

## MUSICAL IMAGES AS A REFLECTION OF THE ARTISTIC UNIVERSALISM OF MARC CHAGALL

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### Introduction

The works of Marc Chagall achieve an organic synthesis of art, literature, architecture, theater, circus and music. The holistic picture he creates of the world involves the participation of different kinds of art, speaking through the language of colors, sounds, voices, rhythms, acrobatics and dance. Although Chagall's artistic and literary connections, as well as the images he captures of circuses, buffoonery and town squares have been studied in detail, the theme of music in his art has not yet received in-depth coverage. Furthermore, the representation of musical components in Chagall's paintings aside, conclusions on the senses and meanings in his pictures are incomplete.

### Study perspectives

The theme of music runs through the artistic works of Marc Chagall; it accompanied the artist throughout his life. Consideration of musical iconography in his works reveals the artistic universalism of the personality and creativity of the artist, and makes it possible to discover new nuances in the relationship between fine arts and music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Marc Chagall (1887-1985) is one of the most mysterious painters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, affecting the beholder emotionally with his phantasmagorical personages, mystic colours and incredible sense of soaring. Belonging equally to Russia and France, his home village in Vitebsk and Jewish traditions, throughout his long - almost centenary - life, Chagall often changed countries, cities and continents, absorbing and creatively elaborating on numerous national, technical and stylistic influences. He represents a vivid intercultural phenomenon; universal concepts of the macrocosm were implemented in his creative work. As psychologist Erich

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Neumann notes, his unification of male and female origins anticipates the double nature of Chagall's artistic expression.<sup>1</sup> Tatyana Zatsarnaya distinguishes the hierotopic character of space in his works, visualizing the vivid, saturated medium of humans' internal world.<sup>2</sup> Natalya Apchinskaya highlights the painter's reproduction of the integral image of the world - "incessantly in scope and depth, free-chaotic, and yet, at the same time, subject to some highly consistent patterns," through which "the inextricable connection between present, past and future is realised."<sup>3</sup>

Chagall was not only a painter, graphic artist, glass artist and scene painter, but also a literary artist. His autobiography *My Life*; numerous articles, essays and lectures included in the book *Mark Chagall about Art and Culture*; poems gathered in the collection *The Angel above Roofs*; and the text for the author's album of lithography, *Circus*, issued from his pen. Thus, Chagall was also a memoirist, essayist, publicist and poet, covering various genres of literature. Literary modes of thinking had a direct impact on the artistic creativity of the "cornflower man,"<sup>4</sup> filling him with deep content-richness, multiplicity and symbolism.<sup>5</sup> Following Andre Breton, who declared the triumphal implementation of metaphor in modern painting with Chagall, many researchers state that "poetry found a picturesque form in his creativity, became its internal content."<sup>6</sup> Aiming to carry out artistic missionary work, Chagall codified the ideas of freedom, miracles, brotherly community and the unity of all as the basis of his universe.

Chagall's creativity presents an organic synthesis of not only painting and literature, but also architecture, theatre, circus and music, making it possible to speak of his artistic universalism. The term "artistic universalism" was developed in literary studies, where it is understood as "a drive for synthesis at the level of 'covering' reality ... and at the level of apprehension of laws and consistent patterns,"<sup>7</sup> or "the synthesis of genres or different artistic systems in the creativity of one author."<sup>8</sup> Olga Studenko distinguishes "the universalism of integrity" ("universalism of coverage," "universalism-encyclopedism") and the "universalism of bases and

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<sup>1</sup> Neumann 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Zatsarnaya 2011, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Apchinskaya 1990, p. 5, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Description of Chagall according to the poet Voznesensky. <http://www.m-chagall.ru/library/Angel-nad-kryshami1.html>, accessed 15 June 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Although Chagall himself repeatedly told, that "literariness" for a painter is an unflattering characteristics (Ge 2013), thus dissociating from vulgarly understood narrativeness in painting.

<sup>6</sup> Vakar 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Studenko 2006, p. 284.

<sup>8</sup> Shkrabo 2011.

meanings.” The essence of “universalism of integrity” lies in the systemacity and inclusivity of creative representation, correlating with such phenomenon, as “the polyphony of methods, genres and styles in the creativity of one author as an echo of experience of ‘the fullness of existence,’ not staying within the selected form once and for all.”<sup>9</sup> The “universalism of bases and meanings” proclaims humanistic ideals, accentuates timeless aspects of the subject matter and orients towards “historical foresight,” going beyond the scope of the “visual field of modernity.”<sup>10</sup>

We see that these provisions are relevant for each type of art and can equally be the basis for analysing the developmental paths of painters, musicians, theatre professionals and so on. Ludmila Daryalova points out the generalizing character of the creativity of authors to whom the term “artistic universalism” is applied, noting the reliance on forms assimilated in historical-cultural development:

“Here can be found the romantically enlarged vision, the mythopoetic vision, modernistic devices of deformation, dictates of artistic rationalism, realistic psychologisms, etc., accompanied by a pathway out to symbolic discourse - all this is presented in synthesis, in new formation, as something integral and poetic.”<sup>11</sup>

Thus, artistic universalism of personality implies a certain diversity of thought, an aspiration to express one’s self in different types of art and even science, to open new horizons in learning the world.

It is generally accepted that artistic universalism of personality was especially notable in the Renaissance. In the opinion of American academic Eugene Marlow, Marc Chagall was the direct successor to this aesthetic.<sup>12</sup> Being gifted in different types of art, and despite experiencing the influence of expressionism, symbolism, cubism, surrealism and neo-primitivism, he managed to preserve his uniqueness of idiom. The wide range of themes, images and genres covered by the painter from Vitebsk - from mythological and iconographic scenes to present-day events of a historical scale, from the thinnest love lyrics to comedic and circus performances - in all, the epic proportions of his creativity, demonstrated through thousands of works, make it possible to speak of the artistic universalism of Chagall’s personality and creativity as a whole.

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<sup>9</sup> Studenko 2006, p. 287.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Daryalova 2003, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.eugenemarlow.com/2013/09/30/the-musical-icons-of-marc-chagall>, accessed 20 June 2014.

Chagall's integral worldview demanded the participation of different types of art, drawing upon the language of colours, lines, sounds, tones, rhythms, acrobatic stunts and dance steps. Although his artistic-literary connections, along with his use of images of circus acts and buffoonery have been studied thoroughly,<sup>13</sup> the theme of music in his art has not been explored in detail, though it is worth mentioning articles by Miriam Rayner,<sup>14</sup> Alexander Maykapar,<sup>15</sup> a note by Eugene Marlow<sup>16</sup> and some well-observed comments in the works of Natalya Apchinskaya<sup>17</sup> and Aliya Reich.<sup>18</sup> Yet any account of Chagall's canvases, of their enclosed essences and meanings, would be incomplete without the musical aspect. The theme of music runs throughout the painter's work, accompanying him through his entire life, emerging in different genres of his creative output. Music initially appeared as a central theme in his works, then faded into insignificance, but never disappeared completely from his field of vision.

The purpose of this article is to study the musical iconography in the works of Mark Chagall, offering a conceptual interpretation of the images of musicians and musical instruments in his paintings, graphics, stained glass works, panels and frescos, revealing the universalism within the personality and creative output of artist, as well offering new perspectives on interconnections between the art and music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Chagall himself possessed musical skills: he liked to sing and play violin. In his later years, he reflected upon the reasons behind his attraction to musical performance: "Why did I sing? Why did I know that the voice is required not only for bawling and for railing at sisters? One way or another, I had a voice and I could develop it."<sup>19</sup> Chagall recalls his first experiences of performance, singing in synagogue, with humour, recalling his childhood dreams of becoming a musician:

"I was assigned as an assistant to the Cantor, and on holidays the whole synagogue and I myself clearly heard my sonorous soprano. I saw the smiles on faces of the diligently listening congregation and dreamt: "I will be a singer, a Cantor. I will enter the conservatory.... In addition, one violinist

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<sup>13</sup> David Simanovich considers different aspects of the problem "Chagall and poetry in the 20<sup>th</sup> century" (Simanovich 2008); Elena Ge focuses attention on the topic of Chagall and language, analysing, amongst other things, the correlation between Chagall and Apollinaire (Ge 2013); Natalya Apchinskaya and Olga Klepatskaya reveal the role of circus imagery in the painter's creative output (Apchinskaya 2006; Klepatskaya 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Rajner 2005; Rajner 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Maykapar 1990.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.eugenemarlow.com/2013/09/30/the-musical-icons-of-marc-chagall>, accessed 20 June 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Apchinskaya 1990; Apchinskaya 1995; Apchinskaya 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Reich 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Chagall 1994.

lived in our precinct. In the afternoons he worked as a sales clerk at the ironmongers, and in the evening he taught the violin. I rasped with difficulty. He beat the measure with his leg and constantly said: "Perfectly!" I thought: "I will become a violinist and enter the conservatory."<sup>20</sup>

Childish recollections played a significant role in Chagall's creative development. The violin, although it did not become his main vocation, entered deeply into his artistic consciousness and occupied an everlasting place within his works. Klezmer melodies, which accompanied the main events in Jewish provincial life, became a vivifying medium, feeding all his creativity; Jewish traditional music was a unifying element, a "theme song," in his works.

On the painter's canvases fantastic images of stringed instruments frequently appear - violins, cellos, mandolins and harps (depicted with various degrees of realism) - as well as musicians playing instruments. A precisely selected colour palette conveys the character and emotional state of the "sounding" fragment.

