

SERGEI KURYOKHIN AND AVANT-GARDE MUSIC: 1980-90s

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First I must mention the difference between the 1st edition (1985) and the 2nd edition (1994) of Frederick Starr's *Red & Hot*. This work is one of the best books about Russian Soviet jazz. The 1st edition of it describes in detail about the history of Russian jazz from its beginning to the 1980s. The 2nd edition provides a supplement in the 14th chapter "Emancipation and Pluralism, 1980-1990." In this chapter, we can first meet Sergei Kuryokhin. This is a good chapter for information about Russian contemporary jazz, but we can't see the last years of Kuryokhin in 1990-1996. Furthermore, as a matter of course, we can't know about the relationship between Kuryokhin and Japan.

In 1989 I saw the stage Kuryokhin on stage for the first time, then I met him at his hotel and had a private interview. I remember well question "What do you think about the influence of KBERIU on your work?" and his reply with a smile "I love it, but there is no influence of KBERIU on me. If I talk about influence to my music, it comes from artists like Art Ensemble of Chicago, Sun Ra, McCoy Tyner." Soon I understood that he knew contemporary avant-garde jazz very well. He also knew noise music, free jazz, punk rock and various ethnic music from around the world.

In August, 1995 we met again in Tokyo. At that time Kuryokhin was studying Yukio Mishima and old sacramental music of Japan and some bands of noise music in Japan. While staying here, he bought more than 200 CK titles. When we met again in Petersburg that November, he already had listened to all of 200 CKs many times, and because he already understood their contents and composition, he gave almost all of them away to his friends.

Thus he absorbed different genres of music, various cultures and many people's influence in his mind. Therefore it's difficult to attempt to describe his art by specific terms of one genre or one culture. That is a useless attempt. But I will try to describe it in the context of acceptance in Japan. Maybe that's why I appreciate Kuryokhin.

1. RUSSIAN JAZZ IN JAPAN

(1) Soviet Jazz Seen from Japanese Eyes

In the beginning of the history of Japanese jazz, the Nihonbashi MITSUKASHI musical band was established in 1909 (Meiji 42). In 1921, Fukutaro Hatano formed Hatano orchestra and appeared at the dance hole Kagetsuen, which is the first dancing place in Japan, and gained popularity. And Ichiro Ida formed the complete jazz band "Laughing Stars" first in Japan in 1923 (Taisho

12). Jazz music was flowing all over Japan until World War II broke out in the early stages of Showa after Taisho. Rance halls and cafes overflowed with young men and women, and everyone danced to jazz. Jazz as dance music was the main culture of Japan.¹

Now, it is well known, that Russian literature at this time was very often read in Japan, and the modern literature of Japan was affected. However, most Russian researchers of Japan don't introduce the jazz from Russia of this time. It should be known at least that Adam Kobach was a pioneer of Japanese jazz, as a member of the jazz band "Cherry land jazz orchestra" which Ichiro Ida formed in 1925 (Taisho 14).

About the history of jazz in Russia, there are the works of S. Frederick Starr, *Red & Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union* (1985), and Aleksandr Medvedev and Olga Medvedeva (eds.), *Sovetskii Kzhaz* (1987).

Next, I want to describe the Russian jazz seen through Japanese eyes.

In the summer of 1922, Valentin Parnakh formed "The first eccentric orchestra in the Soviet Union: The Jazz band of Valentin Parnakh." This jazz band of New Orleans style had a big influence on the artists of Russian avant-garde of those days. When the band of Parnakh appears on the stage of the "Trust KE" which Meyerhold directed in 1924, it was said that his jazz music won high popularity.

In Moscow and Leningrad, and in other cities in Russia, many jazz bands performed, and young men and women danced the Fox trot in the halls of hotels, restaurants, and movie theaters. Jazz band led by musicians such as Aleksandr Tsfasman, Leonid Utesov, Aleksandr Varlamov, Leopold Teplitskii, and Eddie Rosner developed jazz into music beyond more dance music. Soviet Jazz in the 1930s is the height of its prosperity, and Stalin did not exclude jazz. Conversely, jazz was used for national policy as the theater of Leonid Utesov.

Leonid Utesov (1895-1982) was introduced also in Japan. The musical comedy "Veselye rebiata [The Happy Guys]" (1934) directed by Gregorii Aleksandrov was shown at the Hibiya theater of Tokyo also in July, 1935 (Showa 10) and the Japanese spectators were very enthusiastic. This movie had a big influence also on the stage musicals of Japan.

In 1941 (Showa 16), when jazz was suppressed in Japan, Russian researcher Keiji Kise who was introducing the Soviet culture to Japan energetically, wrote an essay "Jazz song on the hill of sparrow" in his book *The Russia and the Russians*.² He reported that jazz songs were overflowing in the cities of Moscow. In the same year, the famous journalist Masao Maruyama wrote an essay "Moscow dances" which is one of the chapters of his book *Soviet News*.³

1 Kôichi Uchida, *Nihon no jazu shi* [The History of Japanese Jazz] (Tokyo: Suin-gu-Jânaru sha, 1976); Masahisa Segawa, *Jazu de odotte* [Rance with Jazz] (Tokyo: Saimaru shuppankai, 1983).

