MUSIC CONSUMPTION PRACTICES IN THE AGE OF THE CLOUD: LISTENING TO RUSSIA

ПРАКТИКИ СЛУШАТЕЛЕЙ В ЭПОХУ МУЗЫКИ В ОБЛАКЕ: ПРИСЛУШИВАЯСЬ К РОССИИ

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The article presents early insights from an ongoing study of the respective musical cultures of young audiences in Stockholm and Moscow. The 3-year research project "Music in the Digital Age" is conducted by a research group at Södertörn University, Sweden and financed by The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation. The cross-cultural study focuses on the impact of the Internet on music in everyday life. This article presents the first results from the Russian segment of the study: we look into how the growing Internet access affects the patterns of music-related practices in Russia.

Key words: *music; the Internet; social media; media consumption; materiality; media economy.*

В статье представлены предварительные результаты продолжающегося исследования музыкальных культур среди молодежной аудитории в Стокгольме и Москве. 3-летний исследовательский проект «Использование музыки в эпоху цифровых медиа» проводится исследовательской группой в Университете Сёдертёрн (Швеция) и финансируется Юбилейным фондом

*Национального банка Швеции. В фокусе кросс-культурного ис-
следования — влияние Интернета на использование музыки и зна-
чения музыки в повседневной жизни. Эта статья рассматривает
первые результаты российского сегмента исследования: мы на-
блюдаем, как облегчение доступа влияет на практики, связанные
с пользованием музыкой, в России.*

Ключевые слова: *музыка; Интернет; социальные медиа; ме-
диапотребление; материальность; медиаэкономика.*

Background and method

The global transformation of relations between the music creators,
music industry and audiences is happening on the backdrop of
technological and cultural change.

The ongoing transition of music into the virtual sphere is reflected in
the metaphor of 'the Cloud,' a decentralized virtual space with a low level of
control and a high level of connectivity, where the content and the medium are
no longer inseparable (Wikström, 2009: 5—9). The image of an emancipated
fan audience (Baym, Burnett, 2009) that enjoys the benefits of a participatory
culture (Jenkins 2006) and a connectivity culture (van Dijk, 2013) on the
Internet is favoured both by the industry and academic research.

Technological development and the facilitation of access to
information affect music as valuable — and often understood as private
— cultural material. "Intimate music practice, on the private or one-to-
one forms of human-music interaction... offers an ideal vantage point
for observing music... in the construction of the self as an aesthetic agent
(DeNora, 2000: 46). The complex meaning of the Internet for music
as a 'change agent' (ibid) is adopted to diverse national contexts. The
national context is the meeting place for the global and local cultural
flows, and to a significant extent, the national context still defines the
practices of music creation and consumption (Österback, 2008; Regev,
Seroussi, 2004; Goldenzwaig, 2005).

For the Russian national context, in particular, the problem of access has been crucial in media consumption research of the 2000s-early 2010s. Vartanova (Vartanova, 2013: 84–90) refers to the growth of the number of Internet users in Central Russia from 8.1 million in 2007-2008 to 17.7 million in 2012. The share of daily Internet users in Russia at the same period (2012) reached 40%. Vartanova also points out the outstandingly large amount of time that Russians spend on social media: 53 minutes per day on average. Her analysis of the dynamics of user interests on the Web shows that 47% of Russians use the Internet to download or listen to music, a figure that exceeds watching and downloading videocontent (43%) or playing videogames (25%).

Thus, the problem of access *per se* appears significantly ameliorated. However, access to any innovation in itself is not a panacea that that benefits everyone Borrowing the metaphor from Negroponte [1995], 'being digital' does not yet narrow the gaps in cultural consumption. The question remains how the audiences make use of the access.

For Russian research in music and media, studies in audience practices have until recently remained a *tabula rasa*.

The research project "Music Use in the Digital Media Age" (led by Dr. Sofia Johansson, Södertörn University) was designed to analyze the impact of the Internet on music use and meanings of music in everyday life. Nationally determined peculiarities in music are observed *from the audience's perspective*. The purpose is to identify how technological, social, cultural development affects music listening, music-related practices and, in a broader perspective, the role of music in the lives of young audiences.

This article describes the practices of Russian music users. However, in some cases, whenever appropriate, I also address the Swedish practices with the purpose of contextualization.