An entire thematic gallery is formed by the portraits of violinists depicted in the process of performing, including *Sitting Violinist*, *Violinist* (**fig. 1**), *Street Violinist* (**fig. 5**) and other works shown below (**fig. 2-4, 6**). The soul of a klezmer ensemble, the violinist is always the most delicate and poetic exponent of the eternal melancholy and hope of the Jewish people. Chagall frequently depicts him alone, or surrounded by animals, or by listeners some distance away from him. Dressed in traditional clothes, the violinist on the one hand symbolizes Chagall's native, small-town upbringing (it is not without meaning that the painter used the expressive image of a green-skinned violinist for the panel decorating a Jewish theatre, and elsewhere; see **figs 1** and **2**). On the other hand, the violinist personifies the eternal, the timeless. Concentrated, as if illuminated by inner light, face of the musician personifies the spiritual-creative element, the creative energy of art, sent out into the world.

The mystery of musical performance in Chagall's works is comparable to prayer; it offers reconciliation with the hardships of everyday existence and opens a way to the sphere of the highest ideals. In Chagall's art, we do not see ceremonial portraits of violinists: almost all are "inscribed" into the surrounding atmosphere, closely connected with the surrounding world and yet, at the same time, rent from it. They are generalized images, based on family members and close associates of the painter, such as his Vitebsk friends and neighbours (in particular, his Uncle Neuch, whose unskilful but sincere music-making Chagall describes in *My Ljé*). The character of these depictions is mainly lyrical, even intimate,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

although sometimes dramatic, social-critical notes appear. For example, the watercolour *The Musicians* (1908) shows a blind violinist, playing for alms in the company of another miserable disabled individual.<sup>21</sup>

The colour of not only the violinist's face, but also his clothes, instrument and interior elements are of great symbolic importance, as well as the background selected by the painter. Non-standard, sometimes shocking combinations, aimed at revelation of ingenuity, the "distance" of the performed set the "key-note" of the whole picture, bear aesthetical information to the viewers. A paradigmatic example is the above-mentioned green violinist who Chagall depicts several times: in *A Violinist* (1912-1913, **fig. 1**), on the panel *Music* for the State Jewish Chamber Theatre and in *Green Violinist* (1923-1924, **fig. 2**), duplicating the successfully-rendered image of the panel. A violinist in the picture *Juggler*, found in the lithography *The Musicians against a Green Background*, is depicted against a green background, which to Chagall means joy, welfare and love for life.



**Fig. 1.** *A Violinist*, 1912-1913. Oil on canvas, 188/158 cm. Amsterdam, Stedelijk



**Fig. 2.** *A Green Violinist*, 1923-1924. Oil on canvas, 198/108.6 cm. New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

The range of Chagall's colour "score" is deeply impressive: faery blue (*Blue Violinist*, **fig. 3**), passionate red (*A Violinist and an Inverted World*, **fig. 4**), flushed orange (*Street Violinist*, **fig. 5**), fervent yellow (*A Violinist and a Cock*, **fig. 6**) and depressing black-brown (*The Musicians*, 1908).

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<sup>21</sup> A detailed analysis of the watercolour *The Musicians* is carried out by Miriam Rajner in the article *Chagall's Fiddler* (Rajner 2005).



**Fig. 3.** *A Blue Violinist*, 1947



**Fig. 4.** *A Violinist and an Inverted World*, 1929



**Fig. 5.** *A Street Violinist*, 1911-1914. Oil on canvas, 94.5/69.5 cm. Dusseldorf, North Rhine-Westphalian Art Collection



**Fig. 6.** *A Violinist and a Cock*, 1982. Paper, Lithography, 66/50 cm. Nice, National Museum of Marc Chagall

Chagall's violinists possess the art of levitation and easily “hang” above the roofs of the houses, devotedly rocketing to the moon and clouds - sometimes together with their chair - as in *Blue Violinist*, or perched on the foundations of world turned upside-down, as in *A Violinist and an Inverted World*. In the sky, birds - the most creative and sweet-voiced representatives of the natural world - become the musicians' companions. Olga Burenina associates the effect of the “floating body” with the development of new forms of artistic vision at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, connected with polymodality and paradoxicality of perception. Viewing the image of the violinist raised into the sky from the panel picture, she observes that music, penetrating into space,

“deprives the habitual form of the classical determinacy and turns one object into another. As a result, ... the violinist’s body, vertically hanging in the air ... becomes fluid, weakly structured, deprived of not only prominent organs (head, hands, legs), but gender differentiation ... [The] flying person bears similarity both with caterpillar and with cocoon woven from finest fibre.”<sup>22</sup>

Levitating on high (*A Bride with Blue Face*, **fig. 7**) or floating in the air, as if jumping (*A Painter and His Bride*), violinists wrap the enamoured lovers with tender musical covers, “repeating” their harmonic relations and motifs, “joining” two halves - male and female - into a single unity. The semantics of musicians’ flight in Chagall’s art is connected with the ability of art to endow the feeling of freedom, delight and happiness, to direct us towards beauty and reveal the angelical, the divine in a person.



**Fig. 7.** *A Bride with Blue Face*, 1932. Oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cm. Private collection

The position in which the violin is held in Chagall’s canvases is schematized, conveying the playing style of folk performers rather than academic string players. The side of the cheek or the front of the shoulder is used as a support, which does not happen in professional classical performance, but is typical of street musicians. Sometimes Chagall’s violinist lowers the instrument down to his torso, inverting it and playing it like a small cello (a technique sometimes practiced by village violinists, a distant likeness of which can be seen in ancient viol playing). Sometimes the

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<sup>22</sup> Burenina 2004.



instrument simultaneously represents the performer's hand, as in *Blue Violinist* (**fig. 3**). The violin is frequently kept at arm's length, as in the picture *Circus Maximus* (1968, **fig. 8**), where the actress, placed in the foreground on the back of giant animal with a bird's head, demonstrates her vaulting skills.

Sometimes the painter uses mirror images, placing the violin on the musician's right side (even left-handed violinists hold the instrument in their left hand) or painting his fingers on the wrong side of fingerboard, above the strings, which would make it impossible to play the instrument. These kinds of "spoonerisms" can also be observed in Chagall's self-portraits, when the painter's palette and brush change places with each other. Often, Chagall's violinists use all 5 fingers of the left hand to perform, despite the fact that the thumb is not used for playing, being needed as a counterbalance on the other side of the instrument's neck. The bow is occasionally depicted in an arched form, similar to a horn, or turns into a "peak," disproportionately short or wide for the depicted instrument. The way the bow is held is also indicative; it resembles the way a paintbrush is held, when support is shifted from the forefinger. This speaks of the fact that Chagall does not strive for documental precision in the musician's pose or the position of his hands: the most important thing for the artist is to reconstruct the essence of the creative act, to accentuate its spiritual meaning. It is also important that the violinist's image in Chagall's creativity is presented by the painter as a creative artist - by himself, using the violin in the same Chagall uses his working instruments, the palette and the brush.<sup>23</sup>

The violinist's image also appears in Chagall's graphic works. The pen drawing *The Violinist at Night* (1939, **fig. 9**) presents a half-length semi-section shaped performer, inspired by music, accompanied by the figure of naked girl and a sketch of a goat - a visualization of the klezmer's thoughts about his beloved (muse) and faithful friend (companion). The gouache drawing *A Violinist* (1926-1927, **fig. 10**) has a satirical orientation: it shows a tipsy musician who has disturbed the district with his fiddling. The woman behind the fence looks at the peace-breaker disapprovingly and throws up

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<sup>23</sup> Natalya Apchinskaya suggests that Chagall identified himself with a musician only in his later period of creativity: "The painter in Chagall's later works is frequently identified not with the poet, as it was in 1910, but with the musician, possibly, because music presupposes an address not only to the individuum, but also to the masses; it met the 'missionary' orientation of the master's creativity in that period, clearly demonstrating the ability of art to unite people" (Apchinskaya 1995, p. 163). Evidence for this is provided in one of the lithographies to the book *Fairy Show and Kingdom* (1972) by Kamil Burnikel, in which the painter depicts himself as a winged band-master, floating above the orchestra and the whole earth. However, as follows from the analysis of previous works, Chagall, due to universality of his creative thinking, had compared himself to musicians before.

her hand in an indignant gesture. The drunken step of the woe-begotten performer lacks secure footing - his leg, raised for stepping, threatens complete loss of balance. One moment more and the sot will be on the ground, yet even in this precarious moment, he keeps hold of the violin, continuing his endless play-acting. This work is interesting both from the viewpoint of depicting a “pre-zero-gravity state,” and the musician’s appearance, endued with a beast-like face and powerful paws at the painter’s pleasure. Possibly, it is a metaphor for the unenviable state of the drunkard, gradually losing human features and grasping the violin as his only source of salvation.



