

Paradoxes of Management in Culture

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By

Alexander Nikolayevich Yakupov

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The author of the monograph, the widely recognized operatic and symphonic conductor, discusses actual development problems of musical art and education. The book content is developed in two interrelated directions. The first one concerns the analysis and evaluation of not simple, sometimes contradicting situations occurring at the establishment of new institutions of culture and art. The second direction concerns recommendations and advice to young managers preparing themselves to act in a self-motivated manner in the vineyards of culture building-up in the modern socio-cultural and economic conditions.

A matter of special interest is the experience of this wonderful musician in projects focused on the realization of cultural values, and their proliferation among wide layers of the population in both a country town and a metropolitan megalopolis.

The publication can be used as a study guide for managers' training in higher educational institutions in the areas of art and culture as well as for the self-education of specialist-managers of a creative orientation.

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INTRODUCTION

An apotheosis reaching the top possibilities of the human spirit and showing its greatness and beauty is only in the power of the really passionate artist. Passing through the *temptation of self-realization*, a creative person tries and unriddles the most difficult enigma, which is himself, his soul and the *phenomenon of the human being* in general, which requires colossal energy expenses. By overcoming the soul's infantilism and ascending above the prose of existence through this process, an artist includes all given to him by God's reserves of intellectual cognition, sensuous comprehension and intuition. Reaching the top of one's spiritual capacities and taking a hold of them is not only the most powerful *impetus* but also a back-breaking labor. Helping a person to achieve this is the noblest task of a society, a state and a manager; though, most often an artist exercises his talent in a far from comfortable medium.

The first thing, which he is forced to encounter, is apprehension of his oeuvres by the society. Even if to suppose for an instant that an artist's talent is recognized by a wide public, one should keep in mind that such terms as *public*, *society*, etc. are used as general notions, though few can understand classical music. (According to the data of the

French sociologist of music Abraham Moles*, those who do amount to no more than two percent of society.) As for the majority of people, they either are not able to understand a high art at all, do not accept it or just ignore it. Besides, constantly accompanying circumstances of an artist's creative activities are such phenomena as competition, a low level of state support, inapprehension by authorities of his role and not infrequent refusals of rendering assistance in a realization of new projects—all this creates certain difficulties in an artist's creative activities.

Along with the listed above, one more problem exists, which recently more and more often specialists have paid attention to. What we speak about here is an overproduction of cultural values. According to analysts' opinion, from the moment that mankind learned how to exteriorize spiritual values—to write down music, to print poems and songs, to fix dances onto audio/videodiscs and of course to replicate them in a great number of copies—the epoch came of an unlimited access to them and of an intensive accumulation of the values themselves. In the case of wear and tear/ageing of any products of material production (cars, furniture, dress, buildings etc.), if desired, then mankind can be rid of them (to

* Abraham A. Moles. *El Kitsch*. Paris, 1973

destroy, pull down, reprocess or, lastly, burn away, etc.), whereas spiritual values are practically immortal due to the modern technological methods of their copying.

The scales of this accumulation are so huge that for a potential consumer, a high-priority problem becomes one of choice, which already cannot be solved by a consumer himself. Many people are not able to adequately know their way around the shoreless sea of musical compositions or, let's say, works of imaginative literature; they are not able to name their favorite composers or poets; just physically one would not have time neither for surveying the field of fiction nor for self-dependently *selecting* works close to his/her heart. Today, the main regulating choice factors become the producer's name and advertisement, for the hiring/buying of which considerable funds are needed. Well, as a matter of fact, they are exactly what an artist lacks badly. As a result, people listen to and read that stuff, which they are offered en masse by producers and advertisers. Why en masse? Because, from the economical point of view, this is much more profitable.

Well, maybe there is no overproduction at all and one needs to look at the problem in some other way. For example, why do only two percent of people like and are able to

understand academic music genres? Would it be impossible to reach a level where mankind made it its mission to increase considerably the percentage of art worshippers? Analysis of the experiences of mankind shows us that in this context, there are a good deal of positive examples. Anyhow, certainly, this problem's solution requires the painstaking work of managers whose hands are kept at the levers, thus ensuring a wide audience of social inclusion to musical art, i.e. the *production* of art pieces, their conservation, and their function in the social medium. This problem is felt especially acutely in the epoch of global changes, when in society, axiological reference points undergo dramatic change, and wherein the nature and quality of people's communication and new approaches to life arrangement are formed. That is why in the modern condition of the social being of Art, an international experience of management is very valuable.

