

## UKRAINIAN MUSIC CRITICISM OF THE 2010s: GENERAL SITUATION, PROBLEMS, DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT (BASED ON THE EXAMPLES FROM CONTEMPORARY ART MUSIC SCENE)

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**SUMMARY.** The paper focuses on the 2010s in the history of Ukrainian music criticism. The materials on contemporary art music were chosen to support the authors' reflections and conclusions. Selection of the time, period and material for the research are conditioned both with the specific social situation of Ukraine and with the recent developments in its music scene. The paper characterizes the main media, most popular critical genres, and methods of critical coverage. It is highlighted that the problems of Ukrainian music criticism during the 2010s were linked to the post-Soviet past and, in general, to the colonial status of Ukrainian culture in the Russian Empire and later in the Soviet Union. Such problems include the absence of independent journals for music criticism, dominance of information genres over reviews, general stable positive evaluation of musical scene activity etc. A few examples illustrate the gradual changing of situation during the 2010s. The authors offer to consider that new period of Ukraine music criticism history began in 2020 when *The Claquers*, a critical media about art music in Ukraine and abroad aiming to solve the mentioned problems, was established.

**Keywords:** Ukrainian music criticism, contemporary art music, policy of colonialism, review, announcement.

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## Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing musicological interest to music criticism, its history and theory. Christopher Dingle defines the following reasons for why it is relevant to study music criticism as an independent sphere of musicological activity: “First, although music criticism has long been an integral aspect of musical life and is an obvious source material for musicological areas such as reception studies, it is only relatively recently that it has been regarded as a field of study. Second, although this translates to a paucity of secondary sources compared to other subjects of musicological enquiry, there is a vast amount of primary source material.”<sup>4</sup> In fact, studying the activity of the music critics, on the one hand, allows to form the history of art music in the aspect of perception and appreciation of different events by contemporaries. This helps to outline a general picture of the cultural development of a certain period. On the other hand, the specifics of music criticism in every country shows the level of national self-awareness and comprehending its own role in global processes. The latter is especially true for the countries currently overcoming their colonial past.

In general, the history of Ukrainian art culture of the last three decades is an example of such tendency: overcoming the dependency from the Russian colonial culture was followed by the formation of specifically Ukrainian reflection and understanding of the cultural processes of the past and present. From such position, music criticism is a very important field of analysis, because it dramatically illustrates the change in the points of view, approaches, methods of narrative and focal points of attention. The study of the critical materials opens a possibility to see the gradual changes in repertoire, formation of a new generation of composers and performers working in current art music directions.

The paper focuses on the 2010s in the history of Ukrainian music criticism development. Most examples cover the contemporary art music scene. The choice of the time and themes was determined for the following reasons.

The first reason is the changes in the political and social situation during the 2010s in Ukraine. An urge to form a democratic society independent from Russia resulted in the Revolution of Dignity and Russia’s invasion in 2014. For this period, development of civil society and strengthening its influence on the state policy are indicative. In other words, horizontal connections in society have become more effective than during the previous decades. The increasing role and significance of the horizontal connection

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<sup>4</sup> Dingle, Christopher (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019, p. 1.

in social life were projected at the cultural community as well. Although similar processes took place in historically informed performance etc.; such changes, however, were most visibly manifested in the activity linked to contemporary art music.

Thus, horizontal connections in contemporary art music scene manifested themselves in the emergence of different private initiatives independent from the state. It would not be accurate to state that such initiatives did not exist before; still, during the 2010s this trend became a mass-scale phenomenon. Examples of such initiatives are different ensembles and orchestras (*Ensemble Nostris Temporis*, *Sed Contra Ensemble*, *Ukho Ensemble Kyiv for Contemporary Music*, *Vocal Ensemble Alter Ratio*), concert agencies and education initiatives (*Kyiv international masterclasses for new music: Course, concert agencies Ukho, Kyiv Contemporary Music Days*), creative laboratories (*Nova Opera*), etc. These are only the most influential private initiatives. In reality, there were many more of them. Not all of them still exist but their activity was very important for development of Ukrainian music scene.