**Fig. 8.** *Circus Maximus*, 1968. Oil on canvas, 169.7/160 cm. Private collection



**Fig. 9.** *A Violinist at Night*, 1939. Paper, pen, 43.2/28 cm. Private collection



**Fig. 10.** *A Violinist*, 1926-1927. Paper, gouache, 49/64 cm. Private collection

However, this beast-musician in Chagall's art is not merely a paradoxical image. Lyrical images of animals playing music or carefully holding instruments are frequently encountered in his works: a swine and a horse with a violin (*A Clown and a Nude with a Bouquet, Horsewoman*), a donkey-violinist (*Strolling musicians*), a fantastic flute-playing animal (*Clowns-Musicians*), a cello-playing goat (*Newly Married and an Eiffel Tower*) and others. A pathetic animal-violinist with a trustingly raised muzzle dissipates the strain, condensed to the limit, in the picture *The Angel's Fall* (**fig. 11**), which contains overtly eschatological motifs. The simple melody of the performer, as if directly addressed to the throwing down of blood red Lucifer, consoles, brings hope for a possible favourable outcome. Burenina interprets the theme of falling in this picture as “the underside of the flying theme,” and in the image of Lucifer she sees another confession, of how “the painter is falling head-down to earth.”<sup>24</sup>



**Fig. 11.** *The Angel's Fall*, 1923-1947. Oil on canvas, 148/189 cm. Private collection

In Chagall's artistic world, flying cow-violinists play music in the sky above Vitebsk (*The Cows above Vitebsk*, **fig. 12**) as does the mysterious monodactylous winged fish in the pre-sunset twilight (*Time is the River without Shores*, **fig. 13**).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Burenina 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Emily Genauer interprets the content of this picture in the following way: “The title of this painting, paraphrasing a metaphor that can be traced back to Ovid, illustrates the affinity between Chagall's pictorial conceptions and poetry.... [T]he big elements of this picture - the fish and the clock - are set against a blue-suffused riverscape. Only here we find nostalgic recollections of home in Vitebsk - the winged fish, Uncle Neuch's violin, the old family pendulum clock” (Genauer, Chagall 1956).



**Fig. 12.** *The Cows above Vitebsk*, 1966. Oil on canvas, 116/89 cm. Private collection



**Fig. 13.** *Time is a River without Shores* 1930-1939. Oil on canvas, 40.5/32.3 cm. New York, The Museum of Contemporary Art

A goat with thrust-out chest, wearing a two-piece outfit on whose shoulder a small woman with flowers has made herself comfortable, is ready to touch the strings of his green violin (*Spring*, **fig. 14**). As with the fish (**fig. 13**) one of his hands is human, while the other is represented as a bifurcated hoof. Thus, music is interpreted as a guide between the earthy and high-minded, low and high, real and imaginary. It erases the boundaries between the world of people and animals, destroys the barriers, appeals to consensus and unity.

One of the most capacious of Chagall's pictures, demonstrating a thesis about the unity of all living things, is *A Violinist* (**fig. 15**). It depicts a musician, full of inspiration, playing a cello which is represented as his own body.<sup>26</sup> In this way, Chagall underlines the continuity between the artist's fate and his talent, the inseparability of the musician's



**Fig. 14.** *Spring*, 1938. Lithography, 35/26 cm.

<sup>26</sup> The main hero of this picture again holds the bow incorrectly in the left hand, as does his duet partner.

personality and art. Music is depicted as a fate, professional art as a verdict, persistently accompanying a person throughout his whole life. Apart from the player's confluence with his instrument, male and female origins are combined here. A bifacial androgynous creature (full and half-face), whose head is covered by a bridal veil and a hat, personifies the eternal striving of enamoured lovers for the undivided possession of each other. The uncontrollable affinity of opposites, described in the Greek myth of Hermaphroditus, and embedded in the imagery of Zbruchky idols by Slavonic pagans, was represented for Chagall by his happy match with Bella Rosenfield, and was spurted into his canvases through the imagery of dual and triune creatures. A friendly animal, accompanying the musician with a tiny violin, is also present in the picture.

The person-cello is one of Chagall's stable images which migrate from work to work. We see variations of it in the etching *A Musician* (fig. 16); in the paintings *Music* (fig. 40), *Concert* (fig. 39) and *Revolution* (fig. 17); in the painting of the dome lamp of the Parisian opera, where it is endowed with wings; and in other works.



**Fig. 15.** *A Violinist*, 1939. Oil on canvas, 100/73 cm. Private collection



**Fig. 16.** *A Musician*. Illustration for the book *My Life*, 1922-1923. Paper, etching, drypoint, 25/19 cm; 27.5/21.6 cm.

In some works, this metamorphosis, the intergrowth of instrument and its possessor into each other, has not happened completely (*Wedding Candles*, *A Bride with Blue Face*, fig. 7), but it is obviously specified. Chagall's cello frequently exceeds the standard size, approaching bass-viol dimensions in length of body, if narrower. The musician plays standing, not always

pressing the strings with his fingers, pointing at the conventional, symbolic character of representation of the instrument.



**Fig. 17.** *Revolution*, 1937. Oil on canvas, 50/100 cm. Private collection

In 1914-1915 Chagall created a number of works, depicting mandolin-players, in which he embodies different stages and sides of the processes of musical performance. One of his seven sisters, Liza, and his only brother David act as his models. The portraits are created in an expressionist manner, with typical distortion of the body's natural proportions and grotesque thinning of facial features. A portrait *Liza with Mandolin* (**fig. 18**) depicts a girl only just learning to play the instrument. Her mouth is slightly open from concentration; her head is bent to one side to better see the fingerboard and the published notation beside her. The pupil's diligence and scrupulousness can be seen through her pose, although red flaming aurora of the fading evening, falling on the windowsill and echoed in the colour of the girl's skirt, destroy the tranquillity of this idyllic picture of home music-making. The apparent discrepancy between the sizes of her hands demands the beholder's attention, creating a feeling of physical inadequacy: her rachitic right hand is almost twice as small as the left one, a massive hand with inverted fingers. A disturbing impression is also left by the face, depicted briefly, in general terms, with a twisted nose and apparently empty eye pits (these are indeed lowered eyelids), resembling a clown's mask.

Chagall provides a quite different variant of musical performance in the *Portrait of Brother David with Mandolin*, of a stately, seated young man with a hand-rolled cigarette in his mouth, confidently playing his instrument. The act apparently gives him pleasure, takes him away to his recollections, as

evidenced by half-closed eyes and the smile wandering across his face (fig. 19).



**Fig. 18.** *Lisa with Mandolin*, 1914.  
Oil on cardboard. Private collection

David was the painter's younger brother, who lost his leg in the First World War and died young, far away from his relatives. This picture, created in nostalgic moderate blue tones, reflects the painter's grief. Chagall left the following lines in his autobiography:

“Poor David! He sleeps in Crimea among the aliens. He was so young and he loved me so much - the sound of his name is dearer for me than the names of attractive far off countries, - with him I feel the smell of native land. My brother. I could do nothing. Tuberculosis. Cypresses. You died away in a strange land.... My memory is burnt. I made your portrait, David. You are smiling, your teeth are shining. A mandolin is in your hands. Everything is in blue tones.... My heart is with you.”<sup>27</sup>



**Fig. 19.** *Portrait of Brother David with Mandolin*, 1914. Cardboard, gouache, 49.5/37 cm. Primorsky State Gallery of Vladivostok

His recollections of David held Chagall fast and, many years on, troubled with feelings of guilt and bitter loss:

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<sup>27</sup> Chagall 1994.

“Be recollected, my brother, David,  
young, exiled from life  
without honour, ceremonials,  
funeral feasts ...  
only God knows where he lies now.”<sup>28</sup>

Chagall made several portraits of David in which he is inseparable from the mandolin.

The idea of being consoled by music in hardships and grief is presented in the picture *Loneliness*. Although the melody does not “sound” here formally, the violin in the centre of composition testifies to the curative influence of musical art on the human soul.



**Fig. 20.** *David sings, accompanying himself with the harp before Saul, and relieves his sufferings* (The First Book of Samuel, XVI, 19-23), 1956. Paper, etching, 30.7/24.8 cm. Nice, National Museum of Marc Chagall



**Fig. 21.** *David with his Harp*, 1956. Lithograph, paper, 36/26.5 cm. Nice, National Museum of Marc Chagall

The development of this idea can be observed in the etching *David sings, accompanying himself with the harp before Saul, and relieves his sufferings*, resurrecting a well-known Bible story about poor Saul, subject to sudden outbursts of melancholy and aggression which could be alleviated only by music (**fig. 20**). The Psalmist David is one of the Chagall’s favourite figures; the artist created numerous pictures of the second king of Israel in his early and middle years in his Bible lithographs and pictures (*David with his Harp*, **fig. 21**, *A Tower of Tsar David*, **fig. 22**). Everywhere the hero is depicted with

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<sup>28</sup> Chagall 1989.



a harp, based on the Hebrew string instrument, the kinnor, mentioned in the Bible.

King Solomon is also never parted from the harp (kinnor), praising the mighty power of love. In the series *The Song of Songs*, Solomon's strains, "accompanying" the embraces of lovers, straightforwardly express sensorially ecstatic feelings, showing considerable alignment with the wedding ceremony scenes that often occur in Chagall's canvases. It is not without cause that the canonical Testament story is interpreted not only as tale of the love borne by Solomon for the girl Shulamite, but also as a collection of hymeneal songs, reproducing the structure of a wedding rite. The use of bright, warm, inviting colours with erotic hidden motifs is typical of Chagall's works in *The Song of Songs* (fig. 23) series.



