

Deciphering the Musical Language of Nicolas Obouhow

Azadeh Atri



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In loving memory of my father,
who, during the dark days of COVID-19, unfailingly
encouraged me to finish this manuscript. I wish he could have
stayed longer to see the result of his encouragement.

To Farman Behboud who showed the way
and
Larry Sitsky who keeps the light on

Review Quotes

By **Jean-Michel Bardez**, French musicologist, composer, pianist, visual artist and director of collections

Claude Ballif, compositeur, professeur d'Analyse au Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris, nous avait fait connaître Nicolas Obouhow, auquel Maurice Ravel avait écrit: « *J'ai perçu l'éclat sonore, la profondeur et la force tragique de votre œuvre* ». Nous en avons été fortement étonnés.

Une part d'inouï, de singularité exceptionnelle, retenait assurément l'attention, depuis son arrivée en France (en 1919) et si les motivations mystiques de ce compositeur étaient prévalentes, l'analyse des moyens d'exécution des formes musicales devenait essentielle. Mettant en scène, entre autres, un instrument de son invention, la *Croix sonore*, des voix criées, sifflées, un "piano-double", Nicolas Obouhow vise un spectacle total avec des costumes, des couleurs projetées, dans un espace qu'il avait conçu lui-même. Ayant imaginé, dès le début du XX^{ème} siècle, un système d'écriture très particulier, il s'oriente vers des densités « hyper-chromatiques », tant simultanées que mélodiques et s'autorise des gestes et des textures véritablement originales. Son système de notation établissait l'identité absolue du dièse et du bémol. En 1928, parmi d'autres témoignages, André Schaeffner précise: « *Il s'agit d'une musique écrite dans un but si spécial qu'il a fallu aller au-delà de tout ce qui avait été tenté jusqu'à présent dans le monde des sons* ».

Cette introduction très synthétique est assurément sans commune mesure avec ce qui peut être proposé, étant donné les questions multiples induites par la création de Nicolas Obouhow... Le travail de recherche d'Azadeh Atri contribue fort heureusement à la connaissance de cet « Illuminé ».

English translation of the above quote

Claude Ballif, composer, Professor of Analysis at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris, introduced us to Nicolas Obouhow, to whom Maurice Ravel wrote: "I recognised the sonorous brilliance, the depth and the tragic power of your work." We were profoundly astonished by it.

From the time of his arrival in France (in 1919), his unprecedented, exceptional uniqueness attracted attention and if the composer's mystical motivations had been common [at the time], it would have become essential to analyse their achievement in musical forms. By presenting on stage, for instance, an instrument of his invention, the *Croix sonore*, shouting and whistling voices, a 'piano-double', Nicolas Obouhow aimed to create a comprehensive spectacle with costumes and projected colours in a space which he himself conceived and built. Having created, at the beginning of the 20th century, a unique system of writing, he turns towards "ultra-chromatic" densities, both simultaneous [harmonic] and melodic, and allows himself truly original gestures and textures. His system of notation redefined and developed the absolute identity of the sharp and the flat. In 1928, among other testimonies, André Schaeffner points out: "this is music written with a purpose so special that he had to go beyond all that had been attempted up to now in the world of sounds."

This very short introduction is certainly disproportionate to the many questions which may arise from Obouhow's work... Azadeh Atri's research contributes most positively to our knowledge of this "*Illuminé*".

By **Prof. Emer. Larry Sitsky (AO)**, The Australian National University
Material on Obouhow is rather scarce—and even more so in English. Most of what is out there is biographical and anecdotal. This book is thus doubly valuable. It contains, for the first time, detailed analyses of compositional procedures. The analytical procedures are accompanied by many music examples, all illuminating the text. This work demonstrates the early days of writing for electronic instruments as well as an early approach to the construction and notation for such instruments. The translation of *The Book of Life* into English is another big bonus in this research. It is high time that a figure such as Obouhow is put under the microscope, as he is a fascinating and enigmatic composer.

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I am grateful to many other scholars who shared their excellent insights. Many thanks to Dr Nino Barkalaya, Dr Elena Poldiaeva and Electra York-Slonimsky. Their enthusiasm and knowledge have been invaluable. Special appreciation and deep gratitude are held for Anna Booth who translated the colossal *The Book of Life* from Russian; a monumental and painstaking task, which seemed impossible to many. I cannot thank her enough for making the “impossible” possible. Her perceptive comments on the text and insightful suggestions have been invaluable. I am also indebted to archivists, curators and librarians who helped me with the archival materials and different sources. I am grateful to the library staff at the Australian National University, in particular Mona Biskup at the Art and Music Library and Jacinta Cloney at the Menzies Library; to the staff of the Music Department at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France; to Parivash Ardei at the Bibliothèque Baha’ie de France who generously devoted so much of her time; and to Parvaneh Shah-Bahrami for her kind assistance with the Baha’i archives. I thank Thierry Maniguet at the Cité de la Musique, who provided invaluable insight into complexities of the *croix sonore* and showed me the instrument. I gratefully acknowledge Hector Lemoine at Editions Henry Lemoine for allowing me to reproduce Obouhow-related materials, Marie Chartus-Vicheney and Paul Sacher Foundation for their permission to reproduce Ivan Wyschnegradsky’s drawings and the Gaumont Pathé Archives for providing Germaine Dulac’s short films. Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders and to

obtain their permission. I apologise for any unintentional errors and would appreciate to be notified of any corrections that should be incorporated into the text.

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Abstract

Various styles and techniques of composition were experimented with and developed by avant-garde composers during the first decades of the 20th century. Nicolas Borisovich Obouhow (1892–1954) plays a significant role as a composer who experimented, very early, with a 12-tone system and electronic sounds. His innovative ideas were not only a response to the Russian avant-garde movement, but were also part of the wider international quest for new means and techniques of composition. For Obouhow, art was a means to facilitate and advance his mystical search, and his views on music place him in a broader international cultural context associated with the occult and a belief in the transcendental power of sound. Drawing from a wide range of primary sources, in particular the Obouhow Archive at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and contemporary newspapers and journals, this research firstly demonstrates how Obouhow's idiosyncratic ideas were formed and influenced by his spiritual beliefs and significant historical events such as the Russian Revolution and the First World War. Secondly, through examining his circle and important relationships, the author examines how Obouhow's views were also in accord with the esoteric beliefs held by many others and how these views were part of a broader worldwide search for man's spiritual destiny in the interwar period and beyond. Finally, through detailed analysis of form, harmonic language, synthetic scale systems and orchestration, this research shows how Obouhow contributed to the early decades of modernism and 12-tone writing.

Prologue

Nicolas Obouhow's musical language is saturated with religious and mystical ideas, and it is impossible to examine his output from a solely analytical standpoint.¹ He declared in a 1935 interview that "in Parsifal, Wagner used the mystic for the art, unlike him, I use art to glorify the mystic".² Obouhow developed various musical systems dealing with form, harmony, scales, and orchestration—systems that reflected his view of the cosmos. Although the extant literature contains some accounts of Obouhow's music and its connection to mysticism and religion, there is no research that fully examines and deciphers Obouhow's musical language. It seems that Obouhow's extreme and dramatic views about the cosmos have inhibited most music scholars from delving into his music. It is as if it is enough to know that Obouhow was yet another eccentric Russian mystic, and perhaps researchers have considered it unnecessary to find out how his music functions. This work (the first in English) explores the way Obouhow's views were expressed in musical terms. It investigates the close relationship between his idiosyncratic system of 12-tone composition and his mysticism, and, more importantly, expounds how Obouhow's 12-tone harmonies and scales operate.

¹Note that there are alternative transliterations of Obouhow's name and surname in the literature. For instance, Obukhov, Obuhov, and Obouhov appear in different sources. However, after settling in Paris, Obouhow adopted the following spelling for his name: Nicolas Obouhow. Therefore, I have used Obouhow's own spelling throughout this research. Other variants of his name may be found where the text is a direct quote from another source. Other Russian names are spelled according to the Library of Congress system of transliteration. Common English spellings of well-known Russian names, such as Tolstoy and Tchaikovsky, are retained.

²"Dans Parsifal, Wagner utilisa le mystique pour l'art. Contrairement a lui, je me sers de l'art pour glorifier le mystique". See E. Poldiaeva (2011), *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow: Reconstruction d'un biographie*, M Kahn (trans.), Édition Van de Velde, Paris, p. 256.

Obouhow was born in Olchanka (a province of Kursk), Russia.³ He was raised in a musical family. His musical talent was discovered by his uncle, Serge Obukhov (1855–1928) who was a well-known singer, and the director of the Imperial Theatre in Moscow.⁴ Obouhow began playing the violin and piano at the age of six.⁵ He spent a short while at the Moscow Conservatoire before moving to St. Petersburg in 1913, where he continued his music studies at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire at the age of 19.⁶ It was here that he received lessons in harmony and counterpoint from teachers, such as Maximilian Steinberg (1883–1946) and Nikolai Tcherepnine (1873–1945).⁷ In the spring of 1917, Obouhow fled Russia with his wife and two sons to escape the turmoil of the Revolution, and after travelling through the Crimea, he eventually settled in Paris in 1918.⁸ In Paris, he resumed his studies in orchestration with Marcel Orban (1884–1958) and

³Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 15. According to Poldiaeva, Obouhow was born on 10 April 1892. This date is based on the Julian calendar. In New Style, Obouhow's date of birth is 22 April.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 16. Apart from Obouhow's uncle (Serge Obukhov), the well-known singer Nadezhda Obukhova was also Obouhow's cousin. Poldiaeva attests that the musical talent was running in Obouhow's family at least for four generations. See Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, pp. 15–16. Also, note that the transliteration used here is according to the Library of Congress system of transliteration.

⁵M. Orban, (1935), 'Un musicien mystique: Nicolas Obouhow', *La Revue Musicale*, p.1011. Marcel Orban (1884–1958) was a Belgian composer and critic who studied with Vincent d'Indy and wrote frequently in *La Revue Musicale*. His article, although very brief, is perhaps the first account that provides a concise biography of Obouhow.

⁶Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, pp. 17–18. According to Poldiaeva, Obouhow studied piano with Strakhov and counterpoint with Alexander Ilinsky (1859–1920) at the Moscow Conservatoire between 1911 and 1913.

⁷Orban, 'Un Musicien Mystique: Nicolas Obouhow', p. 101.

⁸The majority of Russian refugees, caught up in the Civil War, had little choice in where they could emigrate. However, certain places, like Paris and Berlin, were more welcoming or desirable due to historic and cultural ties with Russia. In fact, Paris and Berlin became the most common destinations for Russian refugees. See C. Andreyev & I. Savicky (2004), *Russia Abroad: Prague and the Russian Diaspora, 1918–1938*, Yale University Press, New Haven, pp. 159, 168. For Obouhow's settlement in Paris see Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, pp. 63–99. It is important to note that there is conflicting information regarding Obouhow's migration and the time he settled in Paris. For instance, according to the archive of "Mediatheque Cité de la Musique", found in the following website, Obouhow left Russia on 7 May 1918: <http://mediatheque.cite-musique.fr/mediacomposite/cmde/CMDE000002400/Chrono/index.html>. This date also appears in the Grove Music Online available from <http://www.grovemusic.com>. According to Poldiaeva, Obouhow left Russia in the spring of 1917. Here I have quoted from Poldiaeva's work, because her research is the most recent and detailed source on Obouhow's biography.

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937).⁹ Obouhow stayed in Paris until his death in 1954. In 1948, Obouhow was mugged, which resulted in him being incapacitated, and it is believed that this incident put an end to his compositional endeavours.¹⁰ Nevertheless, his very last composition is dated 1952.¹¹

After his death, Marie-Antoinette Aussenac de Broglie (1883–1971), the virtuoso concert pianist, and Obouhow's close friend and interpreter, inherited his output, and she handed over her Obouhow Collection to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in March 1966.¹² It is believed that Aussenac de Broglie was meticulous when selecting documents to deposit in the library archive.¹³ Whether this was according to the composer's will, one can only speculate. The materials not selected still await discovery, assuming they exist, but it is possible that some lie forgotten in libraries or personal archives. Nonetheless, Aussenac de Broglie's collection includes a considerable body of work.¹⁴ Apart from manuscripts, such as the monumental *Le Livre de Vie* or *The Book of Life*, the Obouhow Archive at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France is in possession of personal items such as photos, concert invitations, program notes, excerpts from newspapers and letters.¹⁵

Obouhow fell into obscurity after his death, although a few of his friends and admirers tried to keep his memory alive. In a special issue devoted to Obouhow, *La Revue Musicale* published articles by Claude

⁹Orban, 'Un musicien mystique, Nicolas Obouhow', p. 100. No detailed information could be found regarding Obouhow's studies with Orban.

¹⁰Note that in most accounts, 1949 has been mentioned as the year of attack, whereas the documents held in Archives Départementales des Yvelines reveal 1948. For the 1949 accounts see E. Poldiaeva (2006), 'Nikolaj Oboechov, L'Hymne mondial', *Holland Festival (2–25 June, 2006)*, p. 8, viewed on 20 April 2011, <http://www.hollandfestival.nl/contentfiles/programmaboeken/programma%20Hymne%20Mondial.pdf> and Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 284.

¹¹Titled *Le Temple est Mesuré, L'Esprit est incarné* (The temple is measured: the Spirit is incarnated) and catalogued Ms. 15263, this composition can be found in the Obouhow archive at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Durand also published this piece in 1953. See N. Obouhow (1953), *Le Temple est Mesuré, L'Esprit est incarné pour piano*, Durand & Cie Éditeurs, Paris.

¹²Poldiaeva, 'Nikolaj Oboechov, L'Hymne mondial', p. 7.

¹³Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁴See Appendix 1 for the catalogue of works.

¹⁵According to Poldiaeva, a very few documents and letters can also be found in the archives of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nicolas Tcherpnin (at the Paul Sacher Foundation), and Prokofiev at the Goldsmiths University of London. See Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 9.

Ballif (1924–2004) and Raymond Petit (1893–1976) in 1972.¹⁶ Schloezer's and Obouhow's articles of the 1920s were reprinted in this issue. A few of Obouhow's friends also organised concerts and competitions as a commemoration. In 1957, Aussenac de Broglie founded a composition competition (*Prix Nicolas Obouhow*) in his memory.¹⁷ In the late 1970s, Ivan Wyschnegradsky (1893–1979) was a driving force in reviving Obouhow's compositions by including them in his concerts. In a 1978 concert, after the performance of his *The Day of Existence*, Wyschnegradsky announced: "I heard my work now, [but] what is important to me is that my friend's music [Obouhow's] is played".¹⁸ In 1981, Radio France organised another concert, titled *Metamorphosis of Mysticism*, in which some parts of *Le Livre de Vie* (*Le Troisième et Dernier Testament*, the foreword to *The Book of Life*) were premiered.¹⁹ Obouhow's piece was performed alongside compositions by Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915) and Wyschnegradsky. Other performances of Obouhow's compositions occurred in 1989 and 2004 in Frankfurt and Amsterdam, where the *Préface au livre de Vie* (*Preface of the Book of Life*) was performed for the second and third time.²⁰ Although there has been a continuing interest in his music within a small circle of pianists and scholars, Obouhow's music is still largely unexplored and unperformed, and we know very little about him both personally and musically.

Apart from some of the piano works and two of his orchestral pieces (the *Preface of the Book of Life* and *The Third and Last Testament*), Obouhow's large-scale composition, *The Book of Life*, is yet to be performed. A selection of his piano pieces was edited by Bardez and published only in 2009.²¹ In fact, it was not until recently that a few scholars and musicians took an interest in Obouhow's compositions and revived his music through their writings and performances. Sitsky, Bardez and Barkalaya are among those who have written about Obouhow and their scholarly contributions will be discussed later. They have also performed some of Obouhow's

¹⁶See Ballif, 'Idealisme et Materialité', *La Revue Musicale*, pp. 5–24 and R. Petit (1972), 'Introduction à l'oeuvre de Nicolas Obouhow', *La Revue Musicale*, pp. 26–39.

