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Neo-Mythologism in the Music
of Arvo Pärt, Veljo Tormis, and Bronius Kutavičius

Abstract. The music of Arvo Pärt, Veljo Tormis, and Bronius Kutavičius written since the 1970s has previously been accommodated under various descriptive terms, such as "holy", "magical", or "Baltic" minimalism, to mention just a few examples. This article aims to outline some of the common features between the ethnographic/ritual creative practices of Tormis and Kutavičius on the one hand, and Pärt's music on the other, drawing on the concept of neo-mythologism—a term for the trends in 20th-century music (Adamenko 2007) characterized by a preoccupation with repetition, symmetry, binary oppositions, and special (visual) symbols (mythologems). Neo-mythologism is a threefold phenomenon, which encompasses topics (literary allusions), musical structure, and presentation/reception. Therefore, it is important to observe neo-mythologism also in the visual representations of music, such as theatrical and video productions (*Adam's Passion* by Arvo Pärt and Robert Wilson, 2015). Carl Jung's notions of the "collective unconscious" and "archetypes", with an emphasis on the intuitive and elusive, had a considerable impact on the Estonian cultural scene in the late 1960s and 1970s, and served as a driving force of the innovative literary and theatrical movements in that period. Neo-mythologism can be proposed as a general term for the various ethnographic, religious, and ritual phenomena of creativity in the Baltic countries in the 1970s and 1980s.

Keywords: Estonian and Lithuanian music, neo-mythologism, ritualism, mythologem, world tree.

1. Introduction

Neo-mythologism is a term for the trend in 20th-century music and other forms of art characterized by specific programmatic and structural features, as well as a distinctive mode of reception. Victoria Adamenko (2007) applied the concepts of the semioticians of the Tartu-Moscow school, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Carl Jung, amongst others, analyzing musical examples from Alexander Scriabin and Arnold Schönberg to Alfred Schnittke and George Crumb. The features she discussed include binary oppositions, ritual repetitiveness (ostinato), number symbolism, various types of mythologems, as well as manifestations of neo-mythologism in the rendition of the text in vocal compositions (babbling as "the language of magic"). As Eleazar Meletinsky noted in connection with mythologism in 20th-century novels, mythification "goes well beyond merely using mythical motifs for artistic purposes" (Meletinsky 1998: 275).

I aim to explore the possibilities for describing some of the musical trends in the 1970s and 1980s, drawing on the examples of the Estonian composers Veljo Tormis (1930–2017) and Arvo Pärt (1935), and the Lithuanian composer Bronius Kutavičius (1932–2021).

Arvo Pärt, not atypically of his generation (Krzysztof Penderecki), went through a stylistic transformation from neoclassicism, via polystylism and dodecaphony, to a self-defined style (*tintinnabuli*) rooted in religion. In the 1960s, several of Pärt's works were governed by a certain kind of *pro et contra* aesthetics of collage, in which atonal material was juxtaposed with tonal quotations, superseded by considerations of silence vs. sound, purity vs. impurity, or scalar vs. triadic in his post-1976 oeuvre.

Veljo Tormis and Bronius Kutavičius, drawing on the tradition of folk song (Estonian *regilaul* and Lithuanian *sutartinės*), evoked visions of the past in several of their works. In Tormis's *Curse Upon Iron* (*Raua needmine*, 1972) for mixed choir, tenor, bass, and shaman drum, the depiction of a ritual forging of a sword (after the Finnish epic *Kalevala*) is combined with references to contemporary images of destruction by the poets Paul-Eerik Rummo and Jaan Kaplinski.

Last Pagan Rites (*Paskutinės pagonių apeigos*, 1978), for soprano, mixed choir, organ, and four Lithuanian folk horns (*ragai*), is part of Bronius Kutavičius's "pagan cycle" of oratorios or scenic oratorios, which also includes the *Pantheistic Oratorio* (1970), *From the Yotvingian Stone* (*Iš jotvingių akmens*, 1983), and the *Tree of the World* (*Pasaulio medis*, 1986). These oratorios are not merely *about* ritualism but were envisaged *as* rituals—theatrical pieces or religious acts (Lampsatis 1998: 93–94), in which the visions of the past inevitably lead to contemporary connotations. Much of Kutavičius's music is concerned with symbolism and historical imagination, manifested in universal mythic symbols, sacred symbols, and mystic allegorical symbolism (Gaidamavičiūtė 2004: 56).

2. Topics, musical structure, and reception

2.1. An introductory example: *Last Pagan Rites* by Bronius Kutavičius

Last Pagan Rites is a setting of four poems by Sigitas Geda (1943–2008), with an instrumental introduction and postludium: *Oh, You Green Grasshopper* (*Žioge žaliasai*), *Celebration of Medvėgalis* (*Medvėgalio pagarbinimas*), *Incantation of the Serpent* (*Gyvatės užkeikimas*), and *Celebration of the Oak Tree* (*Ąžuolo pagarbinimas*).