Methodologically, the finalized qualitative part of the study was based on focus-group interviews. The method of focus-group interview was chosen as the most effective one to create a free, collective picture of audience preferences (Hansen, Cottle, 1998: 257-258).

The focus group research was held in 2012. The semi-structured interview guide was developed for the interview and used with all groups.

All participants (9 groups, 40 informants in mixed, male and female groups) were undergraduate students at The Faculty of Journalism of MSU aged 17-24. Some of the participants come from Moscow and live either with their parents or separately, on their own, while others share a room at the dormitory with other students.

In order to get a more precise picture of audiences' technical preferences, we collected information about individual music consumption via distributing questionnaires to informants upon each interview. This additional information allowed us to understand the intensity of Internet use for music-related practices, map the technical devices used for music listening, and identify major types of 'traditional' and 'new' music-related media. The questionnaires play complementary role in the research and help to map the music habits of our informants.

The data array we collected is sufficient to suppose that the majority of Russian informants listen to music:

- on a daily basis;
- primarily on the computer (at home), and to a lesser extent, on MP3 players and/or mobile phones (in urban environments);
- on the radio and CD-players (less frequently, but still noticeably);
- the national SNS Vkontakte[1] is the online-platform that is most frequently used in connection with music[2].

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[1] **VKontakte** (Russian: "In Touch") (since 2006) is the biggest SNS on the Russian-language Internet. According to VK, the daily audience of this private resource in February 2013 reached 43 million users. The possibility for users to upload and search for audiovisual content makes VK one of the main online media archives in Russia. Users are encouraged to create their own collections of music records of all the records available on VK. Until the adaption of the new copyright law in Russia in 2013, VKontakte has not directly followed the copyright principle. From a music user perspective, VKontakte combines the features of SNS and music service.

[2] Less frequently but regularly mentioned websites, services and platforms include (in descending order): YouTube, Last.FM, SoundCloud, RuTracker, Zaycev.net., Moskva.FM, Yandex.Muzyka, Twitter, Tumbler, Vimeo, Prostopleer, Soundhound, Stereomood, Kroogi, Shazam, Spotify, Soundclick, Beatport, etc. Media players such (primarily, iTunes) were also mentioned among the platforms. Wikipedia and Facebook were present in several discussions.

Habits and navigation

Music is deeply incorporated in daily life because of ubiquitous listening, which detracts from focus. Music in itself, as a collection of parts and bits swirling together, becomes ubiquitous (Kassabian, 2013). It appears in the narratives as a necessary stimulant and mood reflector, even on the bodily level. Reaffirming DeNora's concept of music as a technology of self (2000), young listeners speak about their music as a tool of mental concentration, self-programming, self-regulation; a simulacrum for behavioral impulses. Compensatory and regulatory functions of music present themselves most transparently in the urban context, which fits the fabric of, e.g., Bull's research of 'sound moves' in urban experience (Bull, 2007).

ANZHELA: For me it's all very impulsive, that is to say, well, I listen to what I want to at a certain point. That is always different, but now I can say that in the subway I like to listen to energetic music, because it somehow protects me, yeah. You move with the flow of people, you go in a more energetic manner. With people that is important. Well, just make it fast, all the escalators, underpasses. [FG 15-1]

KONSTANTIN: So, for me, music creates the situation. Well, I turn music on when I work, when I write anything that is not necessary to think about that much. So, music changes the situation rather than vice versa, because, for example, if I'm walking, I will start to walk faster or slower. Well. Plus, I have spent ten years dancing, so I, well, very often try to walk to the beat. Sometimes it can be very difficult. And accordingly, I can completely change the mood when I listen to music. [FG 17-1].

In a number of cases, VKontakte is mentioned directly as *the* platform at which one finds music (Andrey[3]: *"Music is the link on my VKontakte page that you can find on the left"*: FG 17-2).

Furthermore, informants' approach to presenting their music tastes vary significantly. Categories of genre, time, gender, country of origin are used in a mix, complementing each other. As the music

[3] All names of the informants in the quotes are changed.

taste is directly related to identity, as a device for the reflexive process of remembering/reconstructing who one is (DeNora, 2000: 63) the national peculiarities of identity construction in this sphere appear especially noteworthy.