¹⁷Obouhow's friendship with Aussenac de Broglie and the composition competition will be discussed later.

¹⁸Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 119.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 119.

²⁰As the very first orchestral piece of Obouhow, this composition was premiered by Koussevitzky in 1926. This will be discussed later. For the Frankfurt concert, see Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 9.

²¹J. M. Bardez, ed. (2009), *Nicolas Obouhow: Oeuvres pour piano*, Editions Henry Lemoine, Paris.

piano compositions. Sitsky's recordings of the *Révélation* (*Revelation*), *Le Temple est Mesuré, L'Esprit est incarné* (*The temple is measured, The spirit is incarnated*), and *La paix pour les réconciliés: vers la source avec le calice* (*Peace for the Reconciled: Towards the Source of the Chalice*) were released in 2010, and Barkalaya recorded approximately 13 piano works of Obouhow in 2013.²² Obouhow did not live long enough to see any of his orchestral pieces, other than the *Préface du livre de vie*, performed. *Le Troisième et Dernier Testament*, his last existing orchestral composition, was performed only relatively recently in 2006 by the Amsterdam Radio Orchestra under the baton of the avant-garde music enthusiast, Reinbert de Leeuw. Although limited, this renewed interest in Obouhow's compositions in recent years, apart from the curiosity appeal, is mainly due to the considerable intrinsic value of his original musical language, and the fact that much is left to be discovered. Perhaps what intrigues most researchers is how such extraordinary music came out of the traditional atmosphere of the conservatoires that Obouhow experienced in both Russia and France.²³ The Russian conservatoires and Ravel's tutelage offered him conventional approaches to music, but enabled Obouhow to emancipate himself from conventions and venture into the early days of 12-tone writing by employing his own 12-note scales and synthetic chords.

In addition to recent performances of his music, Obouhow's mystical beliefs have been considered and interpreted to a certain extent by Sitsky, Poldiaeva, Barkalaya, and Shaw-Miller. Sitsky and Shaw-Miller have devoted a chapter to Obouhow in their books.²⁴ There are only two major works by Poldiaeva and Barkalaya about

²²For Sitsky's recording, see *Russian rarities* (2010), CD, Move Records, Melbourne. For Barkalaya's recording, see *Nikolai Obouhov: Croix Sonore* (2012), CD, The Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatoire, Moscow. Note that Roger Woodward and Jay Gottlieb also recorded some of Obouhow's piano compositions. See *Music of the Russian Avant-Garde 1905–1926* (2011), CD, Celestial Harmonies, Tuscon and *Nicolas Obouhow: Piano Works* (2010), CD, Sisyphé, Paris.

²³It is evident that before the Revolution the method of teaching in the Russian conservatoires (including the St. Petersburg conservatoire) was quite traditional and to an extent conservative, as "new" compositional ideas were not really welcomed. The atmosphere was formal and sometimes even severe and intense. See Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 22–23. As we shall see in Chapter 6, Ravel's teachings were also based on traditional method of orchestration.

²⁴See L. Sitsky (1994), *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Garde, 1900–1929*, Greenwood Press, London, pp. 254–263 and S. Shaw-Miller (2002), *Visible Deeds of Music: Arts and Music from Wagner to Cage*, Yale University Press, New Haven, pp. 72–88.

Obouhow, and both investigations are in French and Russian.²⁵ There are also some short entries in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and other music encyclopaedias.²⁶ Secondary sources, apart from Poldiaeva's and Barkalaya's research, are brief accounts and do not include detailed analysis of Obouhow's compositional techniques or his harmonic language. Generally speaking, it mainly deals with biographical information, visual aspects of Obouhow's manuscripts (visual, symbolic images), and brief descriptions of the instrument (*croix sonore*, or the sounding cross) he devised. Barkalaya's PhD thesis is the only existing research that tackles some aspects of Obouhow's compositional technique in the broad context of Russian and French modernism.²⁷ While dealing with cultural and artistic movements of the 20th century, her thesis uses general description and a comparative analytical approach. She provides an insightful comparison between Obouhow's technique and that of his contemporaries, such as Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951), Josef Hauer (1883–1959), and Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) as well as some analysis of Obouhow's music that appeared in David and Garban's *Traité d'harmonie tonale, atonale et totale de Nicolas Obouhow*. Poldiaeva's research, first published in Russian in 2006 and translated into French in 2011, also includes descriptive commentaries and biographical information.²⁸ Her book is the first work that provides a significant insight into the composer's life. It is indeed a reconstruction of a biography, as far as documents permit. However, music analysis is not the focus of her research. Current scholarship, nonetheless, provides more information about Obouhow's mystical ideas compared to that of his contemporaries. As we shall see, Obouhow's own texts also do not provide much information on his compositional methods and religious and esoteric ideas.

²⁵Mention should be made that, as a partial fulfilment of his master's degree, Sharlat also wrote a 28-page survey of Obouhow. See Y. Sharlat (2004), 'Nikolay Obukhov: The mystic', Masters thesis, Yale University.

²⁶For example, see J. Powell (2001), 'Obouhow, Nicolas', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Stanley Sadie (ed.), Macmillan, London, vol. 18, pp. 287–289 and D. Gojowy (1980), 'Obuhov, Nikolai', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Stanley Sadie (ed.), Macmillan Publishers Limited, London, vol. 13, pp. 485–486.

²⁷N. Barkalaya (2012), 'Esthétique et technique compositionnelle de Nicolas Obouhov dans le contexte du modernisme russe et français', PhD thesis, University of Paris 8.

²⁸Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*.

There are only a few writings by Obouhow and his contemporaries dealing with Obouhow's symbolic ideas and music. Obouhow's own writings appear in two similar essays, *L'émotion dans la Musique* (Emotion in Music) and *La musique, son but et ses moyens d'expression* (Music, its purpose and its means of expression). *L'émotion dans la Musique* was published twice by *La Revue Musicale*: once in 1927 and again in 1972.²⁹ Like Obouhow's many other works, this seven-page article is not dated, and it is unknown whether he wrote *L'émotion dans la Musique* in 1927 or at an earlier time while he was still in Russia. *La musique, son but et ses moyens d'expression* also does not throw light on the dating issue. It is not dated and is not even published. This 17-page article was found in the Nicholas Slonimsky Archive of The Library of Congress and, although much longer, it contains strong similarities to that of *L'émotion dans la Musique*. These two brief essays are the only extant primary source documents providing first-hand information on Obouhow's aesthetics and musical ideas. However, due to the enigmatic language of these texts, it is hard to fathom how Obouhow's symbolism and musical theories function. In other words, none of these works clearly explains Obouhow's musical systems and mysticism. His contemporary contributors also did not clarify Obouhow's symbolic and musical ideas, as they, too, used a language laden with metaphors.

The main contemporary contributors and commentators were José David (1913–1993), Lucien Garban (1877–1959), Kuen-Lun and Carlos Larronde (1888–1940) all of whom belonged to Obouhow's circle.³⁰ David and Garban collaborated on writing a treatise on Obouhow's music.³¹ Titled *Traité d'harmonie tonale, atonale et totale de Nicolas Obouhow*, this 37-page treatise was meant to expound and elucidate Obouhow's harmonic ideas. As we shall see, it fails to do so, as there is a constant renaming of harmonic systems and inconsistency

²⁹See N. Obouhow (1972), 'L'émotion dans la Musique', *La Revue Musicale*, Paris, vol. 290/291, pp. 55–61 and N. Obouhow (1927), 'L'émotion dans la Musique', *La Revue Musicale*, Paris, vol. 7.

³⁰As we shall see, Kuen-Lun was a pseudonym of an unknown music critic. Larronde was a French playwright and a writer who was interested in esotericism. Garban was a composer and David was a musicologist. They were both friends of Ravel. Obouhow's relationship with Ravel, Larronde, Garban and David will be discussed later.

³¹J. David & L. Garban (1947), *Traité d'harmonie tonale, atonale et totale de Nicolas Obouhow*, Durand, Paris. It is worth mentioning that the first half of this treatise is dealing with traditional harmony and only the second half elaborates on Obouhow's own harmonic ideas.

in the definitions of the systems. Kuen-Lun and Larronde also aimed to explain the symbolism of Obouhow's *The Book of Life*, but their short accounts, full of metaphors, added to confusion.³² Covering some 34 pages, the enigmatic language reveals the esoteric nature of the authors and Obouhow's ideas. Larronde's book, *Le livre de Vie de Nicolas Obouhow*, was in French and published in 1932.³³ Earlier in 1931, Kuen-Lun had published a book in English called *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov*.³⁴ Kuen-Lun has been presented in mysterious ways in literature about Obouhow, and his identity is still unknown. According to *L'Astrosophie*, Kuen-Lun is the pseudonym of a well-known critic of 'ultra-modern' music.³⁵ Orban believed that Kuen-Lun was an "Irish poet and musicographer".³⁶ In *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov*, Kuen-Lun, like Larronde, drew attention to the symbolic aspects of Obouhow's compositions. In fact, *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov* contains strong similarities to Larronde's book. They share similar covers, music examples, and pictures. Such similarities encourage one to consider the possibility that Kuen-Lun was the pen name of Larronde who was a literary critic as well as a playwright.³⁷ In addition to *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov*, Kuen-Lun's understanding of Obouhow's music philosophy are also expressed in his *Music of the Spheres (La Musique des Sphères)*. This brief article was published in 1935 by the esoteric journal *L'Astrosophie: Revue d'astrologie ésotérique et exotérique et des*

³²See Kuen-Lun (1931), *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov*, 9th edition, Edition De Luxe, Paris and C. Larronde (1932), *Le livre de vie de Nicolas Obouhow*, Editions J. Hautmont, Paris. These accounts will be discussed further.

³³Larronde, *Le livre de vie de Nicolas Obouhow*.

³⁴Kuen-Lun, *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov*.

³⁵Kuen-Lun (1935), 'La Musique des Sphères', *L'Astrosophie: Revue d'astrologie ésotérique et exotérique et des sciences psychiques et occultes*, vol. 7, no. 1, p. 39. The name "Kuen-Lun" refers to a massive mountain range that goes through the northern edge of the Tibetan plateau and ends at the North China Plain. Kuen-Lun Mountains had a significant place in theosophical discourses. For Kuen-Lun Mountains in theosophical texts, see H. P. Blavatsky (1892), *The Theosophical Glossary*, The Theosophical Publishing Society, London. Obouhow's relationship with theosophists will be discussed in Chapter 1. Since Kuen-Lun (the author) published in esoteric journals, it is quite possible that he was a theosophist.

³⁶Orban, 'Un Musicien Mystique: Nicolas Obouhow', p. 107.

³⁷Note that Larronde was French, but according to Orban, Kuen-Lun was Irish. While no other document could be found to date revealing Kuen-Lun's identity, it is not clear to what extent one can rely on Orban's account. Thus, the possibility of Kuen-Lun being Larronde is quite legitimate.

sciences psychiques et occultes.³⁸ Kuen-Lun wrote that he understood *The Book of Life* to be a liturgy full of cosmic symbols.³⁹ The title of Kuen-Lun's article (*Music of the Spheres*) recalls Larronde's radio play, *Song of the Spheres: A set of voices in space*.⁴⁰ These two writings are works of occult and esoteric nature.⁴¹

Given the current state of literature and scholarship on Obouhow, a wide array of sources (including manuscripts, letters, contemporary newspapers, journals, and other archival material) had to be used in this research to contextualise the musical and cultural milieu in which he presented his musical innovations and developed his mystical ideas. Primary sources were found mainly in the archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Library of Congress and Bibliothèque Baha'ie (Archives Baha'ies de France). Since few sources examine Obouhow's technique of composition, the music analysis will be based on a thorough inspection of Obouhow's own writings and scores, as well as the study of some of his like-minded contemporaries. Obouhow's early music exhibits a strong kinship with Scriabin, and therefore, this relationship will be examined throughout the book, and particularly in Chapter 3.⁴² It is important to note that the scarce literature on Obouhow reflects an accepted view and a fixed idea that Obouhow was Scriabin's musical descendant. Obouhow was inspired by Scriabin's

³⁸Kuen-Lun, 'La Musique des Sphères', *L'Astrosophie : Revue d'astrologie ésotérique et exotérique*, pp. 39–40.

³⁹Ibid., p. 40.

⁴⁰C. Larronde (1937), *Théâtre invisible: Le douzième coup de minuit, Le Chant des sphères*. Les Edition Denoel & Steele, Paris, p. 101. As revealed in *Théâtre Invisible*, a radio play by Lorrance was broadcast for the first time in March 1936 by the National Radio of Paris. Different parts of Obouhow's *The Book of Life* were performed in this play. The music was introduced under the title of "Song of the Spheres: A set of voices in space".

⁴¹These titles also reveal allusions to Pythagoras's ideas on "Harmony of the Spheres". For more information on "Harmony (or Music) of the Spheres" and its origins, see J. Godwin (1987), *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth*, Thames and Hudson, London.

⁴²The following sources, among many others, have been used to investigate the influence of Scriabin on Obouhow: J. M. Baker (1986), *The Music of Alexander Scriabin*, Yale University Press, New Haven; F. Bowers (1969), *Scriabin: A Biography of the Russian Composer, 1871–1915*, Kodansha International Ltd., Palo Alto; P. Sabbagh (2003), *The Development of Harmony in Scriabin's Works*, Universal Publishers, U.S.A.; S. Morrison (1998), 'Skryabin and the Impossible', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 51, no. 2, pp. 283–330; A. Eaglefield Hull (1916), *The Great Russian Tone-poet, Scriabin*, K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., London; and A. Garcia (2000), 'Scriabin's Symbolist Plot Archetype in the Late Piano Sonatas', *19th Century Music*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 273–300.

harmonies, but his new harmonic innovations sound nothing like Scriabin's. Certainly, Obouhow was musically related to Scriabin, but the relationship became more and more distant, and what remained was not a technical/musical connection, but a philosophical one. The analysis presented in this book borrows from post-tonal theories and techniques, as well as other conventional forms of theory, to better reveal the meaning of the music that the author wanted to highlight.⁴³ This work uses the idea of "transitional music", as discussed by scholars, such as Samson and Whittall, to reveal that, in some of the early output, functional harmony is indistinct, although not utterly discarded.⁴⁴ The analysis of the later compositions shows that Obouhow replaced conventional tonality with his 12-tone systems, synthetic chord, self-created scales, and 12-note aggregates. Post-tonal approaches are used as an analytical method, where Obouhow's music moves away from the conventional tonal language, and only those analytical techniques (such as Straus's idea of pitch interval) that are relevant to the analysis have been utilised.⁴⁵ The analysis, therefore, broadens the existing literature on post-tonal movements, in which various styles and techniques of composition were tested and developed by avant-garde composers. Whilst many scholars have focused on biographical details and the role of mysticism and religion in Obouhow's life, an in-depth analysis of his music will enable a better understanding of his character. Obouhow's systematic and rigorous way of composing reveals that he was not just a curious and eccentric figure. The aim of this research is to resurrect Obouhow's music and introduce it to a wider audience. Hence, the analysis is presented in a more accessible way to make it easier for music lovers and amateur musicians to comprehend. Since most of Obouhow's output was never published, copies of original

⁴³A wide range of sources on post-tonal theory have been drawn upon as well as other analytical approaches to post-tonal music, including J. Samson (1977), *Music in Transition: A Study of Tonal expansion and Atonality, 1900–1920*, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, London; A. Whittall (2008), *The Cambridge Introduction to Serialism*, Cambridge University Press, New York; A. Whittall (2003), *Exploring Twentieth-Century Music: Tradition and Innovation*, Cambridge University Press, New York; and J. N. Straus (2000), *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 2nd edn., New Jersey.

⁴⁴For relevant discussions of "transitional music" see Samson, *Music in Transition: A Study of Tonal Expansion and Atonality, 1900–1920*, and Whittall, *The Cambridge Introduction to Serialism*.

