

FOREWORD

A long-time professor, habilitated doctor, National Culture and Arts Prize winner, and the most powerful authority of theoretical knowledge in Lithuania – Algirdas Jonas Ambrazas (1934–2016) – can invariably be called the founder of Lithuanian theoretical (systematic) musicology.

Due to complicated historical circumstances and numerous other reasons, the beginning of Lithuanian musicology was arduous and time-consuming. Its development was uneven, with a lot of steps; so, the professor had few predecessors. As many of us will know, the founder of Lithuanian musicology is Sigismundus Lauxmin (Žygimantas Liauksminas), one of the first Lithuanian professors at Vilnius University. In 1667, he wrote the first music textbook in Lithuania and Poland titled *Music Theory and Practice (Ars et praxis musica)*. The emergence of Lithuanian music theory was also encouraged by works by foreign musicians living and working in Vilnius at that time, amongst whom we can mention the composer and music theorist Nikolay Diletsky who published his music grammar *Toga złota* in Vilnius in 1675; and Johann David Holland, a composer and pianist who, during the period of 1802–1825, was teaching music at Vilnius University and there, in 1813, published *Academic Treatise on the Real Art of Music (Traktat akademicki o prawdziwej sztuce muzyki)*.

The interwar period of the 20th century was the most intensive for the development of ethnomusicology in Lithuania. Lithuanian folk tunes were compiled and systematised, and studies on Lithuanian folk music instruments were published. The first books about the Lithuanian composers Česlovas Sasnauskas (written by Juozas Žilevičius) and Juozas Naujalis (by Konradas Kaveckas) appeared. In the field of theoretical musicology, the textbooks *The Theory of Music* (1920), *School of Singing* (1920), *School of Choral Music* (1926), and *Harmony* (1926) by Teodoras Brazys (1870–1930) were considered the most influential. These works were naturally complemented by the thesis *Certain Features of Teodoras Brazys' Theoretical Activity and Harmonization of Lithuanian Folk Songs* written by Algirdas Jonas Ambrazas in 1958 and supervised by Eduardas Balsys, the then head of the Department of Music Theory of Lithuanian Conservatory (now – Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre). During the Soviet period,

this became a clear indication of the succession and continuation of earlier works in the field of Lithuanian theoretical musicology.

The observance and maintenance of these traditions were virtually essential for musical culture as, for a long time, the science of music in Lithuania had survived on the initiative of individual musicians and composers, and Lithuania had no academic studies in musicology until the end of World War II. It was only in 1945 that the training of musicologists emerged. The Vilnius Conservatoire, renamed in 1949 as the Lithuanian State Conservatoire, started offering musicology as an academic discipline. The folk music class established at the Conservatoire, and, from 1964, the Music Theory Laboratory, gradually began to undertake systematic research into musicology. It was during the year of the establishment of the Laboratory when the young Lithuanian musicologist Algirdas Ambrazas joined the Conservatoire. Prior to that, from 1957, he was working as an editor at the Radio and Television Committee and also at the State Philharmonic; then, from 1959, he worked at the Vilnius Pedagogical Institute. The long and significant professional career of Ambrazas at the State Conservatoire, where, in 1964, he started to work as Head of the Music Theory Laboratory, and, from 1965, as a teacher, was of paramount importance for Lithuanian musicology in terms of accumulating the treasures of European music theory, becoming more mature in the coverage, content and insights into theoretical issues on a professional level despite the censorship and ideologization of musicology established during the Soviet times. Soon, Ambrazas became an active member of the Section of Musicologists founded by the Lithuanian Composers' Union and took a proactive approach while working at the State Conservatoire (now the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre). In the Lithuanian cultural press, Ambrazas' articles of criticism were a bold manifestation of the artistic nature of a scientist, and he was unquestionably among the most progressive Soviet artists.