The audiences demonstrate a clear tendency for dividing all music into 'Russian' or 'our' and 'foreign,' which follows the organization patterns found in the previous audience research in Russia (Pilkington, Omelchenko, 2002). The connotation of these opposing categories is peculiar. Russian music is often depicted as shameful, bad, low-quality. This is especially relevant for Russian pop music or "pops" (dismissive for "pop"). Participants deliberately choose to demonstrate their disregard for it, or alternatively, they admit listening to it in the manner of coming out. Pop music becomes "pops", an object of stigmatization on the only condition: if this is pop music made in Russia.

Negation is especially typical for the narratives where Russian informants tell about their music preferences.

BORIS: I may not be patriotic, because I can't listen to anything Russian.

M: Why can't you listen to anything Russian?

BORIS: Well, of course, I have listened to all the classics, I'm not talking about those, I'm referring to the modern pop sounds, this stuff [FG 15-1].

TATYANA: I don't know, I guess, my favourite bands from our artists [=Russian] are Spleen, Zemfira, Bi-2. And from abroad... well, different music. Sigur Ros, Arctic Monkeys. Very different genres. (…)

SVETLANA: I graduated from a music school and even attended a music college for a while, so for an a 18-year old I have some kind of an abnormal love for classical music. And it's a completely different part of my love for music, because the other part of me loves, well, what you can call rock. This is generally a mixture of several pop songs, even several Russian pops songs! [laughter]. (…)

XENIA: Well, I guess, I have it pretty much the same way. Excluding rap and Russian pop, that good old Russian pop [laughter] [FG 16-2].

The national origin of music appears more important than genre: foreign pop, rap, dance music are not unattractive to the informants. Obviously, the audience perceives Russian pop as a negative social marker, and distances itself from it.

Numerous examples demonstrate the importance of national labels for the audiences: many listeners use the national origin of music for navigation and inspiration.

ANTON: Well, it's mostly foreign music and not local artists. And I mean, not only British or American − from other countries, too. There is also European [music] or even jazz, soul.

VICTORIA: Can I add? Turkish rock. (Laughter). I'm just a fan of Turkish rock. (Laughter). Discovered it for myself. Anton mentioned 'other countries'. This is very useful when you learn the language, and we did listen a lot to French songs. In general, through songs you can discover a language and fall in love with it. And so I discovered the Turkish language, only through songs [FG 15-2].

The practices of self-identification via negation and resistance, opposing 'Russian' to 'foreign' that immediately stigmatize national mainstream genres as lowbrow appear only in Russian narratives. None of the above-mentioned findings are equally relevant for Sweden.

Furthermore, classical music and jazz are nearly non-existent in Swedish narratives. In Russia, on the contrary, these genres are frequently mentioned with respect and passion. The amplitude of classical/jazz music use stretches from pure utiitarianism, particularly in the 'urban chill' of a megapolis (Bull, 2007: 9) (Xenia: "Classical music is a must, it alleviates Moscow stress" FG 16-2) − to deep dedication.

ALBERT: As for the genre specifics, it is probably classical music, preferably Leonard Bernstein. New York Symphony Orchestra. It's jazz... then probably American pop of the 50s and 60s. The kind that is not directly jazz, you know, like doo-wop, and so on, these styles [FG 18-2].

As the boundaries of artificial scarcity disappear, the return of classical music may be a side effect of simplified access to music on the

Internet. The musical palette is functional and mood/emotion-related, and the access to music is broader than ever. Perhaps, this can explain the return of classical music on to the map of music preferences. It is worth mentioning that the last large-scale qualitative study of music listening in regard to Russian audiences, led by Pilkington in the late 1990s (Pilkington, Omelchenko, 2002), did not record encounters with classical music.

Apart from denying certain genres of Russian music, music choices are presented in a stunningly non-conflicting manner. Favourite music is neither associated with protest, nor opposed to the music of the others (cf. with the tensions between 'normals' and 'progressives', alias 'neformaly' yet in the 1990s) [ibid: 165−200].

Very few informants follow certain artists. The cases of fan-following are nearly non-present. Within the social aspects of music-related practices, the typical uniting feature for the 'lazy' and 'omnivourous' (Johansson, 2012) audience is the lack of interest in the private life of artists. [Eduard: "That's not so interesting to me. Have you made your music? Good, thanks!" FG 17-2]. Music is often seen as a depersonified product.

Music choice, music listening, music collecting appear as highly individualized, private practices, which makes them stunningly distant from the image of generative music cultures (Tham, 2009) and, especially, fan cultures. The individualisation does not exclude practices of joint listening, but, aside from at concerts and 'dropping' certain tracks to friends *vis-a-vis* on the Internet, listening to music remains a private activity, and privacy in music is much appreciated.