⁴⁵See Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory* for relevant discussions on pitch intervals and pitch-classes.

manuscripts have been used in this work. Numerous and carefully annotated musical examples have been extracted in order to make it easier for the readers to follow the analysis. These examples help the music speak for itself. This monograph principally focuses on music for the piano and duo piano. However, to avoid overlooking many inherent features of Obouhow's techniques, some of his music for the piano and voice have been examined, as well as the orchestral compositions, most of which began their existence as two-piano pieces.

This research also contributes to the understanding of the cultural and artistic movements that were developed in Russia and Europe in the late 19th century and early decades of the 20th century. Although scholars such as Poldiaeva, Barkalaya, and Sitsky, among others, have discussed the extent of Obouhow's mysticism and its similarities with Theosophy, archival research provided evidence that Baha'ism also became a kindred faith for Obouhow—which places him in a wider international quest for peace, brotherhood, and unity during the interwar period and beyond.⁴⁶ It seems this quest that he embarked on about a century ago has not been more relevant than it is now! This research also expands upon Poldiaeva's biographical research by presenting some unpublished letters and documents that were found in the archives of the Bibliothèque Baha'ie de France and the Library of Congress as well as uncovering documents which dispel gossipy myths about the mugging. Appended to the research is the first complete translation of the text of *The Book of Life* (Obouhow's magnum opus of some 830 pages) from Russian. This was not attempted before by any other scholar perhaps due to the enormous difficulties a translation of this magnitude presented. Obouhow's enigmatic handwriting (such as pre-revolutionary spelling and cursive style) had to be deciphered, and letters and even whole words, hidden under blobs of ink, had to be interpreted. The translation pinpoints the folk material and the source of biblical quotes (which are both integral parts of the spiritual content of his masterpiece) for the first time. It reveals

⁴⁶Note that in Barkalaya's work, there is a brief mention of the use of a Baha'i text in one of Obouhow's compositions. However, the depth of Obouhow's involvement with the Baha'i circle of Paris and its significance for Obouhow remains uninvestigated in her work. Obouhow's relationship with the Baha'i members of Paris will be discussed further in the ensuing chapters.

the specific parts that Obouhow carefully chose to accompany and enhance the spiritual intention and message of his work. This text would probably not have been translated in isolation. It is a direct result of this research.

From the creation of his notation, his electronic instrument, and new systems of harmony and form, to the tragic loss of his monumental *gesamtkunstwerk* (*Le Livre de Vie*) in a mugging, the story of Obouhow and his lifelong quest to achieve peace in a world destabilised by a Revolution and two world wars is not just a curious tale of a maverick émigré.

Introduction



Plate Intro.-1 The Young Obouhow.¹

Obouhow was perhaps one of the most innovative and controversial composers of the 20th century. His idiosyncratic ideas on music provoked an extreme reaction from both musicians and listeners. Some of his fellow musicians and contemporaries such as Leonid Sabaneev (1881–1968) found his ideas utterly “crazy”, whereas

¹J. M. Bardez, ed. (2009), *Nicolas Obouhow: Œuvres pour piano*, Henry Lemoine, Paris.

others like Ravel thought he was a genius.² His audience was also divided into two groups. On one side was a cohort who genuinely felt and experienced the transcendental power of his music, and on the other side were those who were distressed by Obouhow's 12-tone harmonies and extreme musical and theatrical effects (such as extensive use of clusters, whistling, and crying). The eccentricity of his music was indeed related to the soundscape he sought to create. This was an atmospheric world that was unexplored at the time and a result of a musical reform in every possible aspect. Growing up during the turmoil of Russia at the turn of the century, Obouhow, like his revolutionary compatriots, felt the necessity for change. Politics aside, Russia in the first third of the 20th century was experiencing massive artistic upheavals. Part of the rapid transformation of the musical culture of Russia was due to the new theories about music.³

Russian composers were not the only group who were experimenting and exploring new systems of composition. The early decades of the 20th century were the years of "tonal crisis" and "breaking down of the traditional tonal functions", and there was a worldwide quest for a new harmonic language.⁴ Obouhow's self-created scales and harmonies fit into this experimental, innovative, and colourful world of the early avant-garde movement. Obouhow's ideas of reform were not only restricted to music. As we shall see, he also developed his own personal mysticism based on the notion of synthesis, reconciliation, and unification. Like Scriabin, Charles Ives (1874–1954), Messiaen, Hauer, Wyschnegradsky, and Cyril Scott (1879–1970), Obouhow belonged to the group of musicians for whom music had a highly symbolic role in their mystical search for a higher reality. For Obouhow, only art could reach this higher

²L. Sabaneyeff (1967), *Modern Russian Composers*, trans. J. A. Joffe, Books for Library Press, New York, pp. 239–241. For Ravel's opinion of Obouhow see S. Prokofiev (2012), *Sergey Prokofiev Diaries, 1924–1933: Prodigal Son*, trans. A. Phillips, Faber and Faber Limited, London, vol. 3, p. 330.

³For instance, Rozanov proposed a new scale (C, D-flat, D, E, F, G, A, B-flat, B, C) in 1901 and in 1910 Scriabin began to work on a series of compositions in which he developed his own harmonic language and original constructional methods. For Scriabin's innovative works see P. D. Roberts (1993), *Modernism in Russian Piano Music: Scriabin, Prokofiev, and Their Russian Contemporaries*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, vol. 1, p. 1.

⁴J. Samson (1977), *Music in Transition: A Study of Tonal Expansion and Atonality, 1900–1920*, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, London, p. 19.

reality, and his music is imbued with allusions to this belief. Being a messianic composer, his music aimed to unite all races from all religious backgrounds as well as unite man with God. To give life to his spiritual language he had to revolutionise every aspect of music, as he found the musical theories of his time redundant and insufficient for his purpose. Form, harmony, instrumentation, and even notation had to be reformed. In 1917, Obouhow even designed two new instruments, the *Cristal* (Crystal) and the *Éther* (Ether) (Figure Intro.-1).⁵

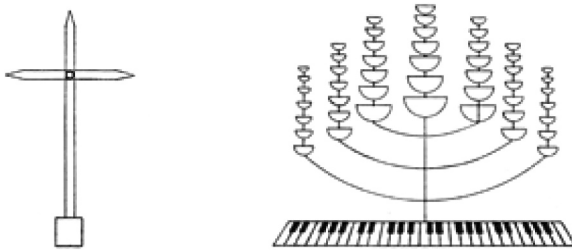


Figure Intro.-1 Ether and Cristal, from *Le livre de vie de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 31. ↵

Obouhow's mystical search led him to create his notion of Absolute Harmony in 1914, which motivated him to devise a modified system of notation in 1915.⁶ This notation is used in all the compositions he

⁵For Ether and Cristal see C. Larronde (1932), *Le livre de vie de Nicolas Obouhow*, Editions J. Hautmont, Paris, p. 31. Ether was a prototype of Obouhow's *croix sonore*. Ether was realised in the late 1920s and it was developed further in the early 1930s. This later model was called the *croix sonore*. As we shall see in the following chapter, both Ether and the *croix sonore* were theremin-like instruments. Cristal was never realised and, as Shaw-Miller states, "*Crystal* was a key-board instrument in which hammers were to strike semi-globes of crystal, rather in the manner of a celesta". See S. Shaw-Miller (2002), *Visible Deeds of Music: Arts and Music from Wagner to Cage*, Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 76. Note that the first description of these instruments appeared in Schloezer's account. See B. D. Schloezer & A. Schaeffner (1925), 'Les Courants de la Musique Russe Contemporaine', *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du conservatoire, Deuxième partie, technique, esthétique, pédagogie*, Librairie Delagrave, Paris, vol. 2, p. 174.

⁶Note that Busoni and Golyshev also came up with their own system of notation in the early 20th century. For Golyshev's and Busoni's notations see L. Sitsky (1994), *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Garde, 1900–1929*, Greenwood Press, London, pp. 254–256 and L. Sitsky (2009), *Busoni and the Piano: The Works, the Writings and the Recordings*, Pendragon Press, New York, pp. 325–330.

wrote after 1915. Apart from its symbolic significance, Obouhow's new system of notation enabled him to express his ideas of tonality and harmony in a more direct way. This system has a close correlation with Absolute Harmony. Major and minor tonalities ceased to exist in Absolute Harmony, therefore, Obouhow had to invent a new way of notating sharpened and flattened notes. This led him to reform the notation, which he called *La notation absolue (simplifiée)* or "the absolute notation (simplified)." This notation was also a response to the chromaticism of the late Romantic music and the growing number of accidentals in late 19th-century music. Obouhow believed that while his notation could retain the "effectiveness of tonality", it could also facilitate reading, as his new system aimed to decrease the number of "complications", caused by "modulations and excessive use of accidentals" in writing.⁷ As Obouhow's system of notation is a result of his innovative ideas on 12-tone writing and his avoidance of functional harmony, it is necessary to provide some background information about this system as well as how it was received in musical circles.

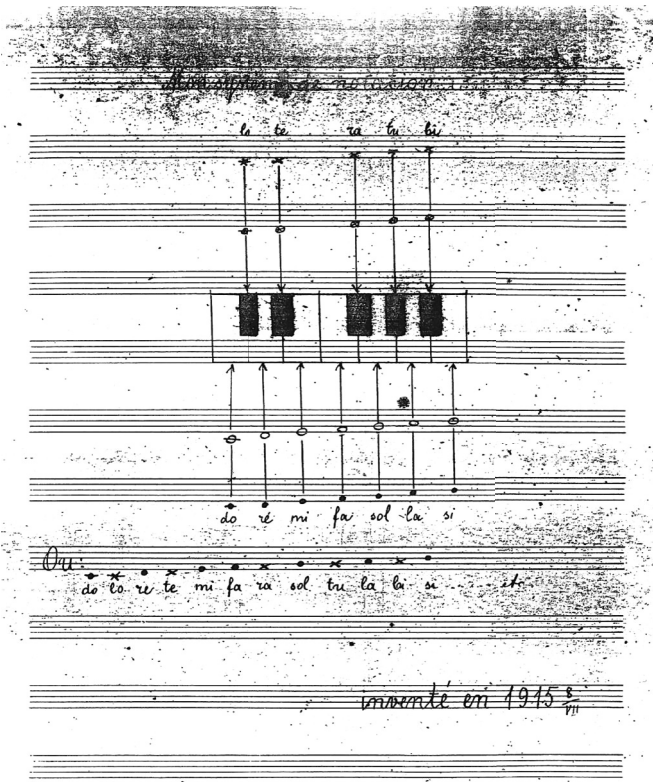
Orban's article in *Revue Musicale* provides some details about Obouhow's system of notation but Obouhow himself wrote a short account of his notation.⁸ Obouhow's writing on the simplification of notation is an undated three-page document, titled *La notation absolue (simplifiée)*, and kept in the Obouhow Archive.⁹ The document seems to be a work in progress, as there are some notes regarding adding music examples and editing the text. The invention of this system dates back to July 8, 1915 (Old Style). In his notation, Obouhow retained the conventional tails of the durational values and included a carefully drawn diagram illustrating this system in almost every composition (Figure Intro.-2).¹⁰

⁷This document is catalogued LA-OBOUHOV NICOLAS-4 and Obouhow's quote can be found on p. 2.

⁸For Orban's account see Orban, 'Un Musicien Mystique: Nicolas Obouhow', pp. 102–104.

⁹The catalogue number is as follows : LA-OBOUHOV NICOLAS-4.

¹⁰It is important to note that although this system is presented at the beginning of most of the compositions, only a few pieces such as *La parabole du Seigneur* provide the exact date. Not only does this date mark the invention of the new system, but it also casts light on the chronological order of his output, as not all the compositions were dated by Obouhow himself. For more details see the catalogue of works in Appendix 1.



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Figure Intro.-2 *La parabole du Seigneur: Mon système de notation*, Vma.Ms. 98. \square

The simplified notation was based on equal temperament and Obouhow's own adaptation of conventional *solfège*. A fervently religious man, Obouhow favoured Guido d'Arezzo's method as it was derived from a hymn/prayer to St. John (do, lo, re, te, mi, fa, ra, sol, tu la, bi, si).¹¹ The following account of Obouhow's notation appeared in the *Beaux Arts* journal in 1935:

As he [Obouhow] speaks, Obouhow rises. He takes a notebook and hands it to me. [Obouhow says] Here is my new system of musical notation. In this system, there are no sharps or flats. No reinforcement of the key. But a scale of 12 independent notes and each bears a different name.¹²

¹¹Orban, 'Un Musicien Mystique: Nicolas Obouhow', p. 102.

¹²E. Poldiaeva (2011), *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow: Reconstruction d'un biographie*, M Kahn (trans.), Édition Van de Velde, Paris, p. 256.

Although it is unknown whether Obouhow knew Boris Yavorsky (1877–1942), the prominent Russian music theorist, his ideas of notation are in line with Yavorsky. According to Ewell, Yavorsky too discussed the uselessness of multiple names for notes and intervals.¹³ As seen in Figure Intro.-2, Obouhow adopted the piano keys as a model for his system. Obouhow marked the black keys of the piano (or all the accidentals—sharpened or flattened notes) with the St. Andrew cross (×).¹⁴ Obouhow’s notation dealt only with the treble and bass clefs and he removed all other clefs in his notation.¹⁵ Obouhow affirmed in the 1934 interview that his reform facilitated the process of composing the “new” music:

It is also necessary that I show you my method of musical notation, particularly convenient for a modern composer and the new vertical music of electro acoustic instruments. This notation is simple. It removes the flats and sharps and introduces, by contrast, an emotional syntax in music.¹⁶

¹³Yavorsky explained in a letter to his music theorist friend, Nadezhda Briusova: “You ought to write a Music-Theory Fundamentals textbook that is void of everything that results from the confusion of naming one note with three names (e.g., B#, C, Dbb) or one audible interval with different designations”. See P. Ewell (2012), ‘Rethinking Octatonicism: Views from Stravinsky’s Homeland’, *Journal of the Society for Music Theory*, vol. 18, no. 4, p. 3, viewed on 5 March 2014, <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.12.18.4/mto.12.18.4.ewell.php>

¹⁴Obouhow, *La notation absolue (simplifiée)*, LA-OBOUHOV NICOLAS-4, p. 1. As we shall see in Chapter 1, St. Andrew was patron saint of Russia. He was first to bring the gospel to Russia. It is believed that St. Andrew was crucified on an “x-shaped” cross. Obouhow also ascribed a symbolic purpose to his notation. For him the black keys were the symbol of the “East” because of the pentatonic effect. The white keys (or the diatonic scale) were the symbol of the “West”. Obouhow’s notation and its relation to his mystical beliefs and ideas of unification will be discussed in Chapter 1. For St. Andrew and his crucifixion see M. J. Anuta (2002), *East Prussians from Russia*, Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc, Baltimore, p. 87–88 and A.A. Koskensalo, J. Smeds, R de Cillia & A. Hugué (2012), *Language: Competence-Change-Contact*, Lit Verlag, Berlin, p. 240.

¹⁵Obouhow, *La notation absolue (simplifiée)*, LA-OBOUHOV NICOLAS-4, pp. 1–2.

¹⁶Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 238. By “electro acoustic instruments” Obouhow meant his sounding cross. However, he did not explain how his notation was capable of creating “an emotional syntax in music”. Note that the idea of having electronic sounds and instruments was indeed a very new and modern concept back in the early 20th century.