**Fig. 22.** *King David's Tower*, 1968-1971. Oil on canvas, 117/90 cm. Nice, National Museum of Marc Chagall

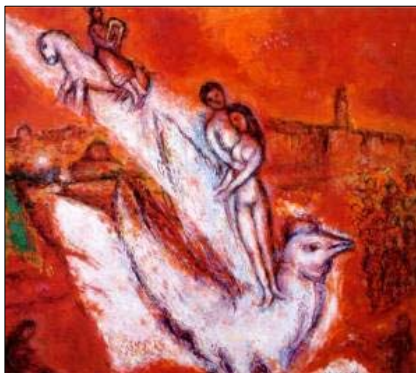
Ancient musical instruments - bells, lyres, shofars (Jewish ritual instrument made from a ram's horn), Greek cymbals (crotals), flutes, pipes and drums<sup>29</sup> are integral features of Chagall's works on mythological and Bible themes, such as *The Dance of Mariam* (fig. 24), *A Myth about Orpheus* (fig. 25), *Orpheus*, *Daphnis and Chloe*, *Sarah and Angels*, *Creation*, etc.

The theme of love and music in the Bible forms the basis for harpsichord cover painting, *A Biblical message* (fig. 26), which graces the National Museum of Marc Chagall in Nice. The painting is devoted to the meeting of Isaac, Abraham's son, and Rebecca, his future beloved wife. Several musicians are present here, but the most significant is the image of Tsar David, flying towards the enamoured couple. The rest of the musicians

<sup>29</sup> Eugene Marlow made a statistical calculation of musical instruments in Chagall's works: "His 10,000 + artworks notwithstanding, a cursory analysis of several hundred of his artworks reveals 16 different instruments: accordion, balalaika, cello, cymbal, flute, guitar, harp, horn, bass drum, keyboard, mandolin, saxophone, small bell, tambourine, trumpet, and violin. Further, there are several graphic references to a full circus orchestra. By far, though, the most frequently "painted" instrument is the violin, followed by the cello, and the horn. Further, there are several graphic references to a full circus orchestra. By far, though, the most frequently "painted" instrument is the violin, followed by the cello, and the horn" (<http://www.eugenemarlow.com/2013/09/30/the-musical-icons-of-marc-chagall>, accessed 20 June 2014).

are placed at the bottom; their size does not exceed the figures, scattered across the landscape. A violinist, playing inspirationally is also depicted on the harpsichord's cover.

“Love and music are presented against moderate nameless landscape, where soft heavenly bluest grades into yellowness of sands, separate small figures of people and animals are seen, dilapidated houses are placed far away. The composition is simple and harmonious. This landscape, inspired by Music and Love, as if saturated with them, dissolves them in itself.”<sup>30</sup>



**Fig. 23.** *A Song of Songs*, 1974. Oil on canvas, 46/55 cm. Private collection



**Fig. 24.** *The Dance of Myriam*, 1966. Paper, watercolour, 44.3/32 cm. Nice, National Museum of Marc Chagall

The close entwinement of love and music is native to Chagall's genre of biblical paintings. Music fills the scenes depicting lovers with deep meaning, showing their eternal sensual attraction to each other, or, on the contrary, their

alienation. In episodes connected with wedding rites and temples, the ritual role of musical art is vividly depicted. Later, the moment of his marriage to Bella, described by Chagall as “the most important in [his] life,” was frequently revisited by Chagall in his art. It is notable, that the autobiography does not focus on merrymaking on the occasion of ceremony, but on the contrary, describes how before the ceremony, his fiancé was “startled, seized with quivering, stood in the crowd,”<sup>31</sup> and how after the wedding he “was sitting, like a statue, ... near my betrothed. Even in my coffin I could hardly have had such a statuesque and long face.”<sup>32</sup> This description, despite the ironical tone of the narrator, shows the severe

<sup>30</sup> Maykapar 1990.

<sup>31</sup> Chagall 1994.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

colouring of the action, conveying sacrament of the wedding rite, and the deep excitement caused by the event. The music played at the moment when the souls of the enamoured come into contact with each other in Chagall's works, is suffused with a special spirituality, irrespective of whether a lonely violinist plays the motif, or a heavenly orchestra rewards the newly-married couple with a Hosanna (**fig. 28**). It is necessary note that during the Jewish wedding under the Chuppah (in the picture *Wedding*, **fig. 27**, its function is fulfilled by red angel's wings), the lovers are deprived of any passion and tenderness, their faces and poses express a deep concentration.



**Fig. 25.** *The Myth of Orpheus*, 1977. Oil on canvas, 97/146 cm.  
Private collection



**Fig. 26.** *The Meeting of Isaac and Rebecca*. Harpsichord's cover painting, 1980, 95/299 cm. Nice, National Museum of Marc Chagall



**Fig. 27.** *The Wedding*, 1918. Oil on canvas, 100/119 cm. Moscow, The State Tretyakov Gallery



**Fig. 28.** *The Wedding*, 1944. Oil on canvas, 99/74 cm. Private collection



**Fig. 29.** *Russian Wedding*, 1909. Oil on canvas, 68/97 cm. Zurich, Collection of Emil Burle's Fund

It is music, through which Chagall tries to understand the peculiarities of wedding rites, which allows the viewer to touch the roots of ethnic culture. He vividly describes a ceremonial Russian wedding procession, headed by a bored military violinist and elderly guslar (poet-singer) (*Russian Wedding*, **fig. 29**) and documents a table at Jewish wedding (*Jewish Wedding*, **fig. 30**).



**Fig. 30.** *Jewish Wedding*, 1912. Paper, ink, 20.5/30 cm.  
Private collection

These scenes of everyday life are interesting from the viewpoint of Chagall's reflection of the psychological characteristics, mood and behaviour of various personages. The Russian wedding procession involves emotional states such as the bride's quiver of expectation, the peaceful sorrow of the father, the curiosity of children and run-down passers-by, the joy of the woman following the bride (possibly her mother or kinswoman) and the excitement of the man who has taken alarm in the background.

They are all united by the melancholic motive of the instrumental duet, creating the impression of the ceremony, the seamliness of the event. The music played at the Jewish celebratory feast is much more dynamic. Although part of klezmer ensemble, located in the top left corner of the picture, is cut off by the edge of the picture, the viewer gets the impression of a fiery partner dance performed in the middle of the room. The figures of a corpulent woman, heated from these vigorous movements (evidently not a Jewess) and her cumbersome partner with awkward, cast up knees, stand in stark contrast to the static poses of the quiet newlyweds and the sullen male guests, busy with discussions of their problems. This satirical sketch has, to some extent, an autobiographical character.

Another rite accompanied by music in Chagall's art is the funeral, as in the picture *The Departed (Death)*, **fig. 31**. A violinist, sitting alone on the roof, sends forth with his melody an excessive expression of grief, formed by the anguished cry of the woman, and the departed, who is turned towards the viewer. In Aliya Reich's opinion, the musician is a metaphor for the painter, the story-teller, narrating what has happened.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Reich 2012, p. 59.



**Fig. 31.** *The Departed (Death)*, 1908. Oil on canvas, Paris, National Centre of Art and Culture, Named by George Pompidu

Chagall's musicians are direct participants (eyewitnesses) of epochal historical events. Thus, in the picture *Revolution* (**fig. 17**), the ensemble placed in the top right corner personifies an independent witness of change in the social-political coordinates of the state, regarding the event from outside.<sup>34</sup> Busy with their peaceful labour of performing, the musicians withstand the acerbic armed battles of humanity, thus affirming the inviolability of creative activity under any regime.

Frequently in Chagall's pictures, musical-sound associations appear by means of conveying plasticity of movement, through dance (*Dance*, **fig. 32-33**), demonstration (*In the Motion [Martial Music]*, **fig. 34**) or acrobatic feats (*Red Horse*, **fig. 35**). These pictures are saturated with a sense of procedure, rhythm and time more characteristic of music than fine art.

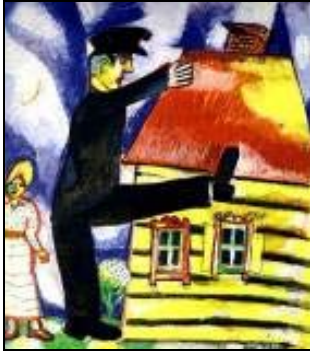


**Fig. 32.** *Dance*, 1928. Paper, aquarelle, 50.5/65.7 cm. Private collection



**Fig. 33.** *Dance*, 1967. Oil on canvas, 129/ 80 cm.

<sup>34</sup> Apchinskaya points out that the revolution for Chagall meant not only a political convulsion, but also an internal spiritual revolution.



**Fig. 34.** *In the Motion (Martial Music)*, 1916. Cardboard, gouache. Moscow, State Tretyakov Gallery



**Fig. 35.** *A Red Horse*, 1938-1944. Oil on canvas. Paris, Centre of George Pompidu



**Fig. 36.** *A Circus Horse*, 1964, 49 x 61 cm. Private collection

Olga Klepatskaya distinguishes musicality as a feature of painter's aesthetic vision, analysing the circus images of Marc Chagall in the context of the Russian avant-gard: "Its [musicality] appears in compositional solutions, in the playful whimsicality of colours, in

the depiction of music-making or dance."<sup>35</sup>

In Chagall's circus works, which reconstruct the world, as "a festival, dream, flight of imagination, where there is no place for melancholy and greyness,"<sup>36</sup> musical fragments receive more effective orchestration and brighter dynamics. The collective performance is dominant; alongside



**Fig. 37.** *The Circus Musicians*, 1965. Lithography. Private collection

<sup>35</sup> Klepatskaya 2008, p. 167.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

string instruments, the clear timbres of wind and percussions instruments are “heard” (*Circus Musicians*, **fig. 37**).<sup>37</sup> The choreographed and acrobatic movements of the performers and the participation of the clowns in music-making (*Circus Horse*, **fig. 36**) suggest certain conclusions about the characteristic genres (dance, march, fanfare), the tempo (fluid) and the character of pieces (merry, sparkling, humorous).