Based on this point of view, the present work is aimed at analyzing an innovational practice of intensive expansion of the classical music space and about the experience of management within that sphere, thereby allowing young managers to build up a more exact management system of fundamental processes in this sphere and consequently ensuring its effectiveness, creating conditions for the

prosperity of artistic endeavors. Surely then, there is no greater happiness for a manager, than the realization that his efforts have assisted creators-beginners in showing their gifts in full and to ordinary people in finding a way to their oeuvres.

If we are to speak about management, it is to be noted that last year, chiefs of various creative organizations started to display a more responsible approach to the study of management theory and practice topics. It is proper to say even that the contemporary cultural community lives in an epoch of a new *culture of management*, one that is quite effective, and allows for solving the listed above problems.

The work offers an analysis of a number of influential people's downfall from positions of high status in the area of art institutions management; people who seemed to be unshakable before, as well as a succession of conflict situations in creative organizations, which persuade us that managers do not always take into consideration a professional specificity of activities, public needs and the social aspects of interaction. It also explores the current expectations of the representatives of creative professions. Not less important for every worker in an artistic sphere is a system of values, rights and behavior norms of people powerful in management of

traditions and customs. More often than not, because of their incompetence, officials start arbitrarily manipulating these categories having no idea that thereby they intrude into “the holy of holies”—the area of *culture* and *art* functioning, which should be scrupulously studied and carefully guarded.

Speaking about management problems, it should be noted that managers work in conditions which colossally regiment their activities. More often than not, the legislations of many states oriented mainly at the fight against frauds and dishonest undertakers, become an insurmountable obstacle in the affairs of honest-minded businessmen, who must prove to be of good character in their intentions at any time, which takes a lot of time, finance and efforts. Instead of assisting managers in every possible way, bureaucrats mainly function only in one role, a permissive-prohibitive one, which is determined for the most part by their own whims, independent of the regime that they represent. Common people distinguish very faultlessly between clerks, who are useful for a society, and others who care only about themselves and who are aptly dubbed “pen-pushers”.

In this book, non-standard experience is represented by projects based on the realization of an establishment of institutions of musical culture and creative processes, and

animation based on the introduction of new forms of management arrangement and through taking into consideration “weak points” in the psyches of modern bureaucrats, which has allowed the author to organize effective management in the area of art.

The content of the proposed book is given on two levels: practical and theoretical. The practical direction is a form of analytical excursus into the realization of interesting managerial projects devoted to the problems of building up musical (or generally speaking, artistic) culture both in provinces and in the metropolitan megalopolis. The theoretical direction is given in the form of reflections, considerations and conclusions made based on a conceptualization of the practical experience and aimed at being useful for new generations of managers in the area of art.

HOW A MANAGEMENT CRISIS OCCURS

(A FRAGMENT OF THE HISTORY OF A PROVINCIAL MUSIC HIGH SCHOOL)*

Unconscious mistakes are repeated more often.

—*Boris Paramonov*[•]

In the beginning of the 1980s, in a music high school of the provincial Russian town Magnitogorsk, events started taking place which, as it became clear later on, came to be the triggers of a brewing crisis which resulted in a change of leadership.

For many years, the music high school was headed by a well-known Russian musician and an eminent representative of Russia's musical culture, Semion Grigoryevich Eidinov, who was held in high esteem by the town's musicians and residents. He was a large-scale person; he was able to speak out in a bright manner, to charm the audience with his intelligence, erudition and the unorthodox style of his

* A secondary special educational establishment of musical orientation performing training of musicians (beginners) and music teachers.

[•] Boris Paramonov. *Historical Culture: Russia in Search of Itself*, 2012.

https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/russian_culture/2/

thinking; he possessed an excellent memory and attractiveness in communication. In short, he was a very interesting person. Many were pleased to be close to him, including myself. Besides this, his captivating feature was naivety, which, as a rule, is inherent to people having a pure, light and childishly open, confiding soul.