Unfolded in a spontaneous manner, the scientific activities undertaken by Ambrazas, developed in multiple directions. In 1969, he published a monograph long-awaited by the music community, *Music and the Present: Etudes of Contemporary Music* (*Muzika ir dabartis: šiuolaikinės muzikos etiudai*), which discussed the 'formalist' compositional techniques of 20th-century modernism and the avant-garde that were unacceptable for Soviet arts ideologists. Many people learned from *The Basics of Music Analysis* (*Muzikos kūrinijų analizės pagrindai*) (1977) that were compiled, edited and largely written by Algirdas Ambrazas. During the period of information shortage in the Soviet times, Ambrazas laid the methodological foundations of music theory in his methodological publica-

tions *From Zarlino to Riemann (Nuo Carlino iki Rymano)* (1980), *The Classics of Functional Theory (Funkcinės teorijos klasikai)* (1981) and *The Theory of Harmony in the 20th Century: Germany and Austria (XX amžiaus harmonijos teorija. Vokietija, Austrija)* (1986), all distinguished by a maturity of theoretical thought.

Alongside the above theoretical studies, the desk of Professor Ambrazas displayed books and dissertations based on research into Lithuanian music. These focused on works by the most significant representatives of the schools of Lithuanian composers Juozas Gruodis (1960, 1964, 1965, 1969, 1981, 1985, 1991, 2009) and Julius Juzeliūnas (2002, 2015). We need to admit that these two artists are extremely fortunate because while researching their music and promoting it, the professor never confined himself to musical scores. With the wing of a connoisseur, patron and promoter, Ambrazas widely embraced the personalities, lives, music and activities of the composers: he prepared their legacies – from archives to letters and memoirs – for publishing, and always remembered their significant anniversaries.

It was the school of Lithuanian composers and the research into national modernism that Professor Algirdas Ambrazas devoted a significant part of his life to. In 1969, in Leningrad, Professor defended his candidate dissertation *The Issues of Juozas Gruodis' Musical Heritage Juozo Gruodžio muzikinio palikimo klausimai*); and in 1991, in Moscow, he defended his habilitated doctoral thesis in arts studies titled *Juozas Gruodis and the Formation of the Lithuanian School of Composers (Juozas Gruodis ir lietuvių kompozitorių mokyklos formavimasis* Obviously, Ambrazas was interested in composers who were also educators (e.g., Juozas Gruodis, Eduardas Balsys, Julius Juzeliūnas), who had created the traditions of the Lithuanian national school of music, traditions of the school of composers, and traditions of music pedagogy – in those whose music mostly reflected the fundamental trends of Lithuanian music. It is not a coincidence that the core of Ambrazas' scientific works is inseparable from his conceptions of the national style of music and school of composers. Many of the professor's works – papers, reports, lectures and books – were covered with a constant concern for the development of Lithuanian musical culture, the fostering of national music traditions and their relevant contemporary manifestations.

Inspired by Juzeliūnas, in the late 1970s and 1980s Professor Ambrazas organised a series of lectures on modern 20th-century music, on its aesthetics and compositional techniques, which took place at the Lithuanian State Conservatoire for several years. He invited the most prominent Soviet musicologists of the time (Y. Kholopov, Y. Nazaikinsky, M. Humal, U. Cohn, T. Bershadsкая, L. Normet, V.

Dernov, A. Klotiņš) and composers (S. Slonimsky, A. Schnittke, B. Tishchenko, E. Denisov). Also, this professional partnership of musicians included other European personalities (Claude Ballif, Dorothea Eberlein, Mieczysław Tomaszewski, Helmut Loos). It was a breath of fresh air for the Lithuanian community of professional musicians and students who had been exhausted by the ideology of social realism and the information shortage. The network of advanced musicians, which developed thanks to Ambrazas' efforts, was a complex structure comprising a continuously renewed configuration of macro- and micro-networks. It featured the most important elements – the 'nodes' and the 'links' connecting them, simultaneously distinguishing the active core (centre) of the networks and the more passive periphery. During the Soviet period, the nucleus of the Lithuanian network of musicologists was undoubtedly Professor Algirdas Ambrazas.