2 Keiji Kise, *Roshiya oyobi roshiya jin* [The Russia and the Russians] (Tokyo: Ksaka yagô shoten, 1941).

3 Masao Maruyama, *Sovêto tsûshin* [Soviet News] (Tokyo: Hata shoten, 1941).

“Anytime I walk along a park, or look in a cinema hall, a department store, or a barbershop, and certainly in a restaurant, I always hear the domestic fashion jazz song of the Soviet Union ‘My Marsha (female name)’ ‘Natasha (similarly female name).’ The kinds of jazz bands are also abundant. Not only the jazz of domestic Utesov, but also the Lensky jazz of Poland, the jazz of Czechoslovakia, woman jazz, and dwarf jazz were imported one after the other. It seemed that Moscow was getting drunk with jazz. If the broadcasting station in Moscow which normally broadcasts were only agitation and propaganda includes jazz in the program, the broadcasting stations far away in Caucasus or Ukraine pour orders for jazz in to Moscow, then a scramble for jazz records starts among them. If we traveled to the health resort in South Russia, jazz is playing cheerfully – ‘Poka, poka [good-bye]’ – without upsetting irritated people who cannot buy a ticket in the station. Jazz heat overflows with the Soviet Union whole country. There is planned economy also in jazz in the Soviet Union where all advances by planned economy, but great passion is shown in only this jazz section, and even carrying out no advertisement, the plan attains 300%, then the people’s enjoyment of jazz grows as fast as its lively tempo...”

In the Soviet Union and Japan, jazz was born at the same time and was in fashion similarly. However, contrary to jazz having been forbidden in Japan in wartime, Soviet jazz survived as momentary amusement to encourage the soldiers at the front and to send the message that the war would be over soon and they would be able to return home.

After World War II ends, the situation was reversed. Although jazz in Japan revived from the U.S. camps, in Russia, the anti-United States campaign started and jazz was thoroughly eliminated as bourgeois music. For example, the saxophone was seized only because the Germans invented it, and a mountain of seized sax was made. However, this jazz exclusion movement that continued till the first half of the 50s, did not reach every district. The bureaucrats relegated to such districts included many jazz fans, and they protected the jazzman secretly. For example, the band of Eddie Rosner was treated favorably in the Koryma concentration camp, and the high officials there were listening to a performance of the highest level of jazz of that time every night.

The musicians of Japan detained in Siberia were favorably treated when they performed Russian folk songs. Matsujiro Azuma, who was the best clarinetist of prewar days, also performed in the Soviet Union army camp and became popular as “an artist.” Yoritoyo Inoue, who was a Japanese symphony orchestra’s member, remembers in his *The music life of Siberia* (Nauka, 1949),⁴ that there was also a jazz band under exclusive contract with a movie theater in Vladivostok.

“The Usuri jazz band under exclusive contract with the Usuri movie theater in Vladivostok, came to our concentration camp in the summer of 1947. We were very glad to have the opportunity to hear a true orchestra of the Soviet

4 Yoritoyo Inoue, *Shiberia no ongaku seikatsu* [The Music Life of Siberia] (Tokyo: Nauka, 1949).

Union for the first time. When the scheduled time came, in addition to a party, 18 musicians were invited to represent of the Soviet Union army officers of concentration camp service and us, and they passed through the gate of the concentration camp. At 2:00 p.m. the curtain of the jazz performance in the open-air theater of the Vladivostok concentration opened.” Though Inoue felt the orthodox symphonic jazz was unrefined when performed with the Russian folk song in that theme, he was considerably impressed by the performance of the jazzmen of Russia.

In 1962 (Showa 37), Bennie Goodman was invited to Russia as a musical envoy and the theaters were sold out each time, and it became a big event which is still remembered in the history of Soviet music. In the same year, Hiroshi Watanabe & Star Kusters from Japan performed in ten big cities of the Soviet Union. Hiroshi Kimura, who was a famous Russia researcher, wrote about this time in his work *Soviet Frank* (1963)⁵: “A theater in Kdessa overflowed with spectators, and people who could not get inside surround the theater, and they were listening for the sound when the doors opened, and it could be heard.”

In October in the same year, the first jazz festival was held in Moscow. The Soviet jazz of these days escaped from mere dance music, and began to follow the way of music as “official art.”

