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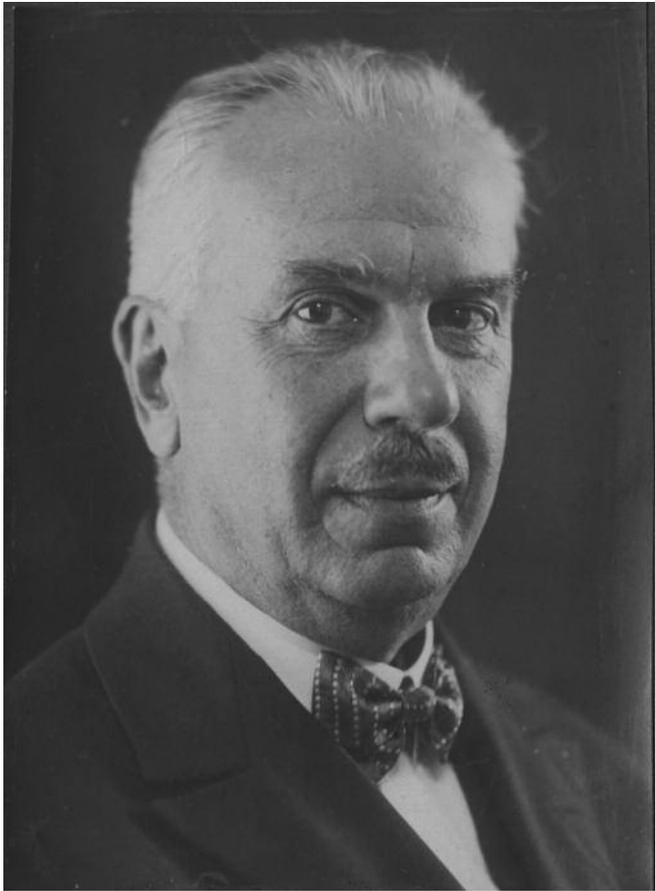| Title	Unknown Sergey Vasilenko and his Viola compositions
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Unknown Sergey Vasilenko and His Viola Compositions:

Recent Discoveries in Russian Archives

Sergey Vasilenko, circa 1937 (photo courtesy of RGALI, fund 1937, op.5, ed. hr. 107)

by Elena Artamonova

Russia has always shown great scope for artistic talent. The beginning of the twentieth century is regarded as the *Silver Age* of Russian culture owing to the emergence of a highly gifted generation of musicians, writers, and painters. Dissatisfaction with the realistic portrayal of life embraced by poets and writers in the nineteenth century stimulated a wave of creativity unprecedented in the cultural history of Russia. This period was dominated by a number of artistic move-ments including Symbolism, Acmeism, and Futurism, which cross-fertilized literature, music, the visual arts, theater, and philosophy with a strong emphasis on the distinctiveness of Russian spirituality. The Socialist Revolution of 1917 and the following Civil War broadened the degree of artistic freedom on the Russian musical scene with its radical innovations and new trends of the *Avant-garde*. It took its first inspiration in the 1890s from the individualism of Russian Symbolist composers of the *Silver Age*, Scriabin in particular. However, the *Avant-garde* moved further, with extreme experimentation in harmonic and rhythmic idioms, rejection of tonality, and alteration of forms up until 1932, when the movement clashed with the state decree "On the Reconstruction of Literary and Art Organizations." This marked the start of the epoch of Socialist Realism; from then on art was thoroughly controlled by the state.

One of the composers who emerged during the *Silver Age* was Sergey Vasilenko. Working at the archives and libraries in Moscow and London, I was fortunate to find a number of his unknown and unpublished compositions for viola and piano. In view of the paucity of music for stringed instruments in Russia in the first decades of the last century, Vasilenko's seven compositions for viola, which are all different in style, mode, and technique, assume special importance. His compositional approach was dissimilar to many renowned contemporaries, including his former student Nikolay Roslavets, who persistently employed his *New System of Organized Sounds* in his viola sonatas. Vasilenko combined the elements of many diverse and often contradictory musical concepts of the time, including the *Silver Age*, Neoclassicism, Romanticism, and the *Avant-garde*. His approach to the rhythmic and harmonic resources of Russian music launched new stan-

dards in viola performance and expanded the repertoire.

