EVOLUTION OF ARTISTIC LIFE:
RUSSIAN LITERATURE AND RUSSIAN MUSIC IN THE XIXth CENTURY
(QUANTITATIVE APPROACH)

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Beside stylistic changeability, art is supposed to possess certain changeability inherent in the INTENSITY of artistic life. Earlier this intensity was investigated on the creativity of 307 Russian poets and 480 prose-writers of the XVIIIth–XXth centuries (Petrov & Majoul, 2002). In the present paper these data are considered together with new data concerning Russian musical life of the XVIIIth–XXth centuries.

In line with the existing tradition (Martindale, 1990), the data on 4511 composers were taken out from an encyclopaedia, composers’ years of birth and the length of an article devoted to each composer’s creative activity (number of lines). All composers were grouped in 10-year intervals depending on their birthdates: 1750-1759, 1760-1769, … . For each ten-year interval (t) the total NUMBER OF COMPOSERS (n) and the total NUMBER OF LINES devoted to them (N) were calculated. The last value (N) seems to be the indicator of the INTENSITY of musical life. After the analysis two hypotheses were put forward:

1. If the number of authors (n) serves as a factor of «popularity» or «prestige» of a particular kind of art in the professional artistic environment, there should be an indicator of «quality of intensity» - the «average mastery». This parameter is SPECIFIC INTENSITY q: q(t)=N(t)/n(t).

2. Changes in the intensity of artistic life have to be regarded as a dynamic process: each generation of authors keeps in mind the experience of the previous generation.

So, there are six versions of three changes in the intensity parameters (n, N and q) (Fig. 1a–f), which can be illustrated with the data on 4511 composers belonging to 17 national schools of music of the XVIIth–XXth centuries [in each case the upper curve responds to the number of authors (n), which is followed by the number of lines (N), and the value of the specific intensity (q)]:

a) n up, N up, q up – RISE. This way usually describes the creation of a national school. The given kind of art becomes popular in the professional artistic environment, the internal resources and mastery increase. So the potential of the national school is rather high. Example: Russia, 1830-49 (here and later birthdates of authors are meant).

b) n down, N down, q down – DECLINE. If this version of change in the intensity parameters continues for a long time, the potential of the national school is likely to be exhausted. Then, if any sources (internal or external) are not found, the national school disappears surely. Example: Italy,
Figure 1. Six versions of the evolution of three parameters characterizing the intensity of musical life in various national cultures.
c) $n$ down, $N$ up, $q$ up – ACCUMULATION. The national school resists «author-replication» and so makes its potential raise. Popularity decreases, but this raise of the potential provides for one more RISE. Usually, the first one has already been before this period. Example: Austria and Germany, 1830-39.

d) $n$ up, $N$ down, $q$ down – DISSIPATION. After major achievements of the national school, the popularity of the given kind of art grows rapidly (at the expense of the internal potential exhausting). Example: Czechia, 1850-69.

e) $n$ up, $N$ up, $q$ down – EXTERNAL GROWTH. The internal potential of the national school decreases, but the intensity grows. This fact can be explained only by influence of another national schools, kinds of art or other external causes (Denmark, 1830-49).

f) $n$ down, $N$ down, $q$ up – EXTERNAL DESTRUCTION. The national school accumulates its internal resources, but popularity of the kind of art declines. So there are some external causes (political, religious, social, cultural, etc.) that refuse the successful development of the national school (Sweden, 1850-59).

The analysis of these three parameters of intensity of RUSSIAN ARTISTIC LIFE revealed the following conclusions illustrated with Fig. 2–4:

1. Before 1795 changes in all three intensity parameters both of prose and poetry are the same. It's likely to mean that there was no distinction between poets and prosaic writers in Russia at that time.

2. 1775-1799. Russian poetry, prose and music experience a RISE.

3. 1805-1819. Russian poetry deteriorates as a result of external causes (EXTERNAL DESTRUCTION), so it virtually vanishes after 1845.

4. A RISE in Russian prose (1805-1819) provides for another one (1845-1869).

5. From 1805-1819 the changes in the intensity parameters in prose are different from those ones in poetry (unlike the period before 1795). So Russian literary authors start to distinguish themselves either as prose-writers (N. Gogol', I. Turguenev) or poets (F.Tyutchev, E. Baratynsky,).


8. The entire evolution of intensity of Russian literary life is (excluding RISES) only affected by external causes.
References


Formation of the Russian composer school. In the Middle Ages composed music in Russia was totally associated with the Byzantium church and isolated from the European world. Later in the 17th -18th cc music becoming also a secular art fell under the influence of the Western culture. So, the Russian national composer school acquired its individual shape rather late, only by the mid 19th century. Preclassical epoch of Russian music (early 19th century) was characteristic for the combination of classicism and romanticism, with the prevailing genre of musical theatre. Widely popular became 'fairy' operas, classicistic tragedies with musical scenes and translated melodramas set to music by Russian composers. Literary 18th century abstract in the early 19th century. Different types of artistic vision, literary schools and directions, their fight and collaboration: classicism, sentimentalism, preromantizism in the 1800s- 1820s Russian literature in the context of Western literature. 2. Russia in the early 19th century. Alexander I's reign. 1812. Russian army and foreign access to the Vienna Congress. In the course of Russia's thousand-year history, Russian literature has come to occupy a unique place in the culture, politics, and linguistic evolution of the Russian people. In the modern era, literature has been the arena for heated discussion of virtually all aspects of Russian life, including the place that literature itself should occupy in that life. In the process, it has produced a rich and varied fund of artistic achievement. The Beginnings. Literature first appeared among the East Slavs after the Christianization of Kievan Rus' in the tenth century (see The Golden Age of Kiev, ch. 1). Seminal events in that process were the development of the Cyrillic (see Glossary) alphabet around A.D. 863 and the development of Old Church Slavonic as a liturgical language for use by the Slavs. You won't find another period in Russian literature with such a concentration of talented poets and their brilliant use of the Russian language. Who were these literary geniuses of the early 20th century, and what did they write about? In an attempt to research or at least explain this topic, Russian scholars write heavy tomes and dedicate their whole lives. But we took upon ourselves this brave task in order to give a brief summary to those of you who are interested in Russia. Pictured L-R: Osip Mandelstam, Korney Chukovsky, Benedikt Livshits, Yuri Annenkov. Public Domain. The Silver Age of Russian poetry is an artistic period that dates from the very late 19th century and ends in the 1920s. It implies a wide range of poets, genres and literary styles.