In *Oh, You Green Grasshopper*, Kutavičius has allowed the performers a considerable degree of temporal flexibility; it evolves from the heterophony of ten vocal parts (an arpeggiation of the C9 chord), accompanied by concise figures played by the organ. Also, a dynamic gradation (pp-mf-ff) is specified in the score. Sigitas Geda's text, governed by repetitions and similarity of sound (assonance and alliteration), is performed simultaneously in the ten parts as if to suggest a vision of primordial unity.[1]

In 2019, the release of the LP record of *Last Pagan Rites* and *From the Yotvingian Stone* (Music Information Centre Lithuania) was accompanied by an "official video clip" directed by Rimas Sakalauskas. In the video (duration: 4 minutes), set to *Oh, You Green Grasshopper*, computer-generated abstract imagery is used to create a fittingly pantheistic vision of Kutavičius's mythical world. The clip opens with an image of the forest, through which a series of concentric circles emerge (E.g. 1a). In the middle of the forest, a computer-generated plant arises and forms a sphere-like object that embraces the sun. In his comments about the project, Sakalauskas has described the computer-generated images as "extraterrestrial life forms" or "cosmic organisms", while the "futuristic structures" of ascending Escheresque organ pipes (E.g. 1b) refer to the interrelatedness of Christianity and paganism in Kutavičius's oratorio.[2] The specific way in which pre-Christian themes evoke threefold temporal connotations (past—present—future) can also be witnessed in Tormis's *Curse Upon Iron*.
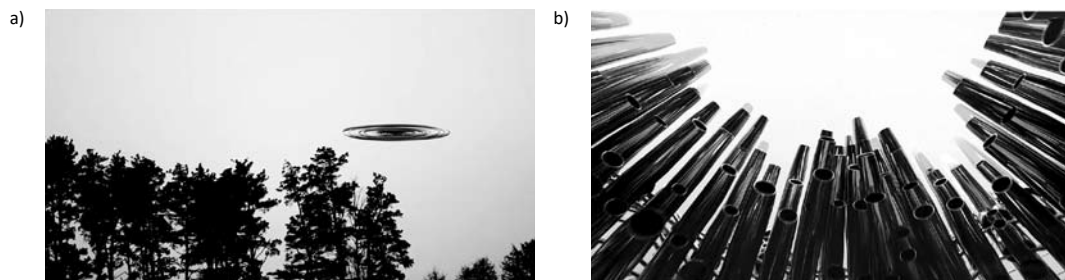
Example 1. Images from Rimas Sakalauskas's video clip for *Last Pagan Rites*:
a) concentric circles hovering over the forest; b) ascending organ pipes

2.2. Methodological and historical considerations

A notion as wide in its scope as (neo-)mythologism inevitably evokes issues of applicability. This is especially true as far as one of the most general neo-mythologist compositional practices, ostinato-like repetitiveness, is concerned. Repetitiveness is one of the features of myths and rituals, as well as various folk music traditions.

Consider, for example, the Estonian lyrical song *The Sad Songster*, as transcribed in the *Anthology of Estonian Traditional Music* (2016/1970). It represents the *regilaul* (runosong) type of folk song, characterized by a repeating eight-note melody of approximately equal note values (isochrony), one note corresponding to one syllable of the text (syllabicity). Musical repetitiveness is accompanied by parallelisms in the text. In successive lines, the image of the sad songster is further specified: "From my eyes [tears] are flowing onto my breast, / from my breast [they flow] onto my heart, / from my heart onto my knees, / from my knee onto my feet, / from my feet onto my toes, / from my toes they flow to the ground" (AETM 2016: 145). Therefore, it is important to note that the topics addressed in *regilaul* are markedly varied and extend well beyond myths and ritualism. Lyrical songs, for instance, are grouped into four categories in the *Anthology* based on the topics addressed in the text: song and songsters; home, youth, love; orphans, slaves; nature, work, fun, and mockery.

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[1]   In the pp staff system: *vasarų vasaružės* (summer), *žalia aviža* (green oat), *vakar žydėjo* (bloomed yesterday), *žaliai žydėjo* (bloomed green), *vasarų danguj danguj* (in the summer sky sky), *žioge žaliasai* (green grasshopper), *vasaružės ilgai* (long summer).

[2]   Striking Oratorios by Bronius Kutavičius: One Music – Different Media. Retrieved (20.02.2022) from the web page of Music Information Centre Lithuania: https://www.mic.lt/en/news/2020/02/26/striking-oratorios-bronius-kutavicius/

Some methods of musical syntax built on the repetitions of small thematic blocks emerged in the early 20th century in connection with various ethnographically inspired trends. This is exemplified in the first piece from Béla Bartók's *Two Romanian Dances* for piano (1910), in which a ubiquitous four-measure phrase is repeated against an ostinato-like accompanying figure. In Stravinsky's music, the juxtaposition of thematic blocks was a much-commented feature, its origin traceable back to Russian folk songs, and also to the multitude of visual perspectives in Cubist paintings (Toorn 2012: 245). Since *The Rite of Spring* (1913), repetitions of small thematic units and ostinati have been associated especially with the depictions of pagan rituals (*Sacrificial Dance*).

