These short chapters are also a valuable resource from a musicological perspective.

¹² Pasternak also mentions that Scriabin was self-centered, but he was very benevolent towards the almost child Pasternak. Otherwise, pianist Arthur Rubinstein in his autobiography *My Many Years* wrote an interesting anecdote in connection with Scriabin's opinion about the work of his composer colleagues. During Rubinstein's youthful stay in Paris, Scriabin came to the French capital to play his compositions. The composer invited the pianist, his great admirer, to tea and cakes at the Café de la Paix and asked him during the conversation which was his favorite composer. Rubinstein immediately replied that it was Brahms. Scriabin “slammed his fist on the table.” “What, what?” he shouted. “How can you love this terrible composer and me at the same time? When I was your age, I was passionate about Chopin. Later I became a bit of a Wagnerian, but now I can only admire Scriabin!” And he grabbed his hat and stormed out of the cafe, full of rage, leaving me stunned by this scene and the bill I had to pay.” (Rubinstein, 1983, pp. 168-169).

¹³ Pasternak was also a friend of the Russian pianist Heinrich Neuhaus, whose wife Zinaida divorced him after meeting Pasternak and married Pasternak in 1934. Zinaida Neuhaus Pasternak thus became Pasternak's second wife.



From examples of references to music in prose, we learn, among other things, which compositions were in fashion at that time, which folk songs Pasternak heard in the Urals, because they were probably widespread, and how the writer skilfully used purely musical terms to describe the sounds of the environment and musical metaphors to describe non-musical phenomena. For him, music was a metonymy for harmony, moderation, beauty and love.

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