

# Theoretical Approaches to Heterophony

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## Abstract

Heterophony is one of the basic principles by which a multilinear texture comes about in the music of oral tradition. It can be found in many cultures both as a particular form of music making and as a component of more complex multipart practices. Heterophony is also a very intriguing topic for ethnomusicological investigation, especially if the researcher intends to describe this phenomenon at the theoretical level. The problems start with the very notion of 'heterophony', and in attempting to resolve them the researcher is faced with the ambiguity of such basic terms as polyphony, monophony, unison, etc. The reason why heterophonic music is especially difficult to describe using standard European terminology is that the phenomenon of heterophony, being intrinsically connected with oral and collective music creation, has no direct analogies in Western written music. The present article aims to interpret heterophony as a musical, social and psychological phenomenon, using and merging different approaches – music-analytical, anthropological and cognitive. The article also discusses the use of the ethnomusicological terminology connected with a musical texture – especially the umbrella terms for multilinear music – and searches for a more inclusive, yet differentiative and limiting definition of heterophony.

Timothy Rice in his article "Ethnomusicological theory", published in the *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, Vol. 42 (2010), expresses his concern over the tendency among most contemporary ethnomusicologists to recognize and use too little ethnomusicological theory in their works. According to Rice and some other authors to whom he refers (e.g. Ruth Stone 2008), despite quite frequent references to the various theoretical concepts (especially of sociological origin), serious, well-argued discussions on theoretical topics are rather rare in ethnomusicological publications (Rice 2010: 101). Ethnomusicological theory is, of course, present in a latent form in every piece of ethnomusicological research. Rice suggests, however, making it more explicit and beginning a more systematic theoretical dialogue among ethnomusicologists:

Writing ethnomusicological theory involves, at its minimum [...], conversations among ethnomusicologists. [...] Without explicit ethnomusicological theory developed in conversations among ourselves, the field is in danger of being little more than the sum of a succession of idiographic reports from here and there, a kind of academic journalism of fleeting interest, but of little or no long-term consequence (Rice 2010: 106).

One of such 'conversations among ethnomusicologists' on the theoretical issues of the field took place during the First Seminar of the ICTM (International Council for Traditional Music) Study Group on Multipart Music (Tallinn, 2014); this provided the impulse for the discussion in the present article. The theme of the Seminar, "Multipart Music: theoretical approaches on the terminology", was dedicated to the part inherent in every theoretical system – its conceptual and terminological apparatus; the actual core of the discussion, however, seemed rather to be the question of the nature of multipart music making. In accordance with the Seminar theme, its participants were inclined to theorizing more than usual and the brief 'idiographic reports' served merely as illustrations to the theoretical discussion. Although theorizing and generalization also prevail in the present article, I find it useful to mention in advance that my personal experience with traditional heterophony, which is the central subject of this research, is mainly connected with two song traditions: the ritual songs of the Russian-Belarusian borderland, where heterophony occurs in its pure form, and the ancient two-part singing of the Seto (South-East Estonia), where one of the parts is performed heterophonically.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> About these two song traditions see, for example, my recent publications: Pärtlas 2012, 2013.

In the light of the article by Rice cited above, I was prompted to consider whether the Tallinn discussions and my own research belong to the frame of ethnomusicological theory, as understood by Rice. Hopefully this question can be answered in the affirmative, because Rice's definition of ethnomusicological theory is very broad and inclusive:

Ethnomusicological theory involves the writing of descriptions, classifications, comparisons, interpretations, and generalizations about music (and possibly sound) in general, about particular musical traditions, about music in a set of related communities, or about music in relation to cognitive, artistic, experiential, social, cultural, political, and economic issues, themes, and processes (Rice 2010: 105).

The diversity of the theoretical approaches included in this definition was also noticeable during the Tallinn Seminar discussions, where it was revealed, among other ways, in the different interpretations of the basic terms and concepts connected with traditional multipart music.

Multipart music may, indeed, be viewed from different positions. According to the definition used by the ICTM Study Group on Multipart Music, it is first of all a *process of music making* and a *form of expressive behaviour*: "Multipart music is a specific mode of music making and expressive behaviour based on the intentionally distinct and coordinated participation in the performing act by sharing knowledge and shaping values".<sup>2</sup> Following this definition, the most relevant approaches to multipart music would be anthropological and sociological. However, it is clear that multipart music is also an outcome of music making – a *musical text* and a *sound object*, both of which have their own principles of organization and structure. Both the above-named aspects merit close examination not only as academically interesting research subjects, but also because of their significant place in the value system of the bearers of tradition. Furthermore, multipart music should also be studied as a *cognitive process* and, from this point of view, we can examine both the creation and perception of multipart music. Thus, such methods as musical analysis, acoustical anal-

ysis and music psychology should also be valued as relevant approaches to traditional multipart music. In this article, I try to take into account different aspects of the musical process, merging the anthropological, music-theoretical and cognitive research methods.

With the goal of achieving a general theoretical understanding of heterophony and taking into account the theme of the present collection of articles, which is intended as an extension to the Tallinn Seminar, it also seems useful to place heterophony into the more general context of both traditional multipart music and ethnomusicological theory with regard to multipart music. In fact, in such a context the topic of heterophony is of special interest, since this widespread form of traditional music making lies on the border of multipart music, and merely answering the question as to whether heterophony is multipart music or not could be illuminating for the more general theoretical discussion. Heterophony, being broadly understood as the simultaneous variation of the same melody, is one of the basic principles by which a multilinear texture comes about in the music of oral tradition. It can be found in many cultures both as a particular form of musical texture and as a component of more complex multipart practices – indeed, almost everywhere where the parts are performed collectively. All the same, at the theoretical level, heterophony can function as an indicator that reveals how the researcher understands the main concepts of ethnomusicology and music theory related to musical texture – such concepts as 'polyphony', 'monophony' and 'homophony' and also newer terms like 'multipart', 'multivoiced', 'plurivocal', etc.

For this reason, the present discussion will begin with a critical overview of the respective terminology. After an overview of the main terms, I will then concentrate on the term 'heterophony' itself, which is one of the most ambiguous notions in both music theory and ethnomusicology.

## 1. On the terminology

### 1.1. The names for 'simultaneous otherness'

In the book *The Wellsprings of Music*, Curt Sachs suggested four choices for how the term 'heter-

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ictmusic.org/group/multipart-music> (15.01.2016).

ophony' can be understood.<sup>3</sup> According to the broadest definition, which was actually not approved by Sachs himself as the most useful one, "heterophony is in every composition in which *'other notes' are heard at the same time*, including a simple drone with a melody, but also including modern polyphony and harmony" (emphasis mine) (Sachs 1977 [1962]: 190). This definition almost coincides with Sachs' broadest definition of polyphony: "The word polyphony marks *the performance and perception of more than one note at a time*" (emphasis mine) (Sachs 1977 [1962]: 175). In both cases, the main criterion for the definition is the simultaneous sounding of two or more notes/pitches – the phenomenon which Sachs, in the same book, once named a "simultaneous otherness" (Sachs 1977 [1962]: 177). The idea of 'simultaneous otherness' corresponds very well with the etymology of both words – 'heterophony' (from Greek *heteros* – different, other) and 'polyphony' (from Greek *polus* – many, much). However, we should agree with Sachs that a more specific use of the term 'heterophony' would be preferable, meaning that 'simultaneous otherness' is not the only attribute of heterophony. Nevertheless, this feature is essential and obligatory, and if we want to understand the place of heterophony among other forms of 'simultaneous otherness', we should first concentrate on this phenomenon and on the terms used for its designation.

First of all, we should recognize that by speaking about 'simultaneous otherness' we consider music as a sound outcome, a sound object. At this level, we do not ask how performers conceive the musical texture, why the multilinear texture appears or what the logic of its structure is. We merely state the fact that two or more different notes have sounded simultaneously, i.e. were performed and/or perceived in such way – "the performance and perception", according to the definition by Sachs cited above. We are dealing here with the most elementary level of music analysis, and therefore the terms we need for the designation of 'simultaneous otherness' should be the

most general and neutral possible with respect to the reasons behind the textural multilinearity, the musical structure and style.

It is remarkable that in music theory the most fundamental differentiation of the types of texture is based on the presence or absence of 'simultaneous otherness'. The question arises as to why this characteristic is so crucial, for whom it matters and from what period of music history it comes. I assume that this circumstance was not equally important in all musical cultures and at all times. The recognition of the 'simultaneous otherness' of sound probably came with the emergence of its opposite notion, 'unison', and was connected with the rise of a degree of control over musical sound and texture. A high degree of control over sound is more characteristic of the written music traditions, where the prescriptive notation gives the performers quite a detailed musical text for execution. Although a high level of sound control is also possible in the music of oral tradition, we may assume that many oral musical cultures exist where there is neither any notion of unison nor any conscious control over deviations from it. This is probably the most likely situation for the development of heterophony.

In English-language music theory, the terms *monophony* and *polyphony* are commonly used as a pair to differentiate different types of texture according to the criterion of the presence or absence of 'simultaneous otherness'. In some languages, there are native terms which are used for this purpose – the terms such as *Einstimmigkeit* and *Mehrstimmigkeit* in German or *одноголосие* and *многоголосие* in Russian.<sup>4</sup> In the opposition 'monophony v. polyphony', both concepts belong to the level of sound outcome and have the most broad and neutral meaning (see the Sachs' definition of polyphony cited above). From this viewpoint, heterophony, being a form of 'simultaneous otherness', should be also a form of polyphony. However, it seems that many scholars do not agree with the last statement. Sachs himself asserts that "unconscious heterophony is, psycho-

<sup>3</sup> The ancient Greek term 'heterophony' was revived by Carl Stumpf in his research "Tonsystem und Musik der Siamesen" (1901). To the early ethnomusicological use of this term there also belong the writings by Guido Adler (1908) and Erich M. von Hornbostel (1909). In this article it is not my intention to give a detailed overview of the history of the term 'heterophony'; I begin here with the definitions by Sachs, because his approach to 'heterophony' seems to be especially deep and consistent and provides a good basis for further discussion.

<sup>4</sup> The list of examples could certainly be continued. Thus, in Estonian there are terms *ühehäälsus* and *mitmehäälsus*, which literally correspond to the above-mentioned German and Russian terms.

logically speaking, a non-polyphonic type of music" (Sachs 1977 [1962]: 186). The question asked by Jaap Kunst – "who can fix the place where heterophony turns into polyphony?" (Kunst 1950: 47) – reveals that Kunst also did not consider heterophony as a form of polyphony. Here we witness the contradiction between the definitions and the actual use of the terms. Thus, Sachs, giving the definition of polyphony at the level of sound realization ("more than one note at a time"), then uses this term as belonging to the cognitive level ("psychologically speaking"). It is the absence of a clear distinction between the levels and aspects of musical phenomena that leads to the ambiguity of the scholarly terminology.

Besides the lack of clarity as to the question of which level – textural, cognitive, behavioural, etc. – the notion of 'polyphony' belongs to, the use of this term as the most general and neutral is also awkward because it has a narrower meaning as well, constituting a terminological pair not only with the term 'monophony', as mentioned above, but also with the terms 'harmony' and 'homophony'. Polyphony and harmony (homophony) are very often opposed as two forms of 'simultaneous otherness', which differ by the prevalence of 'horizontal' or 'vertical' musical thinking. The term 'polyphony' is broadly accepted as designating the type of texture that consists of "two or more simultaneous lines of independent melody".<sup>5</sup> This meaning of the word 'polyphony', which also refers to the rhythmical independence of the voices, is close to that of 'counterpoint'. In the case of harmony (homophony), "two or more parts move together in harmony, the relationship between them creating chords".<sup>6</sup> The homophonic texture may be either monorhythmic or melody with harmonic accompaniment (as in the so-called 'melody-dominated homophony').<sup>7</sup> Since such an interpretation of the term 'polyphony' deals not only with the musical texture (sound outcome),

but also with the type of musical thinking, whether or not heterophony belongs to the domain of polyphony depends on how heterophonic music is intended by the performers.