The picture *Clowns in the Night* (**fig. 38**), with its mystical colouring, is the exception. However, the grief of the play-actors is ambivalent and could pass into abandoned hilarity at any moment. In this sense, unavoidable parallels with Schoenberg’s melodrama *Pierrot Lunaire*, cultic in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, imbue the picture with polysemy. Dense darkness, from which the faces of playing and singing comedians emerge, makes the performed music illusive, unreal, balancing the dynamics up to a soundless state. This is the music of calm and silence, the music of dream, which will dissolve into the night without trace along with the clowns.



**Fig. 38.** *Clowns in the Night*, 1957. Oil on canvas, 95/95 cm. Private collection

The peculiarity of music images in Chagall’s circus works contrasts vividly with his proper “musical” pictures which reflect the processes of music creation and performance (*Concert*, **fig. 39**; *Music*, **fig. 40**).

Flowing, rounded lines corresponding to legato strokes; slow, calm tempos and rhythms conveying the timeless character of the work being played (in opposition to the in-the-moment, dynamic alternation of routines in circus performances) symbolizes the unfading beauty and heavenly harmony of classical compositions (as distinct from the particularly material pleasures of circus performance). The presence of a great number of musicians playing string, wind and percussion instruments, their unification into a group, the introduction of a musical director (composer, demiurge, creating his own musical world as according to his own laws), the presence of music stands (in the *Concert*) suggests a symphonic orchestra with a truly inexhaustible expressiveness. The universalism of Chagall’s thinking manifests itself in the people, animals and birds adding their voice to general sound, combined in one musical ensemble (a goat with a violin and an unknown animal with wings and a bird’s beak can be distinguished

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<sup>37</sup> As evidenced by Olga Klepatskaya, the Lithography *Circus Musicians* was dedicated to the composer Rodion Shchedrin in whose collection it is still kept (Klepatskaya 2008, p. 167).



among the players of the *Concert*, along with a man-cello). Old and modern instruments - bell, lyre and saxophone - are also combined.



**Fig. 39.** *A Concert*, 1957. Oil on canvas, 140/239.5 cm. Private collection



**Fig. 40.** *Music*, 1962-1963. Oil on canvas. Private collection

Chagall was also known as a talented painter of musical scenes. Throughout his life, he undertook challenging theatrical projects in which a direct role was given to music. In 1920, on becoming the art director of the State Jewish Chamber Theatre in Moscow, Chagall painted several panels. Besides the panel *Music* described above depicting a green violinist, musical images and symbols are plentiful in the main wall panel *Introduction to the Jewish National Theatre* (fig. 41). Natalya Apchinskaya<sup>38</sup> suggests that the green cow crashing down from on high, located on the left side of the panel, symbolizes the musical character of the performance, as cow's horns in Yiddish denote fingering. The horns bump into the fingerboard of a broken violin which the actor Solomon Mikhoels holds out to the mysterious animal, expressing readiness to learn new theatrical aesthetics from Chagall. There are four klezmer musicians in the delineated central section - a drummer, a violinist, a clarinetist and a cembalist who is also the musical director. The right hand side of the composition shows other participants of the performance -

<sup>38</sup> Apchinskaya 2004.

acrobats and actors with musical instruments. Chagall's innovative creativity is manifested in the way his geometrical plans produce their own rhythm, which accompanies the movement of figures and explodes, breaking the contours, creating the illusion of a ragged, syncopated rhythm.<sup>39</sup> Taken as a whole, the panel presents the theatre as a world, and the world as theatre, penetrated by light and simultaneously conveying the chaotic nature of existence.



**Fig. 41.** *Introduction to the Jewish National Theatre*, 1920. Canvas, tempera, gouache, 284/787 cm. Moscow, State Tretyakov Gallery

Musical images come to life in two panels created much later - in 1966 - for the lobby of the Metropolitan in New York, the city which sheltered Chagall during the Second World War. Forming a diptych, *The Sources of Music* (**fig. 42**) and *Triumph of Music* (**fig. 43**) contrast in colour: the first canvas is made in blue-green colours against an ochreous background, while the second presents the idea of triumph in a passionately pulsating red palette. The panels present scenes from well-known musical dramas *The Firebird* by Igor Stravinsky, *The Magic Flute* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and *Carmen* by Georges Bizet. In the centre of each work, surrounded by abundant depictions of violin, cello, mandolin, aulos (double flute) and shofar, appear mythological and Biblical figures with musical instruments: a bifacial,



**Fig. 42.** *The Sources of Music*, 1966. Panel, 9/11 m. New York, the Metropolitan

<sup>39</sup> <http://sites.utoronto.ca/tsq/12/ichin12.shtml>, accessed 20 May 2014.

crowned David-Solomon<sup>40</sup> with a harp in *Sources* and the winged goddess Nike in *Triumph*, announcing the victory of music with trumpet exclamations. While creating the panel, Chagall worked with the outstanding Russian ballet-dancer Maia Plisetskaya. Through free improvisation to Felix Mendelsohn's violin concerto, performed by Yehudi Menuhin, she demonstrated for Chagall the main poses and motions of classical dance, which the painter immediately recorded in his sketches.<sup>41</sup>



**Fig. 43.** *Triumph of Music*, 1966. Panel, 9/11 m. New York, the Metropolitan

The panels presented to the Metropolitan were a variation on the theme of one of Chagall's most magnificent works - his painting of the dome ceiling in the Paris Grand Opera (**fig. 44**) - which refreshed the pompous baroque interiors of the famous theatre with rich colours and the vivid breath of modernity. In the mural, Chagall shows his vision of the main developmental stages of theatrical music, paying tribute to outstanding musical playwrights of the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries through referencing their best works. At formal opening of the dome in 1964, Chagall said:

“I wanted to depict, as if in a mirror, the works of artists and composers, like a bouquet of dreams; hanging high above their heads, they are aligned with

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<sup>40</sup> A bifacial image of David-Solomon with a harp in *Sources* corresponds to the picture of half-man-half-animal in the *Triumph* with a lute-like instrument on its shoulder.

<sup>41</sup> In her memoirs, Plisetskaya describes her first impression of the panel *Triumph of Music*, seen in 1968: “A flying sunny angel with pipe, cornflower blue Ivan-Tsarevich making music, the green cello, birds of paradise, a double-headed creature with the mandolin near the horse's chin, glazed violin with bow on the blue sparkling tree. In the middle is a matronly buxom dancer with foxy unfastened hair, diligently holding her legs in first position. She is strained, her face is screwed up, as if she is going to fall ... A mottled covey of ballet dancers is in the left top corner. With tight thighs, wasp waists, in different poses: some jump, some stand motionless, some stand on fingers, some hold the hands in sweet coronal, some have prepared for tours with hapless partners ... One, me exactly, curved the thigh, lurching, stretched as a string, putting a hand on the shoulder, legs are in the second position. I showed something similar to Chagall in Mendelssohn concert. Mark Zakharovich caught that moment ... I have few similarities with dancers on the panel. However, when you look for a long time, steadily, attentively, you see something that is mine, caught by the hand of the great painter” (Plisetskaya 1997, p. 318-319).

the multi-coloured rush of public far below. I wanted to sing like bird, without the theory, without method.”<sup>42</sup>



**Fig. 44.** *Dome painting.* Paris, Grand Opera

The dome is divided into 5 sectors, each of which recalls the pages of famous operas and ballets - French, Austro-German, Russian and Italian. In Chagall's interpretation, the whole history of dramatic musical art is presented as a landscape with a multitude of equal peaks. In the author's opinion, tendencies from the baroque period, classicism, romanticism, realism and impressionism are all reflected in this "colourful mirror of silk and sparkle of jewels," but without strains and conflicts typical of the change in artistic epochs. The painter's peacemaking approach is truly amazing, as it mainly appealed to compositions, which made a way in the art in the thick of polemic; they were met by public ambiguously or had complex scenic fate.<sup>43</sup> In Chagall's childishly clear, sheer vision, musical performances are free from stratification, from the ordinary, the debatable, from contest, or from their authors' vain chase for success; they are

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<sup>42</sup> Chagall 2009.

<sup>43</sup> This comment refers to a number of troubled works: Bizet's *Carmen*, the first staging of which on 3 March 1875 in the Theatre Opera-Comic ended with total failure; the repeated scenic failures of the opera *Fidelio* by Beethoven, which the composer named his most difficult and favourite child; to *Boris Godunov* by Mussorgsky, rejected twice by the Theatrical Committee and taken off the repertoire for several years after its first night; to *Orpheus* by Gluck which, after its first night in Paris in 1774, caused a famous war between pichinists and gluckists; and to the tragedy *Pelleas and Melisande* by Debussy, which marked the beginning of a new era in musical art - impressionism.

perceived as an expression of the endless triumph of genius over frail material. The wide coverage of different styles, national schools and historical periods in the fresco testifies to the artistic universalism of Chagall's concept.



