

Russian textbooks in Music Theory
A bibliography compiled by Ellen Bakulina
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Introduction

The Russian tradition of music theory pedagogy begins with the first Russian-language textbook—that by Piotr Tchaikovsky, first published in 1872 for the use in the then recently established Moscow conservatory. Since that time, harmony textbooks have comprised the largest and most significant body of Russian pedagogical texts in music theory, although later, textbooks on other topics appeared, as well. During the twentieth century, a new pedagogical tradition formed in the Soviet Union, a tradition that divides a standard music theory curriculum into five main subjects:

- elementary theory (or theory fundamentals)
- harmony (which always includes keyboard component)
- solfege (i.e., ear training, also usually with a keyboard component)
- formal analysis
- polyphony (i.e., counterpoint of the modal and tonal eras)

Consequently, every textbook written in the Soviet and post-Soviet era belongs to one of these five categories, although the categories may, of course, intersect in some cases.

Beyond the traditional classification by subject, another classification is important—that of the educational level. Music education in Russia has the following steps:

- 1) Children's school of music (*detskaia muzykal'naia shkola*)
- 2) Post-secondary or "middle" professional education (*srednee spetsial'noe obrazovanie*): College or *Uchilische*
- 3) Higher professional education (*vysheespetsial'noe obrazovanie*): Conservatory, Institute, or Academy
- 4) Post-graduate degree (the candidate degree, *kandidatskaia stepen'*): Aspirantura
- 5) Doctoral degree

The first three of these steps require the use of traditional textbooks. Every textbook has a specification that says whether the book is aimed at the school level, the post-secondary level, the higher level, or a certain combination of them. The distinction between the levels can sometimes be vague, however. Usually, elementary theory books, as well as collections of harmony "lessons" (*zadachi*, melodies for four-part harmonization) are written for post-secondary institutions, although elementary theory is sometimes covered in children's schools. The children's level is also the goal audience of a huge number of solfege books. Textbooks of harmony, form, and polyphony can often be used at both professional levels (post-secondary and higher). Textbooks for the higher-

education level often resemble scholarly treatises; indeed, some Russian-language treatises began their lives as higher-level textbooks (these include some of Kholopov's works, Miasoedov's *Harmony in Russian Music*, and some others). In my bibliography, I have used the numbers given above (1, 2 and 3) to designate what level a book is designed for. At times, however, such a specific designation is impossible, in which cases I did not specify any level.

The subject of formal analysis must be discussed with respect to its name. Although every professional music institution gives courses of musical form, the subject's name was banned in 1948, when the famous Soviet anti-formalist campaign began. Everything that was "formalist" or even related to the word "form" was proclaimed negative and undesirable. The discipline of formal analysis was renamed "analysis of musical compositions" (*analiz muzikal'nykh proizvedenii*). Consequently, form textbooks written after 1948 were given this new name. Its enforced historical origin notwithstanding, the more general name "analysis of musical compositions" in fact corresponds to the nature of the subject, for analysis of form is impossible without some understanding of harmony, counterpoint, texture, and other musical aspects. Although the directives of the Soviet era are no longer valid in the twenty-first century, the alternative name of formal analysis survives in some textbooks and educational institutions.

The subject of solfege should be discussed separately. Although it roughly corresponds to what is known in the West as ear training or musicianship, at lower levels, especially the children's school level, solfege textbooks include theory and harmony material. This happens because the traditional children's music school does not have a special "theory" course, but rather includes theory material as part of the solfege course. Solfege textbooks are a very special category that often combine material related to musical practice, theory, and other aspects; these books should be listed as a separate category, not simply as "theory textbooks." This bibliography does *not* list solfege books.

Bibliography¹

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¹ Some of the authors' complete first names was difficult to locate. Therefore, these authors' first and patronymic names are indicated with their initials.

² "Lesson" is an inexact translation of the word "zadacha," which can also be translated as "exercise". *Zadacha*, in the context of harmony pedagogy, means a melody to be harmonized in four voices. Usually, but not always, the melody is the soprano part. I have chosen not to translate "zadacha" as "exercise" because, in some cases, the original titles contain "uprazhnenie," which corresponds to "exercise" more closely.

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Further research

Some valuable online sources that contain lists of music theory textbooks are

http://college.gromadin.com/?page_id=118

<http://www.twirpx.com/files/art/music/theoretic/harmony>