One further 'disadvantage' of the term 'polyphony', to which some ethnomusicologists refer, is that it is historically too closely connected with the European written musical culture. Some ethnomusicologists prefer not to use the term 'polyphony' with reference to traditional oral music because of its manifold historical-stylistic connotations (e.g. see Macchiarella 2012: 9).

Since the mid 20th century (and even earlier) dissatisfaction with the term 'polyphony' has impelled ethnomusicologists to invent new terms for 'simultaneous otherness', such as 'multipart', 'multivoiced' and 'plurivocal' music. These terms are intended in the most general and neutral manner, being independent of any historical, geographical or cultural context and embracing all forms of 'simultaneous otherness'. Among them, the term *multipart music* is the most used, substituting the term 'polyphony' in its broader sense. The origins and the history of the use of the term 'multipart' are described in detail in the article by Ardian Ahmedaja in this volume; therefore I only mention here that, according to Ahmedaja, the word 'part-singing' was first used in 1910 by James Cowan in his writing on the songs of the Rarotonga (Cook islands), and the word 'multipart' first appeared in the book *Metre, Rhythm, Multi-Part Music* by Jaap Kunst (1950). Nowadays, though there are many ethnomusicologists who prefer the expression 'multipart music' as an umbrella term for all forms of 'simultaneous otherness' (e.g. the majority of the authors in this volume), there is an equal number of scholars who prefer to stick to the older term 'polyphony'. Thus, Joseph Jordania in his book *Who Asked the First Question?* argues that the shorter term 'polyphony' is more convenient as a 'family name', especially when deriving the more

<sup>5</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyphony> (15.01.2016). I deliberately cite here such a not very academic source as Wikipedia, because its definitions reflect well the widespread understandings of common terms as they are usually used in educational practice.

<sup>6</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homophony> (15.01.2016).

<sup>7</sup> Sachs considers these two types of musical texture as 'vertical' (harmony) and 'horizontal' (counterpoint) polyphony: "Western terminology distinguishes two basic concepts of polyphony. One is 'harmony' or 'vertical' polyphony: we hear simultaneous sounds or 'chords' in a lawful sequence of tension ('dissonance') and relaxation ('consonance'). The other concept is 'counterpoint' or 'horizontal' polyphony: we hear a lawful coexistence of voice parts or simultaneous melodic lines." (Sachs 1977 [1962]: 175)

complex names for the sub-types of polyphony (e.g. 'drone polyphony', 'ostinato polyphony', etc.) (Jordania 2006: 24). He reasons:

although both terms ("polyphony" and "multi-part music") actually mean the same (the first one in a long ago dead ancient Greek language, and another in very much alive and the most widespread contemporary English) we have in one case the one-word-term ("polyphony") and in another case complex three-word-combination to denote the same phenomenon ("multi-part music"). This simple fact works in favor of the practical use of one-word-term "polyphony" (Jordania 2006: 24).

There are also researchers who use these terms alternatively with the same meaning. Thus Izaly Zemtsovsky in his article "Polyphony as a Way of Creating and Thinking: The Musical Identity of Homo Polyphonicus" (2003) uses both the terms 'polyphony' and 'part-singing'.

However, we must ask whether the term 'multipart music' is the universal name for all forms of 'simultaneous otherness' in music. Clearly the answer to this question is that it is not, because in the case of 'multipart music' the reason for the emergence of 'simultaneous otherness' is clearly designated by the term itself – it is the distinction between several textural *parts*, which implies their functional difference. In collectively performed music, it means that singers or musicians are divided into parts and this division is deliberate and usually reflected in the folk terminology.<sup>8</sup> Since the concept of 'part' refers, first of all, to musical thinking and behaviour, the concept of 'multipart' belongs first and foremost to the respective aspects of musical process. Of course, multipart music has also a sound dimension and, in this respect, a 'simultaneous otherness' is its very characteristic feature, but this is neither strongly obligatory nor determinative. In fact, the simultaneous sound of different notes can appear without the division of performers and musical texture into different parts – this is the case in many forms of heterophony. Moreover, the opposite situation is not excluded, where the performers declare their division into parts (i.e. they have

different roles in the performance of music), but actually sing or play in unison or at the octave.

In the search for a more neutral term for 'simultaneous otherness' than 'multipart', one of solutions may be the word *multivoiced*, which is the literal translation to the words *Mehrstimmigkeit*, *многоголосие*, etc. (*Stimme* – *голос* – voice). For this last reason, in my previous works (Pärtlas 2012) I preferred this term to other new inventions such as 'plurivocal' or 'polyvocal' and distinguished the terms 'multipart' and 'multivoiced' on the basis of the difference between the meanings of the words 'part' and 'voice'. I interpreted the word 'part' as referring to the intentional differentiation of musical roles between the performers, and the word 'voice' as designating the individual melodic line. Accordingly, the term 'multipart' was understood as belonging to the level of musical thinking and behaviour and the term 'multivoiced' as the concept at the level of sound realization.

However, as my further discussions with colleagues have shown, the word 'multivoiced' was also not a perfect choice for the designation of 'simultaneous otherness'.<sup>9</sup> The problem is that the word 'voice' has too many other meanings besides that of the individual melodic line. One of these meanings, unfortunately, coincides with that of the word 'part', and, therefore, the words 'multipart' and 'multivoiced' can be perceived as synonyms. Actually, the word 'voice' frequently designates one part of a multipart texture also in folk terminology, e.g. in the Russian (*голос*), Estonian (*hääli*) and Mordvinian (*Moksha*) (*вайгыль*) song traditions (the list of examples could certainly be continued – see, for example, the essay by Anda Beitāne on Latvian traditional songs in this volume). In traditional terminology, the word 'voice' also often means the tune, the melody, while for some scholars, the word 'voice' mainly associates with the human voice and vocal music; and then there are, in addition, the philosophical meanings of this word in anthropology and sociology as well.

To avoid such misunderstandings, in this article I decided to use the term *multilinear* instead of 'multivoiced'. It seems that the word 'line' is not

<sup>8</sup> In this connection, it should be noted that the above-cited definition of multipart music given by the Study Group on Multipart Music excludes solo performance from the domain of multipart music practices.

<sup>9</sup> This became especially clear to me during the Tallinn Seminar.

charged with so many different meanings as the word 'voice' and, when applied to music, it mostly associates with the musical texture as a sound aspect of musical process. A further advantage of the term 'multilinear' as opposed to 'multivoiced', 'multiphonic', 'plurivocal', 'plurilinear' and 'polyvocal' is that it is more often used in music studies (especially in music theory) and therefore does not sound strange;<sup>10</sup> it is also equally applicable to both vocal and instrumental music. However, I am compelled to state that an ideal term for 'simultaneous otherness' simply does not exist, unless we invent a totally new word. One drawback of the word 'multilinear' as a neutral term is its connection with the word 'linear', which is often used in music theory and jazz-research as pointing to the specific way of musical thinking where a 'horizontal' musical dimension strongly prevails over the 'vertical' one, or where it is the only factor of music composition (e.g. such terms as 'linear counterpoint', 'linear polyphony', and 'linear harmony'). As to heterophony, the word 'linear' characterizes well the essence of this music in which the vertical sonorities are not under the control of the performers. However, our goal here is to find a neutral term for the level of musical texture – a term which would not be associated with a certain type of musical thinking. This problem could be partly resolved by adding the word 'texture' to the term 'multilinear' wherever possible. In this article I use the concepts of *multilinear music* and *multilinear texture* as belonging entirely to the level of sound realization (sound outcome) and embracing all forms of 'simultaneous otherness' including every manifestation of heterophony. This term would seem to be useful in the context of both the general theory of musical texture and, especially, in the discussion of heterophony.

### 1.2. What does 'the simultaneous variation of the same melody' mean?

The original meaning of the ancient Greek term 'heterophony', revived by Carl Stumpf in 1901, is unclear. At the same time, almost all authors admit that its new usage is also unsatisfactory – the term 'heterophony' is usually characterized as

being 'uncertain' or 'vague', a 'catchall', etc. Although the term 'heterophony' has been in use among ethnomusicologists for more than a century now, new attempts to find a better definition for it are still appearing, and this paper makes its own contribution to the topic. However, the short definition of heterophony that appears at the end of this article is by no means the main goal of my research.

The concept of heterophony raises many issues. First of all, there is the question of how broad or narrow the definition of heterophony should be and which level of musical process it should characterize. The broadest definition at the level of sound, given by Sachs, was discussed above. Sachs' fourth (and preferred) suggestion is also very broad, but it belongs to the level of musical thinking, connecting heterophony to all kinds of improvisation in the oral musical tradition: "heterophony is every type of part-performance left to tradition and improvisation – *contrapunto alla mente* as against *res facta*" (Sachs 1977 [1962]: 191). In ethnomusicological literature we can also find many narrower definitions that describe one ethnic tradition or a group of them (see, for example, the definition for Russian heterophonic singing in *Narodnoye ...* 2005: 496). Such definitions may be very precise in terms of the respective musical styles to which they refer, but their cross-cultural use is rather more limited. It seems that the best working definition, which can be applied to many different musical styles, is still the 'classical' one (used by Stumpf, Hornbostel, Sachs, Cooke, Nettl, etc.), according to which, heterophony is *the simultaneous variation of the same melody*. The advantage of this definition is that it is simple and clear. Nevertheless, it remains incomplete in that too many essential questions are left unresolved and some inherent features unnamed.

Although, at first glance, the definition 'simultaneous variation' appears unequivocal and unambiguous, it can actually describe very different musical phenomena. Let us examine the possible meanings of 'simultaneous variation'. In connection with the word 'variation', a question arises about *the 'theme' of the variations*. What is the

<sup>10</sup> Among the terms mentioned here, the word 'plurilinear' might also be satisfactory as a neutral term at the level of texture (sound outcome). However, I would prefer 'multilinear' because it constitutes a better pair with 'multipart'. Moreover, it would also be sensible to avoid the parallel use of three different prefixes – 'poly-' (in 'polyphony'), 'multi-' (in 'multipart') and 'pluri-' (in 'plurilinear').

‘theme’ of heterophonic variations, and where is it to be found? Does it sound simultaneously with its variations? Or is it a pre-existing melody, on which musicians create the variations? The answer to these questions would also explain the functional interrelations between the voices: are they equivalent melodic lines or, rather, subordinated polyphonic parts, one of which is a main melody, the ‘theme’, while the others are dependent parts, ‘variations’?

With regard to many traditions of vocal heterophony (for example, Russian and, more broadly, East Slavic, Mordvinian, Udmurtian, etc.), we can assert that *all variants of the song tune are functionally equal and homogeneous* and no single one of them can be considered as the ‘theme’. Izaly Zemtsovsky describes the variation process in Russian folk songs as “variations without a theme” (Zemtsovsky 1980: 38). However, the musical styles based on different principles are also often characterized as ‘heterophony’ – the articles in the musical dictionaries (such as *The New Grove*, *MGG* and others) usually refer to such instrumental music traditions as Japanese *gagaku*, Indonesian *gamelan*, Philippine *kulintang*, Thai traditional music, etc. The term ‘heterophony’ is also used to describe many practices of “accompanied vocal music of the Middle East and East Asia, where the instrument provides an embellished version of the vocal part” (Cooke 2001: 466).

Unlike functionally homogeneous vocal heterophony, instrumental and vocal-instrumental heterophony is usually *functionally differentiated*. One example of such music could be the North Indian melodic accompaniment known as *sangat*. According to the description by John Napier (2006), in this kind of performance the melodic line of the singer-soloist can be understood as a ‘theme’ to which the accompanist adds a more or less differentiated variation almost simultaneously with the soloist’s part. Curt Sachs describes a similar practice in Japanese music: “the accompanying instrument follows the singer in free vari-

ation at the respectful distance of an eighthnote without disturbing or confusing the listener with its random con- and dissonances” (Sachs 1977 [1962]: 187). Furthermore, the two last examples show that not only ‘variation’, but also such a seemingly simple notion as *simultaneity* can be called into question.<sup>11</sup> John Napier shows this by examining what ‘as soon as possible’ means in North Indian *sangat* (Napier 2006: 94–95). Sachs’ description of Japanese musical practice confirms the possibility that the heterophonic divergences can be caused not only by melodic variation, but also by the shift in synchronicity.

