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Organ Culture in Kazakhstan: Problems of Periodisation

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Abstract. The article addresses the problem of periodising organ culture in Kazakhstan as a distinct branch of the country's national musical culture. The source base of the study consists of organ works by Kazakhstani composers created between 1967 and the 2020s, along with archival materials, dissertations and monographs on the history of musical art in Kazakhstan, as well as works touching on issues of periodisation and stylistic evolution of the national school of composition. The methodological basis of the work is constructed according to historical, comparative and genre-analytical methods, as well as the principles of a systems approach to the study of musical culture. Drawing on the periodisation models proposed by Larisa Latyshova, Meruert Zhekenova and Tatiana Kharlamova, the article analyses their relationship to Valeria Nedlina's general periodisation of Kazakhstan's musical culture. On this basis, organ art is shown to be developing in line with the general processes of mastering the European academic model while forming its own internal logic of artistic evolution. The development of organ art in Kazakhstan can be associated with the early formation of the genre system of the European tradition, its subsequent expansion in the field of solo performance, and processes of national rethinking. The study refines the existing three-stage periodisation of organ culture in Kazakhstan and revises its chronological boundaries (1967–1975; 1976–1999; the 2000s to the present). It also establishes that, throughout its development, organ culture has served as a field of creative experimentation in which modern compositional techniques, including dodecaphony, have been explored, making it one of the most dynamic areas of the country's national musical culture.

***Keywords*:** organ culture in Kazakhstan, periodisation, genre evolution, organ repertoire, Kazakhstani composing school, national musical culture

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Органное искусство Казахстана и вопросы его периодизации

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена проблеме периодизации органного искусства Казахстана как самостоятельного направления национальной музыкальной культуры. Источниковую базу исследования составляют органные сочинения казахстанских композиторов, созданные в период с 1967 по 2020 год, архивные материалы, диссертационные и монографические работы по истории музыкального искусства Казахстана, а также труды, затрагивающие вопросы периодизации и стилевой эволюции национальной композиторской школы. Методологическую основу работы определяют исторический, сравнительный и жанрово-аналитический методы, а также принципы системного подхода к изучению музыкальной культуры. В статье рассматриваются примеры периодизации Ларисы Латышовой, Меруерт Жекеновой и Татьяны Харламовой, анализируется их соотношение с общей периодизацией музыкального искусства Казахстана, предложенной Валерией Недлиной. На этой основе устанавливается, что органное искусство развивается в русле общих процессов освоения европейской академической модели, однако формирует собственную внутреннюю логику художественной эволюции. Показано, что развитие органного искусства Казахстана связано с ранним формированием жанровой системы европейской традиции, её последующим расширением в области сольного исполнительства и национальным переосмыслением. В результате исследования уточнена существующая трёхэтапная периодизация органного искусства Казахстана и скорректирована её датировка (1967–1975; 1976–1999; 2000-е годы – настоящее время), выявлено, что органная сфера на протяжении всего периода функционировала как пространство творческого эксперимента, где апробировались современные композиционные техники, в том числе додекафония, что позволяет рассматривать данную область как одну из наиболее динамичных в рамках национальной музыкальной культуры.

Ключевые слова: органное искусство Казахстана, периодизация, жанровая эволюция, органный репертуар, казахстанская композиторская школа, национальная музыкальная культура

Introduction

Kazakhstan's organ culture is a relatively young but rapidly developing field within the country's musical life. Its emergence dates from the installation of the first concert organ in Alma-Ata[1] in 1967, which laid the foundations for a new sphere of professional musical activity encompassing performance, teaching and composition. Over the ensuing decades, the republic developed its own school of organ playing and a national repertoire, the instrument came into use across an increasingly wide geographical area, and organ music became firmly established in the country's concert and educational life (for further details, see [1; 2; 3]).

In recent years, the range of studies devoted to organ culture in Kazakhstan has expanded. A significant body of work has been formed examining various aspects of the development of the national organ school, including questions of history [4; 5; 6; 7; 8], instrumentation [9; 10; 11], performance practice, repertoire and compositional creativity [12; 13; 14; 15]. The current stage of research in this area naturally highlights the need to correlate, systematise, and generalise the accumulated research material, which will allow us to form a holistic understanding of the development of organ art in Kazakhstan.

Among the research problems that arise in this regard, the problem of periodisation occupies a special place. It is precisely this framework that allows us to present the organ culture of Kazakhstan as a holistic artistic phenomenon possessing its own internal logic of development, to identify the patterns of its formation, and to determine the place of individual processes in the overall evolution of national musical culture. In theoretical research, periodisation performs not only a historical-descriptive but also a methodological function, since the choice of its criteria largely determines the idea of the nature of the development of the phenomenon under study and the principles of its scholarly interpretation (see, for example: [16, p. 58]).

The purpose of this work is to critically evaluate existing approaches to the periodisation of organ art in Kazakhstan and to search for a universal criterion that allows us to construct an alternative to the existing version of such periodisation.