What made Vasilenko write for an instrument that occupied a subservient position to the violin and other members of the string family, and what retained his interest in the viola throughout his lifetime? Why have these compositions of a respected and loyal Soviet composer remained unknown to the public almost a century after their creation and over half a century after the death of Vasilenko? The analysis and discussion of these subjects rely heavily on the unpublished and little-explored materials from the archives of Sergey Vasilenko in Moscow.

Sergey Nikoforovich Vasilenko

Sergey Nikoforovich Vasilenko (1872–1956) had a long and distinguished career as a composer, conductor, and pedagogue based in Moscow in the first half of the twentieth century.[1] For almost fifty years (1906–41 and 1943–56), he held the position of Professor of Instrumentation and Composition at the Moscow Conservatoire and taught Nikolay Roslavets, Leonid Polovinkin, Nikolay Golovanov, Alexander Alexandrov, Anatoly Alexandrov, and many other students who became internationally known performers and composers. Vasilenko was brought up in an aristocratic family, and an inner circle of friends consisting of the leading writers, painters, and artists of the time influenced the formation of his aesthetic principles and interests. Among his close friends were Vladimir Stasov, Alexander Glazunov, Anatoly Lyadov, Vasily Safonov, Sergey Taneyev, Mily Balakirev, Fyodor Shalyapin, and Konstantin Stanislavsky, the creator of the internationally famous "Stanislavsky System" of acting. All these individuals were not only major personalities in their professional fields and very active public figures, but above all, they are remembered as the true proponents of Russian national heritage. The words of the famous Russian historian Vasily Klyuchevsky, addressed to the young composer in the early 1900s, reveal the tight bond between Sergey Vasilenko and the Russian legacy:

You understand Russian music in depth. Do not turn toward the West or East. Develop Russian music as it is an inexhaustible treasure-trove; besides, this field would never disappoint your expectations. Our great Russian composers have taken only a little part from this treasure-house.[2]

Perhaps today these demanding words could be interpreted as radically nationalistic and narrow minded. At the same time, they also imply faithfulness toward one's own origin and customs that preserves the distinctiveness of a national idiom and one's own individual traits. Vasilenko did indeed follow this path and gained recognition as a composer with a special emphasis on Russian national traditions and history, including Old Believers[3] chant and folk music and symbolic and mystical themes influenced by the *Silver Age* aesthetic. However, he also managed to combine these idioms with the best achievements of the West, including counterpoint, motivic development, and structural purity of forms. His musical language was rooted in the traditions of the nineteenth-century Russian composers, particularly Taneyev and Rimsky-Korsakov, but it was also moderately influenced by Debussy and Scriabin. Vasilenko died in 1956, leaving an extensive list of compositions including operas; ballets; symphonies; concertos for balalaika, trumpet, cello, harp, clarinet, piano, violin, and horn; chamber and instrumental music; songs; choruses; folksong arrangements; and more.

Background on His Viola Compositions

Vasilenko's viola compositions can be split into three categories and periods: adaptations of early music, middle-period works, and late works. The dates of two compositions, *Zodiakus* and *Lullaby*, are unknown. However, their subject-matter and language closely correspond to other works from particular phases.