The terms "repetition" and "ostinato" can be used to describe much of the music written in Estonia in a period from the 1950s to 1990s. The neo-classicist tendencies that emerged in Estonia in the late 1950s, were sublimated into ethnographically inspired repetitiveness in the 1970s—synchronously, but not necessarily in a causal relationship to the minimalist techniques in the US and Western Europe. Repetition-based compositional techniques, therefore, acquired, apparently, a somewhat contradictory status as the middle point between the urbanist "machine aesthetics" of the 1960s and a retrospection of the rural past.

According to the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, however, music and myths are inherently similar. His book *The Raw and the Cooked* (1964), a study of the mythology of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, is structured according to musical allegories. By providing musical titles to the chapters of his treatise (for instance, Part One is entitled "Theme and variations", and the book concludes with a "Rustic symphony in three movements"), Lévi-Strauss emphasizes the affinity between mythical thinking and musical structures. He describes myths and music as "languages which, in their different ways, transcend an articulate expression, while at the same time—like articulate speech, but unlike painting—require a temporal dimension in which to unfold" (Lévi-Strauss 1969: 15). Music, as much as myth, promotes a special relationship with psychological and physiological time, or can rather be characterized as an instrument for the "obliteration of time".

Nevertheless, the strength of neo-mythologist theoretical concepts lies not in the wideness of their applicability (music is mythological per se), but rather in how they provide insight into certain cultural phenomena at a given period. Neo-mythologism in music must, therefore, be considered from three tightly interrelated perspectives: mythologism 1) on the level of topics, 2) in the musical structure, and 3) as a mode of presentation/reception.

Mythologism on the level of topics concerns, for example, works of instrumental music with programmatic titles suggestive of an epic narrative. *The Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson, a collection of fictitious folklore published in the 1760s, served as a source of musical inspiration for much of the 19th century.[3] No one was more influential in promoting Nordic (Germanic) mythology than Wagner, who in his tetralogy of musical dramas *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal* (the latter designated as *Bühnenweihfestspiel*), defined legends and theatrical ritualism as some of the main features of the late 19th-century *Zeitgeist*.

In the realm of musical structure (form), though, neo-mythologist elements can be considered to be a more specifically 20th-century phenomenon. Several of the compositional techniques and aesthetic ideas embraced by the post-WWII avant-garde, such as indeterminacy, open form, and various methods of collage, can be brought under the common denominator of neo-mythologism by virtue of how they promote a specific relationship with temporality. Indeterminacy, manifested either on the level of form or in other musical parameters, suggests the possibility of ceaseless reinterpretation and thus eternal recurrence—a concept rich in Nietzschean and, more importantly for the post-WWII generation of composers, Buddhist connotations. Special methods of notation (re)adopted in the second half of the 20th century, such as the circular organization of the score (Kutavičius's *Celebration of the Oak Tree* from *Last Pagan Rites*), also function as mythologems, or concise visual representations of the main idea of a myth.

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[3] Ossian-related concert overtures include *The Hebrides* (1832)—alternatively entitled as *Fingal's Cave* (*Die Fingals-Höhle*)—by Mendelssohn and Niels W. Gade's *Echoes of Ossian* (*Efterklange af Ossian*, 1840). *Echoes of Ossian*, written in sonata form, begins with an introduction (*Allegro moderato*), a musical equivalent of the invocation of the Muse that contributes to an appropriately legendary mood. Also, Gade uses dotted rhythms, a feature of Scottish folk music (*Vivace non troppo* from Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 3, 1829–1842), as a reference to Ossian's Gaelic topic. Gade continued to pursue the Ossianic themes in his cantata *Comala* (1846), thus outlining the features (folk-like melodies typically in a minor key, etc.) that became to be associated with a certain kind of musical "Nordicness" (Porter 2019: 120).

