

Arvo Pärt, Hardijs Lediņš and the Ritual Moment in Riga, October 1977

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Abstract

Drawing on archival research and oral history, this article reconstructs events surrounding the premieres of Arvo Pärt's first openly sacred *tintinnabuli*-style compositions, including his *Missa syllabica*, at the Festival of Contemporary Music held in Riga in October 1977. It highlights the work of the Latvian artist and architecture student Hardijs Lediņš (1955–2004), whose discotheque at the Riga Polytechnic Institute hosted the event. Tracing the reception of the festival and Pärt's music by participants, notably the pianist Alexei Lubimov, the composer Vladimir Martynov, and the violinist Boriss Avramecs, the article suggests that an informal network of students and alternative artists played a crucial role in nurturing and supporting this most ideologically problematic corner of Pärt's compositional activity of the period. For a little over a year, Lediņš's disco provided an underground space for the presentation of experimental art and the experience of creative freedom. That experience, however, was short-lived, as festival organizers were charged with distributing religious propaganda shortly afterwards, and they were barred from engaging in future organizational work of the sort.

The Tallinn premiere of Arvo Pärt's *tintinnabuli* music on 27 October 1976 was an auspicious event in the life of the city. Staged in the Estonia Concert Hall, the capital's most prestigious venue, and featuring the Tallinn Chamber Choir, it was performed by Hortus Musicus, Andres Mustonen's celebrated early-music ensemble, which had enjoyed the sponsorship of the Estonian Philharmonic since its founding in 1972 (ETMM, MO20; ETMM, M238:1/4). To borrow from the musicologist Peter J. Schmelz, the premiere, sanctioned and supported by the Ministry of Culture, was as "official" an event in the Estonian SSR as any concert could be (Schmelz 2009). In many respects, the official status of the Tallinn premiere was unsurprising. After all, Pärt was an award-winning composer whose work had been alternately celebrated and censored by Soviet authorities for over a decade (Karnes 2017; May 2016). Still, despite the fact that Pärt had not had a concert premiere in over three years, some had doubts about Pärt's latest stylistic turn. "The concert on 27th October did not cause a sensation," Immo Mihkelson remembers (Mihkelson 2016). As Mustonen later recalled of the event, "[i]t was not yet clear if anything would come of this" (Kautny 2002: 118).

As Mihkelson notes, the Tallinn premiere was previewed two days earlier, when Hortus Musicus presented a shorter suite of Pärt's *tintinnabuli* works at Tartu University. The largely academic

audience at the university anticipated the distinctive character of the audience in Tallinn, which Mihkelson recalls as "noticeably younger than the typical concert-goer" (Mihkelson 2016; ETMM, MO20). The musicologist Toomas Siitan likewise describes a distinctive cast to the crowd attending many of Pärt's early *tintinnabuli* performances. It consisted largely of individuals more likely to be seen at concerts of progressive rock than at the philharmonic's classical programs, "young people com[ing] from throughout Estonia" to hear "something real," he remembers, "something fresh" (Siitan, interview 2017). Even the Tartu University concert was not the first public performance of Pärt's *tintinnabuli*-style music, however. As the composer recorded in his musical diaries, *Sarah Was Ninety Years Old* – called *Modus* on the programs in Tartu and Tallinn – had its premiere, *unofficially*, on 27 April 1976, at a festival of new music held at the Anglican Church in Riga's Old Town (APK, 2-1.10). At that time, the Anglican Church was not functioning as a church at all, but as home to the Student Club of the Riga Polytechnic Institute. There, an architecture student named Hardijs Lediņš had been holding a wildly popular series of discotheques since the 1974–75 academic year. In October 1977, the Student Club would host a second discotheque new-music festival, which would feature a slate of *tintinnabuli* premieres: *Arbos*, *Cantate Domino canticum novum*, *Fratres*, and *Summa* were first

performed at the festival, along with a mysterious *tintinnabuli* work called *Test*. As the pianist Alexei Lubimov (*1944), a festival participant, recalls of this and other experiences he had at the Riga Student Club, "it was as if we were discovering a whole new universe" (Lubimov 2010: 159).

