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#### ARTICLE

# THE CONCEPT OF MUSICAL- CULTURAL TRADITION AND "MUSICAL GLOBE" BY JIVANI MIKHAILOV

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**KEYWORDS**

Global Music History, Jivani Mikhailov, musical globe, regionalization system, musical-cultural tradition, musical terminology, musicology.

**ABSTRACT.** Within the concept of Global Music History, and the problem of creating a new history of music, the study of historical experience in this area becomes relevant. In this regard, the experience of Soviet and Russian musicologist, composer and educator Jivani Mikhailov (1938–1995) is noteworthy. He taught at the Tchaikovsky Moscow Conservatory and was a founder of the Moscow school of musical cultural studies.

The aim of this article is to present the concepts of the famous Soviet and Russian scholar as an important historical experience in studying the Musical Cultures of the World from the standpoint of musicology. The author relies on a historical approach, employing the methods of historical research withing music science, and her personal experience of communicating with Jivani Mikhailov.

The article introduces Mikhailov's concept of the musical-cultural tradition, his "musical globe" regionalization system, and key issues in musical terminology. The musical-cultural tradition included both material aspects and a system for selecting and training musicians, along with criteria for creating and assessing musical texts. His regionalization of global musical culture was based not so much on geographical boundaries, but more on features like administrative structures, languages, the specifics religious and philosophical traditions. A key factor for Mikhailov was the study of authentic musical terminology, established in culture and adequately reflecting its unique characteristics. Many of the problems he addressed in his works are still relevant and deserve special study.

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#### МАҚАЛА

# Музыкалық-мәдени дәстүр тұжырымдамасы және Дживани Михайловтың «Музыкалық глобусы»

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**ТІРЕК СӨЗДЕР**

Глобалдық музыка тарихы, Дживани Михайлов, музыкалық глобус, регионирлеу жүйесі, музыкалық-мәдени дәстүр, музыкалық терминология, музыкатану.

**Аңдатпа.** Global Music History тұжырымдамасы аясында жаңа музыкалық тарихты жасау мәселесі өзекті болып отыр. Осы тұрғыда кеңес және ресейлік музыкатанушы, композитор және педагог Дживани Михайловтың (1938–1995) тәжірибесі маңызды. Ол П. И. Чайковский атындағы Мәскеу консерваториясында сабақ беріп, Мәскеу музыкалық мәдениеттану мектебінің негізін қалаған.

Мақаланың мақсаты – белгілі ғалымның тұжырымдамаларын дүниежүзілік музыкалық мәдениеттерді музыкатану тұрғысынан зерттеудегі маңызды тарихи тәжірибе ретінде ұсыну. Автор тарихи әдісті қолдана отырып, музыкалық ғылымдағы тарихи зерттеу тәсілдерін пайдаланады және Дживани Михайловпен жеке әңгімелесу тәжірибесіне сүйенеді.

Мақалада Михайловтың музыкалық-мәдени дәстүр тұжырымдамасы, оның «Музыкалық глобус» атты регионирлеу жүйесі және музыкалық терминологияның негізгі мәселелері қарастырылған. Музыкалық-мәдени дәстүр тек материалдық қырларды ғана емес, сонымен қатар музыканттарды іріктеу мен даярлау жүйесін, сондай-ақ музыкалық мәтіндерді жасау мен бағалаудың өлшемдерін қамтыған. Оның әлемдік музыкалық мәдениетті регионирлеу жүйесі қалыптасқан географиялық шекаралардан гөрі әлем аймақтарының шаруашылық түрлерінің ортақтығын, тілдерін, діни-философиялық мәдени дәстүрлерінің ерекшелігін көбірек ескерді. Михайлов үшін мәдениетте қалыптасқан және оның ерекшеліктерін барабар көрсететін аутентикалық музыкалық терминологияны зерттеу маңызды фактор болды. Оның еңбектерінде көтерілген көптеген мәселелер бүгінгі күні де өзекті болып, арнайы зерттеуді қажет етеді.

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#### СТАТЬЯ

# КОНЦЕПЦИЯ МУЗЫКАЛЬНО- КУЛЬТУРНОЙ ТРАДИЦИИ И «МУЗЫКАЛЬНЫЙ ГЛОБУС» ДЖИВАНИ МИХАЙЛОВА

*Автор прочитал и одобрил окончательный вариант рукописи и заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.*

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Юнусова, Виолетта. «Концепция музыкально-культурной традиции и “Музыкальный глобус” Дживани Михайлова». *Saryn*, том 13, № 3, 2025, с. 36–47. DOI: 10.59850/SARYN.3.13.2025.298. (На английском)

**Ключевые слова**

Глобальная история музыки, Дживани Михайлов, музыкальный глобус, система регионирования, музыкально-культурная традиция, музыкальная терминология, музыковедение.