Ultimately, neo-mythologism is a term to describe the presentation and reception of certain cultural phenomena. Jean-Paul Sartre's (1949: 46) observation that any text exists only at the exact level of the reader's capabilities seems to be especially pertinent in this case. Neo-mythologism is a way of relating oneself to the imagined past, and, therefore, relies heavily on one's sense of identity. It is in the interrelatedness of sound, visuals, movement (choreography), and the commentaries accompanying the work that neo-mythologism manifests itself most clearly. Therefore, it is also imperative to consider the visual representations of music, for example, in theatrical and video productions, or the design of CD booklets. Neo-mythologism is as much a contextual as a structural phenomenon.
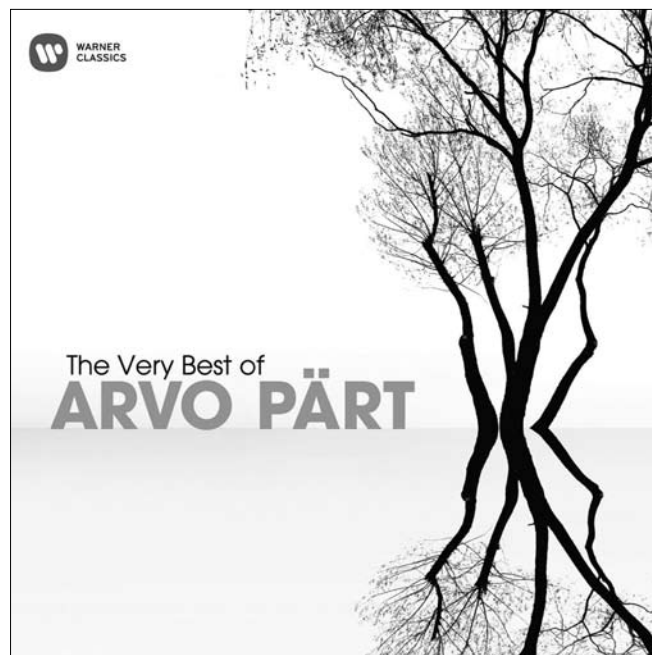
3. Mythologems in *Adam's Passion* by Arvo Pärt and Robert Wilson

3.1. The world tree

Mythologems are visual representations of myths, which often appear as simple geometrical shapes (circle, mandala, sphere, square, etc.). A vertical line stands for the world tree or *arbor mundi*—a mythological symbol that can be encountered in many cultures around the world (Adamenko 2007: 22–24). In Nordic mythology, the world tree is called Yggdrasill. It was the guardian tree of the gods and a symbol of universality, which was believed to tremble as the doom of the gods (Ragnarök) was approaching.

Other symbols, such as the ladder, can also be linked to Yggdrasill: "It was said to spread its limbs over every land, and the fact that it formed a link between the gods, mankind, the giants, and the dead meant that it was visualized as a kind of ladder stretching up to heaven and downwards to the underworld" (Davidson 1990/1964: 191). In the Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg* (1857–1861) by Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, Canto V, there is a story of the planting of an oak and a fir tree, which grow to be so high that they reach the sky.

In a sketch Arvo Pärt drew in 1995—reproduced in several books, most notably on the front cover of *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt* (2012)—he graphically described a number of his works. In this sketch, *Tabula rasa*, for instance, is presented as a spiral circle, and *Arbos* (1986/2001) as a fractal tree. In addition to Pärt's self-commentaries, mythologems appear in the visual media accompanying his music. Images of a (typically leafless) tree have been used on the booklet covers of the CDs featuring Pärt's *Te Deum* and *The Deer's Cry* (both released by ECM New Series), *Da Pacem* (Harmonia Mundi), and *The Very Best of Arvo Pärt* (Warner Classics). The latter is organized symmetrically (E.g. 2), as the image of the leafless tree is combined with its reflection, thus underlining its double mythological function ("a ladder stretching up to heaven and downwards to the underworld").

Example 2. Arboreal symbols and symmetry in the artwork accompanying Pärt's music

3.2. *Adam's Passion*: A case study in neo-mythologism

Mythologems play an important role in *Adam's Passion*—a theatrical production by Robert Wilson, based on four works by Arvo Pärt. The performances of *Adam's Passion* were given in May 2015, in Tallinn, and a video recording of the production was released by Accentus (2015). Pärt's *Sequentia* for string orchestra and percussion (2014) was written especially for this occasion, whereas the remainder of the production is set to the pre-existing works *Adam's Lament* for mixed choir and string orchestra (2010; the beginning at 6:00 in the video), *Tabula rasa* for 2 violins, string orchestra and prepared piano (1977; the beginning at 30:10), and *Miserere* for soli, mixed choir, ensemble and organ (1989/1992; the beginning at 55:40].
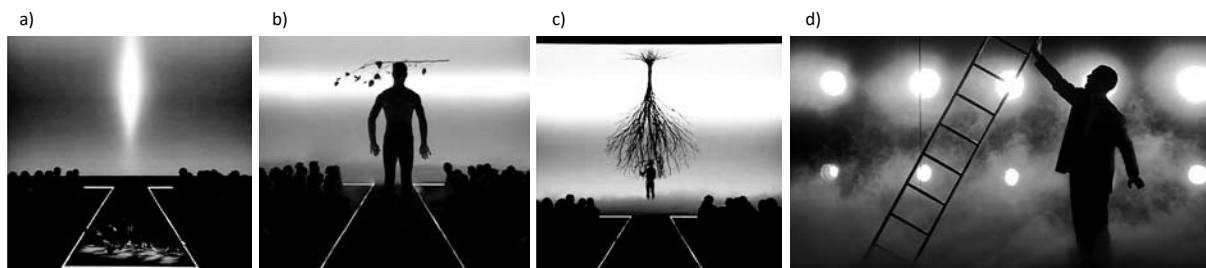
Example 3. Arboreal symbols in *Adam's Passion*:
a) vertical line (*axis mundi*); b) T-shaped cross sign; c) inverted tree (*arbor inversa*); d) ladder