Rudolf Brandl describes heterophony as the simultaneous performance of the ‘basis melody’ and ‘equivalent-alternative’ variations:

*Heterophony, too, is a two-dimensional cognitive structuring of the audible image in which, by means of rules, an exclusively horizontal allocation of sounds and noises in additional parts to a melody-line takes place. There is no vertical rule for the connection with the basis melody. [...] Heterophonic parts are seen as equivalent-alternative forms of the basis melody (heterophony of variants) (Brandl 2008: 288; emphasis as in the original).*

Brandl does not provide concrete examples of music where the ‘basis melody’ sounds simultaneously with its ‘equivalent-alternative’ variations. It seems, however, that his definition corresponds neither to the vocal heterophonic styles mentioned above, where there is not a ‘basis melody’ as such, nor, presumably, to many practices of instrumental and vocal-instrumental ‘simultaneous variation’ in the music of Asia, where the variations may not be ‘equivalent-alternative’.

There is also the question of the *variation techniques* that are relevant to heterophony. While some authors speak about *homogeneous variants* of the melody as the characteristic feature of heterophony (Brandl 2008: 288; *Narodnoye ...* 2005: 495–496), others describe *specific methods*

<sup>11</sup> Usually the ‘simultaneity’ of heterophonic variations means not merely their sounding at the same time, but implies the synchronicity of musical form. However, in the literature on heterophony there are cases where it is understood as the overlapping performance of similar musical utterances. Thus, Steven Brown, who sees the origins of music in the primary ‘contagious heterophony’, defines his newly invented term as follows: “a group vocalization in which each individual produces a variation on a similar kind of call but in which the members of the group call asynchronously; group-wide vocalizing emerges through a sequential process of spreading and contagion” (Brown 2003: 68). The typical example of such ‘contagious heterophony’ is the howling of wolves.

of variation such as ornamentation, simplification, shortening, etc. (Sachs 1977 [1962]; Cooke 2001; Napier 2006). With regard to this question there is no agreement among ethnomusicologists. Thus, David Morton, who shares the former point of view, in his book *The Traditional Music of Thailand* (1976) objects to the designation of the Thai instrumental simultaneous variation as heterophony:

The technique of combining simultaneously one main melody and its variants is often incorrectly described as heterophony: *polyphonic stratification* seems a more precise description, since each of the 'layers' is not just a close approximation of the main melody, but also has distinct characteristics and a style of its own (Morton 1976: 39).

While Morton's observation concerning the different principles that can underlie simultaneous variation is very important for our understanding of heterophony, nevertheless we cannot ignore the century-long tradition of the usage of the term 'heterophony' (which is supported by the musical dictionaries), and it seems that the only solution would be the more inclusive, but not catch-all, definition of this term.

The question of the variation techniques in heterophony is even more complex, because there is also the unresolved problem of where to draw the border between a variation of the same melody and a melodically distinct part. For example, should we consider a subsidiary part moving in the parallel thirds with the main melody as a variation of the latter? The similarity of the melodic contours and the unity of the rhythm suggest that such melodic lines are related as some kind of variants. However, scholars do not usually consider this type of variation as a heterophonic technique. Thus, though the Russian so-called *подголосочная полифония* (literally, 'the polyphony of subsidiary voices') is essentially the polyphony of melodic variants, it is divided into functionally different (main and subsidiary, lower and upper) and harmonically regulated parts,

and is not usually designated as 'heterophony'.<sup>12</sup> Although we can find here many heterophonic divergences within the collectively performed parts (especially the lower main part), the general compositional principle of the multipart texture is the contradistinction of two or three parts, which are fully recognized as such by the singers. From the above, we may conclude that heterophonic variations, as they are usually understood by researchers, are *always situated at the same pitch level* (with the exception of octave duplications), and they are not intended as lower and upper melodic parts. Heterophonically related melodic lines should consequently have a sufficient number of unison (or octave) points to be perceived as the variations of the same melody.

In relation to these unison points, the question arises as to the extent to which the heterophonic variations should differ from each other. This is, so to speak, *a quantitative characteristic of heterophonic variation*. The most usual understanding is that the difference between the melodic variants should be rather small in heterophony. Some researchers (e.g. the Russian ethnomusicologists) draw a distinction between 'monodic' and 'variant heterophony' depending on the amount of multilinear divergence. Another example of such a quantitative approach is the statement by Joseph Jordania in the book cited above:

heterophonic polyphony differs from all other types of polyphony, because it can belong to (a) polyphonic family (when the differences between the versions are well defined), or it could also belong to (b) monophonic family (when the deviations from the unison are minimal) (Jordania 2006: 28–29).

Jordania admits that in this case "the difference is purely quantitative (and not qualitative)", which reveals that when distinguishing between polyphony and monophony he proceeds primarily from the level of the sound outcome. Although such an approach is pertinent in differentiating between particular kinds of musical texture, it seems to me that the more appropriate approach

<sup>12</sup> The rare exception is the position of Joseph Jordania, who characterises the entire Russian multipart singing tradition (except some cases of 'drone polyphony') – and even more widely, that of the Eastern Slavs – as 'variant heterophony' (Jordania 1988: 27) or 'heterophonic polyphony' (Jordania 2006: 226–227). I find that the preferable English term for *подголосочная полифония* would be 'variant polyphony' (Emsheimer 1991: 279), as this allows us to differentiate between the latter and the various forms of Russian one-part singing named by local researchers 'heterophony'.



to the main types of musical thinking, such as monophony and polyphony, should be 'qualitative'. With regard to heterophonic variation, the question as to how the variation is intended and understood by the performers themselves is more essential than the amount of multilinear activity in the texture.

Thus we can say that the most usual definition of heterophony – 'the simultaneous variation of the same melody' – allows different interpretations and embraces different musical phenomena. If one prefers a more specific use of this concept (as, for example, Morton, Brandl and Russian ethnomusicologists), the relevant definition should include the additional limitations concerning the functional interrelation of the melodic lines and the methods of variation. The latter aspect should be specified even if we agree with the more general usage of the term, and the distinction between different forms of heterophony is still of use in both situations.

In any case, there are some other essential features of heterophony which the 'classical' definition fails to mention, though these are often discussed by ethnomusicologists in this context. I refer here to questions about the *consciousness or unconsciousness* of heterophony and the existence of *vertical coordination between the melodic variations*. With respect to the former question, Curt Sachs and some other ethnomusicologists find it necessary to make a distinction between 'conscious' and 'unconscious' heterophony. The answer to the question about vertical coordination is unanimously negative, i.e. there is none. Reading the literature on the question gives the impression that the lack of 'vertical rules' is no less an essential attribute of heterophony than 'simultaneous variation'. For Guido Adler, who was an important figure in the popularization of the term 'heterophony' at the beginning of the 20th century, it was even the main criterion of heterophony, which he defined as "rudimentary irregular polyphony" (Adler 1985 [1908]: 631). From the above, we can conclude that *'the simultaneous variation of the same melody' is not a sufficient explanation of the phenomenon of heterophony*. If irregularity

is an inherent feature of heterophony, it should be reflected in its definition.<sup>13</sup> It seems to me, however, that the issue of consciousness, intention, control over the sonic outcome and vertical regularity is much more difficult than it may at first glance appear. Therefore, these questions will be discussed separately in the relevant section of this article.

## **2. Bipartite and tripartite theoretical models in the approach to heterophony**

In the previous discussion, I mentioned the importance of making a distinction between the different levels of musical process – for example, the levels of musical thinking and sonic realization. Such differentiation can be illuminating in the explaining of the nature of heterophony and other forms of musical texture and also help to systematize the terminology. In this connection, I will try to compare and possibly incorporate the ideas originating from Russian-language music theory and ethnomusicology (especially, the theory of musical texture by Tatyana Bershadsкая) with the well-known tripartite model by Alan P. Merriam 'concept – behaviour – sound'. Although neither of these concepts is new, they still seem to be very fruitful for attaining a better understanding of the process of oral music-making and its sound results.

### **2.1. The music theoretical viewpoint: musical thinking and sonic realization**

Heterophony is often considered to be a border area between monophony and polyphony.<sup>14</sup> Sometimes heterophony is named the primary form of polyphony; less frequently it is called the primary form of monophony (and even, sometimes, the primary form of music, as in Brown 2003). It can also be considered as a transitional form between monophony and polyphony. Whether heterophony is interpreted as belonging to polyphony or monophony depends on which type of heterophonic music the scholar has in mind, how this music is intended by the singers/instrumentalists, and how it is heard and understood by researchers. At the same time, however,

<sup>13</sup> 'The simultaneous variation' in itself does not mean the lack of vertical organization.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, the statement of Jordania: "Heterophony is strategically positioned between polyphony and monophony" (Jordania 2006: 225).

this depends no less on how the terminology is interpreted. Are monophony and polyphony notions belonging to the level of musical thinking or just types of musical texture, i.e. notions at the level of sound?

This issue was widely debated in Russian-language ethnomusicology and music theory during the 1970s and 1980s (Kharlap 1972; Skrebkov 1973; Bershadsckaya 1985 [1978]; Galitskaya 1981; Alekseyev 1986). In this discussion, the position of the music theorist Tatiana Bershadsckaya seems to be the most coherent and systematically formulated. Bershadsckaya makes a clear distinction between the levels of *musical thinking* and its *sonic realisation* (the level of sound). For the first level, Bershadsckaya uses the term *музыкальный склад* or just *склад* (this word can be translated as 'constitution' or 'composition'). This level is essentially an ideal, pointing to the inner logic, the deep structure of the musical texture. The level of sonic realisation (sound) is designated by the term *фактура* ('texture'). This is a material level (i.e. the level of the materialization), which is connected with the particular surface structures. Bershadsckaya distinguishes between three general principles of musical thinking (*музыкальные склады*): *monodic*, *polyphonic* (in the sense of Sachs' 'horizontal polyphony'), and *harmonic*, all of which can be realised in multiple forms of musical texture (Bershadsckaya 1985 [1978]: 11–12).<sup>15</sup> She draws attention to the fact that the appearance of musical texture can differ from and even oppose the principles that give rise to it. For instance, polyphonic thinking can be realised in a chordal (harmonic) texture (as is often the case in Renaissance polyphony), while behind the monophonic texture there can be both polyphonic and harmonic principles (*viz.* the well-known cases of implicit polyphony and harmony) (Bershadsckaya 1985 [1978]: 12–14). Thus we should distinguish between monophonic musical thinking and monophonic texture, between polyphonic thinking and polyphonic texture, and also between harmonic (homophonic) thinking and harmonic (homophonic) texture.

Applying Bershadsckaya's theory to heterophony, we can say that in many cases one is dealing here with monodic musical thinking realized in a polyphonic texture. Using other terms (which I would prefer in English), it is a realization of *monophonic thinking* in a *multilinear texture*. Such an explanation fits well with many styles of vocal heterophony, which are mostly unintentional and unconscious. The singers intend to perform the same melody (monophonic thinking), but they do not aim to sing it in a strict unison. In such conditions, the melodic variation, which is an intrinsic characteristic of oral music, causes the multilinear divergences in the texture (multilinear texture). In some styles of vocal heterophony (e.g. the heterophonic songs of some regions of Russia), these divergences can be so significant that they create the impression of intentional polyphony.<sup>16</sup> In such cases, researchers, defining the type of musical thinking, proceed from the comments of singers, who assert that they sing 'in one voice'.