Adaptations of early music:

* *Four Pieces on Themes of Lute Music of the Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries*, for viola (or cello)

and piano, op. 35, 1918: *Pavane, Madonna Tenerina, Serenade for the Lady of My Heart, Knights*

* *Suite Zodiakus I.A.S. after Unknown Authors of the Eighteenth Century*, for viola and piano: *Ouverture, Passacaille, Minuet, Plainte, Musette[4]*

Middle-period:

* *Oriental Dance*, for clarinet in B-flat or viola and piano, op. 47, 1922

* Sonata, for viola and piano, op. 46, 1923

Late works:

* *Sleeping River*, for viola and piano, August 5, 1951

* *Lullaby*, for viola and piano

* *Four Pieces*, for viola and piano, August 25, 1953: *Prelude, Etude, Legend, Scherzo (Toccata)*

Vasilenko left no written explanation of the stimulus that brought his viola works into being. Certainly his Sonata, op. 46, was composed in December 1923 under the influence of the thriving concert activities of a young violist, Vadim Borisovsky (1900–72), who drew attention to the viola in the early 1920s.[5] Borisovsky premiered this work with the composer at the piano on January 8, 1924, at the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire. Nevertheless, Vasilenko's first composition for viola and piano, the *Four Pieces on Themes of Lute Music of the Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries*, op. 35, was written in 1918, at a time when Borisovsky was only one of many violin students in Moscow. It seems reasonable to assume—in view of Vasilenko's later reputation as a master of instrumentation—that his interest in the viola arose from his desire to experiment with different instrumental techniques, timbres, and sound effects, which he broadly explored in these pieces. However, the Sonata was only acknowledged and performed from time to time in the viola class of Borisovsky, who was the driving force of the majority of solo viola activities in Moscow for forty years (1923–63) until a heart

attack brought his busy schedule to a stop. Borisovsky certainly knew of the existence of the lute pieces; he included them, along with the Sonata, in a catalogue of viola repertoire[6] compiled with Dr. Wilhelm Altmann, a German researcher from Berlin, but there is no evidence that he ever performed them in public, and they have remained unperformed until recently.

The main reason for such neglect was, as so often at the time, political. In the early 1930s the Soviet authorities—through the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM), which effectively controlled Soviet musical life—decided that the viola was an instrument that overloaded the educational programs. As a result of this directive, Borisovsky was forced to resign from his viola professorship at the Moscow Conservatoire, and all his students were compelled to enroll in the violin course. Unofficially, they continued their viola tuition at Borisovsky's home despite the fear of very likely troubles if this arrangement was revealed. Only a year later, Borisovsky was invited back to the Conservatoire due to the fact that RAPM was dissolved by that time.

Vasilenko had his own political problems, not least because his roots in the Russian aristocracy would hardly have endeared him to the new dispensation in Soviet Russia, though he gained a reputation as a compassionate supporter of poor communities well before the Revolution. Certainly, his loyal public reputation appealed to the Soviet authorities, but his professional status and musical fulfillment of the Party ideology were of critical importance. But, his fascination for ancient music with its natural absorption of spirituality and the troubadours' idealized model of love was considered suspect; likewise were the themes of his pieces of the 1950s and their pastoral dreams and mystic fantasies influenced by Symbolism and *Silver Age* aesthetics. Vasilenko turned instead to topics that were politically approved by the Soviet state: stories of the Russian heroic past and socialist present, folk traditions, and folk instruments, including the balalaika. With the earlier viola works therefore under wraps and Borisovsky unable to perform them, it would be almost thirty years before Vasilenko returned to writing for the viola in the 1950s.

Vasilenko's cautious approach allowed his career to proceed relatively unchecked, but his enforced compliance to the ideals of the Communist party led in post-Soviet times to the view that he had simply been a marionette of the state ideology. Much of his fine music has been neglected in consequence.

The Early Adapted Works

By 1918, when his first viola composition appeared, Vasilenko was already forty-six years old and well established as a public figure and a composer who extensively employed Russian subjects in his music. His activities as a conductor and organizer of the series of *Historic Concerts* in 1907–17 spurred an interest in the Baroque and Renaissance. The collection of early music at the Moscow Conservatoire Library, which Vasilenko used for these *Historic Concerts*, was very limited and soon ran out. None of the individual compositions or programmes was performed twice in these series, and, therefore, he was constantly in search of interesting music. His family wealth allowed him to travel abroad extensively and continually supported his concert projects. From 1909, Vasilenko undertook a few trips to Vienna, Bologna, Paris, and Berlin, where he lived for two to three months in search of unusual or representative repertoire. The Berlin Musical Instrument Museum (the *Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung*) and its rich collection of lutes generated Vasilenko's initial interest in these instruments. He was allowed to copy the scores of a number of little-known and anonymous Renaissance and Baroque composers, and, on his return to Russia, he wrote several pieces of his own based on the material he had discovered, among them, in 1912 and 1914, two suites: *15th–16th Century Lute Music of the Minnesingers*, op. 24 and *16th Century Lute Music*, op. 24a, for chamber orchestra.[7]