In the production, Robert Wilson created a sense of visual ambiguity between the Christian and pagan symbols. The arboreal motives used in *Adam's Passion* have precedents in his previous productions (*The Forest* by Robert Wilson and David Byrne; Berlin, 1988) as well as in the reception and visual presentation of Pärt's music. *Adam's Passion* is ripe with binary oppositions: absence vs. presence, light vs. darkness, motion vs. standing still, etc. The increase in activity (or intensity) in one of the musical or visual parameters is counterbalanced with a decrease in the other aspects of the production (for example, as intense light appears, the actors are frozen to living sculptures or silhouettes).

The introduction to *Adam's Passion* (*Sequentia*) serves as a depiction of the primordial state—the time preceding the creation of Adam, the Biblical forefather of humankind. The T-shaped stage, its edges illuminated, forms the sign of the cross, and a half-leafless branch of a tree lies on a long platform that extends into the audience. The Biblical story of creation is illustrated by an image of the rising sun, represented by an ascending light spot projected on the backdrop screen. It is then transformed into a vertical line (*axis mundi*) pointing down at the branch (E.g. 3a).

In the section set to *Adam's Lament*, the Man (as Adam is called in the program notes) appears, his back turned to the viewers. He makes a slow-motion 180-degree turn to face the audience and the branch of the tree, following the text, in which the third-person point of view is substituted by Adam's direct speech (rehearsal no 9 in the score, *Lamentoso*: "My soul wearies for the Lord, and I seek Him in tears"). As the musical activity increases (sixteenth-note values) in *Affannato* (rehearsal no 15), the two Heavy Men enter, rotating as they move across the stage. In the coda of *Adam's Lament*, the Man eventually reaches the branch and balances it on his head (28:30) as a symbol of seeking reconciliation ("Be merciful unto me, O Lord! Bestow on me the spirit of humility and love"), thus producing a T-shaped sign of the cross (E.g. 3b).

Rotational movement symbolizes cyclicity: the cycle of day and night, seasons of the year, or the circle of life. The latter can be considered one of the fundamental concepts in Wilson's production. At the end of the section based on *Tabula rasa*, the Boy enters the stage (51:20), balancing a brick-like object on his head and thus imitating the previous actions of the Man. In the final section, set to *Miserere*, the circle comes to a close, as the branch is picked up by an old man (59:00).

In the *Tabula rasa* and *Miserere* sections of the production, arboreal symbols continue to be at the very heart of the visual language. At 50:30, an upside-down tree descends onto the stage, as if emanating from the sky (E.g. 3c). The image of an inverted tree (*arbor inversa*), its origin in Indian myths, is known from Siberian and Sámi rituals as a symbol of the upper celestial world (Andrén 2014: 34–35). In the concluding part of the production, the vertical symbols of the world tree appear in the guises of a ladder (E.g. 3d; 1:05:30) and a column of smoke (1:22:30), and the final tableau features a mute Tree Chorus.

3.3. *Ludus* and *Silentium* as mythological twins

Binary oppositions and symmetry in music are related to the concept of mythological twins—an ever-recurring topic in many myths. Despite their similar appearance, twin brothers are often described as opposites or different in some quality. As an example of musical references to mythological twins, Adamenko (2007: 47–48) cited George Crumb's *Twin Suns* (*Doppelgänger aus der Ewigkeit*) from *Makrokosmos* (*Twelve Fantasy-Pieces after the Zodiac* for amplified piano, Volume II), which is notated in the form of two circular graphs.

The idea of mythical twins can also be identified (in addition to the all too obvious *Fratres* [meaning "brethren"], 1977), in Pärt's *Tabula rasa,* which consists of two movements: *Ludus* (*con moto*) and *Silentium* (*senza moto*). On the one hand, their opposing nature is emphasized by the titles (activity vs. contemplation); on the other hand, the two movements are composed along a similar pattern of additive techniques. In *Ludus*, general pauses (G.P.) function as markers between similarly organized structural units. As the general pauses become shorter during the movement (time signatures: 8/2, 7/2, ... 1/2), the structural units they separate are expanded. In *Silentium*, the structural units separated by ascending passages or "flourishes" (Karnes 2017: 76) played by the prepared piano also grow constantly larger as the movement advances (number of bars: 2, 2, 4, 4, 6, 6 ...). Therefore, both *Ludus* and *Silentium* can be likened to a spiral (as in the sketch by Pärt in 1995), which expands as one is moving from the center outwards—a symbol that conveys a great multitude of associations, including depictions of solar and lunar powers, growth and expansion, as well as a rotational movement and cyclicity (Cooper 1987: 156–157).