However, as mentioned above, the multilinear music that ethnomusicologists name 'heterophony' is not always unconscious. In this context the question emerges as to how we should define the musical thinking of the singers/instrumentalists if they are themselves aware of the heterophonic divergences, if the variation is intentional, if the performers divide themselves into functionally different parts, but when they nevertheless still do not aim to coordinate the vertical aspect of the multilinear texture. Is their thinking polyphonic, since they produce the multilinear texture deliberately, or monophonic, since every performer proceeds in the creation of his/her melodic line from a purely horizontal (i.e. melodic, linear) musical logic and without taking into account the vertical sonorities that emerge as result of variation? To answer this question, we should again define our terms. Do we understand polyphony merely as "a texture consisting of two or more simultaneous lines of independent melody",<sup>17</sup> or should the definition include the condition of vertical regularity, e.g. "simultaneously combining a number of parts, each forming an individual melody and

<sup>15</sup> When ascribing the names to the types of musical thinking, Bershadsckaya prefers the term 'monodic' to 'monophonic' and 'harmonic' to 'homophonic' because of the special tradition of the usage of these terms in Russian music theory.

<sup>16</sup> A particularly developed multilinear texture appears in the Russian so-called 'differentiated heterophony' and 'drone-like diaphony' (*бурдонная диафония*) (see *Narodnoye ...* 2005: 496–497).

<sup>17</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyphony> (15.01.2016).

*harmonizing with each other*" (emphasis mine)?<sup>18</sup> Although the larger part of polyphonic music is governed by both melodic and harmonic rules, it seems that the question of vertical coordination should not be determinative for the recognition of musical thinking as polyphonic. This is because the notion of polyphony refers first and foremost to the building of musical texture (the texture layers, their functions, etc.) and to the thinking connected with this, while the pitch relations belong rather to the domain of a modal or tonal system. Thus, I would conclude that the deliberate production of a multilinear texture of melodic character should be a sufficient reason for speaking about polyphony in terms of both the musical thinking and its realization.

## **2.2. The music anthropological viewpoint: concept – behaviour – sound**

While music theory, by contradistinguishing the ideal (cognitive) and material levels of musical process, offers a bipartite model for approaching the issue of musical texture, in ethnomusicology we have the well-known tripartite model of Merriam, *concept – behaviour – sound*, which also distinguishes between the different levels of musical process. Although Merriam's triad suggests the general scheme for ethnomusicological studies and is applicable to many areas of research, it can be also a very efficient tool for investigating questions related to musical texture and the processes of its formation. It would seem very helpful to examine all kinds of multipart and multilinear music bearing in mind the clear distinction between the three levels of Merriam's triad. With respect to heterophony, it gives especially interesting results, because one can find here (apparent) discrepancies between these three levels. For instance, the performers of heterophonic songs can assert that they all sing 'in one voice' (the level of conceptualization), but actually they significantly vary the melody (the level of musical behaviour) and as a result we can hear a dense multivoiced texture (the level of sound). I will now try to apply Merriam's model consistently to the issue of heterophony.

*Concept.* The level of "conceptualisation about music" (Merriam 1964: 32) refers, in our case,

to the traditional shared knowledge concerning the structure of multilinear texture and the techniques of its production. The most focused manifestation of this knowledge is the traditional terminology. We are not dealing here with an abstract music theory. On the contrary, traditional terminology is mostly connected with the practical organization of the process of music making, and it also functions as a teaching tool (although the main method of teaching in the oral traditions is usually by imitation). The terminology and other verbalised forms of traditional knowledge reflect the generally accepted understandings about the division of roles between performers and the building of musical texture. These doubtless have a significant effect on the musical practice, but we cannot be sure that they conform entirely to what singers/instrumentalists really do (the level of behaviour) or to the actual musical outcome (the level of sound). Moreover, there are some aspects of musical structure that are not usually discussed by the bearers of tradition. When answering the questions of ethnomusicologists, the bearers of tradition are able to go beyond the scope of traditional discourse in their explanations, but topics remain which are completely outside their traditional way of thinking.

The traditions of functionally homogeneous vocal heterophony are usually poor in terminology. Singers have no need to negotiate the division of roles or the methods of variation. The very typical answer to the inquiry of ethnomusicologists is 'we sing in one voice', which means both the same part and the same tune. For instance, such a statement is characteristic of all types of Russian heterophonic singing, including the so-called 'differentiated heterophony' and 'bourdon diaphony', which give to the outsider-listener the impression of intentionally organized multipart singing (*Narodnoye ...* 2005: 496). The performers of functionally differentiated heterophony (which is mostly instrumental or vocal-instrumental) are obviously able to give more detailed explanations concerning the formation of the multilinear texture, variation technique and the relations between the parts.

*Behaviour.* The notion of "behaviour in relation to music" (Merriam 1964: 32) embraces many dif-

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/polyphony> (15.01.2016).

ferent aspects. Merriam distinguishes between three kinds of behaviour – physical, social and verbal – which can be further subdivided into more particular forms of behaviour (Merriam 1964: 33). Among the behavioural manifestations related to music are the posture of the performers' bodies, gestures, the interaction between the performers in the ensemble, the reaction of the listeners, etc. It seems that 'behaviour in relation to music' should also include 'musical behaviour' as such, i.e. the musical decisions, both conscious and unconscious, that singers/instrumentalists make during the performance of music. To specifically musical decisions belong, for example, improvisation, variation, the use of melodic embellishment, the choice of the part in multipart music, the adjustment of one's own part to the parts of other performers, the reaction to their musical decisions, and so on.

If we include such forms of musical behaviour in the middle category of Merriam's triad, we can state that in heterophony, at the level of musical behaviour, a melodic variation always takes place. In functionally homogeneous heterophony, all performers actualize the melody within the variation zone inherent to the musical tradition. As a rule, they do not employ specific methods of variation, the use of which could create functional differences between the variants. Such a type of 'equivalent-alternative' variation can be considered as a specifically 'heterophonic variation', although this characterizes only one kind of heterophonic music. One more essential feature of 'heterophonic variation' is that it is optional, i.e. there is no obligation to vary the melody. The variation happens spontaneously and if it does not happen, or if melodic variants coincide with each other, it is not a problem for the performers. Finally, a specifically 'heterophonic variation' is individual and non-coordinated: Each performer makes his/her musical decisions personally without taking into account the musical decisions of other performers, at least with respect to the resulting sonorities. In functionally differentiated heterophony, on the other hand, the methods of variation can be intentionally or unintentionally specialized. Such specialization is often connected with the technical abilities of the instruments – as David Morton explained this in relation to Thai music, "each individual line follows the style idiomatic for the instrument playing it" (Morton

1976: 21). What links the two kinds of heterophony is the lack of vertical coordination at the level of musical behaviour (i.e. we do not exclude the possibility that a vertical coordination can be present at the level of sound) and the principle of simultaneous variation (although the methods used may be different).

*Sound.* The level of sound would seem to be more unequivocal, less ambiguous. This is the material level of music, the sonic realization of the musical thinking, the sound outcome of the processes of conceptualization and behaviour. Sound can be also understood as a 'musical text' and, in this respect, it has a multilevel, multi-aspect structure. When investigating conceptualization and behaviour we can prognosticate the sound result; and when investigating the sound result we can make assumptions as to the conceptualization and behaviour. However, the level of sound is to some extent independent. Not all the regular patterns that can be found in the musical text proceed directly from the theoretical intentions or even from the actual behaviour of the performers. Music is in some sense a self-organizing system, where order at one level of musical structure can result in regular patterns at other levels. Thus, in respect of a multilinear texture, the vertical sonorities can depend on the musical scales and *vice versa*; the vertical organization can be conditioned by the rules of melodic development and *vice versa*; some aspects of the harmony can be explained through the rhythmic system, and so on. Therefore, it is sometimes sufficient that one of the aspects of musical structure be consciously organized in order to produce regular patterns in other aspects which are not under the direct control of the performers.

The organization of the vertical aspect of multilinear music can take different forms and manifests itself with different degrees of intensity. We can even say that some elements of regularity can be always found inasmuch as music differs from noise. The question thus arises as to what kind of orderliness should be considered as an example of 'vertical organization' in multilinear music. It seems that this is a question of limitation. If the structure of vertical sonorities is limited only by the structure of the musical scale, it is not enough to draw the conclusion that the vertical aspect is organized, because such limitation is inevitable *per se* and does not need the intervention of the

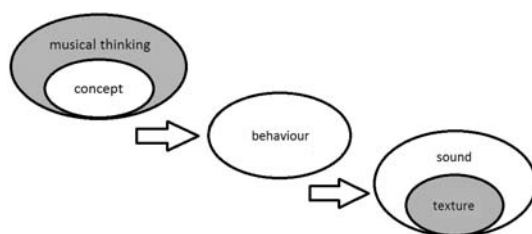
human mind. ‘True’ vertical coordination begins when the usage of the possible sonorities is limited by some additional principle – this might be, for example, the prevalence of the specific intervals or combinations of the scale notes.<sup>19</sup> Such regularities may manifest themselves at different levels of musical structure and are usually more evident at its deeper levels (Pärtlas 2012).

### 2.3. Comparison of the bipartite and tripartite models

The use of both the models described above – the music theoretical and music anthropological – helps understand better the nature of multipart and multilinear music. Both conceptions proceed from the differentiation between thinking in relation to music and its realization as sound. However, they are quite different. The scheme in the Figure 1 shows the relation between the two models – the white ovals designate the levels of the tripartite model by Merriam, while the grey ones refer to the bipartite model suggested by Bershadskaya.

The major difference here is that the level of behaviour is present only in Merriam’s model, which is a manifestation of the ethnomusicological approach. Additionally, the notion of ‘musical thinking’ is not exactly the same as that of ‘conceptualization’. Whereas the latter refers to knowledge that can be verbalized (‘thinking about music’ rather than ‘musical thinking’), the former notion is broader – it includes not only conceptualization but also specifically musical thinking, which can be a non-verbal cognitive process.<sup>20</sup> Bershadskaya’s notion of texture seems, on the contrary, to be narrower than that of sound. According to Merriam, the “sound has structure, and it may be a system” (Merriam 1964: 32). The ‘texture’ in Bershadskaya’s theory also has a structure, but it is a surface structure, and the level of the deep structure, that of the musical system, is designated as the *склад* (which is, at the ideal level, a manifestation of the ‘musical thinking in relation to texture’). In ethnomusicology, the level of sound embraces

**Figure 1.** Comparison of the bipartite and tripartite models of musical process.



all aspects of musical text – structural, acoustical, perceptual, etc.; in Bershadskaya’s conception, the ‘texture’ reflects the structural aspect of the musical text (more exactly the surface layer of the structure). The profound difference between the two research models under consideration concerns, however, the source of the information: the ethnomusicological approach takes into account all the sources of information available to the researcher, whereas the music theoretical approach obtains information about musical thinking from an analysis of the musical text. It would seem that the analytical potential of the music theoretical approach might also be used successfully in ethnomusicological research, especially when musical texts (e.g. archival recordings) are the only source available. In any case, we can state that a consideration of the different aspects and levels of the musical process gives us a more complete, multi-dimensional insight into the issue of musical texture and multipart and multilinear music making.

## 3. Towards an inclusive and differentiated conception of heterophony

### 3.1. One-part and multipart heterophony

When discussing the topic of heterophony, ethnomusicologists do not usually touch upon the question of the different kinds of heterophony

<sup>19</sup> Concerning the different principles of the formation of the vertical sonorities in multilinear music see Pärtlas 2010.