In this article, I will focus on these and other early, largely forgotten engagements between Pärt, *tintinnabuli*, and student culture in the 1970s USSR. I will document the embrace of Pärt's new style among students and young artists, and I will suggest that an informal network of Soviet youth and experimenting musicians played a crucial role in fostering and promoting his *tintinnabuli* works between the time of the official premieres of October 1976 and the international success of *Tabula rasa* in late 1977. While not denying the singularity of Pärt's achievement with his new compositional language, I aim to chip away at the persistent image of Pärt as a solitary, isolated figure at the time of his greatest creative breakthrough. While his *tintinnabuli* experiments alienated him from some – though not all (Vaitmaa 1976: 10) – of his professional colleagues, they simultaneously garnered him the embrace of a community whose sound experiments resonated with his own, and whose attendant spiritual searching paralleled that which had brought him to *tintinnabuli* in the first place. I will suggest that the Latvian capital became a kind of laboratory space for the composer during this period of approximately eighteen months, home to what I will call, following the painter Ilya Kabakov (Kabakov 1999: 51), an *underground* space of relative creative freedom in the USSR, a space in which some of Pärt's most important premieres took place unofficially, as if unnoticed by the Ministry of Culture, unpoliced by Soviet authorities. What made his Riga concert of 28 October 1977 so important was the fact that many of his works premiered that night were openly religious, even sacred in nature. Indeed, it was within the underground space of Lediņš's Riga discotheque that Pärt came out publicly, for the very first time, as a Christian composer. The story unfolded in this article is a story about Pärt and *tintinnabuli*. But it is also a story about Riga itself, and of the spaces it afforded, at least for a moment, for the kind of creative coming-out Pärt ventured: for religious utterance and aesthetic experiment; in short, for the freedom to be an artist.

The Mystery of Test

I'll begin with a mystery. On 15 February 1978, Pärt filed his annual report with the Union of Soviet Estonian Composers, listing all of his works composed during the previous year (EHL, Pärt 1956–1978). His list indicates nine new compositions in 1977, eight of which we recognize today. These include *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* and the double concerto *Tabula rasa*. Below those, Pärt listed *De profundis* and the *Variations for the Healing of Arinushka*. Numbers 5 through 9 on his list are interesting for the fact that they were premiered all together, in October 1977, in the Latvian capital. Piece number 5 is *Cantate Domino*, numbers 6 and 7 are *Fratres* and *Arbos*, and piece number 9 is *Summa*. Number 8, however, would appear to be a ghost – and some unknown reader of this list even penciled in a question mark next to that entry on the document. Pärt recorded the title of the eighth work on his list as *Test*, which he described as "music for a Polish-Soviet film." Three months later, on 15 May, a work called *Test* appeared once again, this time as part of a suite of *tintinnabuli* compositions performed by Hortus Musicus in Tartu (ETMM, M238:1/4). Ever since the official unveiling of Pärt's *tintinnabuli* style a year and a half before, what the composer had been calling his *tintinnabuli* "suite" (*opus*, *onyc*) had comprised a varying list of short compositions in the style. *Trivium*, *Aliinale (Für Alina)*, and *Pari intervallo* had all been performed as part of the suite at one time or another. Now, in Tartu in May 1978, *Test* was taking a turn on the program.

A work called *Test* appears nowhere in Pärt's official catalogue of compositions. And so, the question of its identity nagged me. Just what was this composition, called *Test*? Where did it come from, and where did it end up? We find a hint in transcripts from a meeting of the Estonian SSR Composers' Union on 23 May 1978, eight days after the Tartu concert where the work was performed. There, as Christopher J. May has documented, the composer's wife Nora revealed something surprising. *Test*, she claimed, had been composed as a Latin Mass. Moreover, it had been intended for use as part of one of Pärt's film soundtracks – specifically, a jointly produced Polish-Estonian science-fiction film called *The Test of Pilot Pirx, Navigaator Pirx* in Estonian, *Дознание пилота Пиркса* in Russian (May 2016: 88–89). So why, then, would Pärt have elected to compose a

mass for a film? The movie in question, *Pilot Pirx*, released in 1979, follows the journey into space of an astronaut named Pirx and his crew, which consisted of a mix of humans and potentially untrustworthy androids that Pirx struggles to distinguish from each other. To be sure, the movie includes a fair amount of talk about religion, as Pirx identifies faith in God as a distinctly human attribute, and he questions his crew members about their religious convictions as he tries to distinguish man from machine. Several hundred pages of manuscript materials related to Pärt's work on the film are preserved at the Estonian Theatre and Music Museum in Tallinn, ranging from rudimentary thematic sketches to fair copies of fully orchestrated passages (ETMM, M238:2/62; ETMM, M238:2/TA). The earliest of these materials appears to date from August 1978. Yet, a careful examination of these materials reveals not one of their pages to preserve a trace of anything resembling a mass, nor do the sketches preserve any hints of Pärt's *tintinnabuli* style. Having thus mined the archives in Estonia, I was left facing the mystery with which I began. What was this composition called *Test*? Where did it *really* come from, and where did it end up?

The Mass at the Disco

Several months later, I traveled to Riga to visit the archives of Hardijs Lediņš (1955–2004): artist, composer, and DJ, producer of some of the first New Wave recordings in the Soviet Union (Figure 1). Back in the winter of 1974–75, as an architecture student, Lediņš founded a popular series of discotheques at the Student Club of the Riga Polytechnic Institute, which made its home in the city's disused Anglican church. What drew me to Lediņš was the fact that *Modus*, Pärt's very first work to be labeled by the composer with the heading "tintinnabuli" (*Tintinnabulum 1*; ETMM, M238:2/13), had its first-ever performance under the title of *Saara* in April 1976, in the unofficial venue of a festival of new music organized by Lediņš under the umbrella of his disco (APK, 2-1.10). The identity of the performers is obscure today. In recent correspondence, Lubimov recalled playing the premiere with the celebrated soprano Lydia Davydova (Schmelz, correspondence,



Figure 1. Hardijs Lediņš (source: LLMC).