The answer to the question of why Ambrazas the musicologist became the 'opinion leader' in the professional network of Lithuanian musicologists of the late Soviet era can be found not only in the organizational documents detailing the activities of the networks but also in letters written by Yuri Kholopov. Here, within a variety of contexts, Ambrazas is referred to as a colleague, a friend and a respected scientist. In his last letter to Ambrazas dated July 18, 1999, Kholopov once again proved the professionalism of Ambrazas as a theoretician: *With my great satisfaction, I would like to acknowledge the precision and quality of [your - G.D.] mindset of a theoretician <...> When you were talking about contemporary music at the Moscow Composers' Union, the then young Yuliya Yevdokimova distinguished you from all other speakers, emphasizing specifically the quality of your mindset.* Knowing how critical and demanding Kholopov, a nurturer of Russian theoretical musicology, was towards himself and others, such a compliment cannot be regarded as mere courtesy expressed by a colleague.

For a decade, Professor Ambrazas worked as the only and the irreplaceable scientific secretary of the Specialized Council, established in Lithuania in 1980, which granted degrees of Candidates of Science to musicologists. Under his supervision, from 1980 to 1990, over 80 musicologists, including 12 Lithuanians, defended their dissertations in the field of arts studies. Actively engaged in common work, despite the heavy burden on his shoulders, Algirdas Ambrazas never became lost in the organizational routine, never fell into the trap of conjuncture or became diverted by extremes. The professor could not agree with the imprudent radicalism of modernism in music and was also opposed to the disruption of tradition. With the globalization of culture in the background, Ambrazas still cherished the idea of folk music culture introduced by Juozas Gruodis and the

development of a national music. His theoretical works can be characterised by a strong sense of national identity. He cultivated the system of values created by Juzeliūnas' teacher, Gruodis, and remained surprisingly consistent in his work.

Ambrasas believed that the true values are those that lay the foundations for a national culture. In works created by composers, this is the creation of a system of relations among the elements of a national style or nationally engaged elements and the continuous renewal of their articulation methods. Another dominant value considered by the professor was the national school of composers established in Lithuania. According to Ambrasas, its core is comprised of music by professional composers that can be characterised by a well-established national style. Ambrasas wrote: 'A national style is a dynamic category. Each prominent creative personality not only expresses the existing features of the national style in their own way, but also develops new ones.' The creation of a national culture – music composing of various forms of musical life and music education – this is what Algirdas Ambrasas' life was devoted to. This can be vividly illustrated by the most significant keywords of his works: national, identity, culture, contemporary, innovative, modern, national style, and school of composers.

The identity of Professor Algirdas Ambrasas, a dignified scientist and a personality with artistic soul, is not easy to define. It would be a challenge to distinguish those boundaries of his activity where so-called fundamental research into musicology starts or ends. This is because, according to the Professor's colleague Jūratė Gustaitė, the works at the centre (science) and its periphery (the edges or margins of science) were developing in dual or even triple directions within Ambrasas' personality. It is this particular horde of other, somewhat secondary jobs that would continuously bombard Ambrasas, which adds colour or saturation to the scientist's portrait – the professor was working as an editor, an encyclopaedist, an irreplaceable reviewer, a translator, a proof-reader for annoying typos and errors, a terminologist, a research organiser, a bold publicist who at times could burst into emotions and, also, a subtle connoisseur and admirer of Lithuanian literature and poetry. His strong desire for literature led the professor throughout his life. For him, the best way to restore his spiritual vitality was to spend "an evening with a book". The professor would read in several languages that he had mastered. After all, it is bliss to read Oscar Milosz's poetry in French, Hesse's and Rilke's texts in German, and Dostoevsky's books in Russian; few Lithuanian intellectuals of the Soviet period could boast such abilities. An artistic grasp of fiction, and poetry in particular, and the soul of the original language, would inspire Ambrasas not only when he was writing his own texts, but also when developing Lithuanian music terminology.



Since this collection of works by Algirdas Jonas Ambrazas comprises his speeches and published articles in foreign languages, it would be reasonable to mention separately the most important facts preceding the musicology conferences organised in Lithuania. The history of the dialogue among the musicians of the Baltic States dates back to the interwar period, to the last year of Lithuanian independence. The first conferences of Baltic musicians were held in 1939 and 1940 at the Baltic Unity Congresses. However, just as the second conference was heading to its conclusion on June 17, 1940, Soviet tanks had for several days been moving across the territory of Lithuania and a marionette ‘people’s government’ was formed leading to 50 years of occupation.