Existing Approaches to the Periodisation of Organ Culture in Kazakhstan

The chronological aspect of the formation of organ culture in Kazakhstan was first covered in the article by Larisa Latyshova entitled "From the History of the Art of Organ Performance in Kazakhstan: Specific Features of the Instrumental Availability" (2014). [9] Identifying three stages of development (1967–1987; 1988–2004; since 2005), the researcher links their boundaries with the appearance of new concert instruments in the republic. The following milestones were identified: the installation of the first instrument in 1967; the commissioning of the symphony organ at the Zhambyl State Philharmonic in 1988; and, finally, the appearance of the first organ in Astana[2] in 2005.

Although this approach is of considerable interest from the point of view of organological analysis, it is not universal. Such a correlation of the stages of periodisation solely with the facts of instrument installation does not reflect the internal logic of the development of performing practice and compositional creativity, and ignores the process of repertoire development.

[1] The city bore this name until 1993; since then, it has been known as Almaty.

[2] In 1997, the capital of Kazakhstan was moved from Alma-Ata to Astana, which city consequently began to develop into a major cultural centre.

Moreover, an analysis of sources shows that Latyshova's article does not cover the entire range of instruments operating in Kazakhstan. In particular, digital organs, which since the early 2000s have been actively used both in the liturgical practice of Catholic parishes[3] and in the educational process,[4] were left out of consideration. Their exclusion from the overall picture somewhat narrows the understanding of the actual functioning of the country's organ culture.

The installation dates of individual instruments also require further clarification: the organs in the St. Joseph parish in Karaganda and the Catholic church in Aktobe, whose appearance Latyshova attributed to the second period, were in fact installed earlier—in 1978 and 1979, respectively. The above comments serve as additional arguments in favour of adjusting the proposed periodisation scheme.

An alternative interpretation of the chronology is presented in Meruert Zhekenova's master's thesis (2017),[5] in which organ culture is examined primarily through the prism of performing and composing practice, while issues of expanding the organ are practically not touched upon. The author also identifies three periods, but significantly shifts the boundaries of the second and third.

Zhekenova connects the first stage (1967–1976) with the installation of an organ in the republic and the work of Vladimir Tebenikhin,[6] the first Kazakhstani organist-performer and organ teacher. The second stage (second half of the 1970s–late 1990s) is characterised by the expansion of performing practice and the formation of a new generation of organists. Thus, in 1988, Gabit Tuleutaevich Nesipbaev, a graduate of the Moscow Conservatory, returned to Alma-Ata, having made a great contribution to the development of the country's organ culture.[7] During this same period, the emergence of multi-genre works intended directly for the organ or for various ensembles with its participation is

[3] The ecclesiastical strand of the country's organ culture, which emerged in the 1970s, is closely connected with the history of Karaganda. This region rightfully retains its status as the unofficial centre of the Catholic faith in the Republic of Kazakhstan. This situation is due to a number of historical and social factors. Firstly, a significant portion of Polish and German immigrants deported to this location during the 1940s professed Catholicism. Secondly, the migration of foreign specialists who arrived to work in the coal industry played an important role. Thirdly, exiles and prisoners were sent to the region, among whom were clergymen who managed to preserve and pass on religious traditions. According to the recollections of the deportees, Karaganda had received the unofficial name of "the Vatican of the Soviet Union" already in the second half of the 20th century, becoming a key centre of Catholicism not only in Kazakhstan, but also throughout the entire Soviet space. See: Burgardt L.A. The influence of mass deportations and labour mobilizations on the formation of Karaganda as the centre of the Catholic faith in the USSR. In: Burgardt L.A. *From the history of the Catholic faith and the church in Kazakhstan*. Ust-Kamenogorsk, 2012, pp. 17–33.

Currently, there are four organs in Karaganda and its environs: a pneumatic instrument of the Roman Catholic Parish of St. Joseph (1978), a pneumatic organ of the Discalced Carmelite Monastery (2000), a mechanical organ of the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Fatima, Mother of All Nations (2010), and an electronic ersatz instrument of the Parish of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (2018). Of these, three—all except the instrument in the monastery—are regularly used in the liturgy, while two—those in the cathedral and the Parish of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary—are also used for concerts, including organ recitals.

[4] In Astana, such instruments appeared in 2001; in Atyrau—in 2002; in Uralsk and Almaty—in 2009.

[5] Zhekenova M. *Organ in the creative practice of composers of Kazakhstan: Diss. Master's degree*: 17.00.02; [Repository: KazNUI]. Astana, 2017. 62 p.

[6] Vladimir Ivanovich Tebenikhin (1942–1988)—Soviet organist and pianist, graduate of the Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory.

[7] Currently, Nesipbaev is a soloist of the Almaty Philharmonic and a professor at the Almaty Conservatory.

observed. Zhekenova considers the characteristic features of the third period (from 1998 to the present) to be the further development of the performing school,[8] the installation of organs in Astana and the wider use of the organ in ensembles with non-traditional instruments.[9]

The most controversial aspect of this periodisation is the definition of the boundary between the first two stages, since the author does not substantiate it in any way. According to available data, 1976 was marked by the creation in Kazakhstan of the first major solo works for organ solo—Alexander Lunacharsky's Sonatas and Oscar Geilfuss's Concerto. Apparently, this fact served as an argument for establishing the boundary.

