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ON ARAKISHVILI'S RESPONSE LETTER REGARDING THE ARTICLE BY STEINPRESS

Dimitri Arakishvili is one of the first Georgian composers and musician-scholars, who started exploring original stylistic features of Georgian songs and made Georgian folk music an object for scientific research.

Based on his long practical experience and research into the musical regularities characteristic of Georgian folk music, Arakishvili expressed his point of view on the important original stylistic features which, according to his observations and deep conviction, largely determine national character of traditional music. As such, he considered the chords with characteristic non-tertiary arrangements, including the particularly standing out fourth-fifth chord (perfect fourth + major second), in his words: "A trichord in fifth. „This combination of sounds he recognized as ‘the very nature’ of Georgian harmony. Arakishvili firmly believed that the mentioned chords and other similar structures best provided a real idea on Georgian people's harmonic thinking. Quote: "Certainly, we don't say that Georgian harmony is limited to just this combination. On the contrary, there are all kinds of combinations with tertiary and other movements, , but we would like to note that the combination such as c-f-g is an independent occurrence.... It, as if a blend creating a dissonance, often segues into the consonances c-e-g and c-f-a... But this dissonance is as natural for Georgian music as is the consonant triad c-e-g for European music."

(Arakishvili, 1940:21). He was convinced in the validity of the mentioned view point by song and hymn examples from the musical dialects of highland and lowland regions of East and West Georgia, saturated with such harmonies and fifth movements (Arakishvili, 1925:154). He is also the author of the bold statement that the problem of polyphony and modes was solved by the Hittites and Subarians as early as B.C. It is from here that he assumes, that original sense of harmony was inherited, incepted and developed in Svaneti (Arakishvili, 1950:34, 35).

Sadly, an important and accountable researcher of Georgian folk music such as Shalva Aslanishvili had a fundamentally different attitude towards the recognition of non-tertiary chords as original and independent consonances in Georgian folk music. In his categorical conclusion, non-tertiary chords characteristic of Georgian folk songs were evaluated as "disguised", "derived" variants of tertiary chords (Aslanishvili, 1950:82).

According to Aslanishvili: "Development of the harmonic tissue of Georgian folk song is based on a complex and strict chord system, where: 1) main basis of

each chord is a tertiary scale, i.e. the chord is constructed by major and minor thirds (ibid.: 82, 87). 2) non-tertiary chords in Georgian folk songs are derivative forms of ordinary tertiary chords,... in such constructions tertiary forms are presented in a “disguised” form (ibid.: 82,91); particularly noteworthy is the view point according to which: 3) “All these chords, as the elements, creating special tint in harmony, are harmonic dissonances” (ibid.: 88).

However, Aslanishvili also made statements according to which: 1) “For determining the origin era of a song, one of the main elements of harmony to be considered is chordal system, or more precisely, “a certain system of chords”; 2) “Specific forms of chordal system, which give Georgian song its characteristic tint are the chords, containing a perfect fourth and a major second (ibid.: 153). In his opinion 3) frequent application of non-tertiary chords (both 4\5 and 4\7) adds special peculiarities to Georgian folk songs; (ibid: 86, 87). 4) The scholar considers that the mentioned chord forms may genetically relate to the ancient forms of polyphony, when perfect fourth had a special meaning. 5) Aslanishvili perceived the opinion expressed by O. Fleisher regarding the sameness of the scales of Georgian song and ancient Greek kithara (fourth-fifth chord) as a reference to a kind of borrowing the principle of such a chord structure from the scale of ancient kithara; in response to this, he categorically stated that: “The form of non-tertiary chords organically follows from the harmony peculiarity of Georgian folk songs and is not a phenomenon introduced from another musical culture” (ibid.: 92).

And yet, from the standpoint of recognizing non-tertiary chords as having original, independent consonance function, characteristic of Georgian traditional music, these two great researchers of Georgian folk music - Dimitri Arakishvili and Shalva Aslanishvili remained true to their position of principle until the end.