**Аннотация.** В рамках концепции Global Music History актуальна проблема создания новой истории музыки. В этом контексте значимым представляется опыт советского и российского музыковеда, композитора и педагога Дживани Михайлова (1938–1995). Он преподавал в Московской консерватории имени П. И. Чайковского и был основателем московской школы музыкальной культурологии.

Цель статьи — представить концепции известного учёного как важный исторический опыт в изучении музыкальных культур мира с позиции музыковедения. Автор применяет исторический подход, используя методы исторического исследования в музыкальной науке, а также опирается на личный опыт общения с Дживани Михайловым.

В статье представлены концепция музыкально-культурной традиции Михайлова, его система регионирования «Музыкальный глобус» и ключевые вопросы музыкальной терминологии. Музыкально-культурная традиция включала как материальные аспекты, так и систему отбора и подготовки музыкантов, а также критерии создания и оценки музыкальных текстов. Его система регионирования мировой музыкальной культуры учитывала не столько сложившиеся географические границы, сколько общность типов хозяйствования, языков, специфику религиозно-философской культурной традиции регионов мира. Важным фактором для Михайлова было изучение аутентичной музыкальной терминологии, сложившейся в культуре и адекватно отражающей ее особенности. Многие проблемы, затронутые в его трудах, остаются актуальными и заслуживают специального изучения.

## Introduction

Nowadays, the ICTMD research group is working on the concept of Global Music History. This project requires an analysis of past experience and addresses several key topics: departure from Eurocentric perspectives in music history, the importance of studying traditional music and its role in the global regional culture (Blum), the influence of globalization on the new musical and historical process, and the search for an adequate methodology that combines the methods of ethnomusicology, historical and theoretical musicology, and other humanities. Many scholars have covered this topic, among them are Tobias Janz, Reinhard Strohm, Dominic Sachsenmaier and many others, thus indicating the relevance of the article.

In this context, the concepts of Soviet and Russian scholar Jivani Konstantinovich Mikhailov (1938–1995) offer valuable insight into the work of our predecessors. I had a chance to contact him in 1987, and to work with him at his Department of Musical Cultures of the World at the Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory in 1992–1995<sup>1</sup>. The aim of this article is to present the concepts of the famous Soviet and Russian scholar as an important historical experience in studying the Musical Cultures of the World from the standpoint of musicology. The author relies on a historical approach, employing the methods of historical research withing music science, and her personal experience of communicating with Jivani Mikhailov.

Jivani Konstantinovich Mikhailov is a renowned composer, scholar, educator and founder of the “Musical Cultures of the World” scientific discipline in our country. In the 1970s and 1980s, he worked at the Cairo Conservatory, gave master classes in various countries of the world, carried out many ethnomusicological expeditions to African countries, and was engaged in research work. At the same time, J. Mikhailov conducted active pedagogical and educational activities. Since the mid-1970s, he taught courses “Music of Asia, Africa and America”, later a number of regional courses and generalizing “Musical Cultures of the World”. J. Mikhailov organized a research group, office, sector, and later – the Department of Musical Cultures of the World at the Moscow Conservatory (from 1984 to 1995), supervised the writing of master’s theses. Under his scientific supervision, the largest record company in the USSR “Melody,” released a series of vinyl discs “Music of the Peoples of the World” (Yunusova 107).

## Jivani Mikhailov’s “musical globe”

The accumulated experience convinced him to move away from the Eurocentric model of the music history, which was typical not only for the Soviet, but also for the academic musicology of many countries of the world. The methodological basis for this new perspective was provided by cultural studies, a field that developed rapidly in the USSR during that time.

The new direction, called the “Musical Cultures of the World,” was based on a systematic and regional-civilizational approach to the study of the global music. The scholar rightly considered the systematic approach to be the basis

1 The abstract of the article was presented at: Joint Symposium of the ICTMD Study Groups on Music and Dance in the Turkic World and Global History of Music “Echoes of Heritage: Navigating the Legacy of Music and Dance”. September 18–22, 2024. Baku, Azerbaijan. Previously not published. About Mikhailov, see also our article (Yunusova, Alpatova).

of "a musical worldview, a global picture of the world expressed in sounds and music" (Mikhailov, "Musical Culture of India" 42). He described the regional-civilizational approach as "most fully meeting the task of system formation; its application should be accompanied by an accurate alignment of oppositions such as 'universal-unit', 'general quotient'. The system model of musical culture based on this approach has all the universal features, which ensures its maximum scientific objectivity". He believed that this approach provides an analysis of the individual culture not as isolated or the East-West opposites, but as "phenomena of global order" (Mikhailov, "Musical Culture of India" 43).

Based on the presented methods, he created the so-called "musical globe," which encompassed many of the world's cultures (see Table 1).