In 1918, Vasilenko considered using viola (or cello) and piano for his *Four Pieces on Themes of Lute Music of the Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries*, op. 35. Vasilenko adapted the second, third, and fourth movements—*Madonna Tenerina, Serenade for the Lady of My Heart* (ex. 1), and *Knights* (ex. 2)—from his orchestral suites op. 24 and op. 24a and the opening *Pavane* came from the collection of Photostats that arrived from the Schola Cantorum in Paris in 1913. The authors of the musical material were anonymous apart from the third movement that Vasilenko called *Serenade for the Lady of My Heart*, autographed by Valentin Bakfark, a famous lute player of the mid-sixteenth century.

Vasilenko experimented here with different instrumental genres and forms of dances and songs, fusing them into a single suite that offered a broad range of techniques, timbres, and sound effects atypical for viola compositions from the Baroque period. Continuous waves of scalar and chromatic passages covering all the registers combined with rigorous

Example 1. Sergey Vasilenko, Four Pieces on Themes of Lute Music of the Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries, Serenade for the Lady of My Heart*, mm. 1–12 (viola part).*

Example 2. Sergey Vasilenko, Four Pieces on Themes of Lute Music of the Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries, Knights*, mm. 76–85 (viola part).*

chord technique, emotionally expressive themes in the upper register, broken and arpeggiated pizzicato chords, and *con sordino* and harmonic passages all bring a special distinction for a particular phrase within the viola part.

Similarly, the suite *Zodiakus* was initially arranged by Vasilenko for small orchestra and premiered under his baton in Moscow on December 18, 1914. The manuscript that he obtained from the Schola Cantorum in Paris contained a series of short but exquisitely elegant pieces by a number of anonymous eighteenth-century French composers, hidden behind a peculiar pseudonym, *Zodiakus I.A.S.*[8] Vasilenko chose seven of these pieces for his orchestral suite, op. 27, and this composition received high praise from Paris.

The undated arrangement—previously unknown—for viola and piano without an opus number includes four pieces from the orchestral suite and also a new one, *Musette*, from the same original Parisian source.[9] This viola work is not mentioned in any published or archival sources. The manuscript was found in the collection of music from the library of Vadim Borisovsky, and it is reasonable to conclude that this arrangement was intended for this fine soloist. One may suppose that it was composed after 1931 as

Borisovsky did not include this suite in his viola catalogue published in Germany. At the same time, it is unlikely that Vasilenko worked on this arrangement later than the early 1930s, when his compositional activities were preoccupied with the subject-matter of the Soviet past and present, Turkmenian themes, and Chinese and Indian exoticism.

Technically this suite is much more demanding and instrumentally inconvenient than the lute pieces; occasionally it borders on being unplayable on the viola. This suite consists of five contrasting movements of dance and song-type pieces in which Vasilenko generally followed the style and idioms of the eighteenth-century French suite, but at the same time operated freely with some elements of twentieth-century language, including excessive usage of double stops, long leaps, experiments with polyrhythm, and occasional unusual modulations offering an unconventional tonal display of movements unrelated by key (the movements are in F major, F major, A major, A minor, and G major). The opening *Ouverture* especially retains its external traditional structure and setting but offers the soloist an unreserved scope for technical enhancement and instrumental perfection (ex. 3).