During this period, a new generation of performers formed, who wanted to play and promote new music, including the pianists Antony Baryshevsky, Vitaliy Kyianytsia, Oleksii Shmurak; flutist Sergiy Vilka; oboist Maksym Kolomiiets; clarinetist Dmytro Pashynskiy; violinists Andriy Pavlov, Igor Zavgorodniy, Marianna Skrypa; violoncellists Janna Marchinska, Zoltan Almashi; bassist Nazarii Stets, and others. Most of them collaborated with different ensembles, orchestras, and participated in newly organized festivals.

And last but not the least among the reasons, is that the young generation of Ukrainian composers (Anna Arkushyna, Anna Korsun, Maksym Kolomiiets, Maxim Shalygin, Illia Razumejko, and others) got their master's degree from the European universities and musical academies, participated in different composers' workshops, and continued their activity both in Ukraine and abroad. Therefore, during the 2010s, the tangible changes happened in dissemination of not only Ukrainian but also of European, American contemporary art music, i.e., in its performance and propagation.<sup>5</sup>

In the second half of the 2010s, there was a great and stable interest in contemporary art music both from the audience and performers: more and more concerts were sold-out shows. Each ensemble and performer formed a circle of listeners that included, first, young intellectuals (most of them not being professional musicians).

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<sup>5</sup> For more on the Ukrainian 2010s' music scene sees: Tukova, Iryna. "The Development of Western European Trends in the Kyiv Composition School (2010–2017)." *Lithuanian Musicology*, 2018, 19, pp. 52–61.

Such a situation opened a lot of possibilities for the music critics. It is important to add that at this time online-editions and social networks gradually expanded their influence on large strata of audience, including the ones that music criticism addresses. Respectively, the possibilities of music criticism changed and increased, as the Internet provides many potential readers. Accordingly, it was assumed that the number of musical critics and the depth of their professional evaluation of composers' and performers' activity would increase as well. However, the situation was not so encouraging.

It should be stressed that the history of music criticism in Ukraine has been a subject of interest for musicologists. A growing body of literature has examined the problem in general, including the textbooks, PhD theses, and research papers by Olena Zinkevych, Yuri Chekan, Lidia Melnyk, Olesia Naidiuk, Iryna Sikorska, and others.<sup>6</sup> Still, the period of the 2010s has not been at the centre of researchers' attention. It is necessary to emphasize that such influential monograph as *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism* in the chapter "Music Criticism in the USSR from Asafyev to Cherednichenko" focuses only on Russian music criticism as if the Soviet Union equaled Russia.<sup>7</sup> Such approach underlines, on the one hand, the substitution of the original national cultures and traditions of different republics of the USSR by only one—Russian—cultural tradition that is typical for European and American musicology. On the other hand, many problems of Ukrainian music criticism could be explained with the longtime colonial status of Ukrainian culture. Therefore, studying the situation with music criticism in Ukraine, it is utterly relevant to consider the processes that started since its independence proclamation. The paper by Nana Sharikadze (on the material of Georgian music criticism)<sup>8</sup> is as example of such postcolonial approach to rethinking the history of music criticism.

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<sup>6</sup> Zinkevych, Olena & Chekan, Yuri. *Music Criticism: Theory and Methodology*. Chernivci, Knyhy – XXI, 2007, 423 pp. Zinkevych, Olena. "The Effect of Second Lieutenant Kizhe." *Memory of Vanishing Time. Pages of Music History*, Kyiv, Nora-Print, 2005, pp.12–20. Chekan, Yuri. "Proof and Argumentation in Music Critical Text." *Scientific Herald of Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music*, 2011, 98, pp. 373–386. Chekan, Yuri. "Music Criticism in the Modern Communicative Environment: Change of Format." *Art Notes*, 2011, 20, pp. 18–24. Melnyk, Lidia. *Music Journalistic: Theory, History, Strategies*. Lviv, ZUKC, 2013, 384 pp. Naidiuk, Olesia. *The Processes of Transformation in Genres of Musical Criticism (Based on Material from Ukrainian press, 1990 to 2005)*: PhD Thesis. Kyiv, 2019, 252 pp. Sikorska, Iryna. "Ukrainian Music Criticism in the 1990s: 'Journalistic Bias'." *Materials for Ukrainian Art History*, 2003, 2, pp. 207–211.