4. "Perhaps Estonians also had things like that": Veljo Tormis's *Curse Upon Iron*

4.1. The 1970s: Coming to terms with the past and present

In the 1920s and 1930s, fascination with folk music was one of the driving forces in the Estonian musical scene, and it was promoted by the cultural policy of the Estonian Republic. After WWII, several Estonian composers continued to be preoccupied, to a greater or lesser degree, with ethnomusicological sources—the practice that conveyed multiple ideological implications within the Soviet cultural system. In the 1970s, retrospection became a leitmotif in Estonian music and literature. This period saw a renewed interest in the genre of the historical novel, represented first and foremost by Jaan Kross, whose *Between Three Plagues* (*Kolme katku vahel*, 1970–1980) is set in the 16th century. Arvo Pärt's fascination with Medieval and Renaissance music, which led to the renewal of his compositional technique in the mid-1970s, was affected by the early music movement emerging in Estonia at that time.

The year 1969 has been described as *annus mirabilis* in the history of the Estonian theater, as it marked a breakthrough of new aesthetic concepts of dramaturgy. The theoretical foundations of this process of renewal were clarified in the five issues of the *samizdat* ("self-published"; i.e., disseminated as typeset copies) almanac *Thespis* (1972–1973), its collaborators including Mati Unt, Vaino Vahing, Hando Runnel, Paul-Eerik Rummo, and Jaan Kaplinski.

The first issue contains an article about Carl Jung, written by the literary figure and psychiatrist Vaino Vahing. As an example of the Jungian intuitive philosophical credo, he quotes the following passage: "The needful thing is not to *know* the truth but to *experience* it. Not to have an intellectual conception of things, but to find our way to the inner, and perhaps wordless, irrational experience—that is the great problem" (Vahing 1997: 49; Jung 1970: 299). It was a period when Jung's concepts of archetypes and the collective unconscious as well as Jerzy Grotowski's notion of "ritual theater" were widely discussed in the literary circles.

Some, however, sought the "collective unconscious" in the realm of folklore and the past. In a series of ethnographic documentaries (including *Veelinnurahvas* [*The Waterfowl People*], 1970; *Linnutee tuuled* [*The Winds of Milky Way*], 1977), Lennart Meri analyzed the roots of the Finno-Ugric languages and oral traditions. Meri's book *Hõbevalge* (*Silver White*, 1976), in which he poses his hypothesis about Estonia as the ancient Ultima Thule, is a work of an ethnographer and historian as much as a literary reconstruction of the past.

Meri's documentary *Kaleva hääled* (*The Sounds of Kaleva*, 1986) features video recordings gathered in expeditions to Karelia and the people of Khanty in West Siberia. The film concludes, however, with a theatrical performance of Tormis's *Curse Upon Iron* (1972), a depiction of the forging of a sword during a shamanistic ritual. In the 1970s and 1980s, against the backdrop of political stagnation and increasing Sovietization, references to shamanism were employed as an escapist means of constructing the imaginary past. This mode of thought was endorsed by the assumption that, as Veljo Tormis (2008: 152) recollected, "perhaps Estonians also had things like that."

4.2. Shamanistic babbling and theatricality

Oo...oi-joi-joi-joi-jai-jai-jäi-jäi-jäü-jäü-jau-jau... In *Curse Upon Iron*, this series of syllables is performed by a choir (bass) as an imitation of the jaw harp—an instrument, played by holding its frame between the teeth and pulling the strip to produce sound (E.g. 4). Also, vowel glissandi (gradual changes from vowel to vowel) are used here (rehearsal nos 11 and 22: *oo-uu-üü-öö-ää-ee-ii* and *aa-oo-uu-ōō-ee-ää-öö-üü-ii-ee-aa*). These features are complemented by special methods of voice production, such as singing through the teeth ("Ohoi sinda, rauda raiska" ["Ohoy, villain! Wretched iron!"]), to enhance the impression of a ritual incantation.

In George Crumb's *Ancient Voices of Children* (1970), a cycle of songs after the texts by García Lorca, meaningless syllables are used to express "a primordial searching for words" (Adamenko 2007: 120). Ultimately, meaninglessness alludes to the holistic vision of a prehistoric time, when people, still in their collective "infancy", were inseparable from the rest of the creatures. In Tormis's oeuvre, vowel glissandi also appear, for example, in the first piece from *Four Etudes with Juhan Viiding* (*Neli etüüdi Juhan Viidinguga*, 1979) for narrator and mixed choir (*öö-üü-ii-ee-aa-oo-uu*; "öö" means "night" in Estonian). It is combined with a descending octatonic passage (E.g. 5), motivated by the text: "And I look down" ("Ja vaatan maha").

