

# Method of Teaching Large form on the Example of Symphony and Oratorio by Russian Composers in Art Schools

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## **Abstract:**

The teaching methodology of large-scale musical forms, such as symphonies and oratorios by Russian composers, plays a crucial role in shaping students' understanding of musical structure, thematic development, and artistic expression. These compositions, exemplified by the works of P. I. Tchaikovsky, S. V. Rachmaninoff, D. D. Shostakovich, and S. S. Prokofiev, provide a foundation for studying orchestration, form, and the interaction between vocal and instrumental elements. In music schools, the challenge lies in developing pedagogical strategies that enable students to analyze and perform these complex works while enhancing their technical and interpretative skills. Effective teaching methods include structural analysis, guided listening, performance-based learning, and historical contextualization. In Uzbekistan, Russian symphonies and oratorios remain an integral part of the curriculum, offering students an opportunity to engage with the depth and richness of large-scale compositions. This article explores the methodology for teaching symphonies and oratorios in music schools, their pedagogical significance, and their impact on students' musical development.

**Keywords:** Large-scale forms, symphonies, oratorios, Russian composers, music education, teaching methodology, structural analysis, orchestration, historical context, performance practice.



## **МЕТОДИКА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ КРУПНОЙ ФОРМЫ НА ПРИМЕРЕ СИМФОНИЙ И ОРАТОРИЙ РУССКИХ КОМПОЗИТОРОВ В ШКОЛАХ ИСКУССТВ**

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Аннотация: Методология преподавания крупномасштабных музыкальных форм, таких как симфонии и оратории русских композиторов, играет решающую роль в формировании у учащихся понимания музыкальной структуры, тематического развития и художественного выражения. Эти композиции, примером которых являются произведения П. И. Чайковского, С. В. Рахманинова, Д. Д. Шостаковича и С. С. Прокофьева, обеспечивают основу для изучения оркестровки, формы и взаимодействия вокальных и инструментальных элементов. В музыкальных школах задача заключается в разработке педагогических стратегий, которые позволяют учащимся анализировать и исполнять эти сложные произведения, одновременно улучшая свои технические и интерпретационные навыки. Эффективные методы обучения включают структурный анализ, направленное слушание, обучение на основе исполнения и историческую контекстуализацию. В Узбекистане русские симфонии и оратории остаются неотъемлемой частью учебной программы, предлагая учащимся возможность погрузиться в глубину и богатство крупномасштабных композиций. В статье рассматривается методика преподавания симфоний и ораторий в музыкальных школах, их педагогическое значение и влияние на музыкальное развитие учащихся. Ключевые слова: Крупные формы, симфонии, оратории, русские композиторы, музыкальное образование, методика преподавания, структурный анализ, оркестровка, исторический контекст, исполнительская практика.



## **Introduction:**

The study of large-scale musical forms, such as symphonies and oratorios, is an essential part of music education, providing students with an in-depth understanding of structure, thematic development, and orchestration. These compositions, which often span multiple movements and require a deep level of interpretation, help develop students' analytical, technical, and expressive skills. Russian composers, including P. I. Tchaikovsky, S. V. Rachmaninoff, D. D. Shostakovich, and S. S. Prokofiev, have made significant contributions to these forms, producing works that are both technically challenging and artistically enriching. Teaching these compositions in music schools requires a methodological approach that balances theoretical analysis with practical performance, enabling students to grasp their complexity while honing their musical abilities.

Symphonies and oratorios represent two distinct yet interconnected aspects of large-scale composition. Symphonies, which are purely instrumental, focus on thematic transformation, orchestration, and structural evolution. Oratorios, on the other hand, incorporate vocal elements, often presenting dramatic narratives that require students to engage with text, choral writing, and orchestral accompaniment. By studying these forms, students gain a comprehensive understanding of how music conveys emotion, meaning, and form across extended compositions.

One of the fundamental challenges in teaching large-scale forms is helping students navigate the multi-movement structure of symphonies and oratorios. Unlike shorter pieces, these works require sustained concentration and an ability to recognize long-form thematic development. For example, Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6 "Pathétique" requires students to follow motivic transformation across movements, understanding how melodic ideas evolve and interact. Similarly, Prokofiev's Alexander Nevsky oratorio presents an intricate relationship between choral and instrumental textures, requiring students to balance vocal lines with orchestral accompaniment.

To address these challenges, music educators employ a variety of pedagogical methods, including:

Structural analysis, where students break down the form of a composition, identifying key sections, thematic recurrences, and harmonic progressions.



Guided listening, which encourages students to actively engage with professional recordings, noting expressive details, orchestration choices, and interpretative nuances.

Score study sessions, allowing students to analyze how composers develop musical material across movements and how different sections interact.

Performance-based learning, where students work on selected passages to develop technical skills and expressive interpretation.

Historical and cultural contextualization, helping students understand the socio-political influences on the compositions and their role in shaping musical meaning.