2017). However, Pärt remembers that the singer on the premiere was clearly pregnant, whereas Davydova, born in 1932, was not at the time (May 2016: 227 n. 143). A photograph preserved in Lediņš's archive at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art in Riga captures Pärt during setup for one of the other 1976 festival events; Pärt is on the left-hand side (LLMC, Lediņš Collection [unlabeled box]; Figure 2).¹ It was also Lediņš who organized the Riga concert of October 1977 at which *Test* and four of Pärt's other new *tintinnabuli* works were premiered together. That concert was part of a second festival of contemporary music organized by Lediņš at the Riga Polytechnic Student Club, and Lediņš's archive preserves a complete typescript schedule of the festival's events. Among them, on 28 October, at ten-thirty in the evening, Hortus Musicus was scheduled to perform a concert, with the note "A. Pärt's Music [is] on the program" (*Programmā A. Pārta*

¹ As related by an interlocutor, Pärt himself remembers little of the festival beyond the premiere of *Saara* (Körver, interview 2017).



Figure 2. Pärt (left) during setup for one of the 1976 festival events (LLMC, Lediņš Collection [unlabeled box]).

skaņdarbi) (LLMC, Lediņš Collection, Pirmās diskotēkas RPI).

If a printed program for the concert of 28 October was ever produced, I have not found a copy of it. But the private archive of a Lediņš family friend preserves a reel of magnetic tape on which the concert was recorded (Lauris Vorslavs, private archive). On the outside of the box that houses the tape, in what looks like Lediņš's handwriting, the first piece listed was the *Passionslieder* by the Moscow-based composer Vladimir Martynov. After that, yet another version of Pärt's *tintinnabuli* suite was performed by Andres Mustonen and Hortus Musicus, labeled in a mix of Latin, Latvian, and Russian. This time, the suite consisted of *Arbos*, *Cantate Domino*, *Summa*, *Fratres*, *In spe*, and *Pari intervallo*. Then, confirming at least part of Nora Pärt's story to the Soviet Estonian Composers' Union, another work by Pärt was recorded, which Lediņš labeled "Mass in Six Parts (Test)" (in Latvian, *Mesa (6 daļās) (Tests)*). Fortunately, the tape is still playable. Listening to

it, I at last found an answer to the mystery that had prompted my months-long search.²

Test, it turns out, was indeed a mass. But it was not just any mass. It was Pärt's *Missa syllabica*, which, as Pärt's musical diaries reveal (APK, 2-1.21), was the very first *tintinnabuli* composition he had completed using what has since become known as his "syllabic" method of setting texts – essentially, generating the contour of a melodic line algorithmically, with input into the algorithm consisting, in part, of the syllable count of each word to be set (Brauneiss 2012: 122–125; Brauneiss 2010: 114–117). As indicated in the diaries, Pärt discovered the syllabic method on 12 February 1977, and he used it that day to generate a melodic line for a Russian Orthodox prayer. Immediately after that, he used the same technique to set the Latin Gloria syllabically. Between that date and 15 February, he composed syllabic melodies to set the remaining texts of the Mass Ordinary: Kyrie, Agnus Dei, Sanctus, and Credo. He spent the next three days filling in secondary melodic lines and

² A digital copy of the recording is now archived by the Arvo Pärt Recorded Archive, maintained by Doug Maskew in Tallinn (APRA0010328).

adding triadic *tintinnabuli* voices (T-voices) to them. By 18 February, he had finished a complete Latin Mass, which he would later call *Test* – and later still, the *Missa syllabica* (APK, 2-1.21). For present purposes, what is important to note about Pärt's discovery of his syllabic method is that it arose not from his search for a means of adapting *tintinnabuli* principles to the setting of texts in general, but specifically from his search for a way to set the Biblical words of God and of the saints in his music, a project upon which he had embarked as early as 11 or 12 November 1976 (APK, 2-1.18; APK, 2-1.19). Pärt's project of these months, in other words, was an avowedly religious project. It was an explicitly Christian project, with his first priority, upon discovering the syllabic method, being a setting the entirety of the Ordinary of the Mass, the text that constitutes the very heart of Catholic liturgical practice.