(2) *Acceptance of Russian New Jazz in Japan*

A record of the Russian new jazz was imported to Japan in 1981 by Leo record, and the interest in the avant-garde music of Russia began to increase among some music fans in Japan. The attention to the music of Ganelin trio and Kuryokhin had started all over the world. In 1987, Leonid Chizhik (piano) was invited to “Summer music festival of Tokyo.” This was the first performance in Japan by a jazz pianist whom the Soviet Union government authorized. In June, 1988, jazz critic Teruto Soejima was invited to the 11th Moscow jazz festival and he learned about the existence of Russian new jazz: groups such as “Arkhangel’sk.” He showed an 8 mm film of Russian new jazz at this time in various places in Japan, and gave a lecture about the avant-garde jazz of Russia. In December of the same year, in the magazine *Chaika* (No.10), Masami Suzuki introduced three books about the jazz of Russia; Leo Feigin (ed.), *Russian Jazz: New Identity* (1985), S. Frederick Starr, *Red & Hot* (1985), Aleksandr Medvedev and Olga Medvedeva (eds.), *Sovetskii Kzhaz* (Soviet Jazz) (1987).

On 5-8, April, 1989, “The opened ground level” was held in Tokyo. It was planned by famous musician Yuji Takahashi. Here the musicians of Russian new jazz performed on the stage for the first time in Japan. The musicians from Russia were Sergei Kuryokhin (piano), Valentina Ponomareva (vocal), Vladimir Tarasov (percussion), Vladimir Chekashin (sax), from Japan, Yuji Takahashi (synthesizer), Ayuo Takahashi (guitar), Haruna Miyake (piano), Ka-

5 Hiroshi Kimura, *Sobieto zakkubaran* [Soviet Frank] (Tokyo: Shincho sha, 1963).

zutoki Umezu (sax), from America, John Zorn (reeds), Bill Laswell (base). Moreover, as the same time as this concert, Sergei Kuryokhin's "Polynesia" (VKJ-1209) was released from Victor (original recording is Melodiia. 1988 recording). This concert revolutionized recognition of the Russian new jazz in Japan. "What are you expecting from this concert" – Takahashi replied to this question in this way: "Yes. In my situation now, I want to play truly energetic, fresh music. I want to create music freely, doing something together with such men, without adhering to a genre called jazz."

In the same year, "Jazz from the USSR" (MFCK-890) was released from "WAVE" (original recording is Melodiia in 1985). Besides the standard jazz numbers, the performance of Igor Butman (tenor sax), Leonid Chizhik (piano), etc. is also recorded. It was the first CR version anthology which introduces the complete Russia jazz.

The following is described in the style of a chronicle.

1991: Artemii Troitskii *Back in the USSR* was translated and published. (Japanese title: *Koes Gorbachev like rock?: Russia rocks*)

In May, 1991, the magazine *Eureka: a special issue The Soviet Union Culture Map* came out. In this issue, Masami Suzuki wrote "Russian jazz dash on the top of the world" about the short history of Russian jazz, and new jazz festival "Arkhangel'sk Jazz Rays 90."

In May, 1991, in the magazine *Gendaishi-techo [Modern-poetry Notebook]*, Teruto Soejima wrote "The Soviet jazz appearance."

The summer of 1991, a group "Arkhangel'sk" visited Japan and had a concert tour in 12 cities around Japan. The live recording at this time was released the next year as a CR. "Jazz group Arkhangel'sk: Live in Japan" (Nippon Crown, CRCJ-9102).

October, 1991, in the magazine *Soviet Research* Masami Suzuki wrote "Jazz and Rock as seen in Soviet popular music."

In October, 1991, Keizo Inoue (sax) participated in a Arkhangel'sk jazz festival.

1992: In July, 1992, Sainkho Namchurak (vocal) visited Japan and she sang a Khoomei with jazz musicians for the first time in Japan.

In October, 1992, the band "Ton-Kurami" – Masahiko Sato (piano), Midori Takada (percussion), and Kang Tae Hwang (Sax) – participated in the Arkhangel'sk jazz festival and the Vilnius jazz festival.

1993: In 1993, Timothy W. Ryback *Rock Around the Bloc* was translated and published. That Japanese title is *Freedom, Equality, and Rock*.

In 1993, in the magazine *Jazz Critique* (No.78) the interview of jazz critic Aleksei Batashev and Nikolai Kmitriev was carried. In the same number, Masami Suzuki wrote "The jazz journalism in Russia: history, people and tone of argument."

In May, 1993, Ryoji Hojito (piano) participated in the Novosibirsk music festival