Well, let me give just one indicative example of how S. G. Eidinov was a man of romantic character. Once he stepped up to me and said, “Sasha, come to my office for a minute”. When we were alone, he gave me a newspaper article about UFOs, waited until I read it through and then with an expectancy of something mysterious, he said, “I believe in it, do you?” He believed in miracles. I shared the same view, so I said it to him, notwithstanding that it contravened the official interpretation. Vying with each other, newspapers denied facts of aliens staying on Earth and along with it deemed qualified people who were convinced otherwise as mentally disturbed. S. G. Eidinov was not in fear of looking like a man of this kind in my eyes. In the course of the conversation, it became clear that both of us wanted fervently to become witnesses of a meeting between a human and an intelligent extraterrestrial and see the fruits of a supposed cooperation with our own eyes.

It seemed everyone admired S. G. Eidinov. But from a certain moment, some colleagues, whom he relied on constantly in his activities, started criticizing him. An ordinary teacher came out who occupied social activities at the same time came out as a leader of these colleagues. Indisputably, this group had its arguments. One could reproach S. G. Eidinov that over the years he had dedicated less and less time to the management of the music high school and more to the educational process itself (he was almost 70). After his appearance for a short while in the music high school, he used to go out to a chapel choir of which he was the artistic director and main conductor.

The real administrator of the music high school was the deputy-director for studies, Mr. Z. Though diligent and devoted to the educational establishment, unfortunately, he was not a professional musician. In the 1960s, after quitting the army (at the rank of Major), he came to the music high school as a curriculum director. Despite the presence of interesting and talented musicians on the list of possible personnel, he was chosen for the role. It was not a blind coincidence. While fortifying his own positions, for a position of his first deputy, Semion Grigoryevich looked to be a man both devoted to him and devoid of leadership ambitions.

His *protégé* was a smart and shrewd man inherently, but his habit of commanding ordered discipline, and first of all his professional incompetence and lack of musical apprehension hindered him and more often than not caused dissatisfaction in the team. With the lapse of time, he and his spouse, who was also not a musician in her education, according to their own level of competence created allies from their “own” people, who patronized him heavily. As for communication with rank teachers, it was quite formal, which became a catalyst of a deepening crisis.

What is set out above should be understood as subjective factors. Along with them, there were objective ones, too. In society in general, a non-acceptance rose of the forms and methods of authoritarian management. Authority, a fundament of which was built up on the ideological dictate of party nomenclature, continued making an industry leader of S. G. Eidinov, the leader of Magnitogorsk’s musicians, in the hope of his influence strengthening the creative medium. But as soon as his apprehension outgrew the weight of any town’s chiefs, instantaneously, they took issue. Nationwide problems and global crisis phenomena tend to personification: these accumulated in a society wide non-acceptance of central management methods which started to focus itself on the

personality of one's immediate supervisor. A substitution would then take place. And this is exactly what happened in the music high school on the back of the crisis deepening in the country.

By the beginning of the 1980s, both at the highest level of society in the town and in the opponents' group inside of the music high school, an intention matured to displace S. G. Eidinov from his directorial position and to appoint that teacher who whispered regularly behind the director's back to colleagues and town administration about the shortcomings of the director's work. In the mayor's office of the town, a committee was established, which worked with unscreened bias and clearly extemporized violations from nothing. What seemed amazing was the fast rumor mongering about numerous gross infringements, though the results of the committee's work have never been published. The developing situation caused a great damage to S. G. Eidinov's reputation, as far as it was oriented at softening the grounds for his dismissal. The rumors originated in the town authorities' offices and were exaggerated many times by Eidinov's opponents inside of the music high school.

The opposition leader was reputed as a fairly good specialist; he possessed a phenomenal memory, excellent

musical gifts and other professional advantages. Nevertheless, according to the opinion of many, he was a person neither quite orderly-minded nor disciplined; he did not fit leadership work. Probably, for the first time feeling myself responsible for the fate of the educational establishment, I tried and applied to the opponents asking them not to destroy the fragile world of our creative team and more to it, to use our best efforts to strengthen it.

By that time, I had already learned to cognize the joy of creative activities, finding the interesting work gratifying—a depth into which I submerged myself headfirst. I taught, conducted a chamber orchestra, successfully arranged two open contests of All-Russian contests of young performers; acted in “Race Cup of Ural”, on stage, and so accordingly, I was very scared of a possible breakdown of a creative atmosphere that was very dear to my heart. In its turn, for the most part in the coworkers of the music high school, another attitude prevailed. The reason for it was the fact that their interests were focused mainly in pedagogic activities. Hence, to a great extent, they stayed dependent on management processes that were formed by the deputy-director.