Example 3. Sergey Vasilenko, Suite Zodiakus I.A.S. after Unknown Authors of the Eighteenth Century, Ouverture*, mm. 45–56 (viola part).*

Example 4. Sergey Vasilenko, Suite Zodiakus I.A.S. after Unknown Authors of the Eighteenth Century, Passacaille*, mm. 58–73 (viola part).*

Middle-period Works

The works of the early 1920s show the influence of Oriental subjects that were extensively employed in the works of Russian National composers of the nineteenth century, in particular by Rimsky-Korsakov, Balakirev, and Borodin. In 1922, Vasilenko wrote a graceful and, at the same time, virtuoso *Oriental Dance* for clarinet in B-flat or viola with piano, op. 47. The manuscript of the clarinet version survived, though the first two pages have gone astray. Fortunately, it was published three times in 1931,

1949, and 1959, and, therefore, the missing text could be reconstructed. However, the viola manuscript has been irretrievably lost and was never published. The fact that the work was also intended for viola was confirmed in Georgy Polyanovsky's catalogue of Vasilenko's works published in 1964 and Georgy Ivanov's catalogue of 1973. I arranged this piece for the viola and piano; my viola edition adjusts the articulation and phrasing to the clarinet version to render this charismatic work more suitable for a stringed instrument.

The single-movement Viola Sonata makes considerable technical demands on both players, encompassing the unrestrained emotional expression and power of Romanticism, the intimate lyricism of vocal and song-type themes, contrapuntal imitation with the emphasis on rhythm of Neoclassical aesthetics, and the exotic chromatic and modal harmonies of Oriental music combined with the augmented, diminished, and dissonant intervals of Modernism. Such a fusion of contradicting styles is perhaps the

Example 5. Sergey Vasilenko, Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 23, Allegro moderato, mm. 1–9.

Example 6. Sergey Vasilenko, Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 23, Allegro moderato (cadenza), mm. 200–224 (viola part).

only example found in a viola composition of this period in Russia. Nevertheless, the unusual synthesis of counterpoint and song elements was first introduced by Taneyev in his attempt to create a distinctive Russian instrumental form; a combination of Western counterpoint and Russian folksong. Paul Hindemith had a similar approach in his works, including viola sonatas, occasionally combining counterpoint with German folksongs.

The structure of Vasilenko's sonata combines a traditional sonata form and the four movements of a traditional symphony, also offering the violist a single large cadenza and three short solo episodes, which add a

concertante element to the work. The fact that this sonata was arranged for violin and piano[10] speaks for its exceptionally advanced technical and instrumental qualities. The opening allegro, *Allegro moderato*, contains only the exposition and development (ex. 5), concluding with a dramatic cadenza (ex. 6). Instead of an immediate recapitulation, a second section, *Andante amorevole* (ex. 7), presents two independent, very intimate, and exceptionally melodious themes that are followed by a short, vigorous episode, marked *Molto agitato*. This episode connects this section with a *Fughetta*. This third section has an exposition and counter-exposition but no development. A contrastingly contemplative passage, *Sostenuto*, leads to a

Example 7. Sergey Vasilenko, Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 23, Andante amorevole [movt. II], mm. 240–57.

fourth section, *Tempo del commincio*, which now acts as the recapitulation of the first, thus providing balance. It even presents a modified and shortened version of the third section *Fughetta* (ex. 8), which then leads toward the vibrant and spectacular coda.

The process of the alteration of traditional instrumental forms in Russia at the turn of the twentieth centu-

Example 8. Sergey Vasilenko, Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 23, [movt. IV], mm. 446–56.

ry was introduced and developed in the late piano sonatas of Alexander Scriabin. This practice was very influential, especially among the young generation of composers, including Nikolay Roslavets, who exercised with a single-movement form in his radical endeavor to break all possible ties with tradition. Vasilenko, on the contrary, never belonged to the extreme and revolutionary groups of the Russian musical scene. He implemented his innovations while maintaining his ties to tradition and compromised between the conservatives and left-wing modernist movements of the time. Vasilenko followed this unconventional, ultra-modern approach of having a single-movement sonata that consequently shortens

and condenses the time compared to the layout of a standard four-movement sonata. Despite this radicalism, Vasilenko was a melodist, and this work, though varied in compositional techniques and styles, was largely based on an exquisite melodic development of themes. Thus he employed simple forms within internal parts and sections of this four-movement structure, including a simple ternary form in the second subject of the exposition and a strophic two-verse-chorus form of the second theme in the second movement, which consequently stretched the time and revealed the originality of his creative approach toward the modification of the traditional sonata form.