Table 1. Jivani Mikhailov's "musical globe"

Europe	Asia	Central and Southern Africa	America
Western	South Asia	Western	Northern
Eastern	Near the Middle East, Northern Africa	Central	
	Central Asia	Eastern	Latin
	Far East	South	
	South-Eastern Asia	Countries of the North of Africa	
	North Asia		
	Oceania		

The presented table was partially reconstructed from notes of conversations with the scholar and was not previously published. His musical globe included four regions: Europe (divided into Western and Eastern), Asia (which consists of North Africa, Australia and Oceania), Tropical Africa (parted into five sub-regions), and America (divided into North and Latin).

The regions were split on the basis of the geographical environment, administrative structures (agricultural, nomadic, etc.), linguistic and confessional communities, the cohesion of material and spiritual cultural traditions, the identity of musical traditions. Their boundaries might not coincide with the generally accepted geographical division. Centralized and decentralized regions were allocated. For example, he did not consider Europe as a centralized region, especially its eastern part. On the contrary, he emphasized the centers of the Far East and Southeast Asia to be China and India respectively.

J. Mikhailov also divided musical cultures based on the formation of specific networks: "A musical civilization-region is defined by a commonality of cultural phenomena, organized on the principle of networks within a certain territory in their maximum scale <...> networks that link together identical cultural institutions throughout the entire region, and across neighboring regions as well" ("Musical Culture of India" 38). The scholar saw a strong manifestation of such networks in Southeast Asia, Far East and Middle East, as well as in certain cultures, for example, in India.

He also considered similar networks of the past that influenced the current state of the whole range of cultures (see Fig. 1).

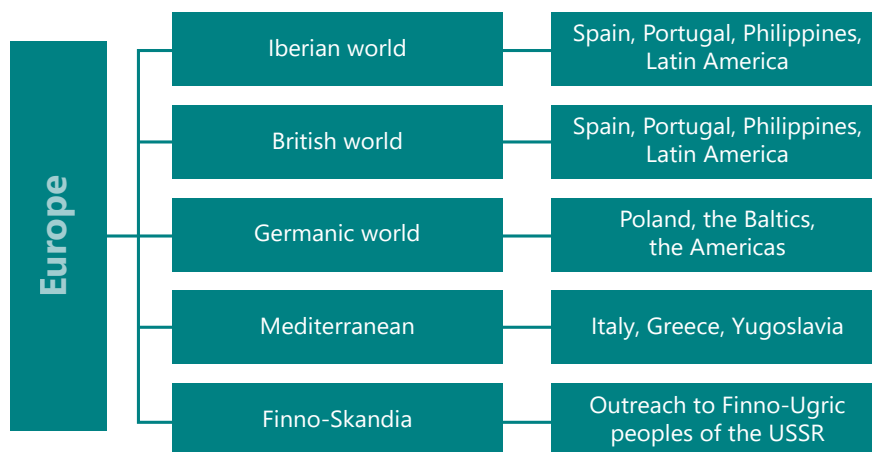


Fig. 1. Europe's regions in relation to other cultures.

In this regard, he distinguished: the Iberian world, which included Spain, Portugal, the Philippines, and Latin America; the British world, which also included the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa; the German world with the Baltic states, North and South America, Austria, Switzerland. He also emphasized the specific Mediterranean region, including Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia, which then existed as a single state. He also pointed out the network of Finno-Skandia, which included the Finno-Ugric peoples of the USSR. He did not have time to develop this classification to the end, however, the promotion of one or another principle of classification changed the boundaries of musical regions. Mikhailov formed his "musical globe," focusing not on the prevailing geographical borders of countries and regions, but on musical and cultural phenomena, which can be in demand today.

### The concept of the musical-cultural tradition

As the core unit for studying and classifying global musical cultures Mikhailov proposed the comprehensive concept of a musical-cultural tradition (MCT). This concept became foundational to the Moscow school of musical culturology he established. He pointed to the limitations of the scientific apparatus in studying such phenomena as music, dance, theater, etc., and set the task "not only to consider the full variety of the effectiveness of a set of phenomena of various arts in the context of the complex cultural and social context of a distinct society, a specific country, but also to reach the level of generalizations, taking into account the cultural experience of a number of civilizations" (Mikhailov, "To the Problem" 3), which would make it possible to study, for example, not music, but musical culture. He found the concept of *musical-cultural tradition* more accurate and complete in comparison with the *music* term. He based his work on the research of both Russian and international culturologists, sociologists, and ethnomusicologists. In his lectures and discussions, he frequently cited Eduard Markaryan, Sergey Arutyunov, Basil Bernstein, John Joseph Becker, Robert Redfield and others.