<sup>20</sup> The concept of ‘musical thinking’ as a specific form of non-verbal imaginative thinking is very important for Russian musicological thought in general (e.g. see the works of the leading Russian scholars such as Yuri Kholopov, Yuri Tyulin, Viktor Bobrovsky, Vyacheslav Medushevsky, Yevgeny Nazaikinsky and others). With regard to traditional multipart singing, the importance of ‘musical thinking’ and ‘musical hearing’ is emphasized by Izaly Zemtsovsky, who describes “part-singing as part-thinking”, which means that part-singing is only possible when each member of polyphonic community (*Homo Polyphonicus*) is able to hear and think polyphonically (Zemtsovsky 2003: 47, 51).

that occur in the different musical cultures of the world, their comparison or the search for an integrating definition. Individual researchers mostly proceed from the particular musical traditions that they investigate. For instance, John Napier in his article "A 'Failed' Unison or Conscious Differentiation: The Notion of 'Heterophony' in North Indian Vocal Performance" (2006) provides a perspicacious discussion of many theoretical questions of heterophony, but he does not go beyond those topics which are directly connected to his musical subject. In English-language ethnomusicological works we very seldom find references to heterophonic styles other than those of the instrumental and vocal-instrumental music of South-East, East and South Asia and the Middle East. Despite some exceptions to this tendency, such as Scottish Gaelic psalm-singing (one of the common examples of heterophony given in music dictionaries), the vast layer of heterophonic singing in Eastern Europe (Eastern Slavs, Finno-Ugric peoples) is hardly considered. On the other hand, Russian-language ethnomusicology, in which the subject of heterophony is thoroughly investigated and theoretically discussed, takes into account only the heterophonic singing styles characteristic of the latter region. My own dissertation on heterophony in the ritual songs of the Russian-Belorussian borderland (1992) follows, in this respect, the Russian theoretical tradition, and the definition of heterophony which I have proposed in that work is valid only for the relevant type of heterophonic singing.

One of the purposes of this article is to find a definition of heterophony which would be inclusive enough to encompass all kinds of heterophonic music making and, at the same time, sufficiently differentiative to point to the principal differences between them. The necessary condition for the achievement of such a goal is to make a clear distinction between *one-part* and *multi-part heterophony*. To understand this distinction unambiguously, we should first agree on what we mean by a 'part'.

The word *part* is rich in meanings, both musical and general. In ethnomusicology, the term can denote the layer of the musical texture, the part of the performing group, the musical or social role of the performer, the individual contri-

bution of every singer/instrumentalist, etc. Using the words 'part' and 'multipart' figuratively, authors sometimes express quite radical ideas, like that of Ignazio Macchiarella, for example, who draws attention to the 'parts' of performer and listener: "Indeed, all music might be considered 'multipart', since all music (or almost all music) is a social act ("a social experience" in Blacking's terms), i.e. it comes from interactions between at least two parts: performer and listener" (Macchiarella 2012: 9). Although this remark is valuable in itself, it is hardly helpful to use the term 'multipart' with such a broad meaning. The other radical interpretation would be to understand the word 'part' as an individual musical contribution of each performer. In this case, we would have to confess that all collectively performed music is 'multipart', which is also too broad a meaning of the term. Even if we assume that a 'part' means the division of the performers into the functionally different parts, the problem remains that such a division is not necessarily connected with their simultaneous sound, since the parts can be performed successively – for example, the parts of the lead singer and responding chorus.<sup>21</sup> The very broad interpretations mentioned above make the term 'multipart' too catchall and obliterate its meaning as a term relating to the domain of musical texture and to the conceptualization and behaviour that give rise to it. To keep the meaning of the term 'multipart' within reasonable borders, it would be sensible to limit its usage to cases of the intentional production of 'simultaneous otherness'. This means that, at the different levels of musical process, the notion 'part' would designate (1) the musical textural function that is recognized by the singers/instrumentalists (the level of musical thinking and conceptualization), (2) the single performer or group of performers who execute a functionally differentiated part of the musical texture (the level of behaviour), and (3) the respective layer of the musical texture (the level of sound). Under such conditions, the term 'multipart' would mean *intentional and negotiated division of the performers into functionally different parts with the goal of producing the simultaneous sound of two or more melodic lines*.

In accordance with the above, I would suggest using the notion *one-part heterophony* in those

<sup>21</sup> Susanne Fürniss pointed to this problem of terminology in her paper at the Tallinn Seminar.

cases in which all the singers/instrumentalists perform the same part – in other words, when they are not divided into different parts. Such a situation mostly occurs when the group of performers is homogeneous, consisting only of singers or of one kind of musical instrument.

One-part heterophony is a widespread phenomenon. For example, it is typical of many regional song traditions of the East Slavs; it also occurs among Finno-Ugric peoples such as Mordvinians and Udmurts and among the Kryashen-Tatars (Boyarkina 1986; Nuriyeva 2008; Almeyeva 2008). Russian ethnomusicology, describing such a type of music making, names heterophony *функциональное одноголосие* (in relation to vocal music, it can be translated as ‘functional one-part singing’) and opposes it to the *функциональное двухголосие* (‘functional two-part singing’, the term coined by Yevgeny Gippius) (*Narodnoye ... 2005: 495–496*). The latter means that the singers consciously differentiate between two textural parts and have a respective terminology (*Narodnoye ... 2005: 498*). In the work just mentioned (which was intended as a textbook on Russian traditional music), the following definition is given for heterophony:

Functional one-part singing [*функциональное одноголосие*] or *heterophony* [...] is the type of multilinear texture [*многоголосной фактуры*] that is characterized by the interlacement of the different performers’ versions within the confines of the same voice part [*голосовой партии*]. In respect to such texture, the folk singers say that they all sing ‘in one voice’ (*Narodnoye ... 2005: 496*).

In the same textbook, three types of heterophony are described: (1) ‘variant heterophony’, (2) ‘differentiated heterophony’ and (3) ‘bourdon diaphony’ (*бурдонная диафония*, Yevgeny Gippius’ term) (*Narodnoye ... 2005: 496–497*). In some other publications, ‘monodic heterophony’ (‘a wide unison’) is also mentioned. In monodic and

variant heterophony the differences between the individual melodic lines are quite small. In the former case, they are limited by differences in tuning, micro-melodic and micro-rhythmic elements and voice embellishment (which still creates a specific sound very different from the unison of art music). According to the textbook we are referring to here, variant heterophony can be one- and two-register, which means that some of the singers perform their variants of the melody an octave above the others (such a form of singing is typical of North-Russia and some other regions) (*Narodnoye ... 2005: 496*).<sup>22</sup> In differentiated heterophony and bourdon diaphony one can find some rudiments of functional differentiation, with some singers mostly using the lower or upper part of the scale and some singers performing the fragments of the bourdon. While the sound outcome gives the impression of quite a developed degree of polyphony, we are nevertheless still dealing here with one-part singing, in as much as (1) the singers do not recognize these divergences as different parts (although they are to some extent aware of them), (2) they do not have traditional terms for designating these textural functions, and (3) such kinds of specialized variation are not obligatory for the singers.<sup>23</sup>

Collectively performed one-part music which is realized in a multilinear texture can be always defined as heterophony, because singing/playing one part always means performing the same melody or, more precisely, melodic model. In the case of multipart practice there can be different situations: the simultaneously performed parts can proceed from different melodic models (this is the more typical situation) or from the same model. The latter case impels us to consider the use of the term ‘heterophony’. If we agree to extend the use of this term to cases of the intentional, functionally differentiated simultaneous variation of the same melody, we should use in such a context the notion of *multipart heterophony*. Such a use of the term ‘heterophony’ was actually quite

<sup>22</sup> It seems to me that in the case of the two-register singing the use of the term ‘heterophony’ is questionable, because the lower and upper parts have different textural and even social functions (the married women sing with the chest voice and young unmarried women with the head voice) and the performers are aware of this. They characterize the timbre of the voices as ‘thick’ and ‘thin’ voices (*Narodnoye ... 2005: 496*). This ‘two-register heterophony’ also occurs among Udmurts (Nuriyeva 2008: 65, 66).

<sup>23</sup> The singing practices described here are obviously the transitional forms between one-part and multipart musical practice.

usual from the very beginning, when this notion was introduced into scholarly language, and is legitimized by long ethnomusicological practice. In connection with the topic of heterophony, ethnomusicologists very often refer to the orchestral music of south-east Asia, such as the Indonesian *gamelan* (e.g. Cooke 2001). This musical practice can provide a very good example of ‘multipart heterophony’.

All researchers describe the texture of *gamelan* music as consisting of multiple textural layers (usually named ‘strata’) which are easily distinguishable for listeners owing to their specific sound characteristics. The strata can be grouped into four or five functional layers such as “(1) foundation/colotomic, (2) simplified/abstracted melody, (3) elaborated/varied melody, and (4) drum patterns” (Spiller 2004: 71).<sup>24</sup> The melodic strata (the second and third functions in Spiller’s classification) are based on the same melodic model – *pokok* in Balinese and *balungan* in Javanese tradition (Jaap Kunst named it ‘nuclear melody’) – which is varied in accordance with the textural functions and specific characteristics of the instruments. As Henry Spiller explains:

The lower-pitched instruments (jengglong and demung) play versions of the melody that are very simple – only seven notes in the example. The versions played by the higher-pitched instruments (boning and titil) are, by comparison, very elaborate. They are considered to be different versions of the same melody because they land on the same pitches at regular time intervals. The simplified version, played by the lower-pitched instruments, includes only the melody’s most essential contours (Spiller 2004: 70).

The differences between variations emerge not only as a result of performing different compositional functions such as ‘abstraction’ and ‘elaboration’ (Tenzer 2000: 53), but also because

of the particularities of the instruments’ playing techniques and conventional musical idioms. According to Benjamin Brinner: “Given a basic melody, musicians will rely on their idiomatic knowledge of instrument-specific conventions (the “idiom” of that instrument) to create the strands that make up the rich, dense texture characteristic of Javanese *gamelan*” (Brinner 2008: 24). The conjunction of the melodic versions into the whole texture is coordinated on the basis of certain vertical rules and musicians create their variations taking into account the musical decisions of the other participants in the performance. As Brinner asserts: “Musicians listen to one another, acutely aware of what others are doing and attuned to the cues that come from those playing leading roles” (Brinner 2008: 24).

According to the descriptions above, the multipart heterophony of *gamelan* essentially differs from the one-part vocal heterophony of the East Slavs, Finno-Ugric peoples and others: the parts are functionally differentiated, the variation techniques are specialized, one of the parts is recognized as the theme (model) for variation, and the simultaneous melodic variants are coordinated at least at some certain points of the metrical and rhythmic form. Nevertheless, we are still dealing here with the principle of simultaneous variation, the melodic versions have the same reference notes (i.e. the structurally fixed sonorities are unisons or octaves), and, between obligatory unison points, the vertical outcome of variation is not a matter for detailed aural control.<sup>25</sup>

Another kind of the ‘multipart heterophony’ is to be found in accompanied vocal music where a melodic instrument performs the variation of the vocal part. In this connection, I referred above to the North-Indian melodic accompaniment *sangat* (Napier 2006) and to a similar Japanese practise mentioned by Sachs (Sachs 1977 [1962]: 187). Certainly, there must also be other examples of such heterophonic accompaniment, including

<sup>24</sup> Michael Tenzer names these functions in a slightly different way and adds the function of ‘mediation’ – “*pokok* reinforcement (or colotomic melody)” (Tenzer 2000: 53).

<sup>25</sup> In connection with the theory and terminology of *gamelan* music, it should be noted that contemporary *gamelan* researchers do not actively use the word ‘heterophony’, preferring instead the notions of ‘polyphonic stratification’ and ‘simultaneous variation’. However, some authors mention that the latter technique can be named ‘heterophony’ (Brinner 2008: 88; Spiller 2004: 12, 278); sometimes the term ‘stratified heterophony’ is used in this connection. It is also interesting that, as Tenzer remarks, the understandings of strata and their compositional functions are more characteristic of the Western conceptualization of *gamelan* music, whereas “the traditional taxonomies are not concerned with the idea of strata” (Tenzer 2000: 52).



'self-heterophony', which emerges when a singer accompanies his/her singing on a melodic instrument, as is the case with the Serbian epic songs with *gusle*. Some cases of heterophonic accompaniment were already briefly described above; therefore here I will only summarize their essential features, comparing them with the other types of heterophonic music making.