Like his other idiosyncratic musical ideas, this modification of notation caused quite a stir in Obouhow's lifetime. Poldiaeva states that Obouhow's simplified notation was a controversial topic both in the Russian and French musical circles. Alexander Vasilyevich Alexandrov (1883–1946), a pupil of Nikolai Medtner (1880–1951), recalled Medtner's account of a meeting with Obouhow:

Nicolas Karlovich [Medtner] told me about a meeting he had some time ago in Petrograd: someone had asked me to see a young composer [Obouhow] ... and to hear his works. When I went home, I saw a young man dressed in a red jacket (!)... When I opened the manuscript, I suddenly saw small cross marks instead of note heads (Nicolas Karlovich showed that he was dizzy).¹⁷

The French circle was more welcoming. As Sitsky states, a volume of standard works in Obouhow's notation was published by Durand in 1947. The set included works by composers such as Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849), Claude Debussy (1862–1918), Florent Schmitt (1870–1958), and Messiaen.¹⁸ Obouhow's notation gained some support from composers such as Arthur Honegger (1892–1955), André Jolivet (1905–1974), Garban and Wyschnegradsky. These composers tried to promote Obouhow's system by adopting his notation in their works.¹⁹ As Examples Intro.-1 and Intro.-2 show, Wyschnegradsky applied Obouhow's notation to his graphic works, *Chromatic Etudes (Études chromatiques)*.²⁰

¹⁷Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁸Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Garde, 1900–1929*, pp. 254, 261. Also, see N. Obouhow (1947), *Pièces pour piano transcrites en nouvelle notation simplifiée*, Durand, Paris. Note that Obouhow's Parisian circle will be discussed later.

¹⁹For Jolivet's composition see A. Jolivet (1947), *Étude sur des modes antiques pour piano*, Durand et Cie, Paris. For Honegger composition, see A. Honegger (1943), *Deux Esquisses en notation Obuhov*, Durand & Cie, Paris. These "sketches" were dedicated to Aussenac de Broglie, Obouhow's close friend and interpreter. For Garban's account see L. Garban (1943), *Précis de Grammaire musicale élémentaire. Conforme à la nouvelle notation simplifiée Nicolas Obouhow*, Durand & Cie Éditeurs, Paris.

²⁰These examples were found on the Association Ivan Wyschnegradsky's website. For Wyschnegradsky's ideas of colour and its relation to sound, see I. Wyschnegradsky (1945), *Étude Chromatique*, digitised image of "chromatic drawings", Association Ivan Wyschnegradsky, France, viewed on 10 August 2014, <http://www.ivan-wyschnegradsky.fr/en/chromatic-drawings>.



Marie Chartus-Vichenev Collection

Example Intro.-1 Wyschnegradsky's 1945 *Chromatic Etudes*. ↵



Ivan Wyschnegradsky Collection, Paul Sacher Foundation, Basel

Example Intro.-2 Wyschnegradsky's 1968 *Chromatic Etudes*. ↵

Honegger in particular was an avid supporter of Obouhow's notation, and he led a long debate supporting this system in the French journals in the 1940s.²¹ Like Obouhow, Honegger believed that this system could facilitate the reading and writing of music as well as making it easier for a beginner to learn a piece, simply because there is no sharp (or double sharp) and no flat (or double flat). Honegger's comment here is also in line with Yavorsky's ideas on the "uselessness of multiple names for notes and intervals".²² He also stated that Obouhow's system could save some time in writing as well as saving paper.²³ It seems Messiaen also found this notation intriguing.²⁴ The Obouhow Archive holds the only hand-written document by Messiaen asserting the significance of Obouhow's system of notation. Messiaen's account appears on an undated sheet of paper with Honegger's writing, titled *Jugement sur la notation Obouhow*, on one side and Messiaen's very brief text on the other side. Since Honegger's Obouhow-related articles appeared in the 1940s, there is a strong possibility that this document was also written at the same time.²⁵

It was with the support of these colleagues that Obouhow could disseminate his notation not only in France but also overseas. In 1948 Émile Vuillermoz (1878–1960), the well-known French music critic, revealed in *Spectateur* that Obouhow's system was adopted by the Russian Conservatoire of Paris (*Le Conservatoire Russe de Paris*) as well as the Conservatoire of Tehran (*Le Conservatoire de Teheran*).²⁶ It is unknown how this notation found its way to Tehran,

²¹For instance, see A. Honegger (1942), 'Une notation musicale simplifiée', *Comoedia*, n. 57, p. 1, A. Honegger (1946), 'La nouvelle notation simplifiée de Nicolas Obouhow', *L'Education Musicale*, no. 10, p. 2 and Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, pp. 263–273.

²²See Ewell, 'Rethinking Octatonicism: Views from Stravinsky's Homeland', *Journal of the Society for Music Theory*, vol. 18, no. 4, p. 3.

²³Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 271.

²⁴No account could be found to date confirming the personal relationship between Obouhow and Messiaen. Undoubtedly, these composers were acquainted with each other's compositions, as one of Messiaen's preludes appeared in Durand's volume of standard works in Obouhow's notation. See Obouhow, *Pièces pour piano transcrites en nouvelle notation simplifiée*.

²⁵As mentioned before, Honegger's debates could be found in different sources such as the *Comoedia*, *L'information Musicale*, and *L'Education Musicale*. Also see Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, pp. 263–274.

²⁶*Spectateur* (1948), 26 October. Catalogued "Res.Vma180: Doc 181–200, no. 182", Vuillermoz's account was found in the Obouhow Archive of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

but it is evident that Aussenac de Broglie knew many Persians in Paris.²⁷ Therefore, it is quite possible that Obouhow made some Persian contacts through Aussenac de Broglie. Obouhow's notation reached countries other than Persia. It went as far as Australia where Bidy Allen wrote in the *Argus* in 1952:

If Nicholas Obouhow can persuade European composers and publishers to accept his sweeping change in musical notation, surely Australia could make an equally bold attack upon other out-of-date teaching material. The chance is there for the Australian Music Examination Board to grasp—if it will.²⁸

Obouhow was so enamoured of his own system that he even devised a machine to automatically notate while playing the piano. The news of this machine was announced by the *Paris-Presse* in June 1948: “un élève de Ravel inventé une machine à écrire les symphonies”.²⁹ However, Obouhow did not obtain the patent for this invention until 1952 (Figure Intro.-3).³⁰ This machine, as far as we know, was never realised.

All Obouhow's musical innovations found their place and expression in his colossal work, *The Book of Life*. It is necessary for us to understand that this composition was literally Obouhow's lifework and without it, his creative output would be negligible. In the 1923 letter to his wife, Vladimir Shcherbachev (1889–1952) revealed that Obouhow intended to compose only one work. Quoting Wyschnegradsky, he wrote:

In the words of Vyshnegradsky, there is in Paris a “genius who is both a follower and a composer who will bring Scriabin to fruition”—Obukhov, who wishes in the course of his life to write but one work (for which mankind will be ever grateful) and this work will be a mystery.”³¹

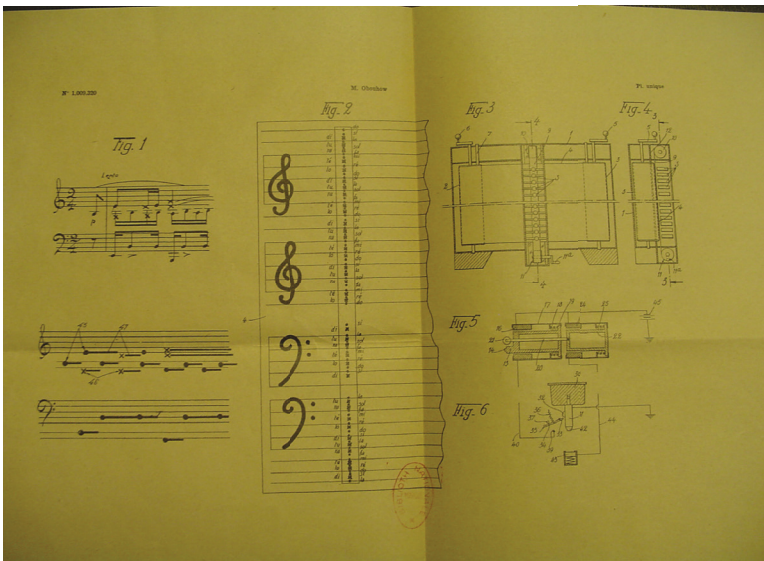
²⁷There are various documents in the archives of the Bibliothèque Baha'ie of Paris that reveal Aussenac de Broglie knew many Persians. This was due to her involvement with Baha'ism. Aussenac de Broglie's relationship with the Baha'is of Paris will be discussed in Chapter 1.

²⁸*The Argus* (1952), ‘A Chance to Lead’, 31 May, p. 8.

²⁹The translation of the French text is as follows: A student of Ravel invented a machine that writes symphonies. See Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, pp. 279, 288.

³⁰Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 278. The patent can also be found in the Obouhow archive of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France with the following catalogue number: Res.Vma 180 (III), Doc 1–197, no. 18–20.

³¹Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Garde, 1900–1929*, p. 138. Note that Scriabin's influence on Obouhow will be discussed later.



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Figure Intro-3 Extracted from the patent for Obouhow's notating machine. ◀

All of Obouhow's other compositions, which were written in the 1930s and onwards, are fragments of the later variants of *The Book of Life*. However, only the early version (catalogued Ms.15226 and Ms. 15226(2)) can be found in its complete form in the Obouhow Archive. Since *The Book of Life* is a culmination of Obouhow's mystical and musical ideas, many examples from different fragments of this composition were extracted for analysis. Hence, it is important to provide some information about this work.

Inspired by Scriabin's *Mysterium*, *The Book of Life* was a Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* that aimed to bring about, through performance in a universal temple, spiritual unity, brotherhood and the dematerialisation of the world. Like *Mysterium*, as Shaw-Miller states, this work is fully integrated in the sense that it involves sound, word, dramatic effects, light projection and even smells.³² An oratorio for voice and two pianos, *The Book of Life* is saturated with religious symbols. It is composed of seven "chapters" incorporating

³²Shaw-Miller, *Visible Deeds of Music: Arts and Music from Wagner to Cage*, p. 14. As mentioned earlier, Scriabin's influence on Obouhow will be demonstrated in the following chapters.

fourteen “stages” in total.³³ The composition is undated and it is not clear when exactly Obouhow started writing it.³⁴ However, a variant of the 14th stage (*Formula du Calice de l’Extasé* or Formula of the Chalice of Ecstasy), catalogued Ms. 17715, is dated June 1921. There is also conflicting information in the literature regarding the dates. According to Kuen-Lun, Obouhow started working on this composition in 1914.³⁵ On the other hand, Ballif believed that Obouhow worked on *The Book of Life* between 1917 and 1925.³⁶ Nonetheless, fragments of Obouhow’s early works (for instance, those written between 1914 and 1917) appear in *The Book of Life*. Thus, Kuen-Lun’s account could be more accurate in terms of when Obouhow began to write this magnum opus. In addition to the uncertainty surrounding the dates, it is also believed that Obouhow continued working on *The Book of Life* for his entire life, and he never finished it. This is not true, since the early variant (Ms.15226 and Ms. 15226(2)) is a complete work comprising 824 pages for the first six chapters and some beautifully and carefully crafted collages for the seventh chapter. It is noteworthy that in some literature concerning Obouhow, *The Book of Life* has been presented as a “2000-page” work. However, the actual composition, including the hand-crafted collages and the glossary of the terms, is not more than 850 pages. One may consider the 2000-page includes the *Préface au livre de Vie* (Preface of the Book of Life). This is a separate composition that was meant to be performed before *The Book of Life*. However, dated 1926, the orchestral version of the *Préface au livre de Vie* is

³³“Chapters” and “stages” are terms used by Obouhow. The seven chapters are as follows: 1) Introduction: The Way, 2) First Part: Pre-induction, 3) Second Part: Induction, 4) Third Part: Service, 5) The Perfect Miracle- Ecstasy, 6) Fourth Part: The Advent, 7) Conclusion: The Source and The Chalice. Stages are 1) Communion, 2) Debut, 3) The Conception, 4) Promise, 5) The Dedication, 6) Languor, 7) Solution, 8) Joining, 9) Aspiration, Departure, Promise, 10) The Union, 11) Fruitfulness, 12) The Revelation of God’s Secret, 13) The Fulfillment of God’s Secret, and 14) Donation. Also, see Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, pp. 195–196.

³⁴This early variant is catalogued Ms.15226 and Ms. 15226(2) in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

³⁵Kuen-Lun (1931), *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov*, 9th edn., Edition De Luxe, Paris, p. 15.

³⁶C. Ballif (1972), ‘Idealisme et Materialite’, *La Revue Musical*, Paris, vol. 290/291, p. 19. Ballif was a student of Messiaen and he taught analysis and composition at the Paris Conservatoire.

only 77 pages.³⁷ It is evident that in the 1940s Obouhow worked on another “preface”, different from the *Préface au livre de Vie*. Titled *Le Troisième et Dernier Testament (The Third and Last Testament)* and subtitled *Victoire par L’Amour. L’Avant-Propos du Livre de Vie (Victory by Love. The Foreword of the Book of Life)*, the orchestral variant of this composition comprises 133 pages. As shown, none of these works adds up to 2000 pages. While it is not clear how many different variants Obouhow worked on, it is evident that parts of the latest version, although incomplete, were stolen when Obouhow was assaulted in 1948. Therefore, another possibility is that the later version, stolen in the attack, had 2000 pages.

The Obouhow Archive holds a document, written by Honegger, regarding the attack.³⁸ On 16 January 1950, Honegger wrote a testimony, addressed to the court (*Cour d’Assises de Seine-et-Oise*), to show his full support for Obouhow. The names of the attackers appear in his testimony: Daniel Touche, Yves Chevalier and Georgette Péralée. In this document Honegger declared that rewriting the stolen parts would be an impossible task and that the manuscript, the product of years of hard work, was “irreparable”.³⁹ While no other information could be found in Honegger testimony regarding the court proceedings, other sources reveal more details. For instance, *La Croix*, *Le Courrier du Maroc* and *Le Télégramme de Brest et de l’Ouest* reported the arrest of the three villains and their trials.⁴⁰ Also, the dossier of the court proceedings shows the trial was not only about the attack on Obouhow and the loss/theft of his manuscript.⁴¹ The accused, Daniel Touche (57 years old), Yves Chevalier (27 years old) and Suzanne Deloye (24 years old) had been involved in a long list of burglaries and muggings, often with violence.

³⁷See Appendix 1 for the dates.

³⁸This document is catalogued “Res.Vma180 (1–122), no. 4”. This letter can also be found in Poldiaeva’s book. See Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 284.

³⁹For Honegger statement see Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 284.

⁴⁰For the newspapers’ reports see *La Croix* (1949), ‘Arrestation d’un châtelain gangster’, 13 June, p. 4. *Le Courrier du Maroc* (1952), ‘Le Chatelain de la crève-cœur, jouait au gangster chez un professeur de musique’, 22 March, p. 6 and *Le Télégramme de Brest et de l’Ouest* (1952), ‘Touche le châtelain-bandit fera 20 ans de bagné’, 25 March, p. 1.

⁴¹Catalogued “224 W64”, this document can be found in Archives Départementales des Yvelines.

According to the investigation report, Chevalier had been recognised by a previous victim. He dobbed in Touche (who was arrested in the act with a whole burglar's kit in his possession, including the wrench) and the police searched their lodgings. Among other things they found "*précis de grammaire musicale*" written by Obouhow. The attack on Obouhow took place during the night of 3–4 December 1948, at about 1.30 am in the rue Montesquieu, St Cloud, as Obouhow was returning home. He was set upon by Touche and Chevalier, who blinded him with an electric lamp and hit him on the head with a wrench. He fell to the ground to avoid further blows and they took his wallet containing a modest sum of 1400 francs as well as his briefcase containing a bottle of wine, various papers, and "a voluminous manuscript being a fragment of a much larger work entitled *The Book of Life*". The muggers escaped before the police arrived. Obouhow was hospitalised and unable to work for weeks. Deloye, Touche's mistress, was not present during the attack on Obouhow.⁴² Her main role was to help carry loot home, fence anything worthwhile, take the rest to the local pawn shop or discard them. The accused were charged with a series of 25 crimes carried out in the Western suburbs including St Cloud (where Obouhow lived at the time) from August 1947 to February 1949. There were eight different *parties civiles*, including Obouhow. Obouhow did not attend the trial but was represented by the Paris barrister Maître Yvonne Pige. Chevalier did admit that he later burned the manuscript of *The Book of Life* and Obouhow's lawyer, Yvonne Pige tried for maximum financial compensation:

... these facts are irrefutable proof of the great artistic value of the part of the work whose manuscript Chevalier has destroyed, a fragment which in the fullest sense of the work will be impossible to reconstitute and which, given M. Obouhow's present state of health, will be impossible to replace by another.... The fragment that has been destroyed was, at the time of the attack, due to be rehearsed with a view to a public performance in the near future.... The value of this piece of music has been attested by those who had read the manuscript. The destruction of this manuscript is seen as a deplorable loss to Music by highly qualified experts, but it is also an indisputable material and moral loss to M. Obouhow.