In the 1970s, the Soviet Union was an officially atheistic state, but it was emphatically *not* a place devoid of religion. Already for decades, and especially in the 1970s, many Soviet artists, including musicians in Pärt's circle, had composed sacred music or participated in private religious study (Dvoskina 2003; Kabakov 1999). But to do so *publicly*, as the anthropologist Alexei Yurchak notes, was substantially outside the bounds of what constituted "normal" behavior for a Soviet citizen. "Religion was tolerated by the state," Yurchak writes, "but disconnected from state institutions (education, media, industry, public associations, army, bureaucracy, etc.)." Its practice, Yurchak continues, was "tolerated but viewed with suspicion and hostility" (Yurchak 2006: 112). Back in 1968, Pärt had gotten himself into considerable trouble for arranging a public performance of his *Credo*, a work for chorus and orchestra whose Latin text declared his personal adaptation of the Nicene Creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ..." (Siitan 1999: 185). The scandal that erupted afterwards contributed to the greatest creative crisis of Pärt's life, a crisis that he resolved only with his discovery of the *tintinnabuli* style in 1976.

In light of this, it might seem remarkable that Pärt's musical diaries reveal his *tintinnabuli* project to have been a devotional project from its very start. As late as 12 September 1976, six weeks

before the official Tallinn premiere, Pärt was still considering several possible titles for each of his earliest *tintinnabuli* compositions (APK, 2-1.18). The choral work *Calix* was also identified as a Dies Irae from the Requiem Mass, and sketches for the work, first referred to by Merike Vaitmaa (Vaitmaa 1991: 22; ETMM, M238:2/61), reveal that the score was conceived as a setting of the Latin hymn. Ahead of the premiere, *Modus* was still being called *Saara*, alluding to the Book of Genesis. And *In spe*, published in 1984 under the title *An den Wassern zu Babel saßen wir und weinten*, was also, in September 1976, identified as Kyrie from the Latin Ordinary (APK, 2-1.18). For the official premiere in Tallinn on 27 October, however, Pärt disguised the devotional nature of all of these works. All of the movements of his suite were identified only by their neutral, non-religious titles (ETMM, M238:1/4). In *Calix*, the choir sing solfege syllables instead of its sacred text.³

In contrast his perceived need to hide the religious nature of his *tintinnabuli* project in Tallinn, the story that unfolded for Pärt in Riga was substantially different. In the disco-festival space of Lediņš's Polytechnic Student Club, Pärt evidently felt free to proclaim his Christian faith openly in music. Not only did his festival concert of October 1977 feature the first performance of the *Missa syllabica*, it also included two additional openly sacred *tintinnabuli* works, *Summa* and *Cantate Domino*. With this in mind, one might ask what it was about this festival space that made it one in which the composer seemed to have no fear. What made it a space in which he could venture to come out with works every bit as officially unacceptable as *Credo*, for which he had gotten into considerable trouble less than a decade before? If answers are to be found, I think, the figure of Lediņš might help us to discover them.

Enter the DJ

When he first proposed his idea for a series of discotheques at the Riga Polytechnic Institute, Lediņš envisioned something different from what many might imagine today. His discos would feature dancing, of course, but only in the second half of the evening. In the first half, which

³ An archival recording of the concert is preserved at Estonian Public Broadcasting (Eesti Rahvusringhääling, Tallinn), ÜPST-2734/KCDR-1020.

he called their “educational” (*tematiska*) part, he would play recordings of music (classical and pop, Soviet and Western, recent and centuries-old), feature performers from the Latvian SSR Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra and elsewhere, and lecture to attendees about what they heard. As Aina Bērziņa, head of the Student Club at the time, described the project in the Polytechnic’s student newspaper in October 1974,

[t]his year, the Student Club is organizing something new: the discotheque. It will be a new kind of recreational evening for students, distinguished from typical events by virtue of the fact that a significant portion of our attention will be on the educational part of evening. We’ll strive to acquaint ourselves with the newest jazz, estrada, and pop music. We’ll organize meetings with experts and discuss subjects of vital interest today. In this way, the events will constitute something new at our institution (Bērziņa 1974).

To prepare his discotheque programs and lectures, Lediņš mined the record and magazine collections of the Latvian State Library and Conservatory, writing out in longhand scrips for delivery at the events (LLMC, Lediņš Collection, Rokraksti; LLMC, Lediņš Collection, Manuskripti; LLMC, Lediņš Collection, M. Davis). His discotheque programs were ambitious. One of the few that has survived, from November 1978, gives us a sense of the range of his concerns. The first, “educational” part of the evening, Lediņš devoted to the topic of “electronic musical instruments and their use in rock.” There, he traced the sounds and technologies of the contemporary West German band Tangerine Dream back to the experimental work of Karlheinz Stockhausen, and to points even deeper into music history (LLMC, Lediņš Collection, Manuskripti). From the start, officials at the Polytechnic recognized Lediņš’s project as a serious educational endeavor, and they supported it enthusiastically. In December 1974, when he first put forward his proposal, the Polytechnic branch of the Soviet Youth League or Komsomol, in charge of promoting and controlling student life at the institution, recommended approval of his plans without any formal deliberation whatsoever (LVA, PA-4263/8/2). The Komsomol reaffirmed its support for Lediņš’s discos repeatedly over the next two years (LVA, PA-4263/10/1; LVA, PA-

4263/10/2). As I was told in an interview with the university administrator Asja Visocka, who presided over the Polytechnic’s Student Club beginning in January 1978, Lediņš and his friends were “very, very active” in shaping cultural life at the institution. And “all of them,” Visocka told me, “were upstanding” (Visocka, interview 2018).