<sup>7</sup> Dingle, Christopher (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 571–589.

<sup>8</sup> Sharikadze, Nana. "Georgian Musical Criticism of the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras." *Lithuanian Musicology*, 2019, 20, pp. 90–100.

Hence, this paper seeks to address the problems that existed in the Ukrainian music criticism during the 2010s, to study the factors that caused them, and to find possible solutions.

### The Main Periodicals

For a long time, the journal *Muzyka* (*Music*, founded in 1923) and newspaper *Kultura i Jyttja* (*Culture and Life*, founded in 1912) were the main printed Ukrainian periodicals that covered premieres, festivals, etc. Since the 1990s, other journals and magazines emerged, for example, the newspapers *Den* (*Day*), *Dzerkalo Tyjdnja* (*Mirror of the week*). However, during the 2010s, online periodicals or electronic versions of the mentioned editions took the lead. Social networks actively contribute to spreading information on music. Newspapers and journals had dedicated pages in the social networks and channels in messengers; authors and readers shared their materials on their personal webpages, etc.<sup>9</sup>

To categorize all the periodical editions (both printed and electronic) that published materials on music criticism, they may be divided in the following groups according to their content:

1) Information editions with a separate section for the cultural news: newspapers *Den* (*Day*), *Dzerkalo tyjdnja* (*Mirror of the week*), on-line edition *LB.ua* (*Left Riverside.ua*), on-line journal *Focus*, Ukrainian internet-edition *Ukrains'ka pravda* (*Ukrainian truth*), journal *Tyzden'.ua* (*Week.ua*), etc.

2) Periodicals about the cultural processes in Ukraine with music being only one of several covered areas: e.g., the on-line journal about contemporary culture *Korydor*, art journal *KOMA*, journal *Krytyka* (*Criticism*), internet-edition *PLATFOR.MA*, etc.

3) Specialized electronic resources about music in general: resource about Ukrainian music *Kyiv Music Labs*, on-line journal *MUSICIAN.ukr*.

4) Specialized editions about the relevant developments in art music: illustrated scientific-popular journal *Muzyka* (*Music*), Ukrainian internet-journal *Muzyka* (*Music*), *Ukrains'ka muzychna gazeta* (*Ukrainian musical newspaper*), journal |A:|, Ukrainian information-educational resource *Moderato.in.ua*.

Obviously, it is impossible to list all the existing editions in this paper, nevertheless, the number of the titles demonstrates both the presence and diversity of information resources influencing very different strata of readers and listeners. It is important to underline that in the sphere of art music independent private music criticism initiatives like Ukrainian information-

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<sup>9</sup> Such tendency is global. See: Dingle, Christopher (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism*. Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 695–706.

educational resource *Moderato.in.ua* and Ukrainian internet-journal *Muzyka* started to emerge. This fact is indicative of Ukrainian cultural development during the 2010s and proves that there was a tendency to form autonomous critical resources.

### Genres and Methods of Coverage

Information genres were dominant for contemporary art music during the 2010s.

First, we can name announcements and program notes, both brief and extended, based on the press-releases and encyclopaedical data. For example, the festival *Bouquet Kyiv Stage* was held in Kyiv from 16 to 26 of August 2018. It received an information support thorough description of its concept, interviews with its organizers, and coverage of its events in different editions: internet-magazine *Muzyka*<sup>10</sup>, on-line edition *LB.ua*,<sup>11</sup> etc. Similar announcements were published prior to the concerts, providing only general information either about the composers, whose works were performed, or about the performers solely.