Soon, events whirled wildly. After finally finding their position with regards to personnel decisions, the authorities

proposed to S. G. Eidinov that he leave one of his posts. He refused. Then, in an attempt to enfeeble the positions of the unwanted director, they fired his deputy. At the same time, the municipal administration stopped trusting the opposition leader, too, as he proved himself an infantile contemplator in that arduous period. So, his candidacy was rejected as hopeless.

Sometime later, the deputy-director position of the music high school was proposed to me. I should admit, the proposal was tempting. By that moment the position was vacant, so there was no sense of guilt towards my predecessor. Prior to giving my consent, I asked whether S. G. Eidinov knew about it. I was given a reply that Eidinov had hardly survived after an infarction and, according to medical regulations, he would stay in rehabilitation about for about six months. Well, someone had to run this creative educational establishment. Besides, they told me the municipal administration had an opinion that the director had to retire on a pension due to his age. I replied that in the music high school, there was no person who could replace him and still one might learn much from him. After obtaining a promise from the municipal administration to leave Eidinov in the director position, I agreed and took the deputy office.

First of all, to the teachers, I handed out their long-awaited salaries delayed because of the managerial mess and arranged the educational process, after which I then immediately drove to the clinic, where Semion Grigoryevich stayed, and informed him of my first steps. It turned out, this information did not do any good to his heart: he started blaming me for my consent on the appointment as deputy-director without discussing it with him.

A new stage of my activities began. It seemed to me before that *a manager's work evaluation is built up according to the results of his work*. In life, everything turned out to be more complicated: anything I said was subjected to the cruelest criticism from the part of Semion Grigoryevich's allies. If the canteen floor was under reparation works, anonymous letters were directed to all authority channels blaming me for the *ugly* color of the freshly painted walls. If a festival or a concert was conducted, a repertoire was criticized. And from all sides, I was reproached concerning the violation of traditions. Oh, those notorious *traditions*! The implied statement in those letters was as follows: everything that was done before was good, while today's innovations were a mere disgrace. What is interesting was that the constant blaming sounded as though they felt the endeavors

were an undue use of state finances. One would be falling under the impression that the complainants wanted to compromise not only me but also the municipality administrators who issued the order on my appointment. You might think I'm not serious! Well, I'm most serious! ***Always, in a society, people are present who are eager to show themselves as state defenders.***

Sometimes it reached absurd levels: on a really tiny fact specified in an anonymous letter, several committees were established and they grilled teachers, students, administration members, etc. The teachers of the music high school were sick and tired of such “taking to pieces”. When their patience came to an end, the team rebelled against what they were being subjected to. At the next meeting with committee members, teachers announced that they had no desire to be hostages of the “masters of backstage affairs” and asked the examiners to leave the educational establishment.

After this incident, the complainants became quiet—that was the first time when I ***realized the strength of collective power!***

To the attention of managers! In the case that you are announced a potential manager's successor without his consent, be ready for the following recurrences:

– A fault will be alleged to you for a crisis created by a previous manager;

– You'll be blamed for a violation of sacred traditions established by your predecessor;

– Complaints will be written against you;

– For a long time you'll find yourself in a quarrel with the allies of the previous manager;

– You'll be blamed for national intolerance;

– You'll encounter prepossession to yourself from part of a number of administrators of a higher rank that have friendly feelings in secret for the previous manager;

– For a long time, rumors will be spread about you that you are not a good person, an intriguer, a careerist (walking over dead bodies, etc.).

The situation will bring conclusions to your head that all this was arranged by your predecessor. Do not believe your eyes, ears, friends and enemies! The listed above is provoked first of all by the manager's allies and not by himself. Losing their positions, desperately they fight for their place under the sun expressing in such ways their disagreement with the changing of their positions in the team.

Advice: There is no point in fighting either with the predecessor or with his allies. What is needed to do is to understand them and help them adapt to new conditions.

What really troubled me more was the position of the media, representatives of which came to us in the hope of settling down the conflict between S. G. Eidinov and the authorities. As for the criticism of the municipal administration, they shrunk from it. So many doled it out on the potential successor. Realizing the complicacy of the situation, I stopped speaking both of Eidinov's merits and the shortages of his managerial activities in an attempt to avoid embroiling myself in the discussion of such topics. In my opinion, such an approach was not fruitless: life started to get better.