The upstanding nature of Lediņš’s work carried him far in putting together his festival of October 1977. To gain support of the Komsomol, he and his colleagues framed the event as a celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, as attested by a flyer produced to advertise the festival on the Polytechnic campus (LLMC, Lediņš Collection, Pirmās diskotēkas RPI) (Figure 3). As one of Lediņš collaborators in staging the event, Boriss Avramecs (*1949), reports, the students declared the goals of their project to be: “1. To showcase the most recent achievements in Soviet music”; and “2. To foster the exchange of views and contacts between young people of the brotherly republics” (Avramecs 2006: 28–29). Recently, in Vilnius, I showed a photograph of the festival flyer to Donatas Katkus, who played first violin in the Vilnius String Quartet when they appeared at the festival. Not having seen the flyer in over forty years, Katkus appeared to register a shock of immediate recognition. And then, he burst out laughing. “We were crazy,” he recalled of the event and of the actions and intentions of his friends and collaborators. “We could do whatever we wanted” (Katkus, interview 2018). As another festival organizer, Alexei Lubimov, explained to the composer Valentin Silvestrov in a letter of 12 July 1977, just as preparations for the October events were underway: “The festival taking shape [in Riga] is being supported by people from the Komsomol. In particular, it is being organized under the banner of the 60th [anniversary], because if you are already [operating] within the sphere of the Ministry of Culture, the censor will leave you alone” (Paul Sacher Stiftung, Valentin Silvestrov Collection). It is in such words from Katkus and Lubimov, I think, that we might find important clues to understanding just why and how the Student Club came to be so important to Pärt’s *tintinnabuli* project during these years.

It is clear from the archives that Lediņš was highly esteemed in many corners of Riga officialdom; that his organizational work among students and musicians was officially supported,

RPI STUDENTU KLUBS

21. oktobris — 30. oktobris 1977. g.

MŪSDIENU MŪZIKAS DEKĀDE

VELTĪTA

**Lielās Oktobra sociālistiskās revolūcijas
60. gadadienai**

Senās mūzikas ansamblis «Hortus musicus» (Tallina)
Viļņas stīgu kvartets
Sitamo instrumentu ansamblis. M. Pekarskis (Maskava)
Saksofonu kvartets. L. Mihailovs (Maskava)
Elektroniskās mūzikas studija (Maskava)
Vokālais ansamblis «Tonika» (Ļeņingrada)

Programmā padomju komponistu skaņdarbi

Bilētes RPI studentu klubā, Bibliotēkas ielā 2a

PAR IZDEVĪMU ATBILD
RĪGAS POLITEHNISKAIS INSTITŪTS
Nodola saīkšanai 1977. gada 14. oktobrī. Izdruška papīrs. Papīra formāts 60x42, 0,46 uzsk. lap l.
Tirāža 200 eks. Pas. 4998. Iespūsta Latvijas PSR Ministru Padomes Valsts Izdevniecība, poligrā-
fijas un grāmatu tirdzniecības lietu komisijas Ogriņu ielā 31, Ogri, Revolūcijas iela 31.
Афиша Рижского политехнического института
на латвийском языке

Ogri 1977

Figure 3. Flyer of the festival of October 1977, Student Club, RPI (LLMC, Lediņš Collection, Pirmās diskotēkas RPI).

and that his activities were subjected to little or no careful oversight by institutional or governmental authorities. It is also clear that he understood quite well how to market his projects to officials so as to maintain their support and the freedom he enjoyed. It is within the relatively unmonitored space of his discotheque project that a little underground domain of creative expression seems to have been able to take root, one just big enough to accommodate such an important project as the first performance of Pärt's openly sacred *tintinnabuli* music. In this light, we might return to the ambiguous, early title of the *Missa syllabica*, premiered at the festival as *Test*. As Pärt's musical diaries make clear, the work was composed in February 1977, some eighteen months before he would even begin to work on the soundtrack for *The Test of Pilot Pirx*. But that film *did* focus on questions of religion, so I suspect that to associate his mass with that particular soundtrack, once it had its underground premiere and he had begun to acknowledge its existence publicly, might have been a strategic move. Namely, the supposed association of the mass to the film could have offered Pärt an excuse, of sorts, for the religious nature of the work, a way of avoiding a repeat of the *Credo* scandal in the event that such danger might loom again. In effect, it shows Pärt hiding yet also not hiding, openly acknowledging the existence of his mass, yet taking care to lay a foundation of plausible deniability if a concerned official should ask too many questions, listen too closely, or approach too near. In contrast, in the underground space of Lediņš's Riga festival, Pärt – like Katkus and Lubimov – felt that he could do whatever he wanted. Musically, he had felt free.