Mythification in *Curse Upon Iron*, however, is not limited to the visions of the past. The text, derived from the Finnish epic *Kalevala*, Canto IX (*The Origin of Iron*), is complemented by the contemporary allusions by Paul-Eerik Rummo and Jaan Kaplinski, thus transforming the shamanistic experience into an allegory of doom in modern (nuclear) warfare: "New eras. New gods and heroes. And cannons and airplanes and tanks and [machine] guns. Brand-new and up-to-date technology ... harm and hurt, cause unknowable loss, and kill, kill with iron and with steel, with chromium, titanium, uranium, plutonium, and with a multitude of other elements."

Example 4. The beats of the shaman drum and onomatopoeic syllables at the outset of Tormis's *Curse Upon Iron*

Example 5. Vowel glissandi in Tormis's *Four Etudes with Juhan Viiding*

At this point, instructions are given in Tormis's score for the physical movement of the performers ("all bend suddenly at the knees and then straighten up slowly"). The ominous words related to warfare ("cannons, airplanes, tanks, and machine guns") are accompanied by "a gesture of fright" (in Meri's film *Kaleva hääled* at 35:50). Also, the ritualist impression is enhanced here by the use of speaking voice, the pitch of which is notated approximately (as in the *Spell Against the Snakebite* [Ussisõnad] from Tormis's *Izhorian Epic*, 1975/1979). The shaman drum, played by the conductor Tõnu Kaljuste in the film, functions as a mythologem not only because of its distinctive "beat", but also by virtue of its circular shape.

Tormis has also called for this kind of theatricality elsewhere in his oeuvre, for example, in *Ingrian Evenings* (*Ingerimaa õhtud*, 1979) from the choral cycle *Forgotten Peoples* (*Unustatud rahvad*). In its final piece (*Ending and Going Home* [*Lõpetus ja kojuminek*]), the performers are required to leave the stage in groups, thus creating the sense of an "open" ending or ongoing (never-ending) singing from a distance. In the performance by the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and the conductor Tõnu Kaljuste (Estonian Television [Eesti Televisioon], 1990/1999), the singers are initially organized in a half circle, and their physical movement serves as an illustration of the informal context in which these songs once used to be sung. In *From the Yotvingian Stone* (1983) for vocal ensemble and Lithuanian folk instruments, Bronius Kutavičius has instructed the performers to sit on the ground in the form of a circle, and "had them enter and leave in a serious, almost religious, procession" (Lampsatis 1998: 92; for a photo see Landsbergis 2014: 14).

In myths and rituals, special powers are attributed to names and the act of addressing persons or objects (apostrophe). In *Curse Upon Iron*, the warmongering piece of metal is addressed as a living being: "Ohoy, villain! Wretched iron! Wretched iron! Cursed bog ore! You, flesh-eater, gnawer of bones! You, spiller of innocent blood!" Likewise, the oak tree is being spoken to ("You, oak. You, oak" ["Tu ąžuole, tu ąžuole"]) in Kutavičius's *Last Pagan Rites*. A somewhat different, but yet distinctly mythologizing practice can be observed in Pärt's *Solfeggio* (1963) for mixed choir, its text consisting of syllable names of the notes that are sung (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si). Thus, the pitches are not just performed, but rather "summoned" by calling their names.

5. Conclusions

"I don't use folk songs—folk songs use me" (Veljo Tormis). This bon mot, quoted so often that it has become to be recognized as Tormis's artistic credo, is revealing for its almost Jungian mythologizing overtones. The composer can thus be imagined as a communicator (not unlike a shaman?) through whom ancient memory (or the collective unconscious) speaks to the modern age. Bronius Kutavičius rejected comparisons made between his music and American "minimalism", noting that "our minimalism [in Lithuanian folk songs] has the history of quite a few centuries" (Lampsatis 1998: 171).

In the case of Arvo Pärt, "spirituality", defined however widely or narrowly, has been one of the most often-commented concepts. Paul Hillier's (1997: 1) monograph on Pärt begins with a discussion on "music and spirituality", and Peter C. Bouteneff's book *Arvo Pärt. Out of Silence* (2015: 25) contains a contemplation on "spirituality and religion", while Leopold Brauneiss (2012) analyzed Pärt's aesthetics from the perspective of Jungian archetypes. Kythe Heller (2017: 151) addressed the "personal accounts of Pärt's music and its spiritual dimensions in underrepresented social settings."