- 1994: In 1994, in the magazine *MUSIC T&KAY* (No.20); special edition *Contemporary Music of Russia*, Teruto Soejima wrote “The free jazz scene of the old Soviet Union: Between Vilnius and Arkhangel’sk.”
In October, 1994, Ryoji Hojito participated in the Arkhangel’sk jazz festival.
In 1994, Teruto Soejima’s book *The Current of Present-age Jazz*⁶ was published.
- 1995: In summer, 1995, Sergei Kuryokhin visited Japan again and participated in “the Yokohama jazz promenade” with Keshavan Maslak (sax).
In November, 1995, Shoji Hano & “Polybreath percussive band” participated in the Vilnius jazz festival and later they played at Chaikovskii hall in Moscow.
- 1996: In July, 1996, in the magazine *Jazz Critique* (No.88) An interview and discography of Sergei Kuryokhin are carried.
- 1997: In July, 1997, Sainkho visited Japan for the third time.
In October, big group “Sibusa-Shirazu” participated in the Arkhangel’sk jazz festival.
- 1998: In September, 1998, Mitsumasa Nonaka (drums) participated in the Memorial Concert of Sergei Kuryokhin in Moscow.
In October, 1998, “Trio Vladimir” visited Japan. The members of trio are Vladimir Rezitskii (Sax), Vladimir Tarasov (percussion) and Vladimir Miller (piano). The jazz critic and organizer Nikolai Kmitriev who visited Japan with this trio and gave lectures about the new jazz of Russia in Waseda University and other sites. At this time, the CK of pianist Masahiko Sato with Trio Vladimir recorded, and the next year two CKs “Sonatina” (BAJ Record, BJCK-0009) and “ $\sqrt{3}$ ” (BAJ Record and BJCK-0010) are released.
In November, 1998, group “Vershiki da Koreshiki” and Sainkho visited Japan for the music festival in Niigata.
- 1999: In October, 1999, Ryoji Hojito played in Moscow and later participated in the Vilnius jazz festival.
- 2000: In July, 2000, poet K.A. Prigov performed in collaboration with jazz musicians of Japan in Tokyo.

(3) Kuryokhin in Japan

Sergei Kuryokhin is most often introduced in acceptance of the Russian new jazz in Japan and there are so many fans of him in Japan. In Japan, almost all of his records and CK were imported and there are also his record collectors. Compared with other musicians of Russia, there are more CKs of Kuryokhin on sale by the Japanese labels, and many of his interviews have been carried by magazines.

⁶ Teruto Soejima, *Gendai jazu no chôryû* [The Current of Present-age Jazz] (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1994).

I will introduce some data in regards to his recordings and interviews.

a) Records: There are three CDs of Kuryokhin which were released in Japan.

- 1) When the concert in April, 1989, “The opened ground level” was carried out, at the same time “Polynesia” (VKJ-1209) was released from Victor (original recording is Melodiia in 1988).
- 2) In the same year, the CK of the duet with Henry Kaiser “Popular Science” (RYKRFISK and MSI-20001) was released.
- 3) In 1996, Kuryokhin’s posthumous work in a duet with Keshavan Maslak “Friends Afar” (Sound Wave and SW-01) was released.

b) The interview, introduction report, criticism

1989: The interview at the time of “The opened ground level” was carried in *Jazz Life* (June, 1989). In it Kuryokhin said about the music of John Coltrane: “I was surprised very much to discover that there was such a new idea about music, about time. Till then, I had the image that music is like a square, and music begins another song when one song is finished, or from one period to another period. But in the new view, they think that music and time is in the ‘Flow.’ It was very wonderful for me to catch the idea of the music which flows continuously.”

1991: Masami Suzuki wrote “Raging nature and chaos: creation laboratory of Kuryokhin” in the book *Soviet Culture Watching* (ed. by Sadayoshi Igeta).⁷ He also introduced the criticism of Tat’iana Kidenko.

In June, 1992, Teruto Soejima saw “Pop Mekhanika” first in the Moers jazz festival in Germany and was very impressed, then he showed the document film of this festival and gave a lecture in various places in Japan.

1996: In July, 1996, in the magazine *Jazz Critique* (No.88) An interview and discography of Sergei Kuryokhin are carried: “Yes, I am interested in all music. I am interested in the music in the world of all times. It is necessary for me to know all music and to hear it.”

In September, 1996, in the magazine *Eureka* Masami Suzuki wrote the mourning report “Eternal – incomplete: Mourning of Sergei Kuryokhin.”

Web site “Prospect Mira” in Japan introduced the report about the Kuryokhin mourning live in October 1996 in Moscow. Next year this site translated the last interview of Kuryokhin in the Magazine *Medved’ [Bear]* and opened it to the public by their homepage.⁸

1998: In 1998, KJ Yoshihide Kotomo was invited to Kuryokhin mourning festival in Moscow.

7 Sadayoshi Igeta, ed., *Sobieto karuchâ wocchingu* [Soviet Culture Watching] (Tokyo: Mado sha, 1991).

8 <http://www.win.ne.jp/Tprospect/>

1999: In February, 1999 in the magazine *Eureka* Masami Suzuki wrote about the latest news concerning Kuryokhin “Sergei’s communication by the thrown bottle.”