⁴²Note that in Honegger testimony Georgette Péralée is mentioned as one of the attackers but the archival documents present Suzanne Deloye.

The barrister also provided the details of hospital admissions due to injuries sustained: 'three weeks following the attack, three weeks in December–January 1949, four months in February–June 1951, two months in July–September 1951'. Pige requested compensation of at least 1,500,000 francs (500,000 francs for the lost manuscript, 500,000 francs for inability to work and 500,000 francs for medical, pharmaceutical, hospital costs as well as *pretium doloris*). At the end of the trial (24 March 1952) Touche was sentenced to 20 years of hard labour, Chevalier got a life sentence with hard labour and Deloye five years of imprisonment.⁴³ The court awarded Obouhow one million francs and the accused were required to pay but it is not clear whether Obouhow was actually compensated as there is no record of payment.

Thus, what could have been the final version of *The Book of Life* was burnt due to this mugging which had a devastating effect on Obouhow. He spent the last years of his life being incapacitated and being admitted to the hospital several times. Though we have lost the final versions of Obouhow's *The Book of Life*, his remaining output is a trove laden with numerous works which confirm his remarkable creativity. Obouhow's quest for new means of expression led him to create his systems of notation, form, harmony and 12-note scale. All these innovations and non-tonal procedures were attempts to abandon and depart from conventional ideas and theories, a path also pursued by Schoenberg, Hauer, Ives and many others.

⁴³A brief account of the verdicts also appeared in *Le Télégramme de Brest et de l'Ouest*. See *Le Télégramme de Brest et de l'Ouest* (1952), 'Touche le châtelain-bandit fera 20 ans de bagne', 25 March, p. 1.

Chapter 1

The Russian and the Paris Periods

Obouhow's method of composing was inextricably bound to his religious and mystical beliefs. In order to develop a theoretical model of Obouhow's compositional technique and uncover how he utilised sound to symbolise his mystical ideas, it is necessary to conduct a survey of incidents that affected his professional life and formed his views on music. It is evident that for Obouhow, his art was more than music alone; it was a means to facilitate his mystical search.¹ This mystical quest can be traced throughout his works. As Obouhow himself affirmed in a 1935 interview, he did not believe in "Art for Art's sake", but he considered the social value of the arts as a way to spiritualise the world.² Obouhow did not regard music as a distraction or pastime, but rather as a "spark of contact which puts humanity in relation with the Universal Spirit".³ For Obouhow, all forms of art act as a vehicle of transmission of emotions. He declared that "art is but a means, a tool serving as a semi-material bridge

¹S. Shaw-Miller (2000), 'Skriabin and Obukhov: Mysterium & Le Livre de Vie', *Consciousness, Literature and the Arts Archive*, vol. 1, no. 3, viewed on 12 March 2011. <http://blackboard.lincoln.ac.uk/bbcswebdav/users/dmeyerdinkgrafe/archive/skria.html>

²E. Poldiaeva (2011), *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow: Reconstruction d'un biographie*, trans. M. Kahn, Édition Van de Velde, Paris, pp. 256–257.

³Kuen-Lun (1931), *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov*, 9th edn., Edition De Luxe, Paris, p. 11.

for the transmission of emotions more elevated and beautiful than those we are able to receive through our five senses".⁴

Obouhow's professional life can be divided into two parts: the Russian period and the Paris period. The importance of the Russian period in Obouhow's artistic life, apart from the education he obtained in the Moscow and St. Petersburg Conservatoires, is the role that Russian Orthodoxy and Russian Symbolism played in the development of his idiosyncratic notions about music. On the other hand, the significance of his time in Paris lies in the new acquaintances he made there. Through Parisian circles, he was exposed to mystical beliefs other than those of Orthodox Christianity. His compositions contributed to two different esoteric schools in Paris: the Theosophical Society and the Baha'i circle. Paris provided a fertile ground where he was able to publish his compositions and perform them, which were rather difficult for the audience of that time to comprehend and assimilate. In both periods, Obouhow developed an elaborate philosophical basis for his music. He mainly drew upon Russian Orthodoxy and Russian Symbolism. This chapter will argue that these key experiences were formative in the development of his musical ideas. Thus, it is necessary to investigate the cultural and political atmosphere of both periods in order to contextualise Obouhow's life and reconstruct the milieu in which his mysticism developed.

Russian Period

It was during his time in Russia that Obouhow conceived most of his philosophical ideas and religious beliefs. Russian Orthodoxy and Russian Symbolism, as two intellectually appealing persuasions of that time, had a significant impact on Obouhow.⁵ In fact, they were the most influential beliefs and philosophies through which Obouhow sought revelation and from which, in turn, his highly

⁴M. Orban (1935), 'Un Musicien Mystique: Nicolas Obouhow', *La Revue Musicale*, vol. 158/159, p. 101.

⁵According to Rosenthal, a massive surge of creative activity transformed the Russian cultural scene between 1898 and 1917. Experimentation in all the arts was accompanied by a revival of interest in philosophy and religion. See B. G. Rosenthal (1974), 'Nietzsche in Russia: The Case of Merezhkovsky', *Slavic Review: Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, vol. 33, no. 3, p. 429. Note that this era is called the Silver Age, which will be investigated later.

symbolic language evolved. Obouhow's symbolic language not only shaped content and musical gesture but even the appearance of his manuscripts. Apart from the influences of Russian Orthodoxy and Russian Symbolism, the advent of the First World War in 1914, followed soon after by the Russian Revolution in 1917, also had a considerable impact on Obouhow's thinking. These events led him to elaborate on his ideas of brotherhood and unification and formed his views on the transformative power of music.

Russian Orthodoxy and Russian Symbolism

For Russians, Orthodoxy had a significant value as it formed the basis of their culture.⁶ Russian Orthodoxy was the dominant religion of Russia from A.D. 988 to 1917, and it had a powerful influence on the spiritual lives of most Russians.⁷ In the Soviet period, most churches and monasteries were closed and religious activities were strongly discouraged.⁸ Nevertheless, as Marsrow states, Russia at the end of the century was still steeped in the ancient traditions and discipline

⁶L. Harrison & E. Yasin, eds. (2015), *Culture Matters in Russia and Everywhere*, Lexington Books, London, p. 127. Orthodoxy is old Christianity, which reached Russia in A.D. 988 when Prince Vladimir made the Byzantine variant of Christianity the state religion of Russia. It was by the fall of the Byzantine Empire in the 15th century that the Russian Church gained its independence. Orthodoxy claims to be universal, and the Orthodox belief holds that its church is Christianity's true, holy and apostolic church and traces its origins directly to the institution established by Jesus Christ. Orthodoxy is based on the Bible and the tradition as defined by the seven ecumenical councils held by church authorities between A.D. 325 and 787. Orthodox teachings include the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the inseparable but distinguishable union of the two natures of Jesus Christ (one divine, the other human). In the Middle Ages, the Russian Church encouraged asceticism, which evolved into a widespread monastic tradition. As a result, numerous monasteries were founded in obscure places in the medieval state of Muscovy (the principality of Moscow, founded in the 13th century). See G. E. Curtis, ed. (1998), *Russia: A Country Study*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, pp. 202–204. For more information on Russian Orthodoxy and the difference between Orthodox Christianity and Catholicism, see T. Ware (2015), *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Eastern Christianity*, Penguin Books, London; C. Emerson (1990), 'Russian Orthodoxy and the Early Bakhtin', *Religion & Literature*, The University of Notre Dame, vol. 22, no. 2/3, p. 115; and A. I. Negrov (2008), *Biblical interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church: A Historical and Hermeneutical Perspective*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, p. 71.

⁷Curtis (ed.), *Russia: A Country Study*, p. xiv.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. xiv.

of the Orthodox church.⁹ In fact, the influence of Russian Orthodoxy on the Russian artists and musicians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries has been well established.¹⁰ The religious philosophical tradition based on Russian Orthodoxy produced many distinguished thinkers, such as Vladimir Soloviev (1853–1900), who, as we shall see, influenced Russian writers and artists at the turn of the century and beyond.¹¹ Orthodox ideas found expression in various forms of art, such as poetry and music, as many of the artists were Orthodox believers. Like his many other compatriots, Obouhow's beliefs have their roots in Russian Orthodoxy.¹² Although there is no account of Obouhow's religious life, his works are saturated by references to Russian Orthodox liturgy, hymns and prayers, as well as Old Church Slavonic texts.¹³ The influence of the Russian Orthodox belief on Obouhow is also evident in titles he adopted for pieces such as *The Book of Life* and *Above All Love is the Water of Life*, which allude to St. John's *Book of Revelation*. His carefully crafted collages that he took to the stage also bear a resemblance to icons, which for Russians were not only paintings. Icons were part of the transfigured cosmos and were dynamic manifestations of man's spiritual power to

⁹A. Marsrow (2008), 'Contexts of Symbolist Music in Silver Age Russia, 1861–1917', Master's thesis, Southern Methodist University, p. 56. According to Marsrow, the tsar still clashed openly with the church leadership over public policy and cultivated an image of his position as the earthly manifestation of a heavenly authority". Marsrow, 'Contexts of Symbolist Music in Silver Age Russia, 1861–1917', p. 56.

¹⁰For instance, the impact of Orthodoxy is evident in the works of writers and musicians such as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Musorgsky. Tolstoy spent the last 20 years of his life studying the New Testament to devise his own brand of Christianity. Dostoevsky was more interested in the "imperialist" aspect of the Orthodox faith and its "mission as the Third Rome and redeemer of corrupt Western culture". See Emerson, 'Russian Orthodoxy and the Early Bakhtin', p. 111.

¹¹J. D. Komblatt & R. F. Gustafson, eds. (1996), *Russian Religious Thought*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, p. 254. Note that Soloviev's influence will be discussed later in the context of Russian Symbolism.

¹²Shaw-Miller, 'Skriabin and Obukhov: *Mysterium & Le Livre de Vie*', viewed on 12 March 2011. <http://blackboard.lincoln.ac.uk/bbcswebdav/users/dmeyerdinkgrafe/archive/skria.html>

¹³See Appendix 9 for the use of Old Church Slavonic on p. 512 of *The Book of Life*.

redeem creation through beauty and art.¹⁴ The theatrical aspects of the Orthodox services, specifically that of Easter (which is one of the major religious celebrations in Russia), were also appealing to Obouhow. This is reflected in the settings of *The Book of Life*. There is no doubt that Orthodox religious convictions informed Obouhow's symbolic language. In fact, the religious symbols that he used both musically and visually became an inseparable part of his compositions. For instance, as mentioned in the Introduction, in Obouhow's system of notation, all the accidentals (sharpened or flattened notes) are indicated by the St. Andrew cross (× not +), alluding to St. Andrew, who was the patron saint of Russia.

The symbol of the cross looms large in his music. It is central to his magnum opus, *The Book of Life*, as well as his other compositions.¹⁵ In *The Book of Life*, *Preface of the Book of Life* and *Le Troisième et Dernier Testament (The Third and Last Testament)*, characters are asked to make the sign of the cross, and there are certain instructions on the manuscript about this crossing.¹⁶ Furthermore, an image of the cross, shown by a projector, had to be present at

¹⁴See Ware, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Eastern Christianity*. Quoting Ugolnik, Emerson remarks: "In the West we attend primarily to the Word, but in Russian Orthodoxy the Book gives rise first and foremost to images". An iconic image represents "not the carnal but the transfigured body", and it is not constructed to satisfy a single external viewer from a single fixed place. "The syntax of icon is based on a dynamic multiplicity of viewpoints, with its several implied observers set inside the represented world. The many points of view coexisted within self-contained icon, which constitutes a paradigm for the plurality of vision". See Emerson, 'Russian Orthodoxy and the Early Bakhtin', p. 115.

¹⁵N. Obouhow (n.d.), *Le Livre de Vie*, in possession of the Obouhow Archive at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Catalogue numbers are Ms. 15226 and Ms. 15226(2). As aforementioned, this composition is an oratorio written for voice and two pianos. The later variants, however, incorporate the *croix sonore* into the instrumentation.

¹⁶Catalogued Ms. 15238, these instructions can be found in the second movement of this piece. See N. Obouhow (1946), 'Second movement', *Le Troisième et Dernier Testament*, in possession of the Obouhow Archive at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, p. 45. *Le Troisième et Dernier Testament* is the final variant of the preface of *The Book of Life*. Completed in 1946, this composition has been orchestrated and subtitled "*Victoire par L'Amour. L'Avant-Propos du Livre de Vie (Victory through Love. The Foreword of the Book of Life)*". There is an earlier piece, *Préface du Livre de Vie (Preface of the Book of Life)*, which was first performed in 1925 and bears no similarity to *Le Troisième et Dernier Testament*.

all times during the performance of *The Third and Last Testament*.¹⁷ As stated earlier, *The Book of Life* itself is an oratorio underpinned by symbolism, not only because of the use of the cross in the new system of notation but also in terms of its religious content and visual impact. For example, it is constructed in seven chapters and Shaw-Miller believes that they reflect the six days of creation and the day of rest.¹⁸ These chapters incorporate fourteen stages (*étapes*) in total. Obouhow never explained the religious aspect of these stages, but they may allude to the 14 Stations of the Cross.¹⁹ Some parts of the seventh chapter itself have been made in the shape of the cross. Not only does Figure 1-1 look like a cross, but the way it has been instructed to perform also follows the way of crossing. Figure 1-1 is constructed with the first part at the top, the second at the bottom, the third on the left, and the fourth on the right, so as one reads it, one's eyes make the sign of the cross.²⁰

On the cover of *The Book of Life*, one can read that this work has to be performed, without interruption, every year at Easter time from the night of the First Coming to the midday of the Second Coming. Although Obouhow did not explain why the performance had to fit within that time frame, it is evident that in the Easter service, the Vigilia (one of the most important services in Orthodox belief) and the morning Liturgy form one long unit from Saturday evening until well past midnight.²¹ Obouhow believed *The Book of Life* could accomplish Christ's Second Coming. This has been reflected through the text. For instance, towards the end of the

¹⁷This instruction can be found in one of the variants of *Le Troisième et Dernier Testament*, catalogued Ms. 15238.

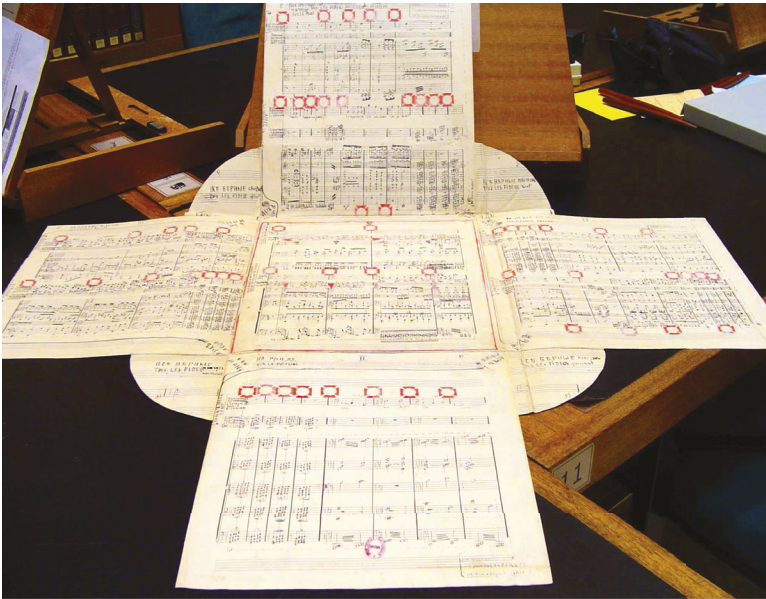
¹⁸S. Shaw-Miller (2002), *Visible Deeds of Music: Arts and Music from Wagner to Cage*, Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 72. See footnote 46 in the Introduction for the chapter titles.