The Ritual Moment

Significantly, Pärt's was not the only sacred music to be performed at the October festival. Vladimir Martynov (*1946), a young composer from Moscow, had also had a sacred premiere: his *Passionslieder* (1977), composed for soprano and a Baroque ensemble of strings and harpsichord. Comprising nine movements, each of which based on a single G-minor, four-bar melody, Martynov's work consists of a highly repetitive, even hypnotic setting of a Lutheran chorale text written by the German theologian Johann Mentzer at the turn of the eighteenth century. *Der am Kreuz ist meine Liebe, meine Liebe ist Jesus Christ*: "He on the cross

is the one whom I love, the one whom I love is Jesus Christ." Martynov's performance, too, was captured by Lediņš on reel-to-reel tape (Lauris Vorslavs, private archive). As Martynov would recall some two decades later, he first heard Pärt's *tintinnabuli* music at the same Riga festival where his *Passionslieder* premiered – Pärt's *tintinnabuli* style was not yet widely known in Moscow – and the experience struck him as something "volcanic, tectonic" (Katunyan 1999: 3). The festival as a whole, as he described in hindsight, was an event in which he and Pärt "came out together, as if in a united front, to declare a new compositional truth" (Martynov 2010: 174–175).

It is not hard to appreciate the shock Martynov experienced when he first heard Pärt's *tintinnabuli* in Riga, for the quasi-medieval sounds of *Test* and *In spe* would likely have signaled a commonality between Pärt's aesthetic concerns and his own, especially when he heard those works after the quasi-Baroque sounds of his *Passionslieder*. And their spiritual concerns intersected as well. At that time, Martynov had yet to commit fully to Orthodox Christianity. But he had already embarked upon a spiritual journey several years before. Working at a Tajik film studio at the start of the decade, he had spent his nights listening to records with friends – especially the progressive rock of King Crimson, Tangerine Dream, and Klaus Schulze. After listening, he and his companions would talk with each other about the spiritual truths – the "Great Religious Idea" (*Великая Религиозная Идея*) – that those artists' music seemed to address (Martynov 2012: 14–15). Soon, back in Moscow, Martynov took a job at the electronic music studio of the Skriabin Museum. There, he formed the rock band Boomerang (*Бумеранг*) with studio colleagues and musician friends, and he continued exploring connections between musical and spiritual practice. Listening one night at the Skriabin Studio to King Crimson's 1974 album *Red*, Martynov had a vision: of music as a "sparkling stream embracing and penetrating everything," and of the task of the composer or musician as consisting, simply, in "lowering themselves into that stream" (Martynov 2012: 22).

As Martynov later recounted, he had his first inklings of the ideas that led him to compose in the idiom of the *Passionslieder* when he read a pair of standard-issue music history texts, the polemical statements traded around 1600 between the

composer Giovanni Artusi and a brother of the composer Claudio Monteverdi. Technically, the Italians' debate focused on Monteverdi's then-radical treatment of musical dissonance, but it hit more broadly upon the role of any composer in relation to the texts they set to music. Artusi held that it was the composer's duty to subject himself to the norms and rules of inherited tradition. Monteverdi countered that the composer – as a freely interpreting intellect – was entitled to bend the rules however he wanted in order to express his own interpretation of a text. Martynov, who was just then starting to think about music as a “path toward religious understanding,” found himself siding with Artusi emphatically (Martynov 2012: 23). He discussed the centuries-old debate with friends whenever and wherever they were willing to listen, and he seriously pondered writing his own polemical treatise to set the historical record straight. Monteverdi's music, and most of the music that came afterwards, was, as Martynov described it, “artistic music” – music created to give sounding expression to the mind or ideas of the artist. In contrast, the music of earlier ages was “magical music,” as he called it, music that merely sounds *through* the composer, music that sounds the voice of God. That was the kind of music Martynov wished to write (Martynov 2012: 31–33).

In unknowing parallel to Pärt in Tallinn, who had begun to study medieval music sometime around 1970, Martynov immersed himself in studies of early and pre-Baroque music in Moscow. And he began to seek, in his own compositions, ways of tapping into the sounds of earlier ages – from a time, he felt, before the advent of thinking about the composer as a self-expressing artist. This meant, for Martynov, the sixteenth century or earlier, whose sounds and gestures he sought to emulate in his own compositions (he later described his project as composing with historical “simulacra”) (Martynov 2011: 17). Thus, the deliberately archaic sounds of the *Passionslieder*. When Martynov first heard Pärt's *tintinnabuli* – his sacred *tintinnabuli* – in Riga in October 1977, he felt as if he saw a vision of himself reflected in a musical mirror, as if he heard an echo of his own spiritual quest in the resonant harmony of Pärt's compositions. (Figure 4.) With their joint premieres at Lediņš's festival, the event had the cast of a ritual moment. It was as though the home of the Polytechnic Student Club – the



Figure 4. Vladimir Martynov, Arvo Pärt
(source: LLMC).