**Fig. 45.** Dome lamp painting. Central circle. Paris, Grand Opera

*Boris Godunov* by Modest Mussorgsky and *The Magic Flute* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart peacefully cohabit the blue sector. Igor Stravinsky's *Firebird* and Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe* are located in red sector; *Romeo and Juliet* by Hector Berlioz<sup>44</sup> and *Tristan and Isolde* by Richard Wagner are located in the green sector. *Swan Lake* by Pyotr Tchaikovsky and *Giselle* by Adolph Adan are presented against a yellow background; *Pelleas and Melisande* by Claude Debussy are depicted against a white background. Bizet's *Carmen*, Beethoven's *Fidelio* and Gluck's *Orfeo* are shown in the central circle of the dome (**fig. 45**), around the lamp. The names of Jean-Phillipe

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<sup>44</sup> It should be noted that *Romeo and Juliet* by Berlioz is not a proper opera. It is work that synthesises the traits of cantata, oratorio, operatic scenes and symphony; the composer defined its genre as a dramatic choral symphony. However, Berlioz's music was performed on the theatrical stage in ballet shows with the choreography of M. Bezhar, A. Amodio, E. Valter, I. Chernyshov, E. Skibin, J. Taras, S. Golovin, V. Skuratov and T. Malanden. It is possibly this circumstance that led Chagall to add this work to his opera-ballet pantheon painted on the dome. There is also a credible version of events that suggests Chagall, not being a professional musician, mixed up an opera *Romeo and Juliet* by Gunod, which had great success in staging of 1897, with the same-name dramatic symphony of Berlioz, written in 1839.

Rameau and Giuseppe Verdi are also imprinted on the dome, without reference to any specific work (Gerard Fonten assumed that Chagall reproduced a scene from *La Traviata* showing Violet with Alfred and George Germone, standing behind).<sup>45</sup> The painting also presents sights of French capital: the Arc de Triomphe, the Eiffel Tower, Concord Square and the Garnier Opera building itself.

Theatrical performances, the majority of which have a tragic conclusion, lose their tragic pathos at Chagall's whim. The painter depicts not the intensity of emotions, the fatal course of circumstances, the fight for depth and feeling, but an ideal world where the heroes can live tranquilly and happily in the absence of irreconcilable contradictions. The musical-dramatic personages, pairs of lovers, angels, animals, and birds, musical instruments coexist in the brightly-mottled space of the dome lamp. The painter himself is also present with his palette and brushes, observing the audience from the top. Chagall's universe expresses the ideas of fraternal affection and mutual understanding through music, in artistic language that is clear and plain to everyone.<sup>46</sup> The dome painting, taken as a whole, sheds light and optimism, inspiring visitors to the Opera with the sharp thirst of life.



**Fig. 46.** *Fantasy of St. Petersburg*. A scenery design for the conclusion of the ballet *Aleko*. 1942. Paper, gouache, watercolors, pencil, 38/57.1 cm. New York, Museum of Modern Art

It can be seen that Italian opera is given a rather modest place, despite its brilliant history, and the achievements of English and American musical

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<sup>45</sup> <http://visitepalaisgarnier.fr/en/interior/marc-chagalls-ceiling>, accessed 20 June 2014.

<sup>46</sup> Chagall describes his musical theatre experiences in a poem:

“I painted a dome lamp and walls -  
the dancers, violinists on the stage,  
a green ox, a fey cock ...  
I presented you the Spirit of Creation,  
my wordless brothers.  
Now - there, to the lands above the stars,  
where night is light, and not dark ...  
... And our songs, magnificent again,  
will be heard in high places  
and tribes of heavenly countries” [Chagall 1989].

drama<sup>47</sup> are not reflected at all in Chagall's works. This may be connected with the musical preferences of the painter, whose favourite composer was W. A. Mozart, or to his self-identification as Russian-French with Jewish origins.



**Fig. 47.** *Aleko and Zemfira in the Moonlight.* A scenery design the "Aleko" ballet, 1942. Paper, gouache, pencil, 38.4 x 57.2 cm. Private collection



**Fig. 48.** *A sketch for Zemfira's costume for the first scene of "Aleko" ballet,* 1942. Paper, gouache, watercolours, pencil, 53.3/36.8 cm. Private collection

The significant proportion of works by Russian composers depicted can be explained by indelible impression left on Paris audiences by Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The selection of works was also influenced by Chagall's own artistic involvement in developing decorative elements of ballets such as Pyotr Tchaikovsky's *Aleko* (based on Pushkin's poem *The Gypsies*) for piano trio, performed by Leonid Myasin (1942); Stravinsky's *Firebird* with choreography by Michel Fokine (1945), revisited by Adolph Bolm and later staged by George Balanchin (1950); and Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe*, based on a libretto by Michel Fokine, with choreography by George Skibin (1959).

The painter created numerous decorations, curtains, panels, sketches for costumes and masks and advertising brochures for the above-named performances, which were staged in the New York State Theatre, Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico and the Paris Grand Opera. In Russian ballets Chagall revived the image of faraway Russia, lost to him forever, for example with the St Petersburg motives in *Aleko* (fig. 46-48) and fantastical metamorphoses in the *Firebird* (fig. 49-50).

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<sup>47</sup> Representing no paucity of works of global scale, notable masterpieces of English and American opera include works by Purcell, Britten and Gershwin.

In these scenes, “the colour depth of decorations and costumes intensifies the sounding music, reflecting the circular motions of the actors.”<sup>48</sup> As related by his relatives, Chagall worked on *Aleko* with Leonid Myasin to the music of Tchaikovsky, and on the declamation of Aleksandr Pushkin’s poems by his wife Bella Rosenfeld Chagall, striving for a genuine concord between music, poetry, painting and choreography.

His scenography for Mozart’s opera *The Magic Flute*, staged in New York in 1967, became the concluding chord of Chagall’s theatrical career.

“Chagall repeatedly confessed his love for Mozart, considering *The Magic Flute* the best of operas, and the whole music of the Austrian composer - ‘harmonic, spiritual and religious.’ *The Magic Flute* was especially close to him in its combination of serious and ‘comic’ (folk) opera, love story with grotesque and buffoonery, religious-philosophical (masonic) problematics with a fairy tale.”<sup>49</sup>

In last years, Chagall developed an interest in stained glass art, into which he also implemented musical plots. In his stained glass composition *American Windows*, which consists of six parts and was created for the Art Institute of Chicago, commissioned by the City Hall for the USA bicentenary, reminiscences of his early works appear.



**Fig. 49.** *The Firebird in the Enchanted Forest.* A sketch of curtain for the *Firebird* ballet by I. Stravinsky, 1945. Paper, watercolour. Private collection

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<sup>48</sup> Cramp 2008.

<sup>49</sup> Apchinskaya 2010.





**Fig. 50.** *The Firebird*. Decoration for overture of the *Firebird* ballet by I. Stravinsky, 1945

As in the series of panels for the State Jewish Chamber Theatre, Chagall uses cubist devices creatively, allegorically presenting music, dance and theatre on separate panels.<sup>50</sup> Another three panels are devoted to the fine art, the Declaration of Independence of the USA and symbols of American national identity (national emblem, the Statue of Liberty against the background of silhouettes of American architecture). Amongst these, appear the outlines of Vitebsk streets, the Eiffel Tower, silhouettes of lovers, animals and fish also emerge. Such return in the later life line to the images of distant past in another context, makes the painter's artistic development concentric, thus summarising his search for a world outlook.



**Fig. 51.** *Windows of America*. First and second stained glass panels, 1977. Chicago, Arts Institute

<sup>50</sup> In 1920 Chagall created four panels for the Moscow theatre, personifying the synthesis of theatrical art: *Music, Dance, Drama (Theatre)* and *Literature*.

In this work Chagall unites different arts, different parts of the world (Europe and America), religions (Christianity and Judaism) and various painting techniques, summing up all the impressions of his life.

The theme of music is distinctly highlighted in the first stained glass panel of the *Windows*, devoted to musical art (**fig. 51**). It depicts a trumpeting angel, descending from the top of a gold throne. His splendid image creates a sense of the sound of solemn hymns. The violin and a page of printed music hanging in the air intensify musical effect. The curved body of the violin is echoed in the shape of the guitar, matching with it, repeating, endlessly scattering their contours across the whole glass panel. The wind player's figure is also "doubled," but in scarcely distinguishable hatching, bleeding through only with sunlight. Chagall's virtuosic play of colours and shadings, achieved through the technique of incomplete glass painting, makes a strong emotional impression: "Colour, as a magnet ... draws the eye ... Multitude of shades of dark blue, blue, cornflower blue, sky blue ... - the colour of the bottomless sky ... the magic world of Chagall's fantasy."<sup>51</sup>

Grace Calderon felt<sup>52</sup> that in this panel the painter manages to convey the pathetic character of blues melodies, famous in Chicago - the city of Muddy Waters and Buddy Guy - since olden times.<sup>53</sup>

Glorifying God with a trumpet fanfare, the ascension of a solemn *Halleluiab* skywards is represented in the stained glass of Chichester Cathedral in England (**fig. 52**). The narrative is based on lines from psalm 150: "... any breath praises the God." It is one of the most sonorous of Chagall's works, where the sound of shofars, trumpets, violins, keyboards (possibly a small organ), tambourine and cymbals merge in one musical greeting. The image of King Solomon riding a biblical donkey (mule) harp in hand is placed at the top of



**Fig. 52.** Stained glass window, 1978.  
Chichester Cathedral

<sup>51</sup> [http://vankaremnikiforovich.blogspot.ru/2010/08/blog-post\\_2546.html](http://vankaremnikiforovich.blogspot.ru/2010/08/blog-post_2546.html), accessed 25 June 2014.

<sup>52</sup> <http://gracecalderone.blogspot.ru/2014/03/america-windows-marc-chagall-1977-art.html>, accessed 17 June 2014.

<sup>53</sup> Muddy Waters and Buddy Guy are famous Chicago bluesmen.

composition. The intense red dominating this work conveys a state of exultance amongst all alive on Earth (people, animals and birds).