Arakishvili considered trichord in fifth to be the “harmonic arrangement” of exceptional importance, which, since ancient times, had been firmly established in Georgian folk musical language in the form of various combinations: in monophony - as horizontally disintegrated, in 2- and 3-part singing - as a consonance sounding in the vertical; but, in the his opinion, Georgian song underwent a harmful change in the sense that original archaic seconds were replaced by European template thirds, which “undermined the uniqueness of Georgian harmony” (Arakishvili, 1948: 56, 57).

Several decades later Arakishvili’s viewpoint regarding non-tertiary chords was shared by folklorist E. Chokhonelidze, who tried to provide argued substantiation;¹¹ he presented his different vision on the formation of Georgian chordal structures and their functional connections.

¹¹ The paper “Some Issues of the Chords in Georgian Folk Polyphony” at the All-Union Scientific Session (1970); annual report “On the Issue of Chords in Georgian Folk Songs” at the Folklore Department of Tbilisi State Conservatoire (1973) and paper “The Issue of Chords in Georgian Folk Musi” for the scientific conference at the Institute of the History of Georgian Literature (1981).

Chokhnelidze also considered the musical language of Georgian people to be a genetic given, and regarded the chord structures, of independent origin, as one of the determining factors distinguishing it from other musical cultures.

In Aslanishvili's attitude to Georgian traditional music, Chokhnelidze considered it incorrect that the scholar directly adjusted the regularities of major-minor system to Georgian music (Chokhnelidze, 1973:11).

Reducing non-tertiary chords to the disguised form of tertiary chords was unjustified and unacceptable for Chokhnelidze, since, in his deep conviction, such an opinion fundamentally contradicted the nature of Georgian folk songs (ibid.: 11)²²

Especially noteworthy is Chokhnelidze's and Arakishvili's identical attitude to live performance practice in the study of folk music. When asked to what extent practical experience justifies what is theoretically ascertained, Arakishvili replied that "the norms established by theory are 'capsized' by folk practice" (Arakishvili, 1952: 43) – this is how he 'saw' enormous importance of auditory analysis in the research of song examples.

Chokhnelidze also believed that "vocal folklore" is an oral tradition, with the basis determined only by auditory experience: "We only have to make these chords sound, observe them in live performance practice, and we will make sure that they have their own specific characteristics and are independent" (Chokhnelidze, 1973:8, 15).

Chokhnelidze refers to the chords of Georgian folk song as 'the chords with free scale', and considers them independent 'autonomous units', whose arrangement and construction is based on modal regulations and the interconnection between them obeys the regularities of melodic movement. Under 'the chords with free scale', Chokhnelidze implies constructions with any interval ratios (tertiary, fourth, fifth, fourth-fifth chords); as striking examples of this he notes the hymns of Imeretian-Gurian mode, where the phrases constructed on the parallel movement of fifth-ninth chords are frequent and completely organic (ibid.:17). Musicologist-theoretician, Vladimer Gogotishvili also regarded fourth-fifth chord as the one with the function of "support axis", and considered it a "leit harmony" of Svan polyphony. He was worried by the fact that the importance of this chord was ignored in Georgian music theory (Gogotishvili: 27, 30).³³

In 1951 the *Sovetskaya muzika* magazin (#2) published B. Steinpress' article "On Some General Norms of Musical Language", in which the author criticized the Georgian scholar regarding the viewpoint expressed on trichord within fourth. The same magazine (1952, #7) published Arakishvili's response letter ("On General Norms and National Originality"), which confirms that his attitude to fourth-fifth chord and regularities of Geor-

² Arakishvili believed that European third left an "inexorable" mark on the performance practice in Georgia. He thought that it was difficult to find the songs with purely preserved Georgian harmony, which would not be "distorted" like European third (Arakishvili, 1940: 22).

³ Arakishvili's attitude to non-tertiary chords, fourth-fifth chord, was in fact completely shared by the entire Department of Georgian Folk Music, Professor Grigol Chkhikvadze and the other staff members.

gian folk music in general was the musician-scholar's well-thought-out and completely categorical statement, rather than a random, unargued point of view. Here are the excerpts from this letter confirming the author's unwavering, principled position on the mentioned issue.

D. Arakishvili asks Mr. Steinpress how correct it is to consider the analogy of old European or contemporary norms of harmony as unconditionally mandatory for ancient Georgian musical culture?!