Anglican Church – had become a church once again, even if just for a couple of days, the sacred rite resounding in its walls for the first time since the country's Soviet annexation thirty-three years before.

An Ending

As Avramecs recalls, mistakes were made in October 1977. One of the festival's organizers reportedly dropped typescript copies of Mentzer's Lutheran text from the balcony of the Anglican Church into the audience below, just as Martynov's *Passionslieder* was being performed. A copy of the text reportedly made its way to the KGB. Quickly, the festival organizers and their enablers were charged with engaging in “religious propaganda” (Avramecs 2006: 30; Avramecs, interview 2017). To date, Latvia's KGB files remain closed to most researchers, and I have been unable to find any record of repercussions in the archives of the Komsomol, the Riga Polytechnic, or the Soviet Latvian Composers' Union, which is said to have tried to intervene in defense of the students and the artists implicated (Rovner 2000: 64; LVA, 423; LVA, PA-4263). However, several of the festival's organizers later described what they experienced. As Lediņš would recall in the time of glasnost, “after the repressions” that followed the festival, “I no longer involved myself with avant-garde music” (Vasiljevs 1988: 14). Referencing the imaginary “travels” that such musical engagements had once afforded him, he explained: “Because I was an architecture student, I was called in to see the rector, and that's why I ceased my travels around the world. I was given a choice: to continue with my studies, or to

organize further festivals" (Lediņš 1989). Lediņš chose the former. For the pianist Lubimov, the repercussions were harsher. "After the festival in Riga," he explains, "I was deprived of concert trips abroad for several years" (Lubimov 2010: 156). Harsher still was the punishment given to the head of the Student Club, Aina Bērziņa, who lost her job (Vasiljevs 1988: 14; Avramecs 2006: 30). The decisions behind these moves seem to have been made quietly, or in spaces still inaccessible to historians. When I spoke with Visocka, Bērziņa's successor in the post, I asked her about the circumstances surrounding the shakeup after the festival. She insisted that the event was a "completely normal festival," and she explained the cessation of Lediņš's organizational work simply: "there was," she told me, "no real desire to continue" (Visocka, interview 2018). The musicologist Martin Boiko shared a somewhat different recollection with me. Although he did not attend the festival himself, he remembers arriving at the Student Club for an event shortly after the scandal broke. "One day I went. There was this lady who always sat, smiling, at the entrance of *Anglikāņi* [the Anglican Church]. Now, she was crying. And that was it" (Boiko, interview 2018).

As the 1977–78 academic year drew to a close at the Riga Polytechnic Institute, changes were afoot. Working diligently to complete his degree, Lediņš continued to organize discos, but he increasingly sought venues beyond the campus, and he devoted an ever-larger share of his programs to rock music and dancing. In Moscow, Lubimov and his friends were busy making plans for a third festival of new music, but the events of the previous October had compelled them to look outside of Latvia entirely. With Lediņš's departure from the scene, they connected with Andres

Mustonen, director of Hortus Musicus, who leveraged his esteem with Estonian officials to open the doors of Tallinn's musical establishment to an officially-sponsored, blowout event planned for November 1978 (Randalu, Mustonen 1995: 36–37). The tradition of the Polytechnic festivals in which Pärt's sacred *tintinnabuli* project took root would continue after all, but in a new locale: in Tallinn, right in Pärt's backyard.

Avramecs would not be involved in organizing the Tallinn festival of 1978. For him, as for both Martynov and Lubimov, the culminating moment for the underground music scene he helped to shape would remain the Riga Polytechnic festival of October 1977 (Avramecs, interview 2019; Lubimov 2010: 159; Martynov 2010: 174–175). Looking back from the vantage of nearly thirty years after the event, Avramecs described its significance largely in terms of its impact upon the social realm, a realm that was both aesthetic and spiritual, and perhaps even slightly, vaguely political. Recalling the festival concert at which Martynov's *Passionslieder* was premiered, he remembered:

The concert took place late in the evening, at the end of October. And that night, on the embankment beside the Anglican Church, there was a rehearsal for an army parade going on, because 7 November was approaching. You could hear the grumbling of truck drivers and commands shouted in Russian. But right next to all that, it was a little oasis (Avramecs 2006: 30).

At that moment, in that ritual moment, it was as though a spiritual history interrupted decades before were revealed to be continuous after all. Underground, the sacral life of the church in Riga's Old Town resumed, momentarily.