During the late Soviet period, as the Lithuanian Composers’ Union and the State Conservatoire (now the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre) were reviving the tradition of organising international conferences for musicologists, Professor Ambrazas became a proactive participant, both as a speaker and as a member of the audience. From 1967, he made a number of speeches at traditional conferences of musicologists in the Baltic States; from 1989 at conferences of Lithuanian and Polish musicologists; and from 1999 at the Rimantas Janeliauskas International Conferences where *The Principles of Music Composing* (*Muzikos komponavimo principai*) were analysed. Extensive expertise in the fundamentals of musicology, an enthusiastic ambition to promote music by Lithuanian composers and, as mentioned earlier, knowledge of foreign languages, opened the door into the international realm of scholarly events for Professor Ambrazas. For more than five decades (1965-2016), he delivered scientific reports in French, German, Russian and Polish in Krakow, Stockholm, Helsinki, Leningrad and Moscow, Kiev or Lviv, Berlin, Chemnitz, Leipzig, Paris, Riga, Tallinn, Vilnius and other cities. His comprehensive knowledge of musicology and interpersonal skills encouraged him to immerse himself in profound professional discussions with the most influential musicologists from East and West. In a similar way to the subjects of his theoretical courses – Jean-Philippe Rameau, Hugo Riemann, Sigfrid Karg-Elert, Heinrich Schenker – Professor Ambrazas was always striving for profound knowledge, understanding and undeniable scientific reasoning. He was always inquisitive when it came to the latest theories and methodologies of analysis in musicology and applied them critically in his teaching courses and research works. His scientific thought was not rigid or isolated from epistemology – either from formal structuralist methodologies or from a hermeneutic perspective – in modern art studies. Here is another distinguishing feature of the

professor' portrait: Ambrazas would generously share his wisdom and expertise with anyone who was willing to listen to his opinion.

Algirdas Ambrazas made his debut abroad with a memorable speech *Renewal of the Language of Music in the Works of Lithuanian Composers* on December 24, 1965, in Moscow at a conference dedicated to research into Western European music modernism titled *On Assumed and True Innovations in Contemporary Music* that took place for the first time in the USSR. The conference organised by the USSR Composers' Union was already several decades late and discussed issues regarding the new music of the 20th century. Unfortunately, the close scrutiny of the arts ideologists turned the discussion into contempt and denouncement of the new music. Although the ignorant hermeticity of Soviet culture was disturbed already in 1962 by Igor Stravinsky, who had for a short period returned to Russia, and a year later by Luigi Nono, a representative of the radical avant-garde who had arrived to Tallinn and Moscow, the fight against formalism continued to take place in the culture of the USSR. At that time, Lithuanian musicians had, incidentally, already initiated educational trips to the Warsaw Autumn Festival (in 1963, Vytautas Landsbergis and Algirdas Ambrazas attended the festival); however, modern compositional techniques could hardly penetrate composers' musical scores and the theoretical discourse. There was shortage of everything – information, examples, music scores, records, courage – because in the USSR, the products of “bourgeois culture” were labelled as containing a dangerous and harmful charge.

The thoughts of the young musicologist Ambrazas at the conference *On Assumed and True Innovations in Contemporary Music* (1965) caused great confusion, as the author explicitly declared his affiliation with the defenders of dodecaphony. Ambrazas vehemently disputed the statement that ‘the means themselves, including a technique or a method, can determine the artistic value of a work’. He became involved in a fierce, ideologised debate about whether realistic music had to obligatorily be tonal and whether the application of the dodecaphonic system was a feature of ‘formalism’. He invited others to take a bolder look at the future and help composers discover new, not yet employed means of expression.

Within five decades, having participated on the stages of and in behind-the-scenes situations at various foreign conferences, Professor Ambrazas not only brought back to Lithuania his euphoric impressions; he also significantly expanded the circle of Lithuanian friends and colleagues in the profession. Based on events and written correspondence, cooperation with the European musicologi-

cal elite was developing. In addition to the previously mentioned representatives, we can add Hannelore Gerlach, Stefan Keym, Urve Lippus, Albrecht Riethmüller, Klaus Wolfgang Niemöller and many others.