Among the existing works, the problem of periodisation is most systematically solved in the study of Tatyana Kharlamova (2019), [17] in which, in essence, the approaches of Latyshova and Zhekenova are generalised and three stages with similar boundaries are also identified: 1967–1976; the second half of the 1970s–the end of the 1990s; from the beginning of the 2000s to the present.[10] Similar to Zhekenova's model, the boundary between the first and second stages is 1976, while the boundary between the second and third periods is determined by the beginning of the new millennium.

Kharlamova's more comprehensive periodisation takes into account the development of instrumentation, performing school, and compositional creativity. At the same time, the central place in it is occupied by the specific functioning of the organ in the practice of composers and the peculiarities of the interpretation of its artistic and expressive possibilities by different authors.

By comparing the considered approaches, it becomes possible to identify both differences and significant points of contact between them. Despite the heterogeneous choice of criteria, all researchers identify three major stages in the development of organ art in Kazakhstan, only differing in terms of their substantive content and chronological boundaries (Table 1).

It is significant that two of the three researchers agree on the milestone separating the first two periods: 1976, when sonata and concerto works appeared in the organ repertoire, marked the transition from small forms, arrangements, and transcriptions to large-scale works. While agreeing in general with the significance of this date for the history of organ art in Kazakhstan, we propose interpreting it as opening a new stage, since it was at this moment in the field of original compositions that a qualitative leap occurred, which marks the beginning of the next period in the development of artistic thinking and compositional practice. As for the milestone separating the second and third stages, each of the three authors defines it in his or her own way. In order to more clearly define this boundary, we will correlate the processes occurring in the organ sphere with the general periodisation of the musical culture of Kazakhstan.

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[8] With the installation of organs in Astana in 2005 and 2007 at the Kazakh National Academy of Music (since 2009—Kazakh National University of Arts, since 2025 named after Kulyash Baiseitova), the number of performers was replenished with the names of Larisa Latyshova, Saltanat Abilkhanova, Venera Seitbattalova.

[9] Zhekenova in her work names the works *Sagyndym* for soprano and organ by Serikzhan Abdinurov (2015) and *Tilep-abyz* for quartet of kobyz players and organ (2015) by Alibi Abdinurov (according to the data we have, the first work was created in 2016).

[10] It should be noted that in Kharlamova's work, as well as in Zhekenova's, the principles for designating the chronological boundaries of stages are not completely uniform: along with specific calendar dates, generalised time characteristics are used ("the second half of the 1970s," etc.), which somewhat complicates the process of correlating different periodisations. Standardising the principles used to establish chronological boundaries would provide greater methodological clarity.

Table 1. Existing approaches to the periodisation of organ culture in Kazakhstan

Full name of the researcher	Year of publication	First stage	Second stage	Third stage	Criterion
Larisa Latyshova	2014	1967–1987	1988–2004	from 2005	Development of the Organ Infrastructure
Meruert Zhekenova	2017	1967–1976	second half of the 1970s – late 1990s	from 1998	Performing and composing practice
Tatyana Kharlamova	2019	1967–1976	from the second half of the 1970s to the 1990s	from the 2000s	Integrated approach (performance, composition, organ functioning)

Organ Culture in Kazakhstan in the Context of the General Periodisation of National Musical Culture

Drawing on the methodological principles established by Vadim Dulat-Aleev, [18] Valeria Nedlina identifies the following periods in the development of Kazakhstan's musical culture from the 20th to the early 21st century: the dominance of the traditional cultural model (until the mid-1930s); the assimilation of the European art-music model (from the 1930s to the mid-1980s); and the emergence of an autonomous national culture grounded in the European professional tradition (from the mid-1980s to the mid-2010s). [19] To what extent is the development of organ art subject to the general regularities of national musical culture?

It is obvious that the time of the emergence of organ culture in Kazakhstan corresponds to the logic of Nedlina's periodisation. The organ has traditionally been perceived as one of the symbols of the European academic musical tradition. Its appearance in Alma-Ata in the late 1960s became one of the culminating manifestations of the process of adaptation of European models, which, according to the researcher, is characteristic of the second stage of development of national culture.

The practical development of the organ is connected with the work of Vladimir Tebenikhin, whose arrival in 1968 in Alma-Ata marked the beginning of the formation of performing and pedagogical schools. At the same time, the foundations of the national repertoire were formed: the first arrangements and adaptations of Kazakh folk songs and original compositions for organ appeared, which laid the foundation for the development of compositional practice.[11]

This process is clearly illustrated by Oskar Geilfuss's Suite for organ (1968), which consists of six movements. For example, the second

[11] As examples we will name the arrangements of Kazakh folk songs *Eki zhiren* ("A pair of bays"), *Karatorgai* ("Starling"), *Zaulatshay* carried out by Tebenikhin in 1968; as well as Three arrangements of Kazakh folk songs for organ, vibraphone and percussion by Tles Kazhgaliev (1968), *Polyphonic sketches* for organ by Iosif Dubovsky (1968).