Late Works

Vasilenko approached the viola again a few years before his death and almost thirty years after his first works for this instrument. The style of these later works bears a closer resemblance to Impressionism and Russian Symbolism with the challenging application of string technique and complex modern rhythms with metric modulations, extensive chromatic exercises, and harmonic modulations.

Sleeping River, which bears the date August 5, 1951, is Vasilenko's arrangement of a movement from his *Ancient Suite* for piano. The arrangement not only changes the key to D major from the original E major but considerably alters the entire text, giving the viola a quasi-cadenza section in the middle (ex. 9). Both instruments are equal partners but carry out different roles: the viola leads the theme throughout, and the piano gives a colorful harmonic display.

The manuscript of the *Lullaby* is undated, but the style suggests that this composition belongs to the early 1950s. This beautiful and charming piece in E minor follows the style of a lullaby but unexpectedly develops into a very expressive and agitated middle section with a viola cadenza before eventually returning to the tranquillity of the initial theme.

Vasilenko's *Four Pieces*, without an opus number, survive in manuscript as contrasting picturesque movements unrelated by key and thematic material; a date, August 25, 1953, appears only on the second piece, *Etude*.

Nevertheless, the pieces undoubtedly belong to the same cycle, which consists of a *Prelude, Etude, Legend*, and *Scherzo*. They survive only as piano-viola scores, with many modifications, which are at times almost impossible to read. (An earlier, even rougher, version of the *Scherzo*, inscribed "Toccata" and then marked as the third in the cycle, does have a separate viola part, with several passages of continuous double-stopping, which Vasilenko did not transfer to the *Scherzo.*)

The *Prelude* in this cycle is a short piece of improvisatory character in D major. The opening theme led by the viola is vocal and chromatic in nature and, at first, does not expand to the high register. It sequentially develops with alterations in harmony and rhythm, which transforms this initially delicate tune into an expressive, passionate melody. It is enriched with double stops with special emphasis on dissonant intervals of minor and major sevenths and leaps articulated by double-dotted eighth notes and quarter notes that bring extra intensity to the character of the music. In the last bars of the piece the piano takes the lead and breaks the melody into short motifs that gradually restrain and soften the emotions to *pianissimo.*

Vasilenko gave the viola a full leadership role in the *Etude*. It is not a didactic study but a concert piece, though it conforms to a single facet of technique marked by harmonic experimentation and modulation from C minor to C major. The chromatic character and uninterrupted waves of sixteenth note passages written in presto might remind one of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumblebee*. Vasilenko placed special emphasis on the viola timbre and dynamic contrasts and finished this piece with a natural harmonic in *pianissimo*, which adds a decorative finishing touch to this virtuosic instrumental display.

Legend is written in a ternary form in which the first part is in C major, the second in D major, and the recapitulation of the first modulates to A major and returns to the home key of C. However, this is just a tonal frame in which Vasilenko constantly experimented with chromatic unresolved modulations that play the role of unpredictable tonal contrasts. The piece exhibits narrative qualities not only in the title, which translates from Latin as "to be read," but also in

Example 9. Sergey Vasilenko, Sleeping River, *mm. 24–31.*

the instrumental texture and application in which both instruments, in turn, become either passive or active participants. The viola is the storyteller in the introduction with the opening theme of a vocal nature accompanied by arpeggiated chords of the piano that remind one of a gusli player.[11] This instrumental subordination changes, and both instruments start a dialogue that leads to a quazi viola cadenza, an episode that precedes the middle section of a contrasting scherzando character. The return of the first theme is rhythmically and instrumentally unanticipated, though it retains its compound meter of 9/8. The piano leads the melody, while the viola accompanies with ascending scalar chromatic passages in sextuplets (ex. 10). Similar to the *Prelude*, the theme then breaks into short motifs that dissolve in *pianissimo*.