Direct musical associations, namely with the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (*Embrace, the Millions!*), appear in the stained glass *World Window*, located in the United Nations building in New York. The window is dedicated to the memory of the second UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, who died in a plane crash. His favourite composer was Beethoven, and the lines from Schiller's *Ode to Joy*, which call for the unification of humanity and are used in the finale of symphony, perfectly reflecting the nature of the activity of the peace campaigner. On the stained glass panel, Chagall depicts musical notation, which was firmly associated with Beethoven's enormous compositions as represented by his contemporaries.

## Conclusions

In the course of this investigation, the following conclusions were reached.

Music is an important philosophical-aesthetic category within Chagall's artistic consciousness. Musical images in his artworks are connected with such essential notions as love, life, inspiration, consolation, harmony, beauty and consent. They connect the painter with his past, his ethnic roots and simultaneously with world artistic experience, underlying Chagall's understanding of religion, history and culture. Music in Chagall's works has a ceremonial-ritual meaning, it accompanies the main events in people's lives (weddings, death) and in society's existence (revolution) and motivates a spiritual quest. Confirming his humanist ideals and timeless values, performing the function of "peacemaker," music is the expression of "universalism of bases and meanings" in Chagall's creative works.

Images of musical instruments and musicians appear in Chagall's works in different genres - graphics, pictorial art, stained glass and painting. They reflect polymodality of the painter's thinking, reflect his whole worldview, an integral part of which is sound. The images of violinists hanging in the air, man-cellos, biblical King Davids and Solomons with harps in their hands, trumpeting angels, his brother and sister playing the mandolin, music-making animals, klezmer ensembles, popular (circus) and symphonic orchestras are widespread in Chagall's musical iconography. A musician in Chagall's art is a metaphor for a creator, the alter ego of the painter himself, due to which such images have a conventional-symbolic character.

The painter imprinted in his works a wide palette of dynamic colours - from pianissimo to fortissimo - and different orchestrations, implying solo, chamber ensemble and orchestral performances. He reproduced typical characteristics of simple and synthetic musical genres, such as dance, march,

adagio (in scenes with lovers), folk tunes, opera and ballet; drew upon folk, ecclesiastical, classical, pop and jazz music. His works are noted for their procedurality, their tempo and rhythm - both calm and equal, and “torn,” syncopating - and for their bright imagery, from lyricism to eccentricity.

Starting with the reflection of klezmer melodies in his early art, Chagall later paid respects to composers many different epochs, styles and national schools: Mozart (his favourite composer), Gluck, Beethoven, Berlioz, Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Bizet, Adan, Wagner, Verdi, Debussy, Ravel and Stravinsky, balancing their achievements in the majestic musical pantheon of the dome of the Paris Opera. The painter also paid attention to famous mythological and biblical musicians - Orpheus, David and Solomon, thus covering the entire history of Western music - from antiquity to modernity - all spheres and genres of musical art, national and international. This testifies to Chagall’s “universalism of integrality,” “universalism-encyclopædism,” and the systemacity and omnitude of his creative representations.

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### **Musical Images as a Reflection of Artistic Universalism of Marc Chagall**

(Abstract)

Music is the most important philosophical and aesthetic category in the artistic consciousness of Marc Chagall. Musical images in his work relate to intrinsic concepts such as love, life, inspiration, comfort, harmony and beauty. They connect the artist with his past, his ethnic roots and, at the same time, with world artistic experience, forming the basis of his understanding of religion, history and culture. In the works of Chagall, music takes on a ceremonial and ritual significance; it accompanies major events in the life of individuals and society, and encourages a spiritual quest.

Images of musical instruments and musicians abound in Chagall’s drawings, paintings and stained glass panels. They reflect the artist’s polymodal thinking, allowing his visual works to restore a complete picture of the world, of which an integral part is sound. The most common elements in Chagall’s musical iconography are violins floating in the air, cellos, humans, the biblical kings David and Solomon holding a harp, trumpeting angels and animals playing musical instruments, as well as klezmer ensembles, popular and symphonic orchestras. The musician is Chagall’s metaphor for a creator, the alter ego of the artist, due to which such images bear a conventional-symbolic character.

The artist captured in his works a broad palette of dynamic nuances and varied orchestration. He recreated the characteristic features of simple and combinatory musical genres, appealing to folk, spiritual, classical, popular and jazz music. His works are characterized by procedure, tempo, rhythm and vivid imagery.

Having started by representing klezmer tunes in his artworks, Chagall went on to pay tribute to composers of various eras, styles and national schools, celebrating their

achievements in the grand musical pantheon that decorates the ceiling of the Paris Opera. The artist also gave attention to famous mythological and biblical musicians, such as Orpheus and David, thus covering the entire history of Western music from ancient times to the present day, and all areas and genres of musical art, nationally and internationally. This is indicative of the universalism consistency and comprehensiveness of all of Chagall's artistic representations.

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**Keywords:** artistic universalism, Marc Chagall, fine art, musical iconography, klezmer music.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	- Acta Archaeologica. Copenhagen.
AAL	- Asien Africa Lateinamerika. Zeitschrift des Zentralen Rates für Asien-, Afrika- und Lateinamerikawissenschaften in der DDR. Berlin.
AAMT	- Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory. Orlando.
AAnt	- American Antiquity. Society for American Archaeology. Washington.
ABM	- Alaska Business Monthly. Anchorage.
Acta Asiatica	- Acta Asiatica. Bulletin of the Institute of Eastern Culture. Tokyo.
AO	- Arkheologicheskoye otkrytiya (1965-2013). Moscow.
AOASH	- Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae. Institute of Oriental Studies. Budapest.
AP	- Arkheologiya Podmoskov'ya. Materialy nauchnogo seminara. Institute of Archaeology Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
ArchOttoman	- Archivum Ottomanicum. Wiesbaden Ottoman Archives. Wiesbaden.
Ars Judaica	- Ars Judaica. Bar-Ilan University. Ramat Gan.
Art-menedzher	- Art-menedzher. Business magazine considering culture and art as a resource for the social and economic development of society and offering various technologies and methodologies of management of this process. Moscow.
Bibliosfera	- Bibliosfera. The Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Novosibirsk.
BKF	- Baltiiskii filologicheskii kurer. Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University. Kaliningrad.
BM	- Byulleten' Moskovskogo obshchestva ispytateley prirody. Otdel biologicheskoy. Moscow Society of Naturalists. Moscow.
BMMS	- Byulleten Muzeya Marka Shagala. Marc Chagall Museum, Vitebsk.
Byilye godyi	- Byilye godyi. Sochi State University. Sochi.
CAn	- Current Anthropology. Chicago.
CHR	- The Canadian Historical Review. University of Toronto Press. Toronto.

CIS	- Culturologicheskie issledovania Sibiri. Omsk State University. Omsk.
Comparativ	- Comparativ. Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und vergleichenden Gesellschaftsforschung. Universität Leipzig, Global and European Studies Institute. Leipzig.
CRJ	- Classical Reception Journal. The Open University, UK. Oxford.
Den'gi	- Den'gi. Publishing House "Kommersant". Moscow.
EDV	- Ekonomicheskaya zhizn Dalnego Vostoka. Geographic Society. Khabarovsk, Amur.
EHQ	- European History Quarterly. University of London. London.
EJNH	- European Journal of Natural History. The Russian Academy of Natural History. Moscow.
Ethnos	- Ethnos. Journal of Anthropology. London.
Études/Inuit/Studies	- Études/Inuit/Studies. Association Inuksiutiit Katimajit Inc. Québec.
EZ	- Evolucijazni na Zemle. Tomsk State University. Tomsk.
Femida	- Femida. Media Corporation "ZAN". Almaty.
Florilegium	- Florilegium. The journal of the Canadian Society of Medievalists. Ottawa.
Forsait	- Forsait. Higher School of Economy. Moscow.
Francia	- Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte, hg. vom Deutschen Historischen Institut Paris (Institut Historique Allemand). Paris.
Fundamental Research	- Fundamental Research. Russian Academy of Natural History. Moscow.
Genetics	- Genetics. Genetics Society of America. Bethesda (USA).
Genetika	- Genetika. Russian Journal of Genetics. Moscow State University. Moscow.
Geologiya i geofizika	- Geologiya i geofizika. Institute of Geology and Geophysics of the Siberian Department of the Science Academy in the USSR, Novosibirsk. Published by the Siberian department of the Science Academy in the USSR. Novosibirsk.
Gyanovashchya	- Gyanovashchya. Dnepropetrovsk State University. Dnepropetrovsk.
HN	- Hraniteli naslediya. Altay State Pedagogical Academy. Barnaul.
HZ	- Historische Zeitschrift. Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main.
Karavan	- Karavan (newspaper). Almaty.
KAS	- Der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung - Auslandsinformationen. Berlin.