¹⁹For the 14 Stations of the Cross or the "way of the cross" see R. Milgate (1988), 'Fourteen stations of the Cross', PhD thesis, University of Wollongong.

²⁰Shaw-Miller, *Visible Deeds of Music: Arts and Music from Wagner to Cage*, p. 79.

²¹R. E. Hillila & B. Blanchard Hong (1997), *Historical Dictionary of the Music and Musicians of Finland*, Greenwood Press, Westport, p. 287. According to Hillila and Blanchard Hong, it is the Saturday service or a service on the eve of great festivals, which prepares the worshipers for the main service on the following day. As Maes states, "the all-night vigil is the combined service of vespers and matins". The Liturgy, or Sunday and Holy Day celebrations of Holy Communion, is another important Orthodox service. Apart from these services, there are "home prayer meetings, celebrations of saints' day, the blessing of the water, and processions of the cross". See Hillila & Blanchard Hong, *Historical Dictionary of the Music and Musicians of Finland*, p. 287 and F. Maes (2002), *A History of Russian Music from Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p. 206.

work, one of the characters (God) sings the following text: “Christ! Truly it is I! Resurrected! Judas! I! Truly! Glorified!”²² The Dove also declaims, “Crucified! Dead! Resurrected! And! He will reign!”²³ Obouhow was not alone in his preoccupations with the Second Coming. Many Russian writers and poets like Alexander Blok (1880–1921), Andrey Bely (1888–1934), Viacheslav Ivanov (1866–1949), and Dmitri Merezhkovsky (1865–1941) shared Obouhow’s view at the turn of the century.²⁴ In particular, after 1900, Merezhkovsky was an advocate of a “new religious consciousness” based on the assumption that the Second Coming of Christ was imminent.²⁵ As we shall see, these apocalyptic ideas were embedded in Russian symbolist convictions, which had strong connections with Russian Orthodox beliefs.



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Figure 1-1 *The Book of Life*, 7th Chapter, Ms. 15226. ↵

²²The text appears on p. 818 of *The Book of Life*. See Appendix 9.

²³The text appears on p. 779 of *The Book of Life*. See Appendix 9.

²⁴S. D. Cioran (1973), *The apocalyptic symbolism of Andrej Belyj*, Mouton & Co. N. V. Publishers, *The Hague*, pp. 10, 22.

²⁵B. G. Rosenthal, ed. (1997), *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture*, Cornell University Press, New York, p. 18.

The complete title of *The Book of Life* is also permeated with religious references:

*L'Action sacrée du Pasteur Tout-Puissant Régnant. La Liturgie de Dieu au Seigneur. L'habitation de celui qui porte sa couronne et la demeure de brebis. L'Obtention de Fiancé et de la Fiancée.*²⁶

The use of terms such as “The sacred action of the Reigning Almighty Shepherd” in this title reveals the ceremonial and ritualistic aspect of the work. The ritual of *The Book of Life* is based on the Orthodox services. In this work, as Barkalaya points out, there are obvious parallels with the Eastern Orthodox liturgy, both in the text and in the sequence of picture parts.²⁷ In this respect, Barkalaya affirms:

As in the Liturgy there is interaction between the Pastor Almighty and the parishioners. The soloist performs the role of the Pastor. The choir of the “faithful” and other characters from “The Book of Life” (Our Mother, Jesus, Judas, the Blessed, the Ecstatic, the Dragon, and the Dove) perform the role of the congregation. Two of these characters (the Ecstatic and the Blessed) are portraits—hypostases of the composer himself—Nicholas the Ecstatic and Nicholas the Blessed.²⁸

In general, the theatrical context of the performance is in line with the Easter service in the sense that it takes place in a special Temple where everyone (including the listeners) participates in the sacred act of the general communion and the waiting for the Second Advent.²⁹

²⁶The translation of the title is as follows: The sacred action of Reigning Almighty Shepherd. The liturgy of the Lord our God. The habitation of the one who wears the crown and the dwelling of the sheep. Securing the Groom and the Bride.

²⁷N. Barkalaya (2010), ‘Super-art in the creative consciousness of Nikolai Obukhov’, *The Musicology Journal*, no. 4, p. 173. I am indebted to Anna Booth for her translation of this article from the Russian source (Баркалая Н. Сверхискусство в творческом сознании Николая Обухова, Музыкальная Академия. Декабрь 2010. No. 4. С.169–174).

²⁸Ibid., p. 173. As Petsche asserts, in a traditional Russian Orthodox Church service the deacon sings hymns and litanies while the priest recites prayers in a low voice at the Holy Table. See J. Petsche (2015), *Gurdjieff and Music: The Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Piano Music and its Esoteric Significance*, Brill, Boston, p. 127.

²⁹Ibid., p. 173. According to McGuckin, the Orthodox Christology is highly eschatological in character. See J. A. McGuckin (2010), ‘Christ’, *The Encyclopaedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, McGuckin (ed.), John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, vol. 1, p. 123

In addition, the text of *The Book of Life* borrows heavily from the Orthodox liturgy and specifically from St John's *Book of Revelation*.³⁰ Music critic and philosopher Boris de Schloezer (1881–1969) also associated the text of *The Book of Life* with the Apocalypse and the Gospel of St. John.³¹ *The Book of Life* (or the Gospel of Brotherhood, as Orban liked to call it) is full of old Slavonic expressions and contains many hymns and prayers from the liturgy of the Russian Church.³² For instance, in the following examples, the character, Our Mother, alludes to biblical texts. Example 1-1 is based on a Russian Orthodox prayer, and the translation of the text is as follows: "Thou alone art without sin, Thy Righteousness is forever".³³ Example 1-2 refers to the *Revelation of St. John*: "We shall not hunger! We shall not thirst!! We shall partake!!! We shall be sated!!!!".³⁴



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Example 1-1 "Our Mother", *The Book of Life*, Ms. 15226, p. 40. ◀

³⁰Note that it was not only Obouhow who was interested in St. John's *Book of Revelation*. Other Russian composers such as Sabaneev and Tchaikovsky also composed music based on this work. For Tchaikovsky's music, see Maes, *A History of Russian Music from Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar*, p. 142, and for Sabaneev's work, see L. Sitsky (1994), *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Garde, 1900–1929*, Greenwood Press, London, p. 300.

³¹B. D. Schloezer (1972) 'Nicolas Obouhow', *La Revue Musicale*, vol. 290/291, p. 53. Schloezer's article appeared first in 1921 in *La Revue Musicale*. A shorter version of this article could be seen in Lavignac's *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du conservatoire*. See Schloezer & Schaeffner (1925), 'Les Courants de la Musique Russe Contemporaine', *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du conservatoire, Deuxième partie, technique, esthétique, pédagogie*, Librairie Delagrave, Paris, vol. 2, p. 174.

³²Schloezer, 'Nicolas Obouhow', p. 53. For Orban's statement, see Orban, 'Un Musicien Mystique: Nicolas Obouhow', p. 108. Also, see Appendix 9, p. 619 for Obouhow's use of Old Church Slavonic.

³³Following is the actual prayer: *Thou alone art without sin, your righteousness is true forever, and thy word is true*. Also see Appendix 9 for the detailed occurrences of the biblical and liturgical texts.

³⁴Revelation 7:16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. The reference to the Revelation can be found on p. 102 of *The Book of Life*. See Appendix 9.

A quote from *Revelation* also appears in the manuscript of the *Avant tout L'Amour c'est l'Eau de la Vie* (*Above all Love is the Water of Life*). As observed in Example 1-3, this quote appears in three languages: Russian, French, and English. Generally speaking, Obouhow wrote his texts in French after moving to France. Russian and French words (text) appear together in pieces that have been first written in Russia and developed further in France. While Obouhow used English vocals in quite a few compositions, as we shall see, it seems that he added the English translations for the Baha'i circle of Paris, as most of the members were English speakers such as the Americans Marjory Morten and Laura Dreyfus-Barney (1879–1974) as well as the Canadian May Maxwell (1870–1940) who were prominent members of the Bahai faith.

For Obouhow, music had a significant role as a vehicle of communion, a characteristic common to the rituals of the Russian Orthodox Church.³⁵ As mentioned before, Obouhow regarded *The Book of Life* as his sacred action, or as Orban recalled, the “new mystical liturgy”.³⁶ With its purpose of unification and theatrical aspects, this work is indeed like a spiritual ritual: characters had to hug, kneel, and make the sign of the cross while performing, audience (who represented the “principle of Collectivity”) had to participate in the performance, coloured lights had to be projected on the stage, a crown had to be spun fast enough to create the shape of a sphere.³⁷ In *The Third and Last Testament*, after all seven seals of *The Book of Life* are opened in a fiesta of colourful lights, the spiritual ritual ends with the image of *The Book of Life* being projected on the stage in the shape of a “large two-winged bird”.³⁸ *The Book of Life*, as Kuen-Lun described, is indeed a sacred action in a sense that is dynamic.³⁹ Together with the ritualistic aspect of

³⁵Shaw-Miller, *Visible Deeds of Music*, p. 79. Hymns are often sung in many Russian Orthodox Church services to prepare the congregation for a reading.

³⁶Orban, ‘Un Musicien Mystique: Nicolas Obouhow’, p. 105.

³⁷These instructions appear in *The Book of Life* as well as *The Third and Last Testament*. Some of these theatrical gestures will be discussed in the course of this research as well as the design of Obouhow’s temple where *The Book of Life* had to be performed. It will also be seen that Obouhow had specific instructions for the staging of the instruments. Also, see Appendix 5 for Kuen-Lun’s description of the performance of *The Book of Life*.

³⁸This is evident in most of the variants of *The Third and Last Testament*.

³⁹Kuen-Lun, *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov*, p. 15.

his works, Obouhow's music is a purely Christian concept, based on reconciliation, love, the union of human beings, and the union of man with God.⁴⁰ This view of unity, as understood by Obouhow, is in line with Russian Orthodox ideas in which the Russian Church is, "above all, unity—the unity of divine grace, living among plurality of rational creatures who are in submission to this grace and this is the ground for the unity of society in Russia".⁴¹ In other words, Orthodox doctrine has a social dimension, as "a self" cannot achieve identity by relating to God alone, and human beings must first "reciprocally define" each other.⁴² As Emerson states, the Holy Spirit, in short, does not visit a believer in isolation.⁴³ According to this doctrine, the mystery of the Trinity is a mystery of unity in diversity.⁴⁴ This idea of unity, as we shall see, also appears in Obouhow's thinking, but he went way beyond the boundaries of Christian ideologies when he developed his own notion of synthesis and unity. Obouhow's "unity in diversity" was indeed an all-encompassing concept, and he considered his temple as a place to unite all human races from different religious backgrounds and ideologies.

Moreover, in a complex glossary at the end of *The Book of Life*, Lord is associated with "Communion" and "Unity", while God is affiliated with "Equilibrium in Ecstasy".⁴⁵ This glossary was provided by Obouhow himself to define his own mystical terms (Figure 1-2). Nonetheless, his writings are more like a language of metaphors.

The glossary does not clarify Obouhow's philosophical or religious ideas. Definitions are quite vague and ambiguous, such that it is impossible to understand what he meant; it is as if the ambiguity in writing was intentional. It is only through a very limited number of writings (by Obouhow's contemporaries) that one can catch a glimpse of Obouhow's spiritual beliefs. Larronde and Kuen-Lun's accounts of *The Book of Life* are the only existing sources that very briefly tackle Obouhow's mysticism. There is no doubt that Obouhow deeply felt that his ritual (performance of

⁴⁰Orban, 'Un Musicien Mystique: Nicolas Obouhow', p. 107.

⁴¹Negrov, *Biblical Interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church*, p. 71.

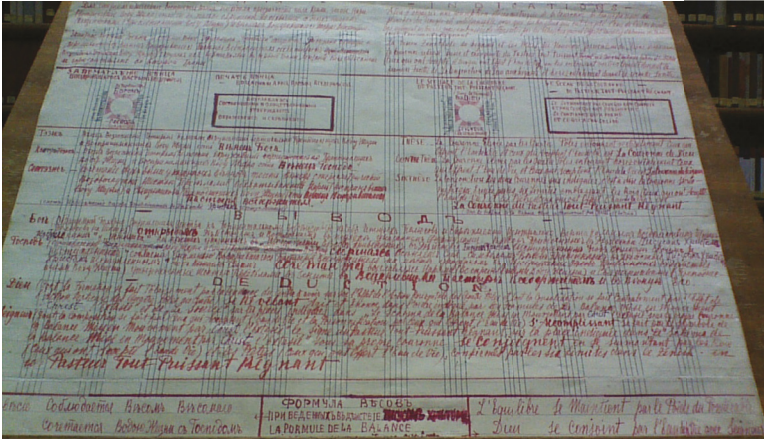
⁴²Emerson, 'Russian Orthodoxy and the Early Bakhtin', p. 114.

⁴³Ibid., p. 114.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 114.

⁴⁵This glossary can be found in Obouhow's *Le Livre de Vie*, catalogued Ms. 15226. Obouhow's glossary also appears in Poldiaeva's book. See Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, pp. 190–192.

The Book of Life) helped cleansing, but the symbolism of the characters and the theological meaning behind Obouhow’s glossary are beyond the scope of the present research. However, borrowing from Kuen-Lun and Larronde’s accounts, some symbolic aspects of *The Book of Life* will be examined.



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Figure 1-2 Definitions, *The Book of Life*, Ms. 15226. ↱

Obouhow believed that by the performance of *The Book of Life*, he could achieve the synthesis and union between God and the Lord (or man). Larronde stated that, for Obouhow, God was the “perpetual balance, the fire of eternal love” and the Lord was the “united humanity”.⁴⁶ Kuen-Lun also stated that *The Book of Life* could bring about a state of perfect equilibrium between Spirit and Matter.⁴⁷ There was a belief that *The Book of Life* could take us on a journey at the end of which we would achieve balance (equilibrium) between carnality and spirituality, and union with God. The synthesis between God and Lord was the climax of Obouhow’s aesthetic ideas and has been personified by him in *Pasteur Tout-Puissant Régnant* or The Reigning Almighty Shepherd.⁴⁸ Figures 1-3 and 1-4 have been extracted from the seventh chapter of *The Book of Life* and are collaged from materials such as cloth,

⁴⁶C. Larronde (1932), *Le livre de vie de Nicolas Obouhow*, Editions J. Hautmont, Paris, p. 17.

⁴⁷Kuen-Lun, *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov*, p. 10.

⁴⁸Larronde, *Le livre de vie de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 18.

pins, and coloured papers. These two figures, according to Orban, represent the culmination of this composition, symbolising the union of Lord (a square with a circle inside) and God (a circle with a square inside). Together, they combined the Almighty, the Supreme Being, and the Total.⁴⁹ As Shaw-Miller observes, “the painstaking nature of the manuscript makes the work a visual art object of an obsessive and haunting homemade beauty”.⁵⁰ Obouhow’s pages are indeed works of art, and in Kuen-Lun’s words, delineated with all the care and skill which the Russian artist brought to bear on his mosaics, eikons [sic.] and frescoes.⁵¹ Figure 1-5 shows another hand-made illustration by Obouhow, which is taken from *Le Troisième et Dernier Testament*. The square-circle symbol is also evident in this figure and, like that of *The Book of Life*, represents God and the Lord.