Ambrazas made his debut on the stage of the conference of Baltic States musicologists in 1969, i.e. at the third conference in Tallinn, where he made a presentation on the use of folklore in contemporary music by Lithuanian composers. For more than four decades, he was a regular speaker at these conferences, a participant at the debates and a passionate audience member. In 2003, at the 37th Conference of Baltic Musicologists in Riga, Ambrazas presented the case for the alliance of the two most significant keywords in his research (*National Issues in Outlook and Creativity by Julius Juzeliūnas, Nacionaliniai klausimai Juliaus Juzeliūno pažiūrose ir kūryboje*). And the professor's last completed presentation in April 2016 was prepared for the 45th Conference of Baltic Musicologists dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Juzeliūnas. The presentation was read in the English language in Vilnius by Jūratė Katinaitytė, the then Chair of the Musicology Section of the Lithuanian Composers' Union. The annual conference *The Principles of Music Composition (Muzikos komponavimo principai)* supervised by Lithuanian composers was yet another regular venue for Ambrazas' presentations and meeting with colleagues.

For Ambrazas, the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory in Leningrad was one of the most significant scientific centres. As I have already mentioned, there, in 1969, the professor defended his candidate dissertation, and in 1975 at the international conference *Contemporary Creativity and Folklore* he gave a speech titled *Certain Aspects of the Use of Folklore in Lithuanian Music (Kai kurie folkloro panaudojimo aspektai lietuvių muzikoje)*. Two years later (in 1977), he ran a conversational lecture on Lithuanian music for educators and participants of a professional development course at the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory.

Being fluent in spoken and written German, Ambrazas gave especially many presentations and lectures on Lithuanian music in Germany, starting from the 1980s. As a lecturer, he repeatedly visited the Department of Musicology at the University of Leipzig and the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Institute for Musicology, the H. Eislser Academy of Music in Berlin, the Chemnitz-Zwickau University of Technology, the Leipzig Conservatory (now the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy University of Music and Theatre in Leipzig) and others.

Another destination for Ambrazas' scientific journeys was Scandinavia. In 1978, in Stockholm, Sweden, he made the presentation *Research into Folk Music and its Fostering in Soviet Lithuania (Liaudies muzikos tyrimas ir puoselėjimas*

soviety Lietuvoje). In autumn 1991, the professor gave lectures at the University of Helsinki and presented the theme *Fight for the Freedom of the Nation in Operas by Lithuanian Composers* (*Kova už tautos laisvę lietuvių kompozitorių operose*) in the French language. By the way, within the framework of the same journey, at the University of Helsinki, he made a presentation on the Lithuanian composers of the 20th century Juozas Gruodis and Julius Juzeliūnas, but this time in German. Here I must add that at the end of 1990, during the period of the struggle for independence, Ambrazas introduced the origins of the Lithuanian school of composers to Polish composers and musicologists in Krakow.

A close relationship with Ukrainian musicians was established through a close friend of Ambrazas, Nina Gerasimova-Persidskaya, a professor and habilitated doctor at the Kiev P. Tchaikovsky Conservatory. The two professors exchanged lectures on Lithuanian and Ukrainian music for students and professionals. In 1970, in Kiev, at the Ukrainian Composers' Union, Professor Ambrazas made a comprehensive presentation on contemporary Lithuanian music illustrating it with analysis and examples. In February 1981, he conducted a series of theoretical lectures at the Lviv Conservatory, and the audience was introduced to Sigfrid Karg-Elert's theoretical system of polar harmony, which was hardly known in the USSR at that time, and Hermann Erpf's theories of harmony and forms in music.

One of the objects of Professor Ambrazas' research was the "formalist" theory of reduction by Heinrich Schenker, banned in the Soviet period. Having obtained copies of Schenker's most prominent works (*Der freie Satz*, *Der Meisterwerk in der Musik*, copies of *Tonwille* magazines and others) from various foreign libraries and thoroughly studied the sources, he ran lectures on this topic and held regular discussions with Mart Humal, Yuri Kholopov and other theorists.