Another telling example is the announcement about the concert *Instrumental theatre of Mauricio Kagel* (March 22, 2018). This concert was created in collaboration by the musicians from the *Sed Contra Ensemble* and the actors of the *New theatre in Pechersk* (Kyiv). A very laconic announcement by Ivan Matlaev<sup>12</sup> summarizes encyclopaedic data about the composer and lists the works to be performed. The specifics of the project, the main idea of musicians' and actors' interpretation of Kagel's works remain unknown to the reader. Lyubov Morozova<sup>13</sup> posted similar but longer announcement with the links to Kagel's works on YouTube.

The example of an extended announcement is the text by Lyubov Morozova "*Luci mie traditrici* is the opera by misanthrope"<sup>14</sup> that preceded the premiere of the opera *Luci mie traditrici* by Salvatore Scarrino in Kyiv (February 22, 2018, at the National Opera House of Ukraine, produced by

<sup>10</sup> Paltcevyh, Julija. "Bouquet as a Gift." *Internet-Journal Muzyka*, URL: <http://mus.art.co.ua/bouquet-yak-podarunok/>

<sup>11</sup> Morozova, Lyubov. "11 Days of Music: the Guide to Festival Bouquet Kyiv Stage." *On-line Edition LB.ua*, URL: [https://lb.ua/culture/2018/08/13/404736\\_11\\_dney\\_muziki\\_gid\\_festivalyu.html](https://lb.ua/culture/2018/08/13/404736_11_dney_muziki_gid_festivalyu.html)

<sup>12</sup> Matlaev, Ivan. "Instrumental Theatre of Mauricio Kagel on Kyiv Stage." *Internet-Journal Muzyka*, URL: <http://mus.art.co.ua/instrumentalnyj-teatr-maurisio-kagelya-na-kyjivskij-stseni/>

<sup>13</sup> Morozova, Lyubov. "Instrumental Theatre of Mauricio Kagel." *On-line Edition LB.ua*, URL: [https://lb.ua/blog/lyubov\\_morozova/393301\\_instrumentalnyj-teatr-maurisio.html](https://lb.ua/blog/lyubov_morozova/393301_instrumentalnyj-teatr-maurisio.html)

<sup>14</sup> Morozova, Lyubov. "*Luci Mie Traditrici* is the Opera by Misanthrope." *On-line Edition LB.ua*, URL: [https://lb.ua/culture/2018/02/21/390805\\_moy\\_predatelskiy\\_svet\\_opera.html](https://lb.ua/culture/2018/02/21/390805_moy_predatelskiy_svet_opera.html)

the private concert agency *Ukho*). The announcement provides information about the composer, his creative legacy, and about the performers, outlines the scenography and costumes, and describes the plot of the opera. Morozova prepares the listeners for the future event, attempting to go beyond the genre of announcement and create a review of sorts. That proves to be problematic as everything besides factual data lacks analysis and argumentation.

Description of conductor Luigi Gaggero's interpretation of the opera is just one illustrative example of many: "Interpretation of Luigi Gaggero, the conductor-director, and *Ukho Ensemble* will seriously differ from conventional audio recordings. Listening to any of the many records in the Internet allows us to evaluate these changes. There are at least three CD-released versions of Scarrino's opera. On the basis of the rehearsals, I can say that there is an urgent necessity for the forth one—this interpretation reveals the masterpiece by Scarrino absolutely from the new point of view."<sup>15</sup> The author does not offer any further explanation for this statement. It should be noted that such style is typical to the most of reviews by Ukrainian critics. The value of event or composition is postulated with minimal analysis, the listener must trust the words of critic not giving it a benefit of a doubt, and any differing point of view automatically is considered wrong.

Interview is another favorite genre of Ukrainian music critics. Not dwelling into the special characteristics of this genre, it should be observed that practically all participants of music performances get interviewed: composers, performers, musicologists, etc. One telling example is the interview of the student musicologist with the student composer.<sup>16</sup> It is interesting to compare the composer's answers to the same questions some years apart.