Example 10. Sergey Vasilenko, Four Pieces, Legend*, mm. 44–52.*

The *Scherzo* in F major exhibits the traditional playful, humorous character with a fast tempo marked here *Allegro molto vivace, quasi presto*. At the same time, the piece follows an unconventional route and is written in a duple time, 2/4, instead of a triple meter. Vasilenko also offered an innovative approach to the form and harmonic display with modulations to distantly related and unrelated keys. It is a through-composed structure with self-contained sections (ABCA¹B¹ and conclusion) instead of a traditional ternary form. Nearly uninterrupted chromatic and scalar runs of sixteenth notes in the viola part present a spectacular technical display and timbral contrast with an accelerando toward the end of the piece.

Conclusion

Vasilenko's compositional style was exquisitely crafted, sophisticated, and very distinctive. While Russian culture was the inspirational source of Vasilenko's musical resourcefulness and being, his intellect and erudition won him recognition among his contemporaries. Some critics called him "a profound analyst"[12] for his comprehension of Russian music along with the works of Wagner, French Impressionists, and other composers. His depth of knowledge of instrumental colors and their combinations, technical and sonorous possibilities, as well as his professionalism in their application allowed Vasilenko to employ, operate, and mix contradictory idioms with dynamism and expression. Often his inquisitiveness and zest of mind led him to pursue and adapt different styles from the Baroque and Neoclassical to a Romantic idiom. He unpretentiously grasped the *Silver Age* aesthetic with its mysticism, symbolic approach, and visual images and modified his language according to the requirements of the new musical epoch. The best examples of this approach are demonstrated in the Viola Sonata with its extraordinary synthesis of strict contrapuntal elements of Neoclassicism with the colorful Oriental idioms and unreserved emotions of Romanticism, as well as in his stylization of the Baroque in *Zodiakus* and the *Lute pieces* enriched by the instrumental advantages and inventions of the twentieth century. Yet he did so without any favoritism or fanaticism and distanced himself from any rigorous duplication of either fashionable aesthetics or radicalism.

The range and complexity of styles and string techniques in his works for viola and piano allow one to describe them as unique examples of Russian viola heritage with a diversity of harmonic and rhythmic language, an exquisite palette of sound color, and a considered approach to the form, articulations, and dynamics. The composer often explored beyond the traditional limits of the technical and sonorous application of the instrument elevating it on a par with the violin. Vasilenko's most important achievement was the enhancement of the viola with a quasi-orchestral range of colors and an equal intensity of musical and technical material that was rare in chamber music. Vasilenko was a devoted musician deeply rooted in Russian culture with a broad spectrum of knowledge, interests, and talents, some of which Soviet life taught him to keep to himself. Unfortunately, in the second half of the twentieth century, his music has fallen from view. In one of his unpublished archival writings, Vasilenko admitted that despite all the tribulations and achievements of life, he was always alone, one to one with his music, perfecting his skills and exploring the unknown. The discovery of these viola works sheds new light on the unknown Vasilenko.[13]

Sergey Vasilenko's Viola Sonata was originally published in 1925 (G.M.6306I.M) and republished in 1931 and 1955 (plate 24387) by Gos. izd-vo, Muzykal'nyi Sektor. It was also issued in editions in 1955 by Muzgiz and in 1985 by Muzyka. The Primrose International Archive and several other libraries contain copies of the music. The Lute pieces *were published in 1930 (and 1932) jointly by Gos. izd-vo, Muzykal'nyi Sektor and Universal Edition (M. 10119; U.E. 9271).* Oriental Dance *for clarinet and piano was published in 1931 jointly by Staatsmusikverlag and Universal Edition (M. 11656; U.E. 10123) and in 1949 and 1959 by Muzgiz. The viola manuscript is lost and has been arranged by Elena Artamonova based on the version for clarinet. The manuscripts of the* Four Pieces, Sleeping River, *and* Lullaby *are housed in the Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture (fund 52 N 500, 817, 900), and the manuscript for* Zodiakus *is part of the private collection of Vadim Borisovsky. Publication options for several of Vasilenko's viola works are currently being explored.*