France, in particular Fontainebleau near Paris, where the professor was searching for traces of Oscar Milosz¹, became for Ambrazas a distinguished centre of cultural and scientific attraction. In April 1987, he made the presentation *La musique lituanienne* (Lithuanian Music) at the Institute of Oriental Languages and Cultures at the Paris National Conservatory as well as for the Lithuanian community in Paris. During the year independence was regained, on February 20, 1991, the professor, in the French language, introduced his French colleagues to the struggle for freedom that permeated even the scores of Lithuanian operas (*Fight for the Freedom of the Nation in Operas by Lithuanian Composers*). I have

¹ See: Algirdas Ambrazas. Gėlės prie Oskaro Milašiaus kapo, in: *Algirdas Jonas Ambrazas: Muzikos tradicijos ir dabartis*, compiled by Gražina Daunoravičienė, Vilnius: Lietuvos kompozitorių sąjunga, 2007, p. 334–343.

already said that Algirdas Ambrazas made speeches in various languages at international conferences taking place in Lithuania as well as in the above-mentioned foreign countries. However, the majority of his presentations and public lectures have never been published. Having become scientific publications, some of the presentations were published abroad in collections of musicology articles.

A published collection of scientific texts on these genres in Lithuania was a dream that Professor Algirdas Ambrazas himself failed to implement. He had, incidentally, thought about the title of his book *De musica*. This may have been an allusion to the works of the great predecessors in the field of music theory. Already in 388 AD, the name *De musica* was introduced to music manuscripts by St. Augustine (Aurelius Augustinus, 354–430), a theologian, where in his six-part treatise and textbook titled *De Musica* he regards music as a science on how to “correctly modulate, how to play or sing in a harmonious way”. It is one of the earliest definitions of the art of music that evoked the aesthetic influence of music. Also, Ambrazas, in terms of some statements and beliefs, might have been attached to Boethius (Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, ca. 480–525 AD), the author of *De institutione musica*, also referred to as a music guide, who consistently regarded music as an intellectual activity. In his treatise, Boethius wrote: *Music is so naturally united with us that we cannot be free of it even if we so desired. For this reason, the power of the intellect ought to be summoned, so that this art, innate through nature, may also be mastered and comprehended through knowledge.*²

This collection *De musica* reflects the key interests of the musicologist Algirdas J. Ambrazas as well as the major trends and objects of his research. Unlike publications in the Lithuanian language that comprise the collection *Algirdas Ambrazas: The Traditions and Present of Music (Algirdas Ambrazas: Muzikos tradicijos ir dabartis)* (2007), the majority of the texts in this new collection have been intended for foreign readers. Undoubtedly, Professor Ambrazas, in his reports, had a purpose to spread knowledge about Lithuanian musical culture and promote it abroad. The chronology of the texts covers more than five decades – from the 1960s of the Soviet era to several decades following the restoration of independence, a period that has also left an indelible mark on the works of musicologists.

The first part of *De musica* analyses various aspects of Lithuanian musical culture: folkloristics, individual genres of music, and works by famous Lithuanian composers (especially Gruodis and Juzeliūnas). The greatest attention of

² Boethius. *De institutione musica*, I, 1. Quoted from: Aušra Grigaravičiūtė. *Musica Tota*, in: *Naujasis Židinys – Aidai*, 2003, Nr. 5, p. 248.

the author is focused on the issue of the nationality of music and development of the school of Lithuanian composers. The second part of the book is related to Ambrazas' research into the theory of music. Here, the most attention is given to analysis of the systems developed by 20th- century harmony theorists Heinrich Schenker and Sigfrid Karg-Elert. In addition, this part reflects Professor Ambrazas' pedagogical expertise, promotes the principle of historicism in teaching, and reveals the issues of music criticism. The texts selected in this book have been grouped according to topic, without strictly following the chronology of the writing or the order of the foreign language they were written in. The illustrations were collected and photographed by the compiler of the book in 2018 at professor's home archive.

In the process of preparing the texts for publication, most of them were slightly edited, shortened and conscientiously revised by the professor. He was always extremely demanding towards himself, his work, and the content, form and style of his texts. In one of his last interviews, Ambrazas said that self-criticism and tolerance had always been the most important features in his work.

The collection *De musica* is dedicated to the 85th anniversary of the birth of the prominent Lithuanian musicologist Professor Algirdas Jonas Ambrazas, and to the 60th anniversary of his musicological and pedagogical activity.

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