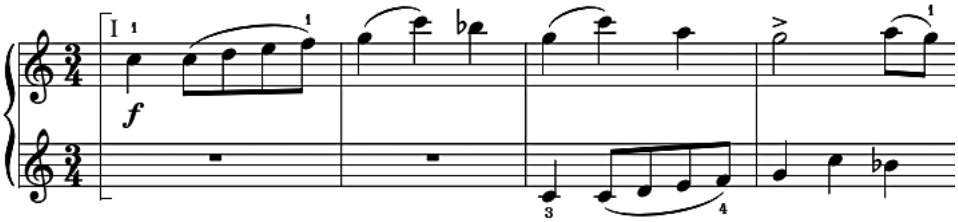
piece *Bi*[12] is an expressive organ miniature, distinguished by a certain technical and harmonic complexity. The main theme, which has a distinctly dance-like character, is constructed in stylistic proximity to the traditional European minuet, which is emphasised by the triple meter, the accentuation of the first beat, and structural symmetry (Example No. 1). At the same time, the composer enriches the classical model with elements of national musical expression, introducing melodic patterns based on fourths and fifths that are characteristic of the Kazakh musical idiom, together with modal structures derived from the modality of folk song. The selected combination of form-generating and intonational means, which determines the characteristic timbre-modal colouring of the work, testifies to the close connection of Western European form with elements of Kazakh musical culture.

Of particular interest is the final movement of the suite, the Fugue, in which Geilfuss uses dodecaphonic principles of organisation. The theme is based on a series that is close in its structure to an all-interval series (it lacks the moves to major second/minor seventh and tritone). Its first hexachord is based on a symmetrical divergent movement from an *F#–B* perfect fifth. This organisation provides the theme of the fugue, which is built on the example of the series (Example No. 2), with a similarity to the themes of many baroque and classical fugues that open with a tonic fifth inscribed in a diminished seventh (see: the themes of J.S. Bach's fugues in *G minor* from Volume I of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, in *F minor* from Volume II of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*).

According to Natalia Simakova, there are not so many dodecaphonic fugues in the music of the 20th century [20, p. 592]; in those samples that were analysed by the researcher,[13] various features are named that testify to the specificity of the embodiment of this polyphonic form in the conditions of seriality. The main feature is connected with the fact that, in response to the strict organisation of the serial structure,

Example No. 1

Oskar Geilfuss. Suite for organ.
Bi, theme



Example No. 2

Oskar Geilfuss. Suite for organ.
Fugue, theme



[12] "Bi" in translation from the Kazakh means "Dance."

[13] This is the third movement of the Cantata op. 29 by Anton Webern, the finale of the String Quartet No. 6 by Ernst Krenek, the second and fourth movements from *Musica stricta* by Andrei Volkonsky, etc.

the reading of the rules of the fugue, as a rule, receives various kinds of freedom. For example, in Webern this is expressed in the rhythmic and intervallic variation of melodic lines, in the combination of the principles of the fugue (which, in essence, are maintained only at the level of serial disposition) with the form of the scherzo (for more details see: [21, p. 206]), while in Krenek, it consists in the distribution of the tones of the theme between different instruments, as well as in the unconventional sequence of compositional elements. [20, p. 593] In all these cases, the fugue form, so understandable in Baroque and classical-romantic examples, loses the clarity and obviousness of its structure. This invites us to take a closer look at the compositional experience of Geilfuss.

Apparently, the composer realised the difficulties facing the fugue under the conditions of twelve-tone technique. In his piece, he substantially reduced the number of rows employed in the serial structure: the fugue is effectively based on only two row forms—Prime from *F-sharp* (P *F#*) and Inversion from *F-sharp* (I *F#*).[14] Their dominance gives the sound a certain static quality, while the regularity of the alternation of rows allows for the articulation of imitative returns of the theme.

The fugue is three-part (the two upper voices are assigned to the manuals, while the third is in the pedal). The exposition (measures 1–21) has three main events, in each of which the theme is presented as Prime from *F-sharp*. The section is based on the soprano plan of the entry of voices (I–II–III), the last of which (in the pedal) is incomplete and complicated by a stretta (before the entry in the third voice, the theme appears in the two upper voices, in direct and inverted form).

The stability of the serial organisation throughout the exposition—as Table 2 shows, this section employs two row forms, Prime from *F-sharp* (P *F#*) and Inversion from *F-sharp* (I *F#*)—raises the question of how the fugue's various compositional elements, particularly the subject entries and episodes, are differentiated from one another. In the exposition, they are distinguished by a different attitude to the structure of the melodic line: in the performances, its structure is stable, while in the episode (measures 11–15), the intervallic structure of the lines varies.

In the developmental section of the free part, intervallic variation extends into the subject entries, while the episodes abandon the integrity of the row. The lines in E2 are constructed from pitches of the series without presenting it in full; in E3, these pitches form chords played on the manuals, against which a pedal line comprising pitches 4–10 of the prime form is articulated.

The subject entries in the developmental section are characterised by contrapuntal elaboration. The first of these (measures 22–26) comprises a chain of two two-voice strettas, in which the theme appears in different rhythmic and linear forms (prime, inverted and retrograde). The second subject statement (measures 29–33) opens with the theme presented in dissonant intervals by the two lower voices and is combined with stretto: the first voice enters with the theme in inversion against its statement in the second voice.