For the Georgian scholar, it is obvious that the question of dissonances and consonances should be considered not abstractly, but concretely, considering the history of particular national musical culture and its specific musical regularities. Basing on the musical material obtained by the expeditions to different regions of Georgia, he confirms that: "In Georgian folk music, trichord is a favorite - native sound, which quite often starts a song. True, it is usually followed closely by ordinary triad, which is natural, as they are equal in Georgian folk music. Theoretically, a trichord usually requires resolution in a consonance, but in practice, Arakishvili believes that "in the case of Georgian songs, it is as much a consonance as a triad". He explains the error of some theoreticians, their incorrect conclusions regarding the regularities of Georgian music, precisely by the lack of practical experience and failure to consider the specificity of the musical material. Arakishvili believes that: "First of all, here, attention should be paid to the fact that we are talking about the shaped over the centuries, musical norms, related to people's psychology... It is incorrect to measure everyone indiscriminately with one common measure; in Georgia, trichord is as solid as triad in the music of other nations.

How else can be explained the fact that these chords sound absolutely natural in the songs of the Georgians from different regions of the country (Svans, Rachans, Gurians, Megrelians and others)?!" (Arakishvili, 1952:43). This is even more noticeable in Svaneti, where singers unintentionally sing usual trichords and triads, which are traditional for their ear and musical aesthetics; major and minor

three-part (structurally without a third) seventh chords, or other chords unusual for European ear, the constant alternation of which creates impressive sound of Svan songs, all the charm of Svan songs. Arakishvili believed that trichord was of much older origin than triad, confirmation of which he saw in the works of classical researcher of ancient Greek music, Prof. V. I. Petri. Petri referred to the scale c-f-g-c of ancient Greek harp as harmonic tetrachord).⁴⁴ If we imagine the mentioned tetrachord without octave, i.e. the G above, we will get the arrangement of Georgian trichord Arakishvili considered it significant that Megrelian and Gurian chonguri-players still successfully used those scales. Let's assume that Steinpress' reasoning is theoretically valid; but to what extent does real

⁴⁴ Petri V. I. "On the Melodic Structure of Aryan Song". "Russian Musical Newspaper", 1897, ##. 1-4, 5-6 (Appendix).

practical experience justify it? - Arakishvili asks and at the same time, denies the fact of unconditional correspondence of theory with practice. He believes that "the norms established by the theory are tipped over by folk musical practice". "One can argue a lot, but cannot ignore or devalue the fact that the trichord in Georgian music is consolidated as completely natural and legitimate by centuries-old auditory practice" (Arakishvili, 1952: 43).

Given the small format of the article, Arakishvili provides only small excerpts from several songs for illustration. Quote: "Since time immemorial, Georgian folk art has had its own musical system, which has been preserved in songs, the musical structure of which differs from European, in terms of understanding consonance and dissonance... Certainly, this does not imply that Georgian folk music harmony is alien to European music. The point is that not at all, on the contrary, they are related to each other. We think that trichord, just like triad, is essentially the axis of Georgian harmony, and they should never be separated from each other. Although one is dissonant and the other is consonant, both chords belong to the aesthetic category that acquired national character and defined the originality of national music... Our musicologists should think about this" (Arakishvili, 1952: 44). Dimitri Arakishvili, one of the first searchers and researchers of preserved Georgian songs-hymns of the times, appealed to the researchers of Georgian music with such advice, and when evaluating the Georgian chords, he urged them to be careful about their conclusions. This was the advice of Dimitri Arakishvili, one of the first seekers for and researchers of the surviving Georgian songs and hymns, to the researchers of Georgian music; he urged them to be careful in their conclusions when evaluating Georgian chords. Arakishvili, was not hindered by the unacceptable attitude of other musician-theoreticians to his point of view: "You can argue as much as you like, but you cannot deny the fact that centuries-old folk auditory practice makes trichord utterly natural and legitimate" (Arakishvili, 1952: 43). This is what he bequeathed to us future researchers of Georgian folklore - steadfast attitude towards the statement: "Trichord is utterly natural, organic and legitimate for Georgian music".

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