Dissertation Abstract: Pamela Elizabeth Thies Ivezic

Alexander Sergeevich Dargomyzhsky 1813-1869: A Study of His Solo Vocal Works
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The maturation of art song in Russia started during the early nineteenth-century with the works of Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857) and reached fruition in mid-century with the songs of Modest Musorgsky (1838-1886). Composing simultaneously was Alexander Sergeevich Dargomyzhsky (1813-1869) whose vocal works provide a crucial link between Glinka and Musorgsky. Dargomyzhsky’s harmonic innovations, development of the narrative style, marriage of music and text, and sensitivity to textual interpretation strongly influenced later composers, beginning with Musorgsky, who referred to Dargomyzhsky as “the esteemed teacher of musical truth.”

Dargomyzhsky’s contributions to the genre are often discussed concurrently with Glinka’s, making it appear as if the two composers’ works were analogous to each other. This appears to be incorrect. While it is true that Dargomyzhsky was influenced by Glinka, it is unfair to assume that Dargomyzhsky was incapable of contributing to the maturation of Russian art song. Dargomyzhsky expanded upon his contemporary’s musical ideas and developed his own style of composing, characterized by his ability to depict through music the internal message of a song’s text.

In this dissertation, Dargomizhsky’s compositional style is discussed through examination of his one-hundred-one solo vocal works. These works are categorized by their accompanying subtitles, as assigned by the composer, and further divided into three chronological compositional periods. Particular attention is given to the analysis of harmony, rhythm, form, text-setting, interpretation of text, and the relationship between the vocal line and accompaniment. This examination provides support for the conjecture that Dargomyzhsky was the missing stylistic link between Glinka and Musorgsky in the development of Russian art song.