The concluding section of the free part, which begins at measure 40, has the character of a recapitulation: like the exposition, it opens with an unaccompanied statement of the subject that restores its original intervallic content while continuing the process of rhythmic variation initiated in the developmental section. Particularly significant in this section are the appearance of the retrograde-inversion form of the row (RI *B♭*), which forms a countersubject to the retrograde statement of the theme in

[14] Of the 19 rows used in the fugue, only 4 have a different form or height (see Table 2).

Table 2. Oskar Geilfuss. Suite for Organ. Fugue. Compositional scheme

<table>
<tr><th>Sections of Form</th><th colspan="4">Exposition</th><th colspan="3">Development Section</th><th colspan="3">Final Section</th></tr>
<tr><td>Voice I (right hand)</td><td>S</td><td>CS</td><td rowspan="3">Episode</td><td>S in inv.</td><td>S in dim.</td><td>S in dim.</td><td rowspan="3">Episode</td><td>S in inv.</td><td rowspan="3">Episode</td><td>S</td><td>CS</td><td rowspan="3">Episode</td><td>S</td><td>S in inv.</td><td rowspan="3">Episode</td></tr>
<tr><td>Voice II (left hand)</td><td></td><td>A</td><td>S</td><td colspan="2">S in inv.</td><td>S</td><td></td><td>A</td><td>CS</td><td>CS</td></tr>
<tr><td>Voice III (pedal)</td><td></td><td></td><td>S trunc.</td><td></td><td></td><td>S trunc.</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Measures</td><td>1–5</td><td>6–10</td><td>11–15</td><td>16–21</td><td colspan="2">22–26</td><td>27–28</td><td>29–33</td><td>34–39</td><td>40–44</td><td>45–48</td><td>49–50</td><td>51–55</td><td>56–57</td><td>58–61</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Disposition</td><td rowspan="2">P F♯</td><td rowspan="2">I F♯
P F♯</td><td rowspan="2">P F♯
I F♯</td><td rowspan="2">I F♯
P F♯
(without D and D♭)</td><td>P F♯</td><td>R D♭</td><td rowspan="2"></td><td rowspan="2">I F♯
P F♯</td><td rowspan="2"></td><td rowspan="2">P F♯</td><td rowspan="2">RI B♭;
R D♭</td><td></td><td>P F♯</td><td>I F♯</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">I F♯</td><td colspan="4">IE</td></tr>
</table>

S = subject; **A** = answer; **CS** = countersubject

measures 45–48, and I *E* (measures 49–53), the only row form in which the pitch centre shifts away from the *F-sharp* retained in all the other forms used in the fugue. This account reveals the distinctive nature of the composer's approach to employing dodecaphony within the fugue: unlike other composers who combined twelve-tone technique with fugal writing, Geilfuss substantially restricted the number of row forms employed in order to preserve the work's formal articulation.

Of particular significance to the present study is the fact that Geilfuss' Fugue from the Suite for organ is, to the best of our knowledge, the first twelve-tone work composed in Kazakhstan.[15] This provides grounds to consider the area of organ compositions as a kind of experimental space. The greater creative openness of the Kazakhstani organ composers to modern compositional searches, in comparison with other areas—e.g. symphonic music or music for other instruments—has its own explanation. Ekaterina Gotsdiner [22, p. 152] and Marina Voinova [23, p. 10] note that, from the second half of the 20th century, European composers have rediscovered the organ as an instrument that provides wide opportunities for experimentation in the field of texture, timbre, polyphony and modern compositional techniques. This trend was reflected to some extent in the organ music created in Kazakhstan.

Moreover, as Valeria Nedlina notes, the evolution of national musical culture at this stage was determined by the interaction of two distinct vectors: European and national. This pattern is clearly reflected in the development of organ culture in Kazakhstan. One of the earliest examples of such interaction is Kuat

[15] To date, the issue of using dodecaphony in the music of Kazakh composers has not been studied. Based on our research and the opinions of a number of Kazakh composers, it can be argued that individual elements of modern compositional techniques, including signs of dodecaphony, can be found in Mansur Sagatov's works *Dialogues* for strings, flute, timpani and piano (1973) and Anatoly Bychkov's *Lamentations* for symphony orchestra (1975). Both of these works appeared later than the Geilfuss Suite.

Shildebayev's Concertino for qyl-qobyz,[16] organ and string orchestra (1979). In this composition, for the first time in the history of Kazakh music, the timbres of organ and strings are combined with a traditional folk instrument to form a fundamentally new model of ensemble sound.

In the Concertino, the organ performs the function of accompaniment, harmonically supporting the theme played by the qyl-kobyz. At the same time, its bright timbre and technical capabilities give the ensemble with the qyl-kobyz a unique flavour that reflects the dialogue of two cultures. In each of them, these instruments had a sacred meaning—the organ was a symbol of church art, closely associated with Catholic worship, and the qyl-kobyz was used for centuries in shamanic rituals.