Several months later, when S. G. Eidinov had recovered, step-by-step, not without difficulties, between us, a contact was established; and for a while, we worked hand in hand. He came to see me and I went to him for important information exchanges; we sought the advice of each other concerning how to decide problems better. It seemed that business-related communication was rectified. Enthusiastically, I ran errands by the director: he possessed a wise perspective on many situations. Notwithstanding, after all, the resentments that had

accumulated in the team towards the municipal administration and the opposition to S. G. Eidinov leaving his position, in February 1982, he wrote down his letter of resignation. He made the chapel choir his main occupation, while I was appointed director of the music high school.

From the moment of assumption of the director's office, I realized that my colleagues hoped for better things from me than just mere readjustment of the educational process and successful self-sustaining practice. Among lots of problems that excited musicians, as a first-priority, I considered the problem of the restoration of a historically true picture of the musical culture and educational development in the town of Magnitogorsk: in our team, there were many teachers devoting many years of their lives to serving the musical and cultural development of the young town.

The fact was that S. G. Eidinov came to the young, under construction town in 1938. After that, he worked for some time in a music school; in 1939, he was offered the position of deputy-director in the (already opened by that time) music high school, which had its material base. At this point the town had a stringed ensemble at a radio-committee and choir groups had already functioned; good musicians came and worked in the town for some time; but the people who

established the music high school and contributed a lot to the town's music culture development had never been mentioned anywhere. The name of the first director of the music high school was unknown; any clarity was absent as to whom the initiative of its opening belonged to or how it was established in such difficult times for the country in those prewar years. About this, Semion Grigoryevich had never spoken. A picture took shape as if everything had started with his arrival.

The only person, who confronted such a version, was a teacher of special piano Yu. G. Pisarenko, who had historical documents at his disposal, based on which it was possible to reconstruct the history of the first years of Magnitogorsk's musical culture development. But being out of favor of S. G. Eidinov, he was forced to leave the town. According to documents stored by him, there was a great deal of people who devoted their talents and energy to building-up the town's musical culture. Nevertheless, by a twist of fate, they could not say a word about their merits: some perished at the front during the Second World war; others, after outspending much time in work, retired; a third group, who contributed weighty endowments, changed their residencies for other towns. Our personnel had known nothing about them. *It was necessary to find a civilized solution to the problem of*

appreciation of people's contributions to the town's musical life.

I proposed establishing a town museum of musical culture on a voluntary basis with arranging of its exposition in both our quite spacious entrance hall of the music high school and foyer of our large concert hall. The team boosted this proposal enthusiastically. For a direct participation in the museum establishment, as an expert, Yu. G. Pisarenko was invited. He accomplished this errand with his intrinsic particularity. Leaping ahead, it is necessary to note that today the exposition of the musical culture museum reflecting its rich history is one of the town's sightseeing attractions. Instead of endless discussions on the role of these or those musicians, by museum-based means, we succeeded in a reconstruction of the objective picture of musical culture development in the industrial town. In order to build up new things, one has to find meanings from past experience and—even if only a general outline—to glimpse the future. With the restoration of historical facts, the work was made much easier. Among the other factors (for example, the museum pulled people together, taught many to understand viewpoints other than their own, and helped with the ridding of acculturated stable patterns), its exposition reflected the activities of decent

musicians working in the town in a truthful manner. And that's what was surprisingly good: one day, I invited S. G. Eidinov to the music high school and he agreed willingly. After surveying the museum's exposition, he shook my hand with gratitude. He liked the museum. This way, our reconciliation took place.

In January 1983, S. G. Eidinov went out with his chapel choir on a concert tour to the Baltics and died there because of a heart seizure on stage. He departed from life an excellent musician and non-ordinary person, interesting, charismatic and gifted in so many ways. He did much for several generations of the town's musicians: he inculcated love for music, taught how to work with the public, brought up a culture of communication amongst colleagues—for many and certainly for me personally, he was a *Teacher* in the high meaning of the word. His departure from life was really symbolic: this was the way real musicians passed away. Nevertheless, all of what happened generated multiple questions, too. What was his tragic end caused by? What happened in his interrelations with people? What were the real causes of the outburst of a crisis? With the benefit of hindsight, it appears that such a tragic outcome was predestined by both objective and subjective circumstances.