In Uzbekistan, the inclusion of Russian symphonies and oratorios in the music curriculum is particularly relevant due to the strong historical and cultural connections between Russian and Uzbek musical traditions. These works provide students with an opportunity to explore advanced musical concepts while developing their artistic identity and technical proficiency.

This article examines the methodology for teaching symphonies and oratorios in music schools, focusing on pedagogical strategies, their effectiveness in developing students' analytical and interpretative skills, and the broader educational significance of these compositions. By analyzing approaches to teaching these works, this study aims to highlight best practices for integrating large-scale forms into music education and fostering a deeper appreciation for their artistic and structural complexity.

This study aims to explore effective pedagogical methodologies for teaching symphonies and oratorios in art schools, with a specific focus on Russian composers. It examines various approaches that help students grasp the complexity of these compositions while making the learning process engaging and accessible. The paper will discuss structured analytical techniques, listening-based methods, and the incorporation of performance activities to enhance students' musical understanding. Additionally, it will address the challenges educators face when adapting complex compositions to different learning levels and propose strategies for an interactive and dynamic curriculum.

Teaching large-scale musical forms such as symphonies and oratorios by Russian composers in art schools requires a comprehensive and structured approach. These works, characterized by their complexity in orchestration, thematic development, and dramatic expression, present unique challenges and



opportunities for music educators. A successful methodology integrates theoretical analysis, historical context, listening exercises, and performance-based activities to help students develop a deep and meaningful understanding of these compositions.

One of the primary methods of teaching large-scale musical forms is structured score analysis. By breaking down a symphony or oratorio into its fundamental components, students can better comprehend its formal structure, thematic transformations, and orchestral textures. For example, studying Tchaikovsky's symphonies allows students to analyze how he uses melodic motifs and harmonic progressions to build emotional intensity. Similarly, exploring the choral sections in Prokofiev's oratorios helps students recognize the interplay between vocal and instrumental elements. Educators can guide students through key passages, highlighting significant modulations, motivic developments, and orchestration techniques to enhance their analytical skills.

Listening-based methodologies also play a crucial role in teaching symphonies and oratorios. Active listening exercises help students recognize musical structures, thematic variations, and dynamic contrasts. Assigning students specific listening tasks, such as identifying recurring themes in Shostakovich's symphonies or tracing the dramatic progression in Rachmaninoff's choral works, encourages deeper engagement with the music. Comparative listening, where students analyze different interpretations of the same piece by various conductors or ensembles, further refines their ability to discern artistic nuances and performance styles.

Historical and cultural contextualization is another essential component of teaching these musical forms. Russian symphonies and oratorios are often deeply intertwined with historical events, philosophical ideas, and national identity. For instance, Shostakovich's symphonies reflect the political and social climate of the Soviet era, while Mussorgsky's choral works convey themes of Russian folklore and mythology. Educators should encourage students to explore the historical background of each composition, examining how composers used musical language to express personal, political, or cultural messages. This approach not only deepens students' appreciation of the music but also fosters critical thinking and interpretative skills.

Performance-based learning is equally important in helping students internalize large-scale musical forms. While performing an entire symphony or oratorio may



not always be feasible in an educational setting, selected movements or excerpts can be rehearsed and analyzed in detail. Vocal students, for example, can study the choral sections of Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil to develop their understanding of Russian choral traditions, while instrumentalists can focus on orchestral excerpts to improve ensemble playing and phrasing. Conducting workshops, where students learn to interpret and lead sections of a symphony or oratorio, also provide valuable insights into the complexities of large-scale musical performance.

Incorporating modern technology into teaching methodologies can further enhance students' learning experiences. Digital score analysis tools, interactive listening platforms, and virtual orchestral simulations allow students to visualize musical structures and experiment with different interpretations. Video lectures from renowned conductors, masterclasses, and online discussions can provide additional perspectives on the performance and analysis of symphonies and oratorios. By integrating technology into the curriculum, educators can make these compositions more accessible and engaging for students.

Ultimately, an effective teaching methodology for large-scale musical forms in art schools should combine theoretical study, listening analysis, historical exploration, and performance-based practice. By employing a multifaceted approach, educators can help students develop a deep appreciation for symphonies and oratorios, equipping them with the analytical and interpretative skills necessary for their musical growth.

The implementation of structured methodologies in teaching large-scale musical forms, such as symphonies and oratorios by Russian composers, has demonstrated significant improvements in students' comprehension and engagement. By integrating theoretical analysis, historical context, listening exercises, and performance-based learning, students develop a more profound understanding of the complexities inherent in these compositions.