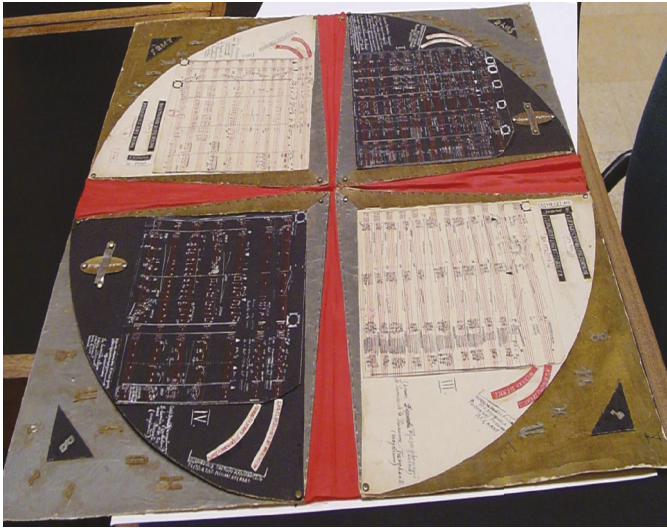
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Figure 1-3 Symbol of “God” (a circle with a square inside), *The Book of Life*, Ms. 15226. ↵

⁴⁹Orban, ‘Un Musicien Mystique: Nicolas Obouhow’, p. 107.

⁵⁰Shaw-Miller, *Visible Deeds of Music*, p. 72.

⁵¹Kuen-Lun, *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov*, p. 11.



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Figure 1-4 Symbol of “Lord” (a square with a circle inside), *The Book of Life*, Ms. 15226. ↵



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Figure 1-5 The back cover of *Le Troisième et Dernier Testament*, Ms. 15240, painted and calligraphed by Obouhow. ↵

Figure 1-5 shows Obouhow's intertwining circles and squares for the union of God and Lord (*Pasteur ToutPuissant Régnant*). This symbol is named "Synthesis of life" in Larronde's book (Figure 1-6).⁵²



Figure 1-6 Synthesis of Life, p. 30. ↵

In Figure 1-5, the words "*Nouvel Evangile* (The New Bible or Gospel)" have been written by Obouhow. They refer to his ideas of unification and synthesis. Obouhow claimed that the idea of the unification of God and the Lord and their incarnation in one entity (The Reigning Almighty Shepherd) was his own religious concept.⁵³ However, his idea was in line with the Orthodox belief that the ultimate goal of a believer is union with God. Another new religious idea was that Judas was not a betrayer or a traitor, but someone who had to help Jesus to fulfil his mission by betraying him. This has been portrayed several times throughout the text of *The Book of Life*. Obouhow was considered to be a "founder of a new sect".⁵⁴ KuenLun also believed that Obouhow's religious ideas were very modern:

the religious conception of the Book of Life is more modern than one would, at first, be inclined to think; in fact, it is in every way as modern as the music.⁵⁵

⁵²Ibid., p. 30

⁵³It is important to note that Obouhow was not alone in pursuing the idea of synthesis and unification. It will be seen that his ideas were embedded in Symbolist thinking and many other Russian writers and artists shared similar aspirations at the time.

⁵⁴*The New York Times* (1934), 'Premiers in Brussee: Electric Instruments used in New Milhaud and Obouhoff Works', 25 March, p. 5.

⁵⁵Kuen-Lun, *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov*, p. 13. Obouhow's "new religious" ideas will be discussed further in the context of Russian Symbolism.

Kuen-Lun wrote that, like Bach, Obouhow was completely absorbed by his religious attitude, and *The Book of Life* could be defined as a musical apocalypse in which the next stage of spiritual evolution is revealed.⁵⁶

This stage, as we shall see, was a state of equilibrium and was considered the final phase in the evolution of humanity. Obouhow's new religious concept, or "New Bible", was indeed in the idea of balance in every aspect of life. It was an equilibrium between soul and mind, materiality and spirituality, the Creator and the Creation. This state of equilibrium could only be achieved through unity, collectivity, and love.

Obouhow's consistent, even obsessive, use of religious symbols, images, and geometric shapes can be observed in his manuscripts (especially those composed after the invention of his system of notation in 1915).⁵⁷ As Barkalaya points out, Obouhow's use of geometric shapes such as the circle, the square, the triangle, the cross, the full stop, and the line is also related to Russian Symbolism and symbolist thinking (which will be discussed later):

such pure or abstract forms were not only a symbol but a statement about the very nature of the idea. Artists and composers filled their canvases and scores with abstract symbols, geometric figures, letters, and finally new perspectives, which violate the classical two- and three-dimensional composition.⁵⁸

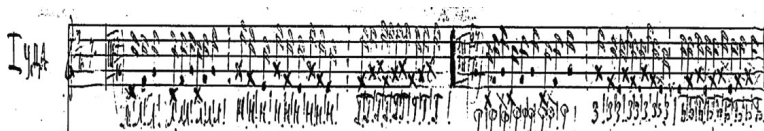
Indeed, occult symbols had intrinsic meanings for the Symbolists. Rosenthal reveals that these symbols and signs had religious, philo-

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 6. The apocalyptic ideas of Obouhow will be dealt with later in this chapter.

⁵⁷Obouhow was very persistent in introducing his self-invented system of notation at the beginning of his compositions. In almost every composition written in this new style, the date of invention is marked as *inventé en 1915 8/VII*. 1915 was a crucial year in Obouhow's life, since it is simultaneous with Scriabin's death as well as the second year of the First World War: two occurrences which deeply influenced Obouhow.

⁵⁸Barkalaya, 'Super-art in the creative consciousness of Nikolai Obukhov', p. 171. According to Barkalaya, "it is not accidental that artists and composers like Kandinsky and Vyshnegradsky saw the synthesis of sound and colour in the form of a sphere or spectrum suffused with all the shades. A synthesis of sound-colour (light)-timbre-word in the form of a Sphere became for them a kind of metaphor of synthetic art, of thought, and of the nature of feelings. Understandably, the Sphere takes the form of a Temple, "The Great Utopia", devised by Kandinsky and Scriabin. This form is reproduced several times in Goncharova's and Vyshnegradsky's sketches". See Barkalaya, 'Super-art in the creative consciousness of Nikolai Obukhov', p. 171.

sophical, and sociopolitical ramifications.⁵⁹ Masonic, Astrological, and Theosophical symbols decorate journals in which the Symbolists published.⁶⁰ Apart from the geometric shapes, the use of letters is also evident in Obouhow's *The Book of Life*. For instance, in Example 1-4, the character "Judas" has to sing the following letters after singing the words "Sobbing Rejoicing": "L! L! L! N! N! N! G! G! G! F! F! F! F! Z! Z! Z! B! B! B!".



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Example 1-4 "Judas", *The Book of Life*, Ms. 15226, p. 614. ↵

Undoubtedly, letters had a symbolic significance for Obouhow, as these singled-out letters appear many times throughout the composition. However, apart from the theatrical aspect of these repeated letters, it is hard to fathom what Obouhow intended. Letter mysticism, or alphabet mysticism, is the only assumption that comes close to making some sense. Alphabet mysticism refers to the esoteric meaning and power behind letters, and it was believed that letters could symbolise metaphysical realities, encase spiritual energies, or encode occult messages.⁶¹ The following reveals the English equivalents of the Russian words and their corresponding letters: Letter L = people; letter N = our; letter G = speak; letter F = fertilise; letter Z = earth; letter B = letters.⁶² Therefore, Obouhow's use of letters in Example 1-4 is related to the following words: people, our, speak, fertilise, earth, and letters. Also musically, letter "L" can be paired with "F", "N" with "Z", and "G" with "B", as each pair either represents the same note content or could be a subset of one

⁵⁹Rosenthal, *The Occult in Russian and Soviet culture*, p. 17.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 17.

⁶¹According to Bennett, letters have been "invested with cosmogonic and oracular meaning, and deployed in meditation and divination". See B. P. Bennett (2011), *Religion and Language in Post-Soviet Russia*, Routledge, New York, pp. 137–138.

⁶²The Russian words and their corresponding letters are as follows: Буква Л = люди; буква Н = наш; буква Г = глаголь; буква Ф = ферт; буква З = земля; буква Б = буквы. I understand that letter symbolism is addressed in the following publication: U. P. Minin (2001), *The Meaning, the Symbolism of the Cyrillic Letters: Deciphering the Russian Alphabet—the Meaning of Life*, Voroby'ov, Moscow.

of Obouhow's whole-tone scales. As we shall see in Chapter 3 these scales were named N1 (C, D, E, F#, G#, A#") and N2 (C#, D#, F, G, A, B) by Obouhow himself. This way of pairing creates the following phrase: people fertilise our earth, speak [the] letters. Nonetheless, uncovering the true meaning of these letters and what they allude to is mere guesswork. This section of *The Book of Life* is dealing with Judas's betrayal, measuring the temple and incarnating the Spirit.⁶³ Since the letter "G" corresponds with the word "speak", one can also speculate whether "G" correlates with the idea of "Judas has to speak out and reveal that he will betray". While letters have an association with Russian Symbolism, the idea of letters being spiritually symbolic is an old Christian concept. As Bennett asserts, Christianity has a venerable history of alphabet mysticism, and it is believed that Slavic letters were divinely revealed to Cyril and Methodius, who were two brothers responsible for the conversion of the Slavs to Christianity in the 9th century.⁶⁴ Also, the shapes of the alphabets (first devised by Cyril) are believed to encode the teachings of the Orthodox Church.⁶⁵ Bennett notes that "not only the graphic and nominal aspects of the letters but their phonological and numerical qualities are thought to comprise a nested interlocking system artfully devised by Cyril himself to reflect and convey the Christian worldview".⁶⁶ Considering Obouhow's obsession with Orthodox Christianity, it is not surprising that he was interested in the esoteric power and symbolic meanings behind these letters. The use of letters, as Barkalaya affirms, was one of the identifying features of Russian Symbolist art. Obouhow's attraction to ambiguity and symbolic language is also due to Symbolism, a movement which pervaded Russia at the time. While the impact of Russian Symbolism on Obouhow's thought has been discussed to some extent by scholars like Sitsky, Barkalaya, Poldiaeva, and Shaw-Miller, it is important to contextualise the cultural period in which Russian Symbolism

⁶³This section can be found in *The Book of Life*, pp. 608–615. See Appendix 9.

⁶⁴Bennett, *Religion and Language in Post-Soviet Russia*, pp. 137–138. For the conversion of the Slavs to Christianity, see R. Bulliet, P. Crossley, & D. Headrick (2008), *The Earth and Its Peoples, A Global History*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, vol. 1, p. 282. Cyril and Methodius "embarked on a highly successful mission to the Slavs ... and they preached in the local language and their followers perfected a writing system, called Cyrillic". See Bulliet, Crossley, & Headrick, *The Earth and Its Peoples, A Global History*, p. 282.

⁶⁵Bennett, *Religion and Language in Post-Soviet Russia*, p. 138.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 138.

flourished.⁶⁷ Symbolist musicians, writers, and painters of the era held that there was another higher world, which only the artist with his/her special powers could perceive.⁶⁸

Russian Symbolism was indeed another profound influence in the development of Obouhow's musical aesthetics and that of many other artists. It was, as Rossman has put it, "the master code" of the Silver Age.⁶⁹ This chapter of Obouhow's life coincides with a cultural period in Russia known as the Silver Age, an era that lasted approximately twenty years (1898–1917).⁷⁰ Russian Orthodoxy made a vital contribution to the culture of the Russian Silver Age. Some of the most original thinkers of this period were either priests, such as Sergei Bulgakov (1871–1944) and Pavel Florensky (1882–1937), or artists, like the poet Blok and the painter Kazimir Severinovich Malevich (1879–1935), who like Obouhow, were devoted to the Orthodox faith.⁷¹ The representatives of the Silver Age compared their style to Russia's Golden Age literature, which covered a period from 1810 to 1840.⁷² The Symbolist movement provided a philosophical and aesthetic foundation for the Russian Silver Age.⁷³ Symbolist ideas pervaded poetry, music, painting, and theatre and influenced artists and writers like Kandinsky, Scriabin, and Blok. Broadly speaking, the goal of the Russian Symbolists was to transcend individuality and achieve collectivity and "all-unity", which is in line with Obouhow's mystical search.⁷⁴

⁶⁷See Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Garde, 1900–1929*, p. 257 and Shaw-Miller, *Visible Deeds of Music*, p. 73. Barkalaya's account can be found in N. Barkalaya (2012), 'Esthétique et technique compositionnelle de Nicolas Obouhov dans le contexte du modernisme russe et français', PhD thesis, University of Paris 8. Paris, pp. 21–33. Also, see Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 181.

⁶⁸Rosenthal, *The Occult in Russian and Soviet culture*, p. 12.

⁶⁹V. J. Rossman (2002), *Russian Intellectual Anti-Semitism in the Post-Communist Era*, The University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, p. 203. Also see Barkalaya, 'Super-art in the creative consciousness of Nikolai Obukhov', p. 171.

⁷⁰See B. G. Rosenthal (1974), 'Nietzsche in Russia: The Case of Merezhkovsky', p. 429. Garcia also notes that one of the most potent artistic forces in the Silver Age was Symbolism. See S. Garcia (2000), 'Scriabin's Symbolist Plot Archetype in the Late Piano Sonatas', *19th Century Music*, University of California Press, vol. 23, no. 3, p. 274.

⁷¹J. E. Bowlt (2008), *Moscow and St. Petersburg in Russia's Silver Age*, Thames & Hudson, London, p. 70.

⁷²Ibid., p. 9.

⁷³Ibid., p. 26.

⁷⁴For Russian Symbolists' goal, see A. Oppo, ed. (2013), *Shapes of Apocalypses: Arts and Philosophy in Slavic Thought*, Academic Studies Press, Boston, p. 179.

Obouhow's affiliation with Russian Symbolist philosophy is evident in his early vocal compositions set to texts by Soloviev and Konstantin Dmitriyevich Balmont (1867–1942).⁷⁵ Obouhow composed *La Vague* (Vague) for voice and piano based on Soloviev's poetry.⁷⁶ *La Sang* (*The Blood*), *Je t'attendrai* (*I will wait for thee*), *N'attends rien* (*Vainly do not wait*) are all related to Russian symbolist thinking, as he used poems of Balmont for the vocal part.⁷⁷ According to Shaw-Miller, many of these poems were later incorporated into *The Book of Life*.⁷⁸ Shaw-Miller does not identify these poems, but it is clear that *N'attends rien* has been used for the *Préface du livre de vie* (*Preface of the Book of Life*).⁷⁹ Obouhow's devotion to Scriabin, himself an adherent of Russian Symbolism and Theosophy, has been documented in an interview of 1934 and his *Six Preludes* of 1915.⁸⁰ Not only does the style of writing resemble that of Scriabin, but the sixth Prelude was also marked as "written on the day Scriabin

⁷⁵Soloviev and Balmont were two of the prominent figures of the symbolist movement in Russia. See R. E. Peterson (1993), *A History of Russian Symbolism*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Philadelphia, pp. 20–21. Balmont, like Obouhow and Prokofiev, moved to Paris to escape the turmoil of the Russian Revolution. While it is unknown whether Obouhow had personally met Balmont, it is not unlikely (considering Obouhow's interest in Balmont's poetry). One can read through Prokofiev's diaries that Prokofiev and Balmont knew each other quite well, and they kept in touch in Paris. Considering both Obouhow and Prokofiev frequented the same circle in Paris, it is quite possible that Obouhow and Balmont had met at one point. Note that Obouhow's Parisian circle will be investigated later in this chapter. For Prokofiev's account of Balmont, see S. Prokofiev (2012), *Sergey Prokofiev Diaries, 1924–1933: Prodigal Son*, trans. A. Phillips, Faber and Faber Limited, London, vol. 3, pp. 6, 22, 29, 39.

⁷⁶This composition belongs to a set of three and appears in two variants in the archive: Ms. 15290 (1–3) and Vma.ms. 107 (1–3). See Appendix 1.

⁷⁷These pieces were written around 1913, but they were published in Paris by Rouart, Lerolle & C in 1921.