Such practises should be defined as multipart music because the parts of the singer and accompanist are functionally differentiated and subordinated. The singer's part is considered to be the main part and the reference melody for the accompanist; from the point of view of variation, it is a 'theme'. The accompanying instrumental part (or parts) is a subsidiary part, which follows the soloist's musical decisions. According to John Napier's description, "if the authority of the soloist is accepted, and their line is understood as 'prime', it may be interpreted as the 'normal' version presented at the same time as one or more accompanying voices actually present 'the heterophony'" (Napier 2006: 93). As in the case with *gamelan*, the variation methods of the instrumentalists are idiomatic for their instruments. All the same, the performers' attitude towards the differences between the parts may, in some respects, be similar to that of one-part vocal heterophony, because musicians tend to declare that the accompanist follows the soloist exactly (Napier 2006: 102).

Summarizing the above, we may conclude that the main differences between one-part and multipart heterophony concern the question of functional differentiation (including subordination) and the method of variation. One-part heterophony is characterized by the lack of functional differentiation and subordination of the melodic lines and by the 'equivalent-alternative' method of variation, whereas the textural layers of multipart heterophony are functionally differentiated and subordinated and the variation methods are specialized. The most important common features of both types of heterophony are the principle of 'simultaneous variation' and the lack of deliberate aural control over the vertical sonorities (except structural unisons). However, the question of aural control and coordination is quite a difficult one and will therefore be discussed in the next part of the article.

### **3.2. Consciousness, intention, control and vertical regularities in heterophony**

The concepts listed in the title of this subsection are closely connected to one another, but they are not the same. As mentioned above, Curt Sachs makes a distinction between 'unconscious' and 'conscious' heterophony (1957, 1962). Peter Cooke (2001) uses in this context words with slightly different meanings: 'accidental' and 'deliberate'. John Napier (2006) wittily notes that heterophony can be unintentional but conscious, if the reason for variant deviations lies in the skills of the musicians involved. He also mentions the expression "a planless plan" by Alan Lomax (1976), which refers to the contrary situation – heterophony that is intentional (planned) but not conscious in details. The intention to produce a multilinear texture does not necessarily mean that musicians also carefully coordinate their parts and control the resulting vertical sonorities. When considering coordination and control, we should not think in the terms of 'yes' or 'no', but ought always to ask the extent to which the sound is coordinated and controlled. Finally, the lack of deliberate vertical coordination and control does not mean that there are no regularities in the vertical aspect of the music. These cognitive questions and some other relative topics of heterophony will be discussed below.

#### **3.2.1. Hearing and listening in the perception of heterophony**

From the cognitive point of view, it would be interesting to consider the discrepancies between the intention of the performers to sing/play the same melody and the multilinear textural outcome. Moreover, the question is not only one of intention, but also of the *perception of the sound result*. John Napier comments on the *sangat* practice: "I was surprised when not one, but two consultants told me that the accompanist can play the same thing at the same time. This seemed to fly in the face of both commonsense, and almost everything that I had heard" (Napier 2006: 102). Questioning the traditional singers of the Russian-Belorussian borderland in 1980s, I received the same 'standard' explanation, which was mentioned above in connection with Russian heterophonic singing (*Narodnoye* ... 2005: 496):

“We sing these songs in one voice”. When I insisted and explained my question more precisely, I was finally told that everyone sings the tune in his/her own way and it is possible that they do not sing exactly the same melody. It seemed to me that my question was strange to my consultants and that normally they do not think about it. Of course, they would be able to *hear* the deviations from unison in their singing, but apparently they usually do not *listen* to them.

Although the singers/instrumentalists may not be interested in careful control over the musical texture, it can be presumed that the specific sound of a multilinear texture in every concrete musical style becomes a ‘sonic ideal’ for the bearers of the respective tradition and the deviations from this ‘ideal’ (e.g. if an unexpected enduring unison or an over-dense multilinear texture emerges) can cause dissatisfaction. In multipart heterophony the performers are evidently far more conscious of the overall sound. However, psychologically speaking, the vertical aspect of music in both one-part and multipart heterophony is traditionally something for *hearing* rather than for *listening*, i.e. it can be passively perceived, but it is not the object of a “concentrated, goal oriented interest in noticing what is sounding” (Günther 2007: 10). Even when we speak about ‘listening’, the question remains as to what singers/instrumentalists actually listen to – whether it is to the general sound, to the melodic variation of other performers, or to the structure of the vertical sonorities. This last kind of listening (listening to the structure of the vertical sonorities) is apparently not characteristic of any type of heterophony.

Of course, when speaking about ‘hearing’ and ‘listening’ in heterophony and, more generally, about all conscious and unconscious musical cognitive processes, we should also take into account the individual factor. When analysing such processes, we should distinguish between general tendencies and the peculiarities of musical thinking of the individual performers. Thus it is always possible that there are some performers who are inclined to ‘listen’, whereas others merely ‘hear’.

Equally, it is also possible that some performers consciously produce a multilinear texture, while others just perform their individual variants of the melody.

In the perception of heterophonic music by outsider listeners (e.g. by ethnomusicologists), the emphasis of aural attention is often shifted. We tend to pay attention to the aspects of sound which are not essential for the bearers of the tradition. The same occurs when ‘secondary’ musical collectives (e.g. so-called ‘folklore ensembles’) try to imitate one-part heterophonic music. In such a situation, the attention of performers is directed to the intentional production of heterophony, which is an attitude fundamentally different from that of the performers of the ‘primary’ tradition.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.2.2. Levels and forms of texture control

Heterophony is often described as an unconscious and/or irregular multilinear texture. Together with the principle of ‘simultaneous variation’, this would seem to be the second main characteristic feature of heterophony. However, as demonstrated above, heterophony can be both unconscious and conscious and, as will be shown in the next subsection, the irregularity of the vertical outcome of heterophony can be called into question in many cases. I would suggest that this essential quality of heterophony could be better described using the notion of *control*. Discussing the problem in these terms, we can say that whether heterophony is conscious or unconscious, irregular or regular, *the performers of heterophonic music do not have (or have a rather limited) control over the vertical aspect of sound*. However, we should take into account the fact that musical processes cannot be completely controlled or uncontrolled – it is a question of degree, and control can manifest itself at different levels and in different forms.

First of all, it should be understood which aspects of the multilinear texture can be controlled. The most elementary level of control, which is characteristic of all kinds of heterophony, is *unity of tonality and synchronicity of form*. This manifests itself in the structural unisons, which are always found in the heterophonic texture. The

<sup>26</sup>As my personal experience in teaching heterophonic songs to music students shows, the avoidance of unison is quite a challenging task for the ‘secondary’ performers, and, unless they concentrate specifically on the individual melodic variation, the heterophonic elements easily disappear and the texture inconspicuously becomes plain unison.

second level of control is that of the *textural coordination* between individual melodic lines. In this respect, three attitudes are possible: (1) the intentional production of a multilinear texture, (2) the intentional production of a unison texture, and (3) a neutral attitude towards the texture. In heterophony, we are dealing with the first or third attitude.

The neutral attitude means that singers/instrumentalists do not plan any kind of texture – they just do not think in the terms of texture, having neither the concept of unison nor that of multilinear texture. Such music making is conceptually one-part and its textural outcome depends to a great extent on the structural complexity of the melody – the more complex melody, the more multilinear divergences we can expect to emerge. In vocal music, this is often connected with the number, length and structure of the melismata – the singing of a single syllable of the text with two or more successive melody notes. In the Estonian runic tunes, which are structurally very simple and mostly syllabic, the heterophonic divergences are minimal (Oras 2008); in the more melismatic Russian tunes, the heterophonic elements are usually more developed. The density of the heterophonic texture also depends on the variation technique and the modal structure. In those styles that are characterized by the exchangeability of certain scale notes in the melodic variants (as in many Russian regional song styles), heterophonic divergences can often appear even without a melismatic context.

The intentional production of a multilinear texture is conceptually a multipart attitude, though this does not mean that performers have complete control over the musical texture. So there are several compositional devices which can ensure the multilinear result without any control over the structure of vertical sonorities. One such possibility is *rhythmic differentiation*, which means that performers use complementary rhythms either by the simultaneous singing/playing of the melodic variants with a different rhythmic density or by filling the long notes in one part with the shorter notes in the other. The former device is often consciously used in multipart heterophony (as is the case with *gamelan*); the latter situation, on the other hand, may appear by chance in the process of variation. Another device for creating a multilinear texture is *pitch differentiation*,

i.e. the use of the different parts of the musical scale (higher and lower) in the different parts. The situation where some singers/instrumentalists perform the lower melodic variants while others perform higher variants occurs in many styles of multipart music, but, as a rule, it is not characteristic of heterophony. Some exceptions like the above-mentioned Russian ‘differentiated heterophony’ point to transitional forms of textural thinking. As in the case with ‘rhythmic differentiation’, the use of the lower and higher melodic variants does not necessarily mean that the resulting vertical sonorities are under the control of the performers, who may simply maintain the unity of the tune’s modal scale.

The third level of control concerns the *structure of vertical sonorities*. As mentioned above, such control can manifest itself mainly in two forms: in the preference for certain harmonic intervals (e.g. thirds or perfect fifths) and/or in the preference for certain combinations of scale notes (Pärtlas 2010). The control over the structure of the vertical sonorities can also be more or less detailed, depending on what exactly the subject of the control is – all real sonorities or only the structural sonorities. In the latter case, the number of vertical sonorities that are not structural and, therefore, that are not the subject of the control depends (as in the case of heterophonic divergences) on the development of the melodic embellishment (including the melismata). For example, in the Seto multipart songs, almost all real sonorities are structural (due to the very small number of melismata), and therefore almost all real vertical sonorities have a regular structure. In the South-Russian multipart singing, on the contrary, one may find many, as it were, accidental sonorities between the structural sonorities that act as a tonal and formal reference; one of the reasons for this is the more developed and complex melodic style of the songs. There are also traditional styles where the thorough aural control over the vertical sonorities is a special aesthetic attitude (e.g. the *cantu a cuncordu* style in Sardinian music).

It appears, however, that the highest level of vertical control – the control over the structure of vertical sonorities – is not characteristic of any kind of heterophonic music. The singers/instrumentalists can be conscious of the fact of the variant divergences in the texture; they can like the sonic outcome and produce such types of texture

intentionally; but the quality of the vertical sonorities is not planned and/or controlled by the performers. This last phenomenon – the lack of control over the quality of the vertical sonorities – should be considered as a second attribute of heterophony along with ‘the simultaneous variation’.

### 3.2.3. Vertical regularities in heterophony

Usually, when speaking about the unconsciousness of heterophony, researchers automatically assume a lack of any vertical organization<sup>27</sup> in the heterophonic texture. The main goal of this subsection is to show that some harmonic regularities can also be found in the multilinear texture that emerges unintentionally and/or is not under the control of the performers. The existence of such regularities can be explained by the connections between the different aspects of the musical structure – they are essentially *resulting regularities* which emerge when intentional coordination of one aspect of the musical structure provides unintentional coordination of another aspect. In the case of heterophony, *the rules of melodic building and variation determine the regularities in the structure of vertical sonorities*.

At the most elementary level, the interval structure of the vertical sonorities can be determined by the very structure of the musical scale, especially when dealing with scales that consist of a small number of scale notes. Such a correlation is obvious, but sometimes the interdependences that occur are more complex. For example, the resulting vertical coordination can be connected with the rules of the *interchangeability of scale notes in the melodic variants*. Thus, in many musical traditions, the rule of so-called ‘overjumping’ (*Überspringverfahren* – Gerhard Kubik 1968) underlies the formation of both melodic variants and vertical sonorities. According to this rule, the vertical sonorities are composed of the notes placed next but one in the scale. Investigating the multipart music of Central and East Africa, Kubik discovered that this principle can be realized in music with different scale structures, such

as the pentatonic and diatonic scales and the scale based on the overtone series (Kubik 1968). I found an analogous principle in the Russian and Seto (South-East Estonia) songs based on the whole-tone and one-three-semitone scale (Pärtlas 2006). What is especially important is that under the conditions of different scales the principle of ‘overjumping’ gives the different intervallic results: thus, in diatonic music the sonorities of the minor and major thirds emerge, in the pentatonic music perfect fourths and major thirds, in the whole-tone and one-three-semitone mode the major thirds only, etc.