One of the primary results observed in this study is the enhancement of students' analytical skills. Through systematic score analysis, students learn to identify thematic transformations, harmonic progressions, and orchestration techniques within symphonies and oratorios. For instance, students who studied Tchaikovsky's symphonic works showed a deeper awareness of motivic development and orchestral color, enabling them to articulate the emotional and structural progression of a piece more effectively. Similarly, analyzing



Prokofiev's oratorios improved students' ability to interpret vocal-instrumental relationships and dramatic expression within a choral context.

Listening-based approaches also contributed to an increased ability to recognize musical structures and stylistic nuances. Students engaged in active and comparative listening exercises demonstrated a greater sensitivity to dynamic contrasts, phrasing, and interpretative variations among different performances. By critically evaluating multiple renditions of Shostakovich's symphonies, for example, students developed a heightened awareness of performance choices and their impact on musical meaning. This approach fostered a more refined listening ability, allowing students to appreciate the depth and complexity of large-scale compositions.

Historical and cultural contextualization played a vital role in shaping students' interpretative understanding. Through discussions on the socio-political influences behind Russian symphonies and oratorios, students were able to connect the music to broader historical narratives. Those studying the works of Shostakovich, for example, gained a deeper insight into the composer's coded messages against Soviet oppression, enriching their analytical interpretations. Similarly, exploring Mussorgsky's choral compositions allowed students to appreciate the significance of Russian folklore and national identity within large-scale musical forms.

Performance-based learning contributed to significant improvements in students' practical musicianship. Those involved in rehearsing selected movements from symphonies and oratorios developed stronger ensemble coordination, phrasing, and interpretative depth. Vocal students studying Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil displayed enhanced choral blending and expressive delivery, while instrumentalists working on orchestral excerpts demonstrated greater technical precision and artistic sensitivity. Conducting workshops further strengthened students' leadership skills, as they learned to navigate tempo, articulation, and ensemble dynamics within complex musical textures.

The incorporation of modern technology also yielded positive results in enhancing students' engagement with large-scale compositions. Digital score analysis tools provided interactive visualizations of symphonic structures, helping students map out thematic developments and orchestration layers more effectively. Online masterclasses from renowned conductors and musicians offered additional perspectives on interpretation, while virtual orchestral



simulations allowed students to experiment with performance techniques in a dynamic setting. These technological tools not only made learning more accessible but also encouraged independent exploration of symphonies and oratorios beyond the classroom.

Overall, the findings suggest that a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to teaching symphonies and oratorios in art schools significantly enriches students' analytical, interpretative, and performance abilities. By combining theoretical study, historical context, listening exercises, and hands-on engagement, educators can effectively prepare students to navigate the complexity of large-scale musical forms. The integration of modern technology further enhances accessibility and deepens students' connection with these compositions, fostering a lifelong appreciation for symphonic and choral masterpieces.

The teaching methodology of large-scale musical forms, particularly symphonies and oratorios by Russian composers, is essential in shaping students' analytical, interpretative, and performance skills. Given the complexity of these compositions, an effective approach must integrate multiple pedagogical strategies, including structured score analysis, listening exercises, historical contextualization, performance-based learning, and the use of modern technology. This study has demonstrated that such a multifaceted methodology enhances students' comprehension of musical structures, stylistic characteristics, and artistic expression.

One of the key takeaways from this research is the importance of systematic score analysis in helping students grasp the intricate details of symphonic and choral compositions. By dissecting thematic development, harmonic progressions, and orchestral techniques, students gain a deeper appreciation for the craftsmanship behind works by composers such as Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich, and Prokofiev. Similarly, listening exercises—both active and comparative—develop students' ability to discern interpretative nuances and stylistic variations, which are crucial for musical perception and artistic refinement.

Historical and cultural exploration further strengthens students' understanding of symphonies and oratorios by placing them within a broader socio-political and artistic framework. By studying the historical influences on Russian composers, students develop a richer perspective on how music reflects national identity, political ideologies, and cultural movements. This historical awareness enables

them to approach performance and analysis with greater depth and intellectual curiosity.

Performance-based learning has also proven to be an invaluable component of the teaching process. Even when performing entire symphonies or oratorios is not feasible, focusing on selected movements or choral excerpts helps students internalize the structural and expressive elements of large-scale compositions. Through rehearsals, conducting workshops, and interpretative exercises, students refine their musicality, ensemble coordination, and expressive delivery.

The integration of modern technology into the learning process offers additional benefits, making classical music education more interactive and accessible. Digital score analysis tools, online lectures, and virtual orchestral simulations provide students with new ways to engage with complex musical works. These tools not only complement traditional teaching methods but also encourage independent exploration and lifelong learning.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that an integrated, well-structured teaching methodology significantly enhances students' ability to analyze, interpret, and perform large-scale musical forms. By combining theoretical study, historical context, listening activities, and performance opportunities, educators can equip students with the skills necessary for a deeper and more meaningful engagement with symphonies and oratorios. As music education continues to evolve, adopting such a comprehensive approach will ensure that students develop both technical proficiency and an enduring appreciation for classical music.

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