"Neo-mythologism" can be considered a viable alternative to the various terms previously used for the musical trends of the 1970s and 1980s. (Re)adopting a neo-mythological point of view will yield several benefits for the further discussion of these phenomena. It can be instrumental in demonstrating the interplay between the different aspects of the musical work as a social act: programmatic aspirations (references to mythical topics), structural properties (for example, "open ending" in the music; onomatopoeia or similarity of sound in the text), and a special mode of presentation/reception. This relationship is characterized by a certain degree of contingency, as suggested by the way how, for instance, arboreal symbols were used in the visual media accompanying Arvo Pärt's music. Therefore, the neo-mythological perspective helps us to define a more coherent context for the ethnographic, religious, and ritual phenomena of creativity in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as their more recent reincarnations in visual media.

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Neomitologizmas Arvo Pärto, Veljo Tormiso ir Broniaus Kutavičiaus muzikoje

Santrauka

Praėjusio amžiaus aštuntajame dešimtmetyje parašyta Arvo Pärto, Veljo Tormiso ir Broniaus Kutavičiaus muzika buvo įvardijama įvairiais vaizduojamaisiais terminais, tokiais kaip šventasis minimalizmas, magiškasis minimalizmas, baltiškasis ritualizmas ir kt. Šiuo straipsniu siekiu apibūdinti kai kuriuos bendrus Tormiso ir Kutavičiaus etnografinės / ritualistinės kūrybos bruožus ir priešpriešinti juos Pärto muzikai, remdamasis neomitologizmo samprata – terminu, apibrėžiančiu šią XX a. muzikos srovę, pasižyminčią pasikartojimais, repeticijomis, simetrija, binarinėmis opozicijomis ir specialiais (vizualiniais) simboliais (mitologemomis). Neomitologizmą muzikoje galima laikyti trejopu reiškiniu, apimančiu atspindimas temas, muzikinę struktūrą ir perteikimą / recepciją. Dėl to į neomitologizmą svarbu atsižvelgti ir vaizdinėse muzikos reprezentacijose, pavyzdžiui, teatriniuose pastatymuose ar videoprodukcijoje.

Tormisas ir Kutavičius, idėjų semdamiesi iš liaudies dainų tradicijų, daugelyje savo darbų sužadino pagoniškosios praeities vizijas. Tormiso *Geležies prakeikime* (1972) mišriam chorui, tenorui, bosui ir šamaniškam būgnui ritualinio kalavijo kaldinimo proceso vaizdavimas (pagal suomių epą *Kalevala*) yra supinamas su šiuolaikiniais destrukcijos vaizdiniais. O *Paskutinės pagonių apeigos* (1978) – Kutavičiaus pagoniškų sceninių oratorijų ciklo dalis. Kutavičiaus oratorijos nėra tik *apie* ritualizmą, bet pačios *yra* tarsi ritualai – teatriniai kūriniai ar religiniai aktai, kuriuose praeities vizijos neišvengiamai veda link šiuolaikinių konotacijų.

Mitologemos atlieka svarbų vaidmenį *Adomo pasijoje,* 2015 m. Taline pastatytame teatriniame Roberto Wilsono veikale, paremtame Pärto muzika. Spektaklyje, kuriame gausu įtampų tarp buvimo ir nebuvimo, šviesos ir tamsos, judesio ir sąstingio, Wilsonas rėmėsi vizualiniu dviprasmiškumu tarp krikščioniškų ir pagoniškų simbolių (pasaulio medis). Mitinė dvynių idėja aptinkama Pärto *Tabula rasa* formoje, susidedančioje iš dviejų dalių: *Ludus* (con moto) ir *Silentium* (senza moto). Viena vertus, jų opozicinė prigimtis išryškėja pavadinimuose (aktyvumas *versus* kontempliacija), kita vertus, abi dalys sukomponuotos naudojant panašius adityvinių technikų modelius.

Neomitologizmas gali būti perspektyvi alternatyva įvairiems anksčiau naudotiems muzikiniams terminams, skirtiems nusakyti praėjusio amžiaus aštuntojo ir devintojo dešimtmečių muzikines sroves. Neomitologinio požiūrio taikymas duoda nemažai peno tolesnei diskusijai. Jis gali būti itin naudingas demonstruojant sąveiką tarp skirtingų muzikinio kūrinio, kaip socialinio veiksmo, aspektų: programinių siekių (nuorodų į mitines temas), struktūrinių savybių (pavyzdžiui, atvira pabaiga muzikoje, onomatopėja ir garsiniai panašumai tekste) ir specialaus perteikimo / recepcijos būdo. Šiems santykiams būdingas tam tikras atsitiktinumo laipsnis – jį galima matyti iš tokių situacijų, kaip, pavyzdžiui, buvo panaudoti medžių simboliai Pärto muziką lydinčiose vaizdinėse medijose. Taigi, neomitologinė perspektyva padeda mums apibrėžti nuoseklesnį kontekstą etnografiniams, religiniams bei ritualiniams praėjusio amžiaus septintojo ir aštuntojo dešimtmečių kūrybiniams reiškiniams, taip pat naujoms jų reinkarnacijoms vaizdinėje medijoje.