2. THE HISTORY AND FEATURES OF RUSSIAN NEW JAZZ: FROM THE 1960S TO THE PRESENT

The Rock music of the Soviet Union spread rapidly in underground in the 1960s. What way did jazz follow on the other hand? When the “Free Jazz” of Ornette Coleman was released in 1960, in the Soviet Union, the jazz of a bop style was still known only among some of the people. In the Soviet Union, the swing style of jazz was still the height of prosperity in the first half of the 1960s, and a jazz club and cafe were made one after another. Young men enjoyed jazz for the dance style rather than the music. “Zvyozdnyi bilet [The starry ticket]” and a “Kollegi [colleagues]” of Vasilii Aksyonov describe exactly young men’s mode of everyday-life.

In the middle of the 1960s, jazz festivals came to be held in various cities including Moscow and Leningrad. Jazz came to into fashion across a remarkable range of people. However, the decline of the earlier jazz craze had also started simultaneously. The young men of the 1950s were absorbed in jazz, therefore there was the resistance to a ready-made criterion and ready-made adult society, and a longing for European and American culture. However, when they got married, had children and started home life, the taste for the music among teenagers in that time moved from the socially accepted jazz to the unofficial rock music. The 1960s were the time of the change of generation from jazz to rock.

Jazz degenerated to old dance music and came to be disliked by the teenager. In the second half of the 1960s, Jazz came to be liked by the intelligent and those over 20. The jazz of a bop style began to be performed at the festival of Czechoslovakia in 1968. At that time, the jazz festival, which was held periodically, had spread to many cities, such as Khabarovsk, Fergana, Erevan, and Kuibyshev. Thus, the jazz which progressed in the local city became one of the factors which produced the present avant-garde jazz. The professional Jazz group – Combo and big band – jazz bands with less than 10 members which were commercially successful in Moscow and Leningrad, were technically excellent and made refined music to listen to, but there was completely no newness in it. The bud of new jazz grew up in the local city, especially, in the north – Arkhangel’sk and the east – Novosibirsk and Alma-Ata in Central Asia and the west – Vilnius (Lithuania) and Riga (Latvia). Since other countries were close to the border, it was possible to hear a foreign music program through radio. Therefore, the music of a new style could be absorbed. Moreover, the jazz in the local city was able to become the music based on customs peculiar to the land and ethnic music. The nature of an area and its sound are inseparable.

Vladimir Rezitkii who was the leader of a group “Arkhangel’sk” became acquainted with drummer Vladimir Tarasov in 1967. The two musicians stud-

ied the music of Bartok and Stravinskii and began to play experimental music soon. V. Tarasov moved to Vilnius two years later and formed a trio with Viacheslav Ganelin and Vladimir Chekashin who were performing mostly avant-garde music at that time. On the other hand, V. Rezitskii remained in Arkhangel'sk and formed the group "Arkhangel'sk" in 1972. Because they received the information from Europe early, the performance of the trio of V. Ganelin, V. Chekashin and V. Tarasov often used an electronic sound and developed an experience which was conscious of the characteristics of theater such as dadaism and Russian avant-garde. After that, V. Ganelin and V. Rezitskii met at the jazz festival of Konetsk in 1973. Unfortunately, we aren't able to know what the group "Arkhangel'sk" was actually performing in the 1970s, because their recordings were not preserved.

In 1970-80s, when rock bands were advancing rapidly, Sax player Aleksei Kozlov, who lived in Moscow, positively included electric guitar and electronic musical instruments in his music, and crossed over jazz and rock in his music. He is still playing an active part in live performances and recently published his memoirs.

The young Sergei Kuryokhin who started with rock music and jazz in Leningrad, formed "Pop Mekhanika" in the early 1980s. And he created the large spectacle show developed freely from classic, jazz, rock and performance. The music of A. Kozlov and S. Kuryokhin does not seem unrefined to an urban audience, because of the influences on their music from Moscow and Leningrad.

As jazz investigator Efim Barban also pointed out, the features of the new jazz of Russia consist of the following three points.⁹

- 1) The bop style of jazz which flowed in from Europe is the foundation of new jazz.
- 2) The tradition of Russian avant-garde was revived. That is, it is in carrying out a collage of sound like the photo montage of A. Rodchenko, constructing music like the pictures of constructivism, performing like the theater of those days, etc.
- 3) Reconsideration of racial traits and traditional culture. A sound developed which was conscious of folklore. From recognition that his racial roots must be reflected also in the music, a musician develops the carnival stage which was conscious of the folklore in all parts of Russia.

By contact with foreign culture, the artists of Russian avant-garde discovered the primitiveness of Russia, and rediscovered public culture, such as painted shop signs and lubok. However, the Soviet jazz in 1970s had little direct contact to foreign music, but many musicians collected information frantically and the music was changed as musicians followed the primitive aspects of Russia again.

⁹ Efim Barban, "Soviet Jazz: New Identity," Leo Feigin, ed., *Russian Jazz: New Identity* (London, Melbourne, NY, 1985), pp.11-22.