Therefore, various announcements, annotations and interviews are the most popular genres in Ukrainian media; their primary function is providing information, and in the case with the music of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries this is understandable and justifiable. The names of the composers and their creativity are often new for listeners. Thus, such materials both prepare the expectations of the public and shape them. They provide new knowledge but do not present reflections on the event; they do not reveal critics' attitudes to new music or performance. Thus, the axiological function—that is the essence of music criticism—is not present there.

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<sup>15</sup> Morozova, Lyubov. "Luci Mie Traditrici is the Opera by Misanthrope." *On-line Edition LB.ua*, URL: [https://lb.ua/culture/2018/02/21/390805\\_moy\\_predatelskiy\\_svet\\_opera.html](https://lb.ua/culture/2018/02/21/390805_moy_predatelskiy_svet_opera.html)

<sup>16</sup> For example: Nevmerzhytskyi, Stas. "Vasyl Tsanko: It is Enough to Build a Wall Between Music and the Listener." *Internet-Journal Muzyka*, URL: <http://mus.art.co.ua/portrety-molodyh-vasyl-tsanko-dosyt-buduvaty-stinu-mizh-muzykoyu-sluhachem/>

The genre of review was the least used in periodical editions. During the 2010s, there almost never was an instant critical reaction to the premieres. Obviously, there were reviews but published sometime later, when a critic had a chance to carefully consider his or her position, expressing it regarding the possible consequences, etc. It should be stressed that most reviews (with some exceptions) during the 2010s had two main drawbacks.

The first problem was that the authors of the reviews did not use methods of analysis of contemporary art music and its performing with great success. This explains why in its Ukrainian variant the genre diversity of music criticism was limited only to announcements and interviews, why the reviews only describe their authors' impressions from the musical works, and why the analysis of the performances does not go beyond studying the projects' exterior side. Olga Golynska's review of the premiere of the cycle *Luminous chants* for mixed choir by Victoria Poleva is an indicative example of that: "Fifteen parts of large-scale holistic composition that consists of sacral chants flashed through as if in one breath. Refined, ineffable expressive, highly professional performance by choir and soloists under the constant leadership of Mykola Hobdych, head of the choir,<sup>17</sup> made this music amazingly live, organically dynamic and at the same time... heavenly."<sup>18</sup> The main idea of the review was to show the admiration for the composer and performers and with many epithets to underline their prominence. Although, as the review states, the performance was not perfect on the levels of ensembles and intonation, there were many questions from the audience to the visual design of the stage, etc. The composition by Poleva was not in any way original. It is traditional for Ukrainian art music to rethink the liturgical chants, extensively using the elements of the styles of Arvo Part, Valentyn Silvestrov, and Svyatoslav Lunyov. Therefore, in this and similar examples of reviews, the authors describe only their own emotions (certainly, they give positive evaluation of works and performance) making no attempt to substantiate their point of view or prove their position.

The second problem with the reviews was their absolute positivism. Ukrainian musicologists (for example, Olena Zinkevych<sup>19</sup> and Luba Kyjanovska<sup>20</sup>) already drew attention to this fact. Kyjanovska states:

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<sup>17</sup> The cycle was performed by the choir *Kyiv* with Mykola Hobdych conducting.

<sup>18</sup> Golynska, Olga. "Victoria Plevá – Artist-Elf." *Internet-Journal Muzyka*, URL: <http://mus.art.co.ua/viktoriya-polova-mytets-elf/>

<sup>19</sup> Zinkevych, Olena. "The Effect of Second Lieutenant Kizhe." *Memory of Vanishing Time. Pages of Music History*, Kyiv, Nora-Print, 2005, pp. 12–20.