Emphasizing the definition of *musical culture*, in comparison with a more abstract *culture* as a whole, the scholar proposed the following formulation of the musical

and cultural tradition: "This is a specific sociocultural system that includes a certain musical phenomenon along with the entire set of means of its life support" (Mikhailov, "To the Problem" 5).

In the theory of musical-cultural tradition, he defined and described in detail a number of interacting factors that ensure its functioning: "1) a fund of musical texts (or a set of cliché stereotypes through which these texts can be built), as well as the means of preserving it; 2) rules that serve as a general guide for building a musical text and a code of criteria for evaluating these texts; 3) specialist musicians (including their selection, musical preparation and content); 4) specific forms of sound implementation and audience organizations; 5) material support for the music making process (first of all, the creation of the artificial acoustic environment, and the manufacture of musical instruments" (Mikhailov, "To the Problem" 7).

These parameters function in the system of two interconnected triads: *civilization-culture-tradition* and *culture-tradition-genre* (Mikhailov, "To the Problem" 5). Noting the uniqueness of the musical and cultural tradition among different peoples and in different historical periods, Mikhailov identified three vectors that ensure its functionality: spatial, temporal and "circulating" in different social stratum ("To the Problem" 12).

He was also concerned with issues of musical terminology, and paid special attention to the terms of different world cultures, which can be correlated with the generally accepted *music* term, as well as the problem of diverse terminology. This problem also arises in the Global Music History project.

J. Mikhailov traced the historical path of ideas about music, starting with the ancient civilizations of the East and emphasized its close connection with the phenomenon of sound, which is a key element of musical cultures and plays an important role in its global concept. He wondered: "What was the music for the ancient Chinese, Indians, Egyptians, Babylonians – either a specific substance, a special kind of energy, or maybe a message from other worlds?" (Mikhailov, "Reflections" 6). The scholar showed the difference between concepts similar to music in other cultures, emphasizing that this must be taken into account in studies on these cultures. He urged to study not only the specific terminology of these cultures but also the wider general cultural and historical context, noting (in a reference to J. Blacking) (Blacking 26–27, 30, 39, 47, 85, 90, 123) that cultures contain relatively few purely musical terms (Mikhailov, "Reflections" 8). He called not to replace the terms of the culture being studied with their European counterparts.

According to Mikhailov, terms related to the concept of music, even in ancient civilizations "covered a rather wide sphere of existence: the initial sound – its special cultivation (selection, subtlety, refinement) as a type of spiritual and creative activity – and the focus of this activity on achieving a certain desired state (joy, fun, inner freedom or spiritual concentration, finding harmony with other worlds, etc.)" ("Reflections" 6–7).

### About musical terminology

Based on those factors, the scholar distinguished three types of terminology. He classified the first type as a "sum of concepts that that grew out of specific performing practices (a specific type of music, genre, etc.)"; the second one was "a body of terms <...>

from a developed subculture (court music, cult forms of music, etc.", which usually has a scientific basis and descriptions. The third type was "a dictionary of terms related to the musical culture of a particular country or region" (Mikhailov, "Reflections" 10). He urged researchers to work on all three types at the same time. It should be noted that the first type of term is known to ethnomusicologists as performance terminology and it is often studied in detail, sometimes alongside the second type.

J. Mikhailov objected to the juxtaposition of certain things between West and East, where each side was assigned special qualities (tonal thinking and modality, sonata form and improvisation, etc.). He argued for "the universality of the sound phenomenon, sounding and the effectiveness of each its methods of organization, and the dominance of a certain principle in culture and a particular era" (Mikhailov, "Reflections" 16). The scholar spoke of the need to create a universal terminology, emphasizing the importance of the process of universalizing both the terms themselves and the musical-conceptual system. To do this, in his opinion, it is necessary to reach the global level of thinking and abandon all kinds of centrism (European, Asian, etc.), as well as to make a deep comparative and typological study of "various musical cultures with their entire set of components" (Mikhailov, "Reflections" 18–19).

For a deeper understanding of the specifics or commonality of cultures, the Mikhailov expressed the need for research universalism, which is hindered by the fragmentation of scholars from different fields (such as musicologists and philologists), and even within musicology itself, where academic musicologists study serious music, and ethnomusicologists study folk music ("Reflections" 9). This problem is still relevant today.

## Conclusion

The concept of sound and the theory of the musical-cultural tradition of J. Mikhailov is actively used in Russian musical cultural studies, ethnomusicology, and the history of music. The Moscow Conservatory has the Scientific Center "Musical Cultures of the World", which advocates his legacy. J. Mikhailov's ideas – his regionalization system, theory of musical-cultural tradition, and views on musical terminology – have proven relevant for our time and continue to be developed in musicology of Russia. He proposed an original methodology of Global Music Cultures that requires further development. This historical experience will be interesting to scholars and will help in creating a modern Global Music History.

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