Although Kubik interpreted the principle of ‘overjumping’ as the method forming the vertical sonorities, I would like to draw attention to the possibility that this principle could be of *melodic origin*. It seems that the theoretical substantiation of this phenomenon could be the theory of ‘tertial induction’ (*теория терцово́й индукции*) of the Russian music theorist Lev Mazel (1972). Lev Mazel was not satisfied with the common explanation of the tertial chord structure in tonal music by the acoustic qualities of vertical intervals alone. He added a functional explanation, which takes into account the melodic functions of the scale notes. Since the notes placed next but one in the scale both have a melodic tendency to go to the same scale note located between them, they have a similar melodic function (for instance, the upper and the lower neighbouring tones of the same scale note). Since stepwise melodic motion has a special importance in many musical cultures, the principle of ‘overjumping’ is widespread in traditional (and art) music. The vertical sonorities that result from this principle may be recognized by the performers as a desirable harmonic sounds, but the method of ‘overjumping’ can also work without any harmonic intentions. The heterophonic songs of the Russian-Belarusian borderland provide a good example of this last situation (an example of the musical style is provided in Ex. 1).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Actually, I would prefer the notion of ‘harmonic regularities’, were the word ‘harmony’ not so strongly connected for many musicologists with the functional harmony of the Western art music. The regularities in the structure of the vertical (i.e. harmonic) sonorities, however, can be found in music that is not related to functional harmony. So we can speak about a harmonic dimension in all musical styles where the ‘simultaneous otherness’ is coordinated by certain intervallic and/or modal rules.

<sup>28</sup> I described this song tradition and its heterophonic style in more detail in Pärtlas 2012; therefore I will provide here the minimum necessary examples and explanations.



*avoid particular vertical sonorities.* This suggests that in the heterophonic tradition under consideration: (1) the musical thinking of the singers is essentially melodic; (2) at the level of behaviour they do not coordinate their melodic variants; and (3) the regularities that can be found at the level of sound result entirely from the melodic logic of the tunes.

### 3.2.4. Heterophony and ‘mass singing’

Before moving on to the concluding section, I would like to touch upon one more topic related to heterophony, although it is somewhat ‘risky’ and perhaps provocative. This topic concerns the aesthetic evaluation of the different forms of heterophony. In this connection, Curt Sachs differentiated between ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ heterophony, proceeding from the understanding that ‘positive’ heterophony is conscious and ‘negative’ unconscious. So bringing an example of ‘unconscious’ heterophony, Sachs speaks about congregational singing in church; he notes that it “would be unbearable if intention and attention were focused on satisfactory sense perception, meaning, on art” (Sachs 1977 [1962]: 186).

Although nowadays we usually avoid evaluating any kind of music as ‘negative’, it would be unreasonable to deny the obvious fact that different musical phenomena may have a different aesthetic value for the insiders of a tradition and for those outside it. In musicology, the word ‘heterophony’ is often associated with musical phenomena that have little or no aesthetic value, such as crowd singing at a demonstration or some sports event, soldiers’ songs performed while marching, etc. For this reason, the term ‘heterophony’ is sometimes perceived as having a negative meaning. Some negative attitudes towards heterophony, which can be found even among ethnomusicologists, are also rooted in the essentially ethnocentric belief that the level of control over the musical process determines the quality of the musical result and that real mastery means an awareness of every smallest detail of musical performance. Proceeding from such an attitude, the value of heterophony is sometimes seen in its ‘polyphonic potential’, i.e. in the assumption that it may be considered as historical step in the development of a truly polyphonic style (Bouët 2012).

For me there is no doubt that heterophony in both its forms – one-part and multipart – can

be an entirely self-sufficient aesthetic phenomenon; however, I would like to draw a distinction between heterophony and simple inaccuracy in performance. The case of so-called ‘mass singing’ usually involves the latter situation. Ignazio Macchiarella differentiates between ‘mass singing’ practices, which “should not be considered as multipart music since they lack intentionality”, and heterophony, which according to him is multipart music, because “these intentional unperfect music synchronisms are fully part of the expressions of multipart music” (Macchiarella 2012: 10). While agreeing with the idea that imprecise musical performance and heterophony are different in nature, I cannot agree with the reason Macchiarella gives for this difference, because, as I have attempted to demonstrate above, one-part heterophony is essentially unintentional and lacks vertical awareness. I think that the border between ‘true’ heterophony and discordant ‘mass singing’ is not the border between conscious and unconscious, or intentional and unintentional. In my opinion, the question here relates to *how music is initially meant and how it is performed*. The ancient heterophonic songs are initially ‘meant’ to be performed with variation and not in unison and heterophonic performance is in full accordance with their very nature. In such songs, the unintentional heterophonic divergences are really an inherent part of the musical expression. In the case of ‘mass singing’, we are very often dealing with music that was initially meant to be sung either solo, in unison or in a harmonically coordinated multipart way (as in the case, for example, of popular songs used as marching songs). The ‘mass performance’ of such music is usually far from being perfect and the performers themselves do not consider such music making as skilled and aesthetically valuable: such music making fulfils other functions.

Every kind of music indeed, including heterophonic songs, can be performed improperly. For example, I witnessed an occasion when two women started to sing a heterophonic wedding song in parallel seconds. I asked them whether it was a proper performance and they said ‘no, it was not’. This suggests that although the heterophonic divergences in these songs were unintentional, the performers were fully conscious of the need to support the unity of tonality. It seems that in such cases we should not speak about heterophony,

but, rather more mundanely, about inaccurate performance. Of course, the border between heterophony and inaccurate performance can sometimes be very vague, and it depends, too, on the cultural and musical context.

## Conclusions

In my research I proceeded from the assumption that a clear system of concepts and terms is a necessary condition for every productive theoretical discussion. While Alessandro Bratus in his essay in the present volume praises the term 'multipart' for its "positive ambiguity", which allows it to be applied to different musical practices, I try to overcome the 'negative ambiguity' of this term, which impedes understanding between ethnomusicologists. I also try to enunciate a definition of 'heterophony' that is both inclusive and coherent, clearly pointing to the distinctive attributes of this phenomenon and differentiating between its particular forms.

I believe that 'heterophony' is a term that is well worth theorizing about. This term could be very useful in ethnomusicological discourse, since it combines in itself two important advantages: on one hand, it is a Western term of a very old origin, which does not need much translation; on the other hand, its 'new history' is not long and it is mostly used for designating the phenomena of non-Western music. On the subject of the usefulness of a clearly defined international terminology, I completely agree with John Napier, who said:

some straightforward terminological determination may be necessary, one that perhaps does not mire writers in awkward translation, verbose descriptions of what they perceive, endless neologisms, or the constant introduction of non-Western terminology, which in itself always requires a degree of translation (Napier 2006: 86).

Such terms as 'heterophony' allow us better to identify some universal features in human musical thinking and in the ways of music making and ensure the possibility of the cross-cultural use of the terminology.

It would appear that the most typical cause of ambiguous definitions and their different understandings is *an insufficient attention to the different*

*levels and aspects of musical and cultural phenomena.* Using (and merging) the existing *structural models of musical process*, such as Merriam's tripartite model 'concept – behaviour – sound' and Bershanskaya's bipartite model *склад – фактура* (musical thinking and sonic realization (texture)), I tried to better understand to which level(s) one or another (ethno)musicological term refers and formulate definitions that take into account differences between the levels.

At the *level of sound* (sonic realization), I propose the use of the concept *multilinear texture* as the most neutral term for designating every form of 'simultaneous otherness'. Heterophony, as a kind of texture, is always multilinear. A multilinear texture is also characteristic of multipart music, but *not all multilinear music is multipart*. 'True' multipart music implies the "will to produce differentiated sound emissions" (Macchiarella 2012: 10), which refers to the level of concept. This means that *multipart music should be defined proceeding, first of all, from the level of concept*, and the aspects of behaviour and sound outcome are secondary with respect to that of conceptualization.

At the *level of concept* (musical thinking), two types of heterophony should be distinguished – *one-part* and *multipart heterophony*. 'One-part heterophony' means that the performers do not divide themselves into different textural parts. The other characteristic features of 'one-part heterophony' are: (1) the performers lack the concept of unison; (2) the multilinear divergences are unintentional; (3) all the singers/instrumentalists have an equal role in the musical performance, executing 'equivalent-alternative' variants of the melody; (4) though in some cases the performers can be aware of the multilinear divergences in the texture, nevertheless they do not control the structure of the vertical sonorities. One-part heterophony typically occurs in homogeneous ensembles (the same type of musical instruments) and, especially, in vocal music. 'Multipart heterophony', on the other hand, means that: (1) the performers are consciously divided into functionally different textural parts; (2) their roles in the musical performance are differentiated and often subordinated; (3) the performers use specific methods of variation, which are often idiomatic of their instruments; (4) they are completely aware

of the multilinear character of the texture, but they still do not control the structure of the vertical sonorities.

The *level of behaviour* is the bridge between the level of concept and that of the sound. When studying heterophony, one should take into account that musical behaviour includes components that are not acknowledged at the level of concept or which can even (apparently) contradict the assertions of the bearers of tradition. The level of behaviour includes among other components also the specifically musical decisions and choices made by singers/instrumentalists during performance.

The descriptions of one-part and multipart heterophony proposed above may seem quite contrasting, but there are two essential features that link them together. The first of these is *the simultaneous variation of the same melody*, which is the well-known definition of heterophony. As I showed in this article, it works relatively well, but it is not sufficient and can be variously interpreted. The second attribute of heterophony, which has gained much less attention in ethnomusicological research, is *the lack of control over the structure of vertical sonorities*. In this paper I have tried to define this second characteristic feature of heterophony very carefully, because in this respect different understandings are possible. The second attribute of heterophony is very important, because the better we realize it, the better we can understand the first one, i.e. the nature of heterophonic variation. It would be incorrect to claim that performers completely lack control over the vertical aspect of heterophonic music, for they can be aware of the multilinear texture emerging as a result of the simultaneous variation, and indeed they can even coordinate the variation process (in the case of multipart heterophony). Neither would it be correct to assert that heterophonic texture is always irregular with respect to the intervallic structure of the vertical sonorities. Vertical regularities can be found in the resulting sonorities, but these are rooted in the rules of melodic variation and in the structure of musical scales. What really is not characteristic

of any kind of heterophony is *the intentional formation of particular vertical sonorities* (except the structural unisons). The resulting sonorities may be passively perceived by the traditional performers and listeners, but they are not the aim of the performance.

To summarize the theoretical discussion above in a short definition of heterophony, I would propose the following formulation: the term 'heterophony' may be used to define *different types of music making, both one-part and multipart, which are characterized by a multilinear texture and which come into being through the process of the simultaneous variation of the same melody when the performers do not control the quality of the vertical sonorities*. This definition contains as its inevitable and necessary part the usual description of heterophony as 'the simultaneous variation of the same melody'. One of its new components points to the lack of control over the vertical sonorities on the part of the performers. This is an attribute of heterophony which is of no less importance than 'the simultaneous variation'. The wording used for this attribute in the present definition emphasizes that we are speaking here about the levels of conceptualization (intention) and behaviour (control), but not about the sound outcome, because the latter may be 'vertically' regulated by the rules resulting from the melodic ('horizontal') musical logic. This new definition also points to the differences at the level of conceptualization between one-part and multipart heterophony and to the fact that both one-part and multipart musical thinking can be realized in a multilinear texture.