For example, there is the mass entertainment called “Estrada” in Russia, of which the prototype was made at the end of the 19th century. It is a variety hall of the Russian style with a variety show of pleasant programs – a light comedy, a chat, a musical instrument performance, magic, acrobatics, a puppet play, etc. There is also a performance of jazz. Therefore, probably, jazz was able to make an image as public-music.¹⁰ Leonid Utesov was the first musician who used dramatic jazz with the chief aim of entertaining the spectators. Probably, stage performance of the new jazz of the present age including “Arkhangel’sk” may also be referred to as having inherited the traditions of Estrada and L. Utesov.

3. SHORT HISTORY OF KURYOKHIN

In 16 June 1954 Kuryokhin was born in Murmansk. His father was the captain of a submarine and his mother was a mathematics teacher.¹¹ His family settled in Leningrad in 1971, after changing their address to Moscow and the Crimea. Kuryokhin began to study a piano from the time of 4 years old. He began the Rock band with his schoolmates in 1964. He knew jazz through VкA, and became crazy for this music. In 1969, he began to perform jazz. He studied the classical music at the college of culture in Leningrad.¹² He got

10 Yu. Saul’skii tried to define the music of “Estrada” and said as follows: “Трудность и в отсутствии сложившейся терминологии. Эстрадно-симфонический оркестр, вокально-инструментальный ансамбль, джаз – понятия вполне конкретные, но если говорить об эстрадной музыке в целом, то точного термина пока нет. Понятие «молодежная музыка» неправомерно ограничивает музыкальные интересы молодежи. Термины «масс-культура» и «контр-культура», вполне закономерные в применении к определенным течениям на Западе, не следует, по-моему, употреблять в связи с нашим искусством. Даже термин «субкультура», более нейтральный, казалось бы, тоже не очень приемлем, так как он может принизить значимость многих интересных явлений нашей эстрадной музыки, их роль в развитии советского музыкального искусства в целом. Приходится пользоваться аморфным термином «эстрадная музыка».” (Саульский Ю. Эстрадная музыка // Эстрада: что? где? зачем?. М.: Искусство, 1988. С.194.)

11 See to the following book for details. Artemii Troitskii, *Tusovka: Who’s who in the New Soviet Rock Culture* (London, NY, 1990), pp.64-73.

12 Alfred Schnittke described the relationship between classical music and jazz, and recognized that his work is learning a lot from jazz. “Джаз многому учит. Он освобождает мышление музыкантов от закостеневших догм и шаблонов. Джаз многое открывает и «разрешает», как бы подталкивая нас ко всякого рода поискам, изменениям привычного. Раньше мне казалось: в искусстве композиции важно прежде всего как произведение сделано, важно совершенство выполнения художественного плана. Я плохо представлял возможности, скрытые в самом процессе создания и интерпретации музыки, недооценивал значение ошибки, отступления от правила. Теперь я понимаю, что «ошибка» или обращение с правилом на грани риска и есть та зона, где возникают и развиваются

married during enrollment in school. He participated in the top rock band “Sankt-Peterburg” in Leningrad in those days, but after his father died and his daughter was born, he had to leave the college and went into the professional pop band. He made a provincial tour around the northern part of Russia, and earned his living expenses. Although this was a professional band, the pop music called “VIA”(Vocal instrumental ensemble) which the Soviet Union government officially recognized in those days, were very outdated music. Kuryokhin disliked this tedious, low-level music throughout his life.

Kuryokhin returned to Leningrad and participated in the band of Anatorii Vapirov. Anatorii Vapirov who is a multireed player and now living in Bulgaria, was one of the leaders of free jazz, along with the Ganelin trio in those days. Being highly educated in his composition and performance, Kuryokhin polished his technique further and the speed of which he played the piano became the top in the Soviet Union. In 1981, his first solo album “The Ways of Freedom” was released from Leo records in Britain, and the name of Sergei Kuryokhin came to be known also on the western side. And from 1981 to 84, he participated in the rock group “Akvarium [Aquarium]” of Boris Grebenshchikov, and played an active part in the group’s keyboard arrangements. He formed the performance group “Pop Mekhanika (Popular Mechanics)” and tried various experiments. Musicians of classic, rock, jazz, folk songs, and all fields performed with “Pop Mekhanika.” The sax player Vladimir Chekashin and percussionist Vladimir Tarasov, who were the members of Ganelin trio, Gypsy singer Valentina Ponomaryova, Boris Grebenshchikov, legendary guitarist Victor Tsoi, who was leader of the group “Kino,” etc... so many big stars were involved in the music. Furthermore, Kuryokhin called street performers, clowns and even animals, like cows and rabbits to the stage of “Pop Mekhanika,” and created a carnival space of chaos. Every concert of “Pop Mekhanika” was a very surprising performance and it swept over the European and American music world, and a sensation started in various places. The group also participated in the project of Nam June Paik at Seoul Olympic Games. In 1995, Kuryokhin made the program “Stereo = Shostakovich” in Berlin. He was also involved in the work of a music program on television.