References to music as a centripetal force for community-building appear mainly in historical contexts. Our informants acknowledge that music can bring people together, however, such references are always routed in the past.

TATYANA: If you take the previous generation as an example − our parents. There was no such access and, therefore, it [=music] was twice as precious for them. It's just that they treated these vinyls as something holy

and listened to them together not just because they had them, but because "it's amazing, I managed to get it" [FG 16-2].

ROMAN: They say that you can now listen to the radio all over the world, online. Same with music. You will have free access. Yes, while my father would be running after AC/DC' or Deep Purple's records...

KONSTANTIN: ...that were illegally brought into the country.

ROMAN: Yes, that were illegally imported into Russia, into the country. That was cool, yes. Damn many stories to tell.

KONSTANTIN: There is some particular romantic touch in it.

ROMAN: Yes!

KONSTANTIN: And I just heard the story about how people in the middle of nowhere, in the fields... were exchanging vinyls [FG 17-1].

Before we take a closer look at the factor of materiality, it is worth mentioning that the music of previous generations ('dad's records', 'classic rock', AC/DC, Pink Floyd, Queen and, especially, The Beatles, quoted with a particular respect) is fully appreciated and widely enjoyed.

Audiences freely combine music from different epochs which is also the result of less scarcity and simplified access.

What is more peculiar, the image of father (as a catalyst for choosing music for developing music taste, for learning about music devices or just as a common reference) is recurrent for both female and male, supposed savants' and laggards'[4] narratives.

ALINA: My dad buys music, I personally have never bought a thing, because it is much easier to listen online. And he, basically, he is not on Vkontakte or any social network, so it is much easier for him to go to the Apple store, download a few albums, and he likes to listen to them on the road, or, I do not know, when he's not busy with other things [FG 15-1].

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[4] Savant – a trend-sensitive user with expert capacity who actively spreads the knowledge. Laggard – a user who relies on traditional channels and forms of information, reluctant to change.

TIMOFEY: I can't say I prefer some particular style. GEORGY: As for me, it can be divided into two parts. This [the first part] is the music that my father introduced me to - it's jazz, it's George Benson, Norman Brown (jazz-rock), Earth Wind and Fire, Kool & The Gang, Funkadelic. To this day we listen to jazz on vinyls. Actually, these are stunning bands - and the bands that I discovered myself are different [FG 18-2].

It would be insufficient to explain the role of a father purely from the gender perspective. Neither brothers nor boyfriends, nor any other male relatives or close friends, not to mention women, appear as frequently in the narratives. To a certiain extent, the precedent of father's authority can be interpreted as an outcome of a more pronounced interest in techical gadgets among men, as well as a higher level of income, which enables investment in a hobby. Further on, this hobby becomes a channel of communication with the child. In any case, we need separate focused research to elaborate on this phenomenon.

Platforms, materiality and a/sociality

All informants listen to music on the Internet, or download it from the Internet. Their listening patterns are considerably more complex than in most Swedish focus groups, where the music service Spotify prevails[5]. Besides, quite a few Russians describe themselves as devoted collectors.

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[5] Among the Swdish Internet users aged 16 to 25 years, 9 out of 10 are on Spotify [Findahl, 2011] Recently, Spotify announced it will launch in Russia in 2014.