I hope that this definition, which is both inclusive and limiting and which takes into account different levels and aspects of the music-making process, facilitates the cross-cultural use of the term 'heterophony'. The recognition of heterophony as a complex and multilevel process also contributes to the more general discussion about the nature of traditional multipart music, drawing attention to the fundamental question about the relationship between human agency (musical thinking and actions) and sound structure in music.



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## Teoreetilised lähenemised heterofooniale

Žanna Pärtlas

Heterofoonia on üks lihtsamaid (algelisemaid) mitmehäälsuse vorme traditsioonilises muusikas ning samas üks segasemaid teoreetilisi teemasid etnomusikoloogias. Selle nähtuse tekkimine on otseselt seotud traditsioonilise muusika suulise loomuse ja sellest lähtuva muusikalise mõtlemisega, mistõttu on seda raske kirjeldada kasutades Euroopa kunstmuusikast välja kasvanud terminoloogilist aparati. Heterofoonia teoreetiline mõtestamine on keeruline ülesanne ka selle poolest, et paneb proovile muusikateooria ja etnomusikoloogia kõige üldisemaid muusikalise faktuuri ja selle tekitamisviisidega seotud mõisteid, millele lisandub etnomusikoloogiliste terminite tõlkimise probleem (siinne artikkel käsitleb põhiliselt ingliskeelset terminoloogiat, mis domineerib rahvusvahelises muusikateaduslikus suhtluses).

Artiklis üritatakse mõtestada heterofooniat kui muusikalist, sotsiaalset ja psühholoogilist nähtust, ühendades erinevaid lähenemisviise – muusikaanalüütilist, antropoloogilist ja kognitiivset. Ühtlasi arutletakse mitmehäälsusega seotud terminoloogia kasutamist ning otsitakse heterofooniale definitsiooni, mis oleks senistest täielikum (s.t. hõlmaks kõiki selle nähtuse olulisi tunnuseid), diferentseerivam (s.t. eristaks heterofoonia põhilisi liike) ja piiritlevam (s.t. määraks selgemini selle nähtuse piire) ning arvestaks niipalju kui võimalik ka väljakujunenud terminoloogilist traditsiooni. Viimase puhul võib täheldada mõningat vastuolulisust, mille üheks põhjuseks tundub olevat vähene arvestamine muusikalise protsessi mitmetasandilisusega, mis tähendab, et termineid kasutades jääb sageli teadvustamata, millisele tasandile üks või teine mõiste kuulub, ja nii satuvad eri tasandite terminid vastuollu. Artiklis üritatakse lahendada seda probleemi, vaadeldes järjekindlalt heterofoonia eri aspekte – rahvamuusikute mõtlemisviisi, muusikalise käitumise mustreid ning muusikat kui kõlalist objekti.

Vastavalt eelmainitud eesmärkidele koosneb artikkel kolmest peatükist. Esimeses peatükis (*On the terminology*) arutletakse mitmehäälsusega seotud üldisemaid mõisteid ning analüüsitakse heterofoonia n.-ö. klassikalist definitsiooni *the simultaneous variation of the same melody* ('sama meloodia üheaegne varieerimine'). Üldistest terminitest pööratakse erilist tähelepanu neutraalsetele katusterminitele, mille eesmärk on tähistada igasugust muusikalist kooskõlamist sõltumata mitmehäälsuse faktuuri ehitusest ja tekkimise põhjustest (sellega seoses on kasutatud Curt Sachs'i väljendit *simultaneous otherness* (Sachs 1977 [1962]: 177)). Paljudest käibel olevatest mõistetest (*polyphony, multipart, multivoiced, plurivocal, plurilinear music* jms.) jääb katusterminina sõelale väljend *multilinear music*, mis seostub põhiliselt muusikalise protsessi kõlatasandiga ja ei ole üleliia koormatud ajalooliselt väljakujunenud kitsamate tähendustega. Analüüsides heterofoonia tavapärasest definitsiooni leitakse, et selle näiliselt lihtsa sõnastuse igast komponendist võib aru saada (ja seda ka tehakse) üsna mitut moodi, mis teeb heterofoonia mõiste ebaselgeks ja laialivalguvaks. Muu hulgas vaadeldakse artikli selles osas heterofoonilise varieerimise spetsiifikat, meloodialiinide funktsionaalset vahekorda, sünkroonsuse mõistet jms. Samuti selgub, et heterofoonia üldlevinud definitsioon jätab nimetamata selle nähtuse ühe väga olulise tunnuse – faktuuri vertikaalse aspekti ebakorrapärasuse –, kuigi seda heterofoonia omadust mainitakse korduvalt sellealases kirjanduses, alustades termini kasutuselevõttust 20. sajandi alguses. Tähelepanu juhitakse ka sellele, et „vertikaalse irregulaarsuse“ mõiste ise nõuab lähemat seletamist ja täpsustamist.

Artikli teine peatükk (*Bipartite and tripartite theoretical models in the approach to heterophony*) loob heterofoonia uurimisele metodoloogilise aluse. Selle eesmärgiga võrreldakse kahte teoreetilist kontseptsiooni: Vene muusikateoreetiku Tatjana Beršadskaja kahetasandilist mudelit *склад–фактура* (~'mõtlemislaad–faktuur'),<sup>1</sup> kus esimene tasand iseloomustab faktuuriga seotud muusikalise mõtlemise põhiprintsiipi ja teine selle realiseerimist konkreetsetes faktuuris (Beršadskaja 1985 [1978]), ning Ameerika muusikaantropoloogi Alan P. Merriami kolmetasandilist mudelit *concept–behaviour–sound* ('idee–käitumine–kõla'; Merriam 1980 [1964]), mis lisab muusika ideaalse ja materiaalse tasandi vastandamisele

<sup>1</sup> Selle terminipaari esimest sõna on raske tõlkida eesti keelde (otsetõlge oleks „laad“, „viis“, „kord“), sest sellele vastav muusikateooria termin „kirjaviis“ viitab ühetähenduslikult kirjalikule muusikatradsioonile. Beršadskaja faktuuriteooria seisukohalt oleks kõige sobivam tõlge „mõtlemislaad“ või „mõtlemisviis“, kusjuures peab meele pidama, et jutt käib just muusikalise faktuuri aspektist.

ka antropoloogilise dimensiooni. Heterofoonia puhul võivad nende tasandite vahel tekkida (näilised) vastuolud: traditsioonikandjad võivad uskuda, et nad laulavad või mängivad ühehäälselt (idee tasand), samas varieerida meloodiat olulisel määral (käitumise tasand), mille tagajärjena osutub kõlaline tulemus mitmehäälsuks (kõla tasand). Samuti on võimalik situatsioon, kus muusikud ei koordineeri meloodia varieerimist ei idee ega käitumise tasandil, kuid ometi osutub kõla tasandil muusika vertikaalne aspekt korrapäraseks (Pärtlas 1992, 2012).

Kolmas peatükk (*Towards an inclusive and differentiated conception of heterophony*) koosneb kahest alaosast. Neist esimeses (*One-part and multipart heterophony*) eristatakse heterofoonia kahte tüüpi: *one-part heterophony*, mille puhul esitajad ei jagune partiideks ning kõik meloodia variandid on funktsionaalselt võrdsed, ning *multipart heterophony*, mille puhul esitajad jagunevad teadlikult partiideks ning meloodia variandid täidavad erinevaid funktsioone ja nende vahel võivad olla ka subordinatsiooni suhted.<sup>2</sup> Esimest tüüpi heterofoonia tekib põhiliselt homogeensetes ansamblites ja eriti vokaalmuusikas (näiteks esineb seda palju slaavlaste ja soomeugrilaste vanemas rahvalaulus); teine tüüp on omane heterogeensetele instrumentaalansamblitele (nagu Indoneesia *gamelan* või Filipiini *kulintang*) ja vokaal-instrumentaalmuusikale, kus meloodiline instrument saadab soololauljat (nagu Põhja-India instrumentaalsaade *sangat*). Need kaks heterofoonia tüüpi erinevad ka varieerimistehnika poolest: kui ühe partii raames toimuv varieerimine lähtub meloodiamudeli realiseerimise põhimõttelisest paljususest, siis eri partiides kasutatakse spetsialiseeritud varieerimistehnikaid (põhiliselt meloodia lihtsustamist ja keerustamist) ning meloodiavariandid on sageli idiomaatilised neid esitavatele muusikapillidele.

Kolmanda peatüki teises osas (*Consciousness, intention, control and vertical regularities in heterophony*) vaadeldakse küsimusi, mis on seotud mitmehäälsuse faktuuri tekitamise kognitiivsete aspektidega: teadvustatuse ja kavatsuslikkusega ning kontrolliga kõlalise tulemuse üle. Heterofooniat käsitlevates uurimustes ei pöörata üldjuhul tähelepanu erinevustele mainitud aspektide vahel. Käesolevas artiklis näidatakse, et mitmehäälsuse olemasolu teadvustamine ei tähenda selle kavatsuslikku tekitamist ning mõlemad ei tähenda, et muusikud üritavad või suudavad hoida mitmehäälsust kuuldelise kontrolli all. Samuti lahatakse mitmehäälsuse tekitamise strateegiaid ning kuuldelise kontrolli ulatust, juhtides tähelepanu faktile, et kontroll võib olla osaline ja puudutada vaid mõningaid mitmehäälsuse faktuuri aspekte. Heterofoonia atribuudina tõstetakse esile kontrolli puudumist mitmehäälsuses tekkivate kooskõlade üle, mis ühendab kõiki heterofoonia liike sõltumata sellest, kas mitmehäälsus on teadvustatud ja taotluslik ning kas muusikud jagunevad partiideks või mitte. Samuti näidatakse ühe konkreetse muusikatraditsiooni, nimelt Vene-Valgevene piiriala pulmalaulude näitel, kuidas heterofoonia teadvustamatus ja mitmehäälsuse kavatsuste puudumine lauljate poolt ei tähenda, et viisi varieerimise mitmehäälsuse tulemus oleks kaootiline. Viisi varieerimise meloodilised seaduspärasused, mis lähtuvad lauludele omasest laadisüsteemist, tagavad ka muusika vertikaalse aspekti korrapärasuse, kuigi keegi ei püüdle selle poole ei idee ega käitumise tasandil.

Artikli kokkuvõttes iseloomustatakse heterofoonia fenomeni, lähtudes järjest muusikalise protsessi kolmest tasandist – muusikalisest mõtlemisest, käitumisest ja kõlalisest tulemusest – ning võttes arvesse erinevusi heterofoonia kahe põhilise tüübi vahel (jagunemisega ning jagunemiseta partiidesse). Diskussiooni summeerivas heterofoonia definitsioonis osutatakse lisaks faktuuri tavapärasele kirjeldusele kõla tasandil („meloodia samaaegne varieerimine“) ka selle kognitiivsele ja käitumuslikule aspektile, ja nimelt – heterofoonia kahe tüübi olemasolule ning kontrolli puudumisele kooskõlade üle kui heterofoonia olemuslikule tunnusele. Uus definitsioon ühendab ja diferentseerib erinevaid muusikalisi nähtusi, mille puhul on heterofoonia terminid kasutatud, ning näitab nende ühiseid ja olulisi jooni. Loodetavasti võimaldab artiklis esitatud heterofoonia kontseptsioon selle mõiste mittevasturääkivat kasutamist erinevate muusikakultuuride puhul ning panustab ka üldisemasse diskussiooni traditsioonilise mitmehäälsuse olemuse üle.

<sup>2</sup> Inglisekeelsete terminite *one-part* ja *multipart* otsetõlge eesti keelde ei kõla kuigi hästi – „ühepartiiiline“ ja „mitmepartiiiline“. Samuti ei sobi ka terminid „ühe- ja mitmehäälsus“, sest need on kõlaltasandiga seotud katusterminid, samal ajal kui „partii“ viitab idee ja käitumise tasanditele. Võib-olla tasuks kasutada selles kontekstis vene etnomusikoloogia eeskujul termineid „funktsionaalne ühe- ja mitmehäälsus“ (*функциональное одnogолосие и многоголосие*) (Narodnoye ... 2005).