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***Baltic Musicological Conferences: Cultural Mission and Political Machinery***

The cultural space of the Baltics – is it reality or fiction, a spontaneous cultural tradition or an artificial geopolitical construction? These questions challenging the Baltic musicological conferences after fifty years history are not rhetorical at all. Starting from 1967, when the first conference took place, the annual meetings of the countries’ musicologists have not been limited solely to the pursuit of professional goals. Time and again, political changes and cultural ruptures would leave their marks in the history of the Baltic musicological cooperation. The Soviet method of ritual dedications was employed when founding the conference five decades ago: the assembly of musicologists from the three Baltic States was formally dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the October revolution, thus founding the tradition defiant to the Soviet centralisation. (Even then some musicologists were convinced that they were continuing the pre-war cooperation of the Baltic musical communities: the first pre-war conferences of Baltic musicians were held in 1939 and 1940, during the Baltic Friendship Congresses.)

Soon the conferences became a scene for the professional self-expression and the non-hierarchical networking of the young musicologists of the sixties and later generations. The tradition contributed for establishing the institutional status of Baltic musicology opposing the official doctrine of Soviet music and musicology in the second half of the 20th century. The establishment of the alternative canons of national classics and modern music, as well as the modernisation of musicology itself are among the results of these conferences. During the years of political changes in 1990s, the cultural revival has inspired discussions about the more general search for Baltic cultural identity and the possibilities of institutional establishment thereof. Basing on results and impact of cooperation between musicologists of neighbouring countries, I shall discuss the Soviet formation and post-Soviet transformation of national history writing, given the political and cultural factors of these changes.

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