The national element is vividly expressed in the musical fabric of the Concertino: the qyl-qobyz part clearly incorporates elements of the küy[17] *Kertolgau*, while the organ's solo episodes feature motifs characteristic of Kazakh melodic writing. These include a theme based on a pentatonic scale, alternation between the flattened and natural second degree, and an abundance of sonorities built on fourths and fifths. The search for ways to implement the kyu themes and structural features of traditional instrumental music in Shildebaev's Concertino leads to a synthesis of national and pan-European principles. As noted by Altyn Ketegenova and Aizada Nussupova, "the discovered means significantly enriched and refreshed the colour of the sound and—in close connection with other techniques, for example, polyphonic means, texture, and form of presentation—accurately and subtly reflected the modal intonation features of Kazakh monody." [24, p. 36]

Thus, the combination of the organ with traditional Kazakh instruments and intonational nature becomes one of the manifestations of the national rethinking of the European organ tradition. In expanding the artistic possibilities of the organ, such compositions testify to the formation of its own principles of development in Kazakhstani organ music.

According to Nedlina, the third stage in the history of Kazakhstan's musical culture is associated with the processes of cultural autonomisation and the understanding of national art in the global artistic context. They led to the formation of three successive phases: the revival of traditions (1985–1991), adaptation to new socio-economic conditions (1992–1998), and a period of renewal of national culture, which has lasted from the late 1990s to the present day.

Let us immediately note that two of the boundaries identified by the researcher—1985 and 1992—do not have a significant impact

[16] Kyl-kobyz is an ancient bowed string instrument of the Kazakh traditional musical culture, historically associated with the art of shamans and storytellers. In the traditional nomadic worldview, the kobyz was endowed with a special spiritual and symbolic meaning that conceived the instrument as capable of performing not only a musical but also a ritual function. Ethnomusicological studies note that its construction, timbre and performance practice reflect Tengrist conceptions of the cosmos, while its sound is traditionally associated with the meditative and the sacred, embodying the connection between humanity, nature and the spiritual world. For more details see: Amanzhol B. Musical traditions of Tengrism. *Central Asian Journal of Art Studies*. 2016, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 65.

[17] Küy is the leading genre of traditional Kazakh instrumental music, which involves an independent composition performed primarily on the dombra, as well as on other folk instruments, including the qyl-kobyz. In Kazakh musical culture, the küy performs not only an artistic but also a narrative function: each piece is associated with a specific plot, historical event, philosophical idea, or emotional state, which is revealed through artistic means of expression. The characteristic features of the genre are the improvisational nature of performance, variability of interpretation and close connection with oral tradition, which makes küy one of the key forms of preserving cultural memory and national musical thinking.

on the development of organ music. Although a noticeable decline in the intensity[18] of composition has been observed in organ music in Kazakhstan since the second half of the 1980s, neither the genre structure of the repertoire, the themes of the works, or their characteristics have undergone any fundamental changes. One of the most illustrative examples of is Aida Isakova's Improvisation for organ (1987). Like Concertino by Shildebaev, this composition is connected with the problem of interaction of cultural traditions. In this case, it is resolved not so much at the level of thematics, but rather through an appeal to the very principle of improvisation. Improvisation turns out to be a universal artistic category that is organic both for European organ practice, historically associated with the tradition of free music-making, as well as for Kazakh musical culture, which is based on an oral professional tradition. As a result, the national principle is manifested not through the citation of folklore, but through a rethinking of compositional techniques, which marks a qualitatively new stage in the interaction of European and Kazakh traditional experience.

A different picture is observed at the turn of the 1990s and 2000s, when Nedlina identifies a stage of renewal of national culture. This milestone also proves important for organ art: since the early 2000s, the number of original works for solo instruments has increased, new types of ensemble compositions have emerged, and the genre range of works and their themes have expanded. The combination of traditional timbres and organ, set by Shildebaev's Concertino, is continued in the symphonic picture *Blue Minaret* for organ, qyl-kobyz, and symphony orchestra by Serik Erkimbekov (2002), the chorale *In Memory of the Victims of Beslan* for qyl-kobyz quartet and organ by Dmitry Ostankovich (2007), Fantasy for organ, igil[19] and throat singing by Daniyar Berzhaprakov (2025). Along with works in the sonata genre (*Kazakh Bakhiana* by Bakir Bayakhunov, 2001, 1st edition), programmatic pieces appear (*Sacrifice to Tengri* for a large symphony orchestra and organ by Adil Bestybaev, 2008, *Tekemet* by Zhunus Dzhumabekov, 2011, etc.), a fantasy (Fantasy for organ by Gulzhan Uzenbaeva, 2005), a symphony (Organ Symphony by Arman Zhaiym, 2023) and a spiritual concerto (*Dedication to the Pontiff* for mixed and children's choirs accompanied by organ by Dzhumabekov, 2003). The thematic content of organ music written since the early 2000s has expanded to include new subjects alongside those already established, foremost among them the synthesis of national and broader European traditions, exemplified by Bayakhunov's *Kazakh Bachiana*. A striking example is Rakhat-Bi Abdyssagin's *Quantum Universe*, a symphony for organ, quantum guitar and electronics (2025).