<sup>20</sup> Kyjanovska, Luba. "Music Criticism Today: The Search for Harmony in Universal Chaos." *Ukrainian Information-Educational Resource Moderato.in.ua*, URL: <https://moderato.in.ua/blogs/music-critic-today.html>



“Among these obstacles, first, I would like to note the lack of established ethical principles in relation to critical material... As a rule, our performers and composers react very painfully to any, even the most delicate remarks, interpreting them as an encroachment on the freedom of creativity and their talent. Every critic who writes articles and reviews on the concerts, plays or new works, and who does not use the words ‘genius’, ‘seminal’, ‘for the first time in the history of culture’, inevitably encounters insults and outspoken expressions of displeasure from the heroes of their opuses.”<sup>21</sup>

As a result, even a brief overview of different materials shows that only “geniuses” live and work in Ukraine who do not make any mistakes, do not produce unsuccessful compositions, performances, or unreasoned interpretations. It is very difficult to find a review that gives some negative remarks about the composer’s or performer’s work. Even the bravest authors dared to make only scarce negative commentaries sweetened with compliments and generally positive evaluation. Such is the fragment from the review “Youthful excitement: new music on Kyiv Contemporary Music Days” by Lyubov Morozova where the work of the conductor Miheil Menabde was characterized in the following manner: “Project orchestra ... *Armonia Ludus* despite its constantly changing composition is a very important phenomenon for Kyiv. In the sound jointly produced with the conductor Miheil Menabde there was proper excitement, fascination with the score, and joy of collective music performing. What was lacking was the unity of style. The conductor directed general processes well but did not provide a certain course for his ship, letting musicians float on their own: everybody performed in their personal manner. As a result, instead of harmonious vertical we witnessed a many-voiced horizontal, which also was not bad but without miracles.”<sup>22</sup> The reader may wonder rhetorically: how did the orchestra sound? Was its performance good or bad? Between the lines of the review, the reader realizes that performers probably had some problems with ensemble of different orchestral groups, texture, and dynamic balance, etc. Still, the author neither names these problems explicitly nor characterizes them. Such style of review may be explained by the fact that Morozova tried to be understandable to the wide circle of the readers and avoided specific terminology. However, professional critical skills should be used for substantiating critical remarks and analysis of the

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<sup>21</sup> Kyjanovska, Luba. “Music Criticism Today: The Search for Harmony in Universal Chaos.” *Ukrainian Information-Educational Resource Moderato.in.ua*, URL: <https://moderato.in.ua/blogs/music-critic-today.html>

<sup>22</sup> Morozova, Lyubov. “Youthful Excitement: New Music on Kyiv Contemporary Music Days.” *Ukrainian Internet-Edition Ukrains’ka Pravda*, URL: <https://life.pravda.com.ua/culture/2016/09/29/218471/>

works, even in the case with a general audience. The review by Olena Korchova for the premiere of the opera-ballet *ARK* by Illia Razumejko and Roman Grygoriv<sup>23</sup> exemplifies a combination of different approaches used to prove the critic's point of view and substantiate the value of the project.

Thus, analysis showed that the information component of music criticism in contemporary art music is well-developed. Different announcements regularly appeared in periodical editions and social networks. There were numerous widely discussed interviews with interesting points of view on the development of contemporary art music both in Ukraine and globally. For the musicologists and teachers specializing in contemporary art music and its leading trends, such interviews are necessary professional material. This direction of musical criticism was a valuable support for concerts and festival events. Nevertheless, during the 2010s, reviews and other genres with explicit axiological position of the author remained an open question. Music criticism had been influencing activity neither of composers or performers nor the quality of projects and public opinion, although forming listener's conscious attitude to proposition of this cultural market segment could influence quality of musical constituent of projects. Such situation is caused by a few factors of different levels, including the specifics of education, the place of music criticism in society, and the consequences of the centuries-long colonial status of Ukrainian culture.

### **The Problems and Their Causes**

At the end of the Soviet era influential Ukrainian musicologist and music critic Olena Zinkevych published the article "The Effect of Second Lieutenant Kizhe,"<sup>24</sup> beginning it with the following passage: "I start from the seemingly paradoxical statement: there is no music criticism in Ukraine! There are separate critical speeches, separate musicologists, who from time to time come up with the poignant articles; but music criticism as a separate sphere of musicology does not exist."<sup>25</sup> She names many reasons for such a radical statement, including the absence of a relevant social status of music criticism, absence of a very profession of a music critic, lack of specialized editions, existence of criticism within the administrative system

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<sup>23</sup> Korchova, Olena. "And the Ark Floats..." *On-line Edition LB.ua*, URL: [https://lb.ua/blog/olena\\_korchova/376271\\_i\\_kovcheg\\_plive.html](https://lb.ua/blog/olena_korchova/376271_i_kovcheg_plive.html)

<sup>24</sup> The name of the article is an intertextual reference to the novel *Second Lieutenant Kije* by Yury Tynyanov.