Violist and musicologist Elena Artamonova is currently pursuing a PhD in Music Performance at Goldsmiths

College, Centre for Russian Music, University of London, under the guidance of Professor Alexander Ivashkin, researching unknown viola music of the Russian Avant-garde movement. She graduated with First Class Honors from the Gnesin Music College and the Moscow Conservatoire under Yuri Bashmet and attended the master classes among others of Tabea Zimmermann, Nobuko Imai, Martin Outram, and Simon Rowland-Jones. Elena holds a number of prizes and awards, including the Associateship of the Royal College of Music with Honors and has performed in Europe, the USA, and the Far East.

Notes

[1] Vasilenko's brief biography can be found in various music dictionaries. However, many interesting details about his formation and professional experiences are still confined to his personal reminiscences housed in RGALI (the Russian State Archive for Literature and Art) in Moscow, which were only partly published in his *Memoirs* in the USSR in 1948 and in 1979.

[2] Sergey Vasilenko, *Stranitsy vospominaniy* (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo, 1948), 162. (Translated by Elena Artamonova.)

[3] Reforms to the practices of the Orthodox Church in the mid-seventeenth century led to a schism, with the "Old Believers" adhering to the earlier rites.

[4] All titles of the movements in the manuscript are given in French.

[5] Vadim Borisovsky began his career as a chamber violist, similar to his colleagues, but despite all the odds moved on to promote the viola as a solo instrument giving recitals and researching and arranging works for this instrument. He was the founder of the first viola-solo faculty at the Moscow Conservatoire and is regarded as the "Father of the Russian School of viola playing" for his tremendous contributions to the development of the viola and the enlargement of its solo repertoire. Borisovsky's dedication and professionalism were appreciated not only in the Soviet Union, but also abroad. Among his distinguished admirers were Lionel Tertis in the United Kingdom and Paul Hindemith in Germany,

to name a few. Borisovsky was one of the founder-members of the Beethoven Quartet, which closely collaborated with Dmitry Shostakovich, and he remained in the group until 1964, when he was replaced by one of his prominent former students, Fyodor Druzhinin.

[6] Wilhelm Altmann and Vadim Borisovsky, *Literaturverzeichnis für Bratsche und Viola d'amore* (Wolfenbüttel, Germany: Verlag für musikalische Kultur und Wissenschaft, 1937).

[7] Vasilenko's titles vary between versions, though the Suite, op. 24a was a revised edition of the Suite, op. 24, in which Vasilenko gave the titles to unnamed pieces and slightly changed the order of movements and orchestration. He also paid little regard to historical accuracy: the Minnesingers flourished from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, and at least two movements from these suites have their origins in the fifteenth century.

[8] The meaning of the initials remains unknown.

[9] The viola version drops the word "French," which appears in the title of the orchestral version and which Vasilenko also used to describe the material in his *Memoirs*.

[10] Sergey Vasilenko, *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, arranged for violin and piano by Mikhail Reitikh (Moscow: Muzgiz, 1955).

[11] Gusli was an old multi-string plucked instrument derived from the ancient lyre. Gusli is associated with the legendary Boyan, a singer of tales from the ancient Slavic epic poem *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, which was adapted by Alexander Borodin as an opera.

[12] Evgeniy Braudo, "Sorokapyatiletie tvorcheskoy deyatel'nosti zasluzhennogo deyatelya iskusstv S.N. Vasilenko," 18. Housed in RGALI, fund 2024, op.1, ed. hr. 37. (Translated by Elena Artamonova.)

[13] The first complete recording of Vasilenko's viola music is available on the Toccata Classics label. Further details may be found at www.toccataclassics.com/cddetail.php?CN=TOCC0127