The work is of particular interest not only due to its unusual cast, but also due to its artistic concept, which is based on an understanding of the relationship between modern physics, quantum theory and avant-garde composition. The use of a specially developed quantum guitar, which

[18] If in the period from 1967 to 1984, eighteen works for organ, varying in genre and performer, were created in Kazakhstan, then from 1985–1998 the corresponding number was reduced to seven. This fact can be interpreted as a reaction to changes in socio-economic conditions (the beginning of perestroika, which led to the collapse of the USSR).

[19] The igil is a traditional two-stringed bowed instrument of the Turkic peoples of Southern Siberia and Central Asia, most widespread in the musical culture of the Tuvans, Khakassians and Mongolian-speaking peoples. In terms of design and sound production method, it is similar to the Kazakh qyl-kobyz, but differs in the shape of the body, structure, and performance technique.

interacts with a quantum computing system,[20] takes the organ into the realm of fundamentally new sonic and technological experience. The synthesis of national and broader European elements exemplified by the symphony indicates that Kazakhstan's organ culture has reached a level of development at which it can be regarded as a fully established cultural field.

Summarising the correlation of events occurring in the field of organ music with the general historical logic described by Nedlina, we come to the following conclusions. Of the three major stages identified by the researcher, only the second and the final phase of the third show a direct correspondence to the processes unfolding in the organ sphere. However, the boundaries associated with the revival of traditions and adaptation to socio-economic conditions are not accompanied by qualitative changes in the organ repertoire. The boundary between the first two stages of Kazakhstan's organ culture is therefore determined by processes internal to the field rather than by developments in the country's culture as a whole. The third stage has a different character. The various changes observed in the field of organ music allow us to associate the turn of the 1990s and 2000s with the beginning of a new stage in its development.

Let us recall that, according to researchers who have conducted a periodisation of organ music in Kazakhstan, the third period in its history begins in 1998 (Zhekenova), the 2000s (Kharlamova), and 2005 (Latyshova). Correlating these dates with what Nedlina indicated, we propose counting the third period from the beginning of the new millennium: this date is close to all of the above and most accurately corresponds to the logic of historical events.

A comparison with Nedlina's periodisation allows us to make another observation: in a number of areas, the development of organ art not only followed the general trends of national musical culture, but also revealed its own dynamics, which in some cases was of an advanced nature. Thus, already at the initial stage, two stable tendencies clearly emerge, which persist throughout subsequent evolution.

The first is associated with the active development of modern compositional techniques, thanks to which organ music often became a space for artistic experimentation.[21] The second is characterised by a consistent search for forms of interaction between the European organ tradition and national musical culture. If at the early stage the national origin was manifested primarily through arrangements of folk melodies and the development of traditional intonation

[20] Rakhat-Bi Abdysagin is known not only as a composer and performer, but also as a researcher studying the problems of interaction between music, mathematics and modern physics. In 2025, he published a monograph *Quantum Mechanics and Avant-Garde Music: Shadows of the Void*, which is dedicated to the relationship between quantum mechanics and music. While working on the symphony *Quantum Universe*, the composer collaborated with the British physicist and quantum information specialist Bob Coecke, who developed the quantum guitar—an experimental instrument in which signals coming from the strings through a system of sensors are processed using a quantum computer. As a result, the traditional sound of an electric guitar is complemented by an electronically generated sound layer created during the performance process.

[21] For example, in the cycle Three Pieces by Zhunus Dzhumabekov (2007) there are clusters, tremolo (sometimes chord), glissando and sonoristic effects associated with the search for new timbre colours and innovative acoustic solutions. This is evident in the alternation of tonal and atonal episodes, the combination of registration and articulation techniques, and the extensive use of pointillist devices. An illustrative example of the use of polystylistics and stylistic pluralism appears in Bakir Bayakhunov's fugue (Prelude, Chorale and Fugue, 2022). In it, two types of polyphony are compared: strict polyphony in the spirit of Renaissance writing and the twelve-tone technique characteristic of the 20th century.

material (arrangements by Tebenikhin, the second part of the Geilfuss suite), then later there was a gradual complication of the methods of its embodiment. Along with thematics, timbre, genre and principles of compositional organisation become the object of artistic comprehension. This is reflected in the combination of the organ with traditional Kazakh instruments, and subsequently in the appeal to improvisation as a general principle of musical thinking that unites the European and Kazakh traditions. The interaction of two artistic systems consistently moves from the development of national themes to its deeper rethinking at the level of musical language and compositional thinking. [25, p. 407]

Generalisation of Study Results: Periodisation of Organ Culture in Kazakhstan through the Prism of Genre

The appearance of the organ in Kazakhstan was an important stage in the development of national academic musical culture. The initiative to install the first instrument in Almaty reflected the desire of those who led the region's cultural development to expand the existing boundaries of professional music. The statement of Kuddus Kuzhamyarov, rector of the conservatory in Alma-Ata (1957–1967), is widely known: "I want the organ to sound in the steppe too." This phrase, uttered in a conversation with Dmitry Polikarpov, head of the Department of Culture of the Central Committee of the CPSU USSR, served as one of the impetuses for the promotion of the national organ project. However, the future of organ culture was determined not so much by institutional prerequisites as by the active response of Kazakhstani composers.