<sup>25</sup> The article was reprinted. Here is it quoted from: Zinkevych, Olena. "The Effect of Second Lieutenant Kizhe." *Memory of Vanishing Time. Pages of Music History*, Kyiv, Nora-Print, 2005, p. 12.

of the state, etc. Zinkevych indicates that the information genres prevail and overall quality level of reviews is rather low. However, she proposes not only to name the problems, but, most importantly, points at their roots. Zinkevych underlines: “The root cause of this, in principle, is obvious—the general situation in the country (both in repressive and stagnant periods). In this sense, the position of all kinds of art criticism was the same. The current situation echoes those years. The disappearance of criticism meant an absolute victory for the command-and-control system in musical culture and formation of ‘system-like thinking,’ which is a sociological term denoting a psychological equivalent for an authoritarian system. Authoritarian thinking of some, cowardice of others, and conformism of the rest makes an environment, where criticism is not viable.”<sup>26</sup>

It is necessary to add that the problems were rooted not only in the Soviet authoritarian system but also in colonization policy of Russia towards the other countries and nationalities under its power. There was a common belief that everything most interesting, valuable, and progressive was located in Moscow and Leningrad.<sup>27</sup> All the decisions about contacts of Ukrainian composers, performers, and musicologists with European, American etc. colleagues were made in Moscow. The central and most impact journals that published critical materials too, were in Moscow and Leningrad.<sup>28</sup> The list of the facts may be continued; however, it is very important to stress that such underlying causes prevented a rapid emergence and evolution of Ukrainian music criticism as an independent sphere of musicological activity. It took years to overcome all these issues and train a new generation of critics who created new horizontal connections in Ukrainian music scene. In her study of the history of music criticism during the early period of Ukrainian independence (1990–2005) Naidiuk notes: “The state of criticism of this period is characterized by instability. Professional criticism evolved only if the printed periodicals were interested in critical texts. Since printed periodicals are a phenomenon that is extremely vulnerable and affected by any economic and social changes, music criticism has also been vulnerable. However, the widespread opinion about the decline of criticism during this period, or its total non-existence, is not true. On the contrary, self-reflection that follows from several the articles considering the vital problems of criticism, which were authored by the critics themselves, in

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<sup>26</sup> Zinkevych, Olena. “The Effect of Second Lieutenant Kizhe.” *Memory of Vanishing Time. Pages of Music History*, Kyiv, Nora-Print, 2005, pp. 13–14.

<sup>27</sup> Present-day Saint Petersburg.

<sup>28</sup> The proof of such conclusion is the abovementioned chapter from monograph *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism*, where the music criticism in the USSR was illustrated with the activity of only Russian critics.

our view, evidences the maturity of criticism.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, the history of music criticism received very differing assessments from the musicologists. Still, it could be safely stated that during the 2010s the issues named by Zinkevych were there though they were gradually solved.

In Ukraine, during this period, musicological professional activity of a critic still was not a separate and independent sphere. Authors of critical materials were either teachers at different musical colleges and academies writing reviews from time to time or the students of music criticism.<sup>30</sup> Within the frameworks of their study course, it was required to have published announcements, reviews, etc. There was only one person who worked exclusively as a music critic and journalist in the sphere of contemporary art music—Ljubov Morozova. She had authority among composers, performers, managers of different festivals, etc. and authored most of the materials about contemporary art music. And yet her most prominent achievement was being a musicologist and working as a music critic.