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Arvo Pärt, Hardijs Lediņš ja rituaalsed hetked Riias oktoobris 1977

Kevin C. Karnes

Arvo Pärdi *tintinnabuli*-muusika esmaesitus Tallinnas 27. oktoobril 1976 oli linna kultuurielus paljulubav sündmus, nii „ametlik“, kui üks kontsert Eesti NSV-s olla sai. See polnud aga Pärdi *tintinnabuli*-stiilis muusika esimene avalik esitus. Too leidis aset 27. aprillil 1976, kui Riia vanalinnas anglikaani kirikus toimunud uue muusika festivalil tuli mitteametlikult esiettekandele „Saara oli 90-aastane“. Festivali organiseeriti Riia Polütehnilise Instituudi üliõpilasklubi diskoteegi egiidi all. 1977. aasta oktoobris korraldas üliõpilasklubi arhitektuuritudeng Hardijs Lediņši (1955–2004) eestvedamisel teise uue muusika festivali, kus anti võimalus järgmiste *tintinnabuli*-kompositsioonide esmaesitusteks: „Arbos“, „Cantate Domino canticum novum“, „Fratres“ ja „Summa“, kõrvuti salapärase *tintinnabuli*-teosega, mille pealkirjaks oli „Test“. Artikkel keskendub sellele varasele, suuresti unustatud seosele Pärdi, *tintinnabuli*-muusika ja tudengikultuuri vahel 1970ndate NSVL-is. Selles näidatakse, et Riia üliõpilasklubist sai tol ajal helilooja laboratoorium, põrandaalune ruum, kus ta tuli esimest korda avalikult välja otseselt kristliku muusika loojana.

Riias esmaesitusele tulnud, „Testiks“ nimetatud kompositsiooni identiteet oli uurijatele kaua aega müsteerium, kes oletasid seost Pärdi muusikaga filmile „Navigaator Pirx“ (1978–79). Kuid filmiga seonduv arhiivimaterjal ei näita kokkupuutepunkte filmimuusika ja Pärdi *tintinnabuli*-stiilis loomingu vahel, peale käputäie tsitaatide teosest „Kui Bach oleks mesilasi pidanud“ (1976). Ent helisalvestis oktoobrikuise festivali kontserdilt, mis on säilinud Lediņši perekonnasõbra Lauris Vorslavi eraarhiivis, näitab, et „Test“ oli tegelikkuses Pärdi „Missa syllabica“ (1977). Pärdi muusikapäevikud tõendavad, et „Missa syllabica“ oli esimene *tintinnabuli*-teos, mille ta komponeeris, kasutades tekstist muusika tuletamisel oma niinimetatud süllaabilist meetodit. Tõepoolest, ta oli avastanud süllaabilise tehnika, otsides teed, kuidas komponeerida ladinakeelset missat.

Et mõista, miks Riia diskoteek kujutas endast turvalist kohta, kus korraldada Pärdi ideoloogiliselt kõige problemaatilisema, nõukogude võimu poolt keelatud, varjamatult vaimuliku muusika esiettekandeid, võiks lähemalt vaadelda Lediņši diskotegevust Riia Polütehnilises Instituudis. Tema diskoplaanidele oli alus pandud 1974. aastal, ja diskoteek muutus kiiresti magnetiks tudengitele ning linna ja kaugemategi piirkondade loomingulistele noortele. Algusest peale osutus Lediņš väga osavaks võimude toetuse säilitamisel, saades oma tegevusele korduvalt heakskiidu komsomoli juhtorganitel ja koostades kavasad, millesse olid kaasatud külalised nõukogude ühiskonna ülemkiihist, kaasa arvatud Läti NSV Heliloojate Liidu esimees ja – sellest on teateid – Alfred Schnittke. Tegelikult imetleti Lediņšit ja tema tegevust Polütehnilises Instituudis niivõrd, et tal lubati tegutseda küllalt vabalt; arhiivimaterjalid tõendavad, et vastutavad komsomolitegelased lubasid tema diskodel toimuda ilma suurema järelevalveta.

See oli kontekst, milles Lediņš ja ta sõbrad organiseerisid 1976–77 oma uue muusika festivali. Festivali külaliste hulka kuulusid Aleksei Ljubimov, Tatjana Grindenko ja helilooja Vladimir Martõnov. Eriti Martõnovile tähendasid Riia festivalid nõukogude muusikaelus märgilise tähendusega sündmusi, need andsid talle nagu Pärdivõimaluse esitleda oma esimest varjamatult vaimulikku kompositsiooni diskoteegiprojekti turvalistes raamidest. Samal oktoobrikuise festivalil, kus mängiti Pärdi „Missa syllabicat“, tulid esiettekandele Martõnovi „Passionslieder“ („Kannatuslaulud“, 1977). Kuid hiljem lahvas skandaal. Martõnovi teose esituse ajal levitas üks festivalist osavõtja kontserdikülalistajate hulgas „Kannatuslaulude“ vaimuliku teksti koopiaid. Koopiad leidsid tee võimudeni, ja Lediņšil keelati tulevikus festivali korraldada. Sel momendil liikus impulss Tallinna, kus Varajase ja nüüdisaja muusika festival novembris 1978 tähistas selle üürikese festivalitraditsiooni kulminatsiooni ja ühtlasi lõppu.

Tõlkinud Anu Schaper