KPZ	- Kazanskij pedagogicheskij zhurnal. Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology. Kazan.
IAIAND	- Istoriko-arkheologicheskie issledovaniya v g. Azove i na Nizhnem Donu v 2006 g., Don.
Istoriografiya	- Istoriografiya i istochnikovedenie istorii stran Azii i Afriki. Leningrad State University. Leningrad.
Istoriya i sovremennost'	- Istoriya i sovremennost'. Moscow.
Izvestia Ugo	- Izvestija Ugo-Zapadnogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta. Kursk.
IzvSamarsk	- Izvestiya Samarskogo nauchnogo tsentra RAN. Samara.
JBAA	- Journal of the British Archaeological Association, British Archaeological Association. London.
Kulturnoe nasledie	- Kulturnoe nasledie. Altai State University, Altai Territory, Barnaul.
Lesnoi Zhurnal	- Lesnoi Zhurnal. Izvestiia Vysshikh Uchebnykh Zavedenii. Bulletin of Higher Educational Institution. Arkhangelsk.
LKK	- Literatura i kultura v Kitae. Moscow.
LSJ	- Life Science Journal. Acta Zhengzhou University Overseas. Zhengzhou University. New York.
JAMT	- Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory. New York.
JAR	- Journal of Archaeological Research. Journal of Archaeological Research. New York.
JISV	- Jekonomicheskie i istoricheskie issledovaniya na Severo-Vostoke SSSR. Economic and historical research in the North-East of the USSR. Magadan.
KT	- Kazakhskaya tsivilizatsiya. University Kaimar Almaty. Almaty.
Marketing	- Marketing. Centre for Marketing Research and Management. Moscow.
MBD	- Molodyye v bibliotechnom dele. Youth in Library Science. Moscow.
MEJSR	- Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research. International scientific journal published by the international digital organization for scientific information (IDOSI).
Memoirs SAA	- Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology. Society for American Archaeology. Washington DC.
MENP	- Materialy po evolyucii nazemnykh pozvochnykh. Moscow.
MIA	- Materialy po istorii i archeologii SSSR. Moscow, Saint Petersburg.
MIFFK	- Materialy po istorii fauny i flory Kazahstana. Kazakhstan.

Mir bibliografii	- Mir bibliografii. Moscow.
Mir obrazovaniya	- Mir obrazovaniya - obrazovanie v mire. Scientific-Methodological Journal. Moscow Psychology and Sociology Institute. Moscow.
MNKO	- Mir Nauki, Kul'tury, Obrazovaniya. Gorno-Altaysk.
Molodezh' Tatarstana	- Molodezh' Tatarstana. Newspaper. Kazan.
MUSEUM	- MUSEUM. UNESCO.
Narodnaya shkola	- Narodnaya shkola. Saint Petersburg.
Nauchnoye obozreniye	- Nauchnoye obozreniye, series 2, Gumanitarniye nauki. Lomonosov Moscow State University. Moscow.
Nauch.-tekhn. Inform	- Nauchnaya i tekhnicheskaya informatsiya. Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Naukovedeniye	- Naukovedeniye. Institute of History of Natural Sciences and Technics named after S. I. Vavilov of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Neues Leben	- Neues Leben [newspaper]. Berlin.
NIV	- Novyy istoricheskiy vestnik. Obshchestvo s ogranichennoj otvetstvennost'yu "Izdatel'stvo Ippolitova". Moscow.
NKOGK	- Obshchestvo i gosudarstvo v Kitae: XXXIX nauchnaia konferentsiia. Moscow.
NNZ	- Novgorod i Novgorodskaya zemlya. Istoriya i arkhologiya. Veliki Novgorod.
Novosti	- Russian News Agency "Novosti". Moscow.
NT	- Nauchnyi Tatarstan. Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan. Kazan.
NTB	- Nauchnyye i tekhnicheskiye biblioteki. The State Public Scientific and Technical Library Russia. Moscow.
Odyssey	- Odyssey. Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Universal History. Moscow.
ONS	- Obshchestvennuyye nauki i sovremennost. Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
OT	- Otechestvennyye zapiski. Saint Petersburg.
Panorama iskusstv	- Panorama iskusstv. Sovetskii khudozhnik. Moscow.
Pervye amerikancy	- Pervye amerikancy. First Americans (Almanac). Russian Society of Indianists. Saint Petersburg.
PGI	- Problemi Gumanitarnih Issledovaniy. Russian State Institute for Regional Issues in Northern Caucasus. Pyatigorsk.
Polar Record	- Polar Record. A Journal of Arctic and Antarctic Research. Scott Polar Research Institute. Cambridge, UK.
Politische Wissenschaft	- Politische Wissenschaft. Deutsche Hochschule für Politik Berlin.

Polzunovskiy vestnik	- Polzunovskiy vestnik. Altay State Technical University. Barnaul.
Pozdneplejstocenovye	- Pozdneplejstocenovye i rannegolocenovye kul'turnye svyazi Azii i Ameriki. Institute of History, Philology and Philosophy. Novosibirsk.
Prizrenie	- Prizrenie i blagotvoritel'nost' v Rossii. Izdanie Vserossijskogo sojuza uchrezhdenij, obshhestv i dejatelej po obshhestvennomu i chastnomu prizreniju. Saint Petersburg.
Problemi filosofii	- Problemi filosofii. Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Proceedings Volgograd	- Proceedings of the Volgograd State Pedagogical University. Volgograd.
PsZ	- Psikhologicheskij zhurnal. Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
PT	- Perspectives on Terrorism. The Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI) headquartered in Vienna, and the Center for Terrorism and Security Studies (CTSS) headquartered at the University of Massachusetts' Lowell campus. Massachusetts.
RA	- Rossiiskaia Arkheologija. Moscow.
Reka vremen	- Reka vremen. Moscow.
Rivista di Bizantinistica	- Rivista di Bizantinistica. Bologna.
RossEconom	- Rossiski ekonomicheskij jurnal. International Academy of Business and Management. Moscow.
Rossiyskaya Gazeta	- Rossiyskaya Gazeta. Russian government daily newspaper. Moscow.
SA	- Sovetskaja Arkheologija. Institute of Archaeology, Russia, Moscow. Moscow.
SC	- Sviyazhskie chteniya. Sviyazhsk.
Scientometrics	- Scientometrics. Akadémiai Kiadó. Budapest.
Serdalo	- Obschenacionalnaya gaseta Respubliki Ingushetiya "Serdalo". Nazran.
SGV	- Saratovskie gubernskie vedomosti. Saratov.
Shagalovskii sbornik	- Shagalovskii sbornik. Marc Chagall Museum. Minsk.
SI	- Sociologicheskije issledovaniya. Science Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Soziale Geschichte	- Soziale Geschichte. Zeitschrift für historische Analyse des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts. Bremen.
Spectrum	- Spectrum. The Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies. Astana.
SS	- Sibirskaya stolitsa. Tobolsk State Historical and Architectural Museum-Reserve. Tobolsk.

SSM	- Social Sciences and Modernity. The Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences "Science". Moscow.
SV	- Sovremennaya filologiya. Ufa.
SZ	- Sociologicheskiy zhurnal. Moscow.
Tarih Dergisi	- Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi. Istanbul.
TKA	- Tolski kraevedchesky almanah. Tula.
Tradizionnaya kultura	- Tradizionnaya kultura. An academic almanac representing the perspective direction in complex study of ethnoculture: national outlook, pedagogics, life, mythology, customs, ceremonies, poetry and music. Moscow.
Trudovaya pomoshch'	- Trudovaya pomoshch'. Izdanie Popechitel'stva o trudovoj pomoshhi. Saint Petersburg.
Vestnik AAJ	- Vestnik arheologii, antropologii i jetnografii. Institute of Problems of Development of the North, Russia. Tyumen.
Vestnik Chelyabinsk	- Vestnik Chelyabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, Istoriya. Publishing house of Chelyabinsk State University. Chelyabinsk.
Vestnik Chuvashskogo	- Vestnik Chuvashskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta im I. Ya. Yakovleva. I. Y. Yakovlev Chuvash State Pedagogical University. Cheboksary.
VestKrasno	- Vestnike Krasnoyarskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta imeni V. P. Astafeva. Krasnojarskiy gosudarstvennyj pedagogicheskij universitet im. V. P. Astafeva. Krasnojarsk.
Vestnik Kazak	- Vestnik Akademii nauk Kazakhskoy SSR. Academy of Science of the Kazakh SSR. Kazakhstan.
Vestnik RAN	- Vestnik Rossiyskoy Akademii Nauk. Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Vestnik Samara	- Vestnik Samarskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Samara State University. Samara.
Vestn Tomsk Gos Univ.	- Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Kul'turologiya i iskusstvovedeniye. Bulletin of Tomsk State University. Tomsk.
Vestnik Semej	- Vestnik gosudarstvennogo universiteta imeni Shakarima goroda Semej. Shakarim State University of Semej.
Vestnik Ufa	- Vestnik Vostochnoy ekonomiko-yuridicheskoy gumanitarnoy akademii. East Economic-Legal Humanitarian Academy. Ufa.
Vestnik VyatGGU	- Vestnik Vyatskogo gosudarstvennogo gumanitarnogo universiteta: Vyatka State University of Humanities. Kirov.

Vizantiysky vremennik	- Vizantiysky vremennik. Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Voprosy Istorii	- Voprosy Istorii. Russian academic journal for historical studies. The Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
Voprosi Literaturny	- Voprosi Literaturny. Writer's Union of the USSR. Moscow.
Voprosy filosofii	- Voprosy filosofii. Russian Academy of Sciences. Moscow.
VTP	- Istoricheskiye, filosofskiy, politicheskiye i yuridicheskiye nauki, kul'turologiya i iskusstvovedeniye. Voprosy teorii i praktiki. Tambov.
WASJ	- World Applied Sciences Journal. International Digital Organization Scientific for Information "IDOSI Publications" UAE. Dubai.
Zapiski	- Zapiski Vostochnogo otdeleniya Russkogo arkhologicheskogo obshchestva. Archaeological Society. Saint Petersburg.
ZDMG	- Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft. Berlin Magazine of the German East Society. Berlin.