In musical society and beyond, there were not many people paying any attention to critical reviews and the issues they raised. It was all the truer since music professionals have long been living in their usual bubble of total approval. Nevertheless, by the end of the 2010s the situation started to change. For instance, there was a critical polemic about contemporary art music compositions in the repertoire of state philharmonics. And going forward, it is very important to stress that in 2021 the programs of state orchestras regularly included contemporary compositions. Five years before that, such a situation was unimaginable, so the critical polemics obviously were effective.

In March 2017, Morozova authored a review on the activities and financing of state orchestras, choirs, etc.<sup>31</sup> In April of the same year, in response to a discussion of the issues and amounts of funding for state institutions, she published an article about private initiatives in the field of art music (four of the six listed companies were dealing with contemporary art music).<sup>32</sup> In May, Stas Nevmerzhytskyi interviewed the director of the National Academic Brass Band and the management of the National

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<sup>29</sup> Naidiuk, Olesia. *The Processes of Transformation in Genres of Musical Criticism (Based on Material from Ukrainian press, 1990 to 2005)*: PhD Thesis. Kyiv, 2019, p. 166.

<sup>30</sup> Since 1989, the Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music students may get a specialization in music criticism.

<sup>31</sup> Morozova, Lyubov. “Musical Conservation: How National Orchestras and Groups Work.” *On-line Edition LB.ua*, URL: [https://lb.ua/culture/2017/03/09/360730\\_muzikalnaya\\_konservatsiya.html](https://lb.ua/culture/2017/03/09/360730_muzikalnaya_konservatsiya.html)

<sup>32</sup> Morozova, Lyubov. “How 6 Non-Governmental Initiatives in the Field of Art Music Survive.” *On-line Edition LB.ua*, URL: [https://lb.ua/culture/2017/04/28/364893\\_vizhivayut\\_6\\_negosudarstvennih.html](https://lb.ua/culture/2017/04/28/364893_vizhivayut_6_negosudarstvennih.html)

Philharmonic of Ukraine. The critic inquired why the state does not fund the concerts where the music by young Ukrainian composers is performed (at the time, the average age of the composers, whose works were performed at the state-funded concerts was over 50 years old).<sup>33</sup> As a result, on May 22, 2018, the project *New Ukrainian Music*, initiated by the National Philharmonic, premiered featuring the works by Ukrainian composers under the age of 35 (Maksym Kolomiets, Maxim Shalygin, Olexiy Retynsky, Vitaliy Kyianytsia, Denys Bocharov).

## Conclusions

Therefore, during the 2010s the foundation was laid for a new period of development of Ukrainian music criticism. The special private musical Internet recourses appeared; a new generation of musicologists, independent from vertical hierarchy connections and Soviet past, emerged; communication with colleagues all over the world expanded knowledge about the main trends of contemporary art music.

A new period in Ukrainian criticism started in 2020, when *The Claquers*,<sup>34</sup> a critical resource about art music in Ukraine and beyond, was founded by the students of the Ukrainian National Academy of Music: Stas Nevmerzhytskyi, Oleksandr Ostrovskyi, Dzvenyslava Safian, and Yelyzaveta Sirenko. The media provides regular reviews of concerts and projects, offers interviews and discussions about different events, podcasts, and games. This new independent initiative is shaping the value and significance of music criticism in Ukrainian music scene.

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<sup>33</sup> Nevmerzhytskyi, Stas. "National Ensembles VS. Ukrainian Music: Collaboration or Resistance?" *Kyiv Music Labs*, URL: [http://www.kyivmusiclabs.com/2017/04/vs.html?fbclid=IwAR2b1qrmOrDvTeCEL9MMuQVji\\_T6kkxzPycwFxrj\\_VRmhiQdYIQ5zMH6nwo](http://www.kyivmusiclabs.com/2017/04/vs.html?fbclid=IwAR2b1qrmOrDvTeCEL9MMuQVji_T6kkxzPycwFxrj_VRmhiQdYIQ5zMH6nwo)

<sup>34</sup> *The Claquers*: Official Site, URL: <https://theclaquers.com/en/>

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