Kuryokhin constructed many various projects. In recent years, he was dealing with about 20 movie’s music. The movie in which Avirov starred “Mr. Resigner,” was shown also in Japan. Kuryokhin composed the music of the rock opera style which was exactly in the wonderful image of this movie. In 1996, he prepared to compose for the opera “Koktor Zhivago” with film director Sergei Solov’yov at Bol’shoi Theatre. Kuryokhin said, “The whole culture is going to change greatly now” and his projects tended to become something on a worldwide scale. But he died in 9 July 1996.

животворные элементы искусства.” (*Шнитке А. Нужен поиск, нужны изменения привычного // Советский джаз. Проблемы. События. Мастера. Сборник статей. М.: Сов. композитор, 1987. С.68.*)

4. ACHIEVEMENTS F “P P MEKHANIKA”

What did Kuryokhin think about jazz?

In the interview (*Medved'*, 1996, No.3), Kuryokhin talked about the jazz which he usually listened to in his later years: “Jazz. Lots of jazz, more and more of it. I listen to music which has some sort of completeness in terms of time, the one which was created, developed, gave us its classical models and, strictly speaking, died. Jazz is an absolutely confined culture, which is in my mind associated with a particular space, time and tradition. I enjoy looking at the photographs of young jazzmen from the 1950's. Here they stand, Coltrain, Hank Mobley, Joe Henderson. I feel very cozy inside jazz. [...] And for me it is a special world which has given us its classic names and then has sealed itself off.”

Although jazz was indispensable for Kuryokhin when he began his new music, jazz was not all of his music. Kuryokhin immediately tried to create an experimental band of polyphony, polystyle and polygenre – “Pop Mekhanika.” As an example, I want to introduce the concert of Pop Mekhanika in Sweden (1988).

A concert as a large spectacle show unfolded for 2 hours. Two voices (one is Kuryokhin) begin to sing a song imitating Khoomei (song of a throat), then a rock band performs hard rock in a lively way. Next, the band of free jazz intrudes and noise is raised. After a while, the stage turns around and a string quartet plays classical music. Rock starts again and a beautician begins cutting hair on the same stage. Men and women wearing strange dress and a group wearing operating room attire arrive and begin to dance. A tractor and construction workers cross the stage front and go. Seven ducks take a walk on the stage before a female opera singer sings an aria solemnly. A military band marches in and plays a brave march... There is no anticipating what will happen next on stage. Twisted, distorted, rubbing sounds. Kuryokhin takes in and unites the different music and the art of genres which are completely different, includes various foreign elements on one stage, and creates the space of the carnival. Kuryokhin as a composer and a conductor succeeded in collecting such various formula into one universe. Other musicians have not done this.¹³

13 In 1989, Tat'iana Kidenko said about “Pop Mekhanika”: “Да, это действительно карнавал: высокое и низкое, серьезное и смешное, музыкальное и немusicalное перемешаны здесь, словно в котле средневекового алхимика. Но варится в этом котле вовсе не зелье для изготовления «философского камня». По сути, «Поп-механика» стала творческой лабораторией вначале ленинградских, а потом уже и не только ленинградских музыкантов для испытания не апробированных еще средств музыкального выражения, для осуществления собственной художественной свободы.” (*Диденко Т.А. Пути Сергея Курехина // Русский язык за рубежом. 1989. №1. С.19.*)

If Kuryokhin composed “Pop Mekhanika” in Japan, he said it would be like this: “First I arrive in Japan. On that day I rest and the next day our only rehearsal is held from morning to evening, then we will start our performance activity from the day after: Gagaku, the string-music ensemble which plays the European classical music, ten rock guitarists, many animals, a flower, the small theatrical company of 5-6 persons of Japan, Kabuki...”¹⁴

He said about his way of music: “It’s like crazy, but it is not crazy. It’s more serious.”

5. KURYOKHIN AND MOVIE’S MUSIC IN THE 1990s

From the second half of the 1980s to early the 1990s, Kuryokhin composed movie’s music energetically. After Sergei Kuryokhin passed away, his CKs of movie’s music were released one after another. In 1998, Kuryokhin’s “The Rich’s Opera” (CARAVAN RECORDS CAR 023) and Pop Mekhanika’s “INSECT CULTURE” (Solyd Records SLR 0108) were released. Although “INSECT CULTURE” had come out as a record once and it is a CK re-release, the contents are not old at all. It is wonderful music in which all sounds are united in the pan of alchemy which took care of each noise.

After “Tragedy in rock style” (Soyuz SZCK 0670-97)(1997), sound track CK “Two captains 2” (PMC 98001) which the label “Pop Mekhanika” that the Sergei Kuryokhin Charity Foundation produces, was released. “Tragedy of a rock style” is the work of the director Savva Kulish in 1988. The story of this movie is that a healthy youth goes into a cult religious group and is soon addicted to drugs and is ruined. In one scene of this movie, Pop Mekhanika and the rock band “Brigada S” are seen on television.