As a result of their efforts, works in a variety of genres featuring the organ appeared in rapid succession in the republic during the years following 1967. Alongside arrangements and original pieces for solo organ, composers produced ensemble works, as well as an oratorio, a cantata, a ballet and symphonic works incorporating the instrument (see Table 3). All of this points to the instrument's rapid integration into the system of European musical genres.

Initially, however, the solo organ repertoire was confined to small-scale forms, while in works

Table 3. Organ-related works created in Kazakhstan from 1967 to 1972

Area	Works created	Mastered genres
Solo	Arrangements by Vladimir Tebenikhin (1968) Variations on a Theme by B. Sarybaev by Evgeny Astakhov (1970s) Variations by Raphael Baidalin (1970s) Poem by Sanat Kibirova (1970s) Polyphonic Sketches by Joseph Dubovsky (1968) Suite for organ by Oskar Geilfuss (1968)	Miniatures, variations, suites
Ensemble	Three Arrangements of Kazakh Folk Songs for organ, vibraphone and percussion by Tles Kazhgaliev (1968)	Miniatures
Orchestral, Orchestral and choral, including organ	*Lenin* Oratorio by Gaziza Zhubanova (1969) *Zhiger* Symphony by Gaziza Zhubanova (1971) *Solemn Ode to the 50th Anniversary of the USSR* by Mikhail Ivanov-Sokolsky (1972) Symphony *In Memory of Rozybakiev* by Kuddus Kuzhamyarov (1971) The ballet *Hamlet* by Aida Isakova (1971)	Oratorio, cantata, symphony, ballet

belonging to larger genres the instrument served merely as a distinctive timbral colour within orchestral and orchestral-choral textures. In this regard, one of the most important trends in the further development of Kazakhstan organ music is the development of major genres in the field of solo performance. This observation allows the approaches to the periodisation of organ culture considered above to be supplemented by an additional, genre-based perspective.

The complex phenomenon of genre reflects the level of mastery of the instrument, the degree of maturity of the performing culture, changes occurring in composer's thinking, and the nature of the interaction of national and European artistic traditions. [26, p. 15] In this regard, a look at the history of Kazakhstani organ art through the prism of genre provides an opportunity to examine in interconnection those processes that have already been noted by researchers as particularly significant: the development of performance, instrumentation, and compositional practice. In this sense, genre changes act not so much as an independent criterion for periodisation, but rather as a form of generalisation of already identified patterns of organ development in Kazakhstan (Table 4).

From a genre standpoint, national organ art reveals its own internal logic of development. Its history also includes three stages, whose chronological framework is as discussed above.

First stage (1967–1975): almost the entire main range of genres of the European tradition is mastered. The solo repertoire is dominated by miniatures, variations, arrangements and transcriptions of folk melodies, through which nationally distinctive melodic material was first introduced into organ music. In ensemble and orchestral works, the organ functions primarily within large-scale classical genres, without yet assuming an independent dramaturgical or structural role.

The second stage (1976–1999) is characterised by the expansion of the genre system due to the appearance in the repertoire for solo organ of large works such as sonatas and concertos. At the same time, the degree of national rethinking of the European organ tradition is deepening: along with an appeal to folklore material, works based on the interaction of the organ with traditional Kazakh instruments are appearing, as well as new compositional solutions reflecting the peculiarities of national musical thinking. The expansion of the repertoire was facilitated by the

Table 4. Stages of development of organ art and genre characteristics of the repertoire

Stage	Years	Main characteristics	Key genres in the field of original organ compositions	Key genres in other fields
I	1967–1975	Adaptation of the instrument and formation of the initial repertoire	Arrangements, miniatures, cycles, variations	Miniatures, oratorio, symphony, cantata, ballet, concert
II	1976–1999	Expansion of the genre range and the emergence of national principles of composition	Sonata, concert	Sonata, concertino
III	2000–present	Genre diversity and artistic maturity	Symphony, fantasy, fugue (as a cycle)	Fantasy, chorale, symphonic picture

development of the field of performance and the appearance of new instruments.

The third stage (from 2000 to the present) is characterised by genre diversity and artistic maturity of the national organ culture. The solo repertoire has expanded significantly to encompass virtually the entire system of European genres, including large-scale cycles, fantasies, fugues, and an organ symphony. At the same time, the range of ensemble configurations incorporating classical and traditional Kazakh instruments expands, while in large-scale orchestral works the organ increasingly assumes an independent dramaturgical function.

Thus, the development of organ art in Kazakhstan can be understood as a consistent process of assimilation, integration and national rethinking of the European genre tradition. This perspective allows the development of the national repertoire to be viewed not merely as a succession of discrete historical events, but as a coherent process of generic expansion reflecting changes in artistic thought, performance practice and compositional activity. It is this approach that allows us to most fully explain the specifics of the formation and functioning of the Kazakh organ school and determine its place in the modern musical space of the country.

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