⁷⁸Shaw-Miller (2002), *Visible Deeds of Music*, p. 73.

⁷⁹See Chapter 6 for the use of Balmont's songs and the orchestration of this composition. Mention should also be made that this composition is an individual piece, separate from *The Book of Life*. It is believed that the "Preface" had to be performed before *The Book of Life* (as the title suggests). However, there is no instruction by Obouhow regarding the order of performance and the 1925 program notes reveal that the "Preface" was performed after some fragments of *The Book of Life* were played. See Figure 1-9.

⁸⁰For the impact of Russian Symbolism on Scriabin, see M. Brown (1979), 'Scriabin and Russian "Mystic" Symbolism', *19th-Century Music*, University of California Press, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 42–51 and Shaw-Miller, *Visible Deeds of Music*, p. 56. Note that Scriabin's impact on Obouhow's music will be investigated in Chapter 3.

died”.⁸¹ The mystical tone of Obouhow’s titles also resembles that of Scriabin. In the 1934 interview, in response to who his master was, Obouhow replied: “As a composer I consider myself a follower of Scriabin”.⁸²

The Russian Symbolist movement, broadly speaking, was concerned with the meaning and purpose of art as well as the role of the artist in society.⁸³ Apart from the Russian Orthodoxy, Russian Symbolism is derived from various sources, including the works of Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–1898), Fyodor Tyutchev (1803–1873), and Soloviev (the first two French, the latter two Russian).⁸⁴ In addition to its French and Russian heritages, Russian Symbolism was influenced by German philosophers and writers. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844–1900), and Richard Wagner (1813–1883) were among those who influenced the Russian Symbolist artists.⁸⁵ Of all the above-mentioned thinkers and writers, Soloviev and Nietzsche seem to be the most influential figures in Russia on the threshold of the 20th century. Garcia affirms:

From Nietzsche came the idea that the rituals of intoxication and ecstasy associated with the Greek worship of the god Dionysus were the appropriate models for art. However, the symbolists merged this pagan concept with a Christian mystical sensibility taken from Russian mystic philosopher Vladimir Solovyov, who provided the symbolists with their artistic purpose.⁸⁶

According to Brown, Soloviev viewed reality as a transcendent “total-unity” whose feeble comprehension by man required a synthesis of religion and philosophy, and science of faith, thought, and experience.⁸⁷ Soloviev understood art as a microcosm of total unity, a real force by which the entire human world could be enlightened and regenerated.⁸⁸ Soloviev also believed in the reintegration of the

⁸¹The inscription could be found on the manuscript (Ms. 15265 (6). Sharlat, Barkalaya and Poldiaeva also point out this inscription. See Y. Sharlat (2004), ‘Nikolay Obukhov: The mystic’, Master’s thesis, Yale University, p. 13, and Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 31. These pieces will be analysed in Chapter 4.

⁸²Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 237.

⁸³Garcia, ‘Scriabin’s Symbolist Plot Archetype in the Late Piano Sonatas’, p. 274.

⁸⁴Rosenthal, ‘Nietzsche in Russia: The Case of Merezhkovsky’, p. 431.

⁸⁵B. M. Damaré (2008), ‘Music and Literature in Silver Age Russia: Mikhail Kuzmin and Alexander Scriabin’, PhD thesis, University of Michigan, pp. 4–11.

⁸⁶Garcia, ‘Scriabin’s Symbolist Plot Archetype in the Late Piano Sonatas’, p. 274.

⁸⁷Brown, ‘Scriabin and Russian “Mystic” Symbolism’, p. 44.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 44.

material world with the spiritual world.⁸⁹ Garcia asserts that the role of artists, in Soloviev's point of view, lies in using the intuitive power of symbols and myth to find the link between the "visible world of sensual phenomena and the world of extrasensory revelation".⁹⁰ Obouhow shared this view of Soloviev. Obouhow declared that art, in general, enables individuals to realise their spiritual visions.⁹¹ He also considered the social value of the arts as a way to spiritualise the world.⁹²

Obouhow's prophetic aspirations were also connected with symbolist thinking and more specifically with Soloviev's philosophies. In fact, the idea of prophecy, as Davidson states, is central to the life and works of Soloviev.⁹³ In Shaw-Miller's words, "Soloviev imagined an ultimate synthesis of the divine and human, earthly and ideal embodied in part through the figure of Christ".⁹⁴ Soloviev's philosophies were a driving force behind the idea of the Russian writer being a prophet and continuing or completing the task of the biblical prophets.⁹⁵ This idea, as Davidson affirms, became firmly fixed in the worldview of the religious symbolists like Blok. He regarded Soloviev as his main teacher and juxtaposed "the artist in whom is revealed the heart of the prophet" with the figure of Moses on Mount Sinai.⁹⁶ Alongside this idea is Obouhow's prophetic role in his compositions, specifically in his *The Book of Life*, where he did not regard himself as the composer of *The Book of Life* but rather the one who was "allowed" to open it.⁹⁷ Obouhow proclaimed several times in the manuscript that he, "Nicolas the Ecstatic (*Nicolas l'Extasié*)", had opened the "book". As evident in Example 1-5, the character (Lord) sings the following words: The book of Life is open!

⁸⁹Oppo, *Shapes of Apocalypses: Arts and Philosophy in Slavic Thought*, p. 179.

⁹⁰Garcia, 'Scriabin's Symbolist Plot Archetype in the Late Piano Sonatas', p. 274.

⁹¹N. Obouhow (1972), 'L'émotion dans la Musique', *La Revue Musicale*, Paris, vol. 290/291, p. 56.

⁹²Poldiaeva, *Le message de Nicolas Obouhow*, p. 256.

⁹³P. Davidson (2000), 'Vladimir Solov'ev and the Ideal of Prophecy', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 78, no. 4, pp. 643–644. According to Davidson, Soloviev was the "first Russian writer who made a serious study of the Hebrew prophets and established the Russian attitude to prophecy on a new, historically grounded, religious and philosophical footing".

⁹⁴Shaw-Miller, *Consciousness, Literature and the Arts archive*, viewed on 12 March 2011. <http://blackboard.lincoln.ac.uk/bbcswebdav/users/dmeyerdingrafe/archive/skria.html>

⁹⁵Davidson, 'Vladimir Solov'ev and the Ideal of Prophecy', p. 644.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 644.

⁹⁷Schloezer, 'Nicolas Obouhow', p. 52.

Apart from Soloviev's views of prophecy, the notion of an artist being a prophet or a creator is also embedded in the idea of "super-art" in Russia. Wagner's operas, Nietzsche's philosophy and aesthetics, as well as the poetry of the French symbolists played a key role in the emergence of super-art in Russia.⁹⁹ In fact, the idea of super-art became a Russian reincarnation of the idea of "super-man": "super-art was created by super-strengths or the discoveries of super-people (creators, spiritualists, demiurges)".¹⁰⁰ The term super-art at first appeared in Russian texts as "all-art" (a literal translation of the French "*L'art total*" or "total art"), which has its origins in the aesthetics of French symbolism.¹⁰¹ However, the super-art of composers and artists like Scriabin, Obouhow, Wychnegradsky, and Kandinsky differs from total art. In this respect, Barkalaya writes:

the religious renunciation of the old world with the requirement to sacrifice it, and generally the aesthetic concept linked with religious experience and extreme eschatologism with which super-art is literally imbued, was with rare exceptions uncharacteristic of the total art of the French symbolists.¹⁰²

The idea of being in an ecstatic state was also common in Russian symbolist thinking. Barkalaya mentions that for the creators of the symbolist art, the idea was to leave the boundaries of the real world and enter the unreal or irrational world.¹⁰³ Accordingly, the states accompanying the creative work were most often called ecstasy, illumination, divine grace, contemplation or meditation, and transcendence.¹⁰⁴ It is not surprising that Obouhow called himself "Nicolas the Ecstatic" in *The Book of Life*. In fact, of all the 20th-century Russian musicians, Scriabin and Obouhow were particularly interested in the notion of ecstasy. There is no doubt that Scriabin's ideas inspired Obouhow, and it is not surprising that Obouhow's *The Book of Life* reveals strong similarities to Scriabin's

⁹⁹Barkalaya, 'Super-art in the creative consciousness of Nikolai Obukhov', p. 170. According to Barkalaya, the poetry of Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Baudelaire and Verlaine, was popular at the time in Russia and quite important in the development of aesthetic tastes and ideas.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 170.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 170.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 170. Note that the eschatological ideas of the time will be discussed later.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 170.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 170.

Mysterium.¹⁰⁵ They both considered their music a sacred ritual through which the unification of the human and the divine would occur. Schloezer, Scriabin's brother-in-law, was perhaps the first music critic who pointed out this affinity in his writings.¹⁰⁶ Schloezer attributed Scriabin's idea of ecstasy to "light, bliss (or beatitude), purity, contemplation and absolute harmony", whereas Obouhow's was associated with "inordinate passion, violence, tension of the whole being, pain and joy", a state, according to Schloezer, close to the intoxication of Dionysus and beyond the limitation of the human ego.¹⁰⁷ Apart from Obouhow's compositions, this Dionysian ecstasy is also present in the works of other Russian artists and writers in the first decades of the 20th century. In fact, for many of Obouhow's contemporaries, such as Merezhkovsky and Ivanov, Christ was a Dionysian figure who promised an "exit from oneself" into creative madness, sacrifice, ecstasy, and transfiguration.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, Schloezer associated Obouhow's idea of ecstasy with the Russian mystic dissidents of the 17th century who found ecstasy in immolation and whose songs can be heard in Mussorgsky's *Khovantchina* and Dostoevsky's heroes.¹⁰⁹ In addition to the idea of ecstasy, Obouhow believed that he could transform the world and create a new world by means of his music.¹¹⁰ This is evident in Example 1-8, where the text reads "The new world is created! The

¹⁰⁵Schloezer, 'Nicolas Obouhow', p. 53.

¹⁰⁶As mentioned before, Schloezer's account of Obouhow appeared in both the *Revue Musicale* and the Lavignac's encyclopedia.

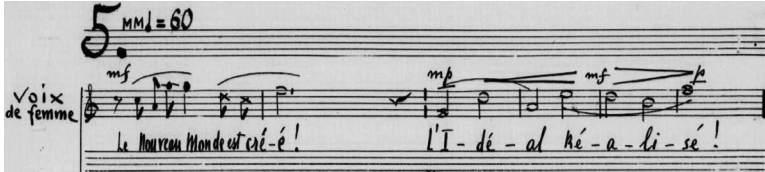
¹⁰⁷Schloezer, 'Nicolas Obouhow', p. 54. According to Schloezer, Obouhow's use of the term "ecstasy" in his French texts is related to a Russian word "iztouplenie", which could be literally translated as "ecstasy". Schloezer provided a valuable description of the Russian term "iztouplenie", which does not have an exact French equivalent. However, in Russian, as Schloezer remarked, this term is related to "ecstasy" in a sense that is a state "beyond the limitation of the human ego". See Schloezer, 'Nicolas Obouhow', p. 54.

¹⁰⁸Emerson, 'Russian Orthodoxy and the Early Bakhtin', p. 111. Merezhkovsky's ideas will be examined later in this chapter. According to Emerson, "in the final decades of the Romanov dynasty cults of Decadence and Nietzscheanism coexisted with a peculiarly Russian and communalist Christian renaissance".

¹⁰⁹Schloezer, 'Nicolas Obouhow', p. 54. Also see R. R. Robson (2014), "Not Something Ordinary, but a Great Mystery: Old Believer Ritual in the Late Imperial Period", in *Orthodox Christianity in Imperial Russia: A Source Book on Lived Religion*, H. J. Coleman (ed.), Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp. 184–191.

¹¹⁰For the Symbolists' view on the creation of the new world, see Rosenthal, *The Occult in Russian and Soviet culture*, p. 18.

ideal is realised!" This idea of transformation was also one of the symbolist notions and, as we shall see, Obouhow's reflections on art resemble this tenet.



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Example 1-8 *Le Troisième et Dernier Testament*, Ms. 15238, 2nd movement, p. 7. ↵

It was through the transformation that Obouhow built his “new world”. Symbolists, like Soloviev, believed in a future transformation of humanity through art.¹¹¹ More than a philosophy of art, symbolism was regarded as a method of achieving change through collective transformation.¹¹² This notion of transformation can also be observed in Obouhow's two essays on music and art: *L'émotion dans la Musique* and *La musique, son but et ses moyens d'expression*.

As mentioned in the Introduction, these two articles are the only existing primary sources that offer first-hand information on Obouhow's aesthetics. Revealing Obouhow's reflection on the transcendental power of music, and its relation to the evolution of humanity, these documents can explain why Obouhow adopted descriptive and enigmatic titles for his compositions. For instance, in *Eternel* (Eternal) descriptive movement titles such as *Clarté profonde* (Profound Clarity), *Lumière noire* (Luminous Night), *Rayons divins* (Divine Rays), *Statue* (Statue), *Cendres* (Ash) could be suggesting or symbolizing different stages of the eternal life from Obouhow's point of view. Obouhow believed in the transcendental power of music and its role in achieving the “Ideal”.¹¹³ He did not clearly define the Ideal in his writings, but he regarded the Ideal as a spiritual status in a human's life and as an equilibrium between spirit and sensitivity, between soul and mind. Secondary sources provide more details and equate the Ideal with God:

¹¹¹R. C. Williams (1995), ‘The Russian Revolution and the End of Time: 1900–1940’, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, Neue Folge*, Franz Steiner Verlag publication, Bd. 43, H. 3, p. 369.

¹¹²Garcia, ‘Scriabin's Symbolist Plot Archetype in the Late Piano Sonatas’, p. 274.

¹¹³Obouhow, ‘L'émotion dans la Musique’, p. 57.

We are, according to Obouhow, on the threshold of perdition (dominated by materialism and money), at the gate of the Last Judgment, and the purpose of *The Book of Life* is to accomplish the fusion [union] of the Ideal and the Real, in other words, God and Lord that we personify in the Reigning Pastor All-mighty [Pasteur Tout-Puissant Regnant] who is all in everyone [all]....¹¹⁴

For Obouhow, the Ideal was derived from the awareness and consciousness that human beings have gained throughout the evolution from barbarism to civilization.¹¹⁵ There is no further elaboration on evolution by Obouhow, but Kuen-Lun conjectured that “such an evolution will be the result of centuries of preparation and ought to be considered as the final phase in the evolution of humanity”.¹¹⁶ According to Kuen-Lun, through *The Book of Life*, one could liberate oneself from the darkness of the past centuries and aim toward a state of “equilibrium and beatitude, the final stage and goal of all its sufferings”.¹¹⁷ Obouhow’s ideas on theological evolution have been described by Kuen-Lun thus:

In the past, the religious conception was on the vertical plane, the plane of Deity, humanity, at that time, being considered as the slave of this plane. Later, the human plane was raised to a higher level, and must continue to rise until the horizontal plane will be in balance with the vertical, and the sphere of harmony made perfect.¹¹⁸

Hence, Ideal depicts a spiritual state, a divine status which originated, according to Obouhow, in the teachings of Christ:

...the conception of the Ideal that has been conveyed by Christ and which he alluded to in the words of Scripture: “Man shall not live by bread alone”.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴Orban, ‘Un Musicien Mystique: Nicolas Obouhow’, p. 107. A 1926 review similarly associated “Ideal” and “Real” with God and the Lord: “We are, says the author, at the threshold of perdition, at the gate of the Last Judgment, and purpose of the Book of Life is to fulfill the fusion of the Ideal and the Real, in other words [union] of God and Lord, personified by “Pastor Almighty”, who is All in Everyone”. See A. Decaen (1926), ‘Concerts & Virtuoses’, *le Gaulois*, Paris, no. 17776, p. 4.

¹¹⁵Obouhow, ‘L’émotion dans la Musique’, p. 55.

¹¹⁶Kuen-Lun, *The Book of Life of Nicholas Obuhov*, p. 13.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 13.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 13.

¹¹⁹Obouhow, ‘L’émotion dans la Musique’, p. 55.