Although you might think that it does not excel musically if you hear only the CK, when we see the movie, it is dear how Kuryokhin worked with the image of the screen. By listening to movie’s music together with an image, it gives the full effect. Because of this point, this movie’s music can be called excellent.

For the same reason, we can’t evaluate “Two captains 2” only by CK. In this movie of Director Sergei Rebizhev, Kuryokhin and Grebenshchikov play the two captains’ roles. The movie is in monochrome and was made by the remix of an old movie film with new images. The method of this movie is similar to that of the method of using a quotation from an old popular song and new fusion from his work in the music of Kuryokhin. Moreover, Kuryokhin himself explained as follows:

“ ‘Two captains 2’ is art. It is a story about Mao Tse-Tung and Chiang Kaishek not as Chinese but as Siamese twins. This movie begins from the scene of the concert ‘The rock opposing orgasm.’ The purpose of this movie is proving that orgasm is not the substance of life, but the origin of life.”

¹⁴ *Jazz Life*, June, 1989, p.38.

6. AFTER THE DEATH OF KURYOKHIN

In 1997, Library of Almanac “Petropol” and Sergei Kuryokhin Charity Foundation published the collection of posthumous works of Kuryokhin *Nemoi svidetel’* [A Silent Witness]. In this 125-page small book, six documents are contained: “An interview of myself,” the short novel “The travel to Russia” whose Japanese girl Reiko is one of heroes, the common scenario with the Sergei Revizhev “The Reformity and the Saint,” the opera script of five curtains “Five days of baron Vrangel’s whole life,” the talk with Mikhail Bolotovskii “Children are our future,” the plan document of the series program of television “A Silent Witness.” And the book cover is decorated by Kuryokhin’s captain figure in the film “Two captains 2.”

A Silent Witness is a music program on the theme of various people; Louis Armstrong, Yukio Mishima, David Bowie, Led Zeppelin, Jean-Paul Sartre, Malcolm X, Guattari, Timothy Leary, Sun Ra, John Cage, Kaisetsu Suzuki, Gurdzhev... Probably, it would be very surprising show, if this program were realized.

Polystyle of music and composition of a TV program in the same style – the inexhaustible idea was whirling in Kuryokhin. In “An interview of myself,” he spoke about his views on art. Kuryokhin answered the question of his Christianity: “That’s right. I am an orthodox, although all my whole has been offered to Kavalla mysticism. I actually found out that it was a mistake to accept Raimundus Lullus with Great Abraham who created Golem. Because of this, all my efforts to create a new race led me to create the Wandering Jew. [...] The Wandering Jew was me. From that moment, I understood: There is only one universe, and even if we study the macrocosmos as we do with space aeronautics, we will get nowhere. We built a spaceship and made it cruise to the microcosmos, i.e., the spiritual world inside man. Two hens Myshka and Pyshka are steering the spaceship. We have the plan to launch a spiritual satellite. We succeeded in splitting a spiritual atom in the middle of our research. In this way, we came close to the creation of a spiritual atomic bomb. [Q: the “We” – who is it?] It is me, Kionysius the Areopagite and Napoleon, and Gogol’.”

The speech of Kuryokhin like the music of “Pop Mekhanika,” juxtaposes various ideas from completely different areas and makes combinations which could not usually exist. Therefore, it gives people a difficult impression. In the 1990s, he was playing an active part as an actor, a singer, a philosopher, a patriot and a poet in addition to his activity as a musician.¹⁵ He was conducting “Pop Mekhanika” by himself. In 1983 he said about his art: “For me there is a definite contradiction between art and creative work. Creativity is a spirit, a liberation from the burden of matter, and when the spirit leaves, what is left is a dead work of art, a museum exhibit, an object of worship. That’s why I think

15 See his poem: «Песня» // Петрополь 96. С.213.

that the real essence of art is to be found outside art, but is contained in creative process. A real artist is always a nonconformist.”¹⁶

7. C O N C L U S I O N

I still do not know the whole aspect of Kuryokhin. Probably as time goes by, information about Kuryokhin will appear on television, in movies, CDs and other media. Research on Kuryokhin and his work has just started at last. We will continuously receive inspiration from Kuryokhin in the manner of letters in bottles which were thrown in the sea.

The art of Kuryokhin is not jazz, neither is it rock, and it must be evaluated in the present-day culture of all music. He said: “I am always interested in the new idea without a precedent, about music, sound, rhythm theory and orchestration. It is not important for me what kind of music it is. Some new idea – ‘It’s wonderful! It’s very fresh’ – That feeling is the most important for me. Continuously meeting a fresh idea – It’s necessary for me.”¹⁷

We always must continue to feel music as a fresh thing. Listening to the music of Kuryokhin is a window to a new appreciation of such freshness.

16 “The Ways of Freedom (Sergei Kuryokhin’s Interview),” *Russian Jazz: New Identity*, p.111.

17 *Jazz Critique*, 1996. No.88, p.267.