Figure 1

**Leading platforms associated with music.
Russian focus groups, according to the narratives.**
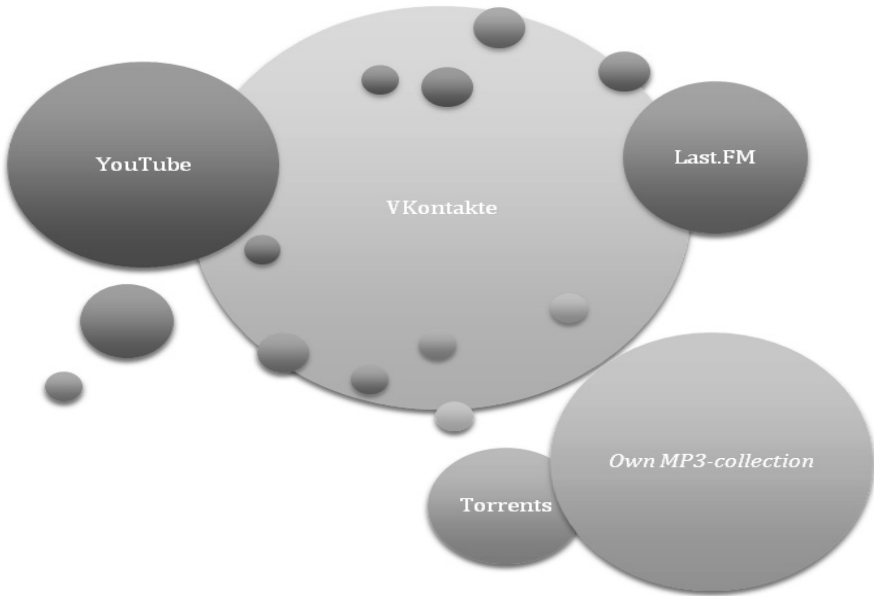
The Russian listeners demonstrate a strong affiliation with music that can be privately stored on a computer hard-drive, an mp3-player, CD and even vinyl. Both those who present themselves as avid music collectors, and those who appear rather indifferent to music, appreciate the **materiality** of music.

The CD, seen in its young age as *enfant terrible* of the industry, the killer of the vinyl that depraved music of physical emotionality (Rothenbuhler, 1997) nowadays gives listeners a sense of nostalgia of materiality. The level of abstraction associated with the digital recording on a CD does not become an obstacle for nostalgia. Even mp3-files on a hard-drive are interpreted by informants as a material possession (is that a sign of a new materiality of the digital object? (Roy, 2013)).

Collecting music is inseparable from passion (Marshall, 2013; Shuker, 2010). As Marshall (2013) explains it, "ownership, personal possession is a central element of collecting. Some possessions can be understood as a constitutive part of an 'extended self". For Marshall, the process of planning, desiring, "hunting" is a central, meaningful element of collecting that is threatened by the decay of artificial scarcity. And the listeners are well aware of the cause-and-effect relationship: in the eyes of our informants, materiality of music is directly interconnected with its value.

ANTON: Well, I can tell you where I see drawbacks of online listening and quick access to music. I think, it's like with everything else. With books, films... I mean, it's a temptation, just to type some name or simply, browse through people's pages. And it takes you a lot of time and you don't get anything out of it because you listen to something you do not need. And if, say, we're talking about gifts, CDs, then you think twice before you go and buy it. You buy what is really necessary. Then it's not just something superflous, it has some sense, it's not only music. It's, like, you come to a friend, and there is always music playing and the music becomes, well, such an organic environment. And then it's no longer music, in fact, I think.

ANZHELA: I also miss the materiality. The fact that the disks are fading away. Well, I like to keep something in my hands. A thing. Well, again, the design of a disk. Now you upload the cover, of course, along with the album, the discography, but I still miss the booklet, all these things, it's a pity that they are disappearing.

VICTORIA: Yes, I totally agree with the guys. When you can touch something, you know that it's yours, and you're a part of someone's creativity. And, even, for example, when I bought a record, I knew that I paid my favorite musicians, it's like their income. And when you have the ability to download from torrents infinitely, then you can download and never listen to the music, or listen to it just by the way. While I could listen to CDs a lot, I could only do it several times a day, for me it was something special. And now this feeling is gone, completely. And I'm sad about it [FG 1510-2].

The informants elaborate for storing their music – either as a compensation to the cloud-based services or *instead of* the cloud-based services. The physical carriers are emotionally important to the majority of the listeners, and they speak about them with warmth and passion. Traditional music shops appear in the conversation frequently, labeled both as a place of habit and as an anachronism. The passionate attitude toward the physical, toward storing and owning, goes beyond nostalgia.

The omnipresence of music is mentioned in all groups, while they interpreted the phenomenon differently. The informants appreciate easy access to free "music on tap". At the same time, they describe their frustration over the uncontrolled music flow, and point out the necessity of guidance, gatekeeping or even control over music. In some cases, participants point out that music has lost its collective nature due to over-accessibility, and refer to the *live* segment as the last bastion of valuable music. Interest in artists arises from concerts and shows [cf. with Nordström, 2013]. In this context, VKontakte events, Twitter posts, and YouTube reports are widely used to facilitate music distribution and discussions about music, both before and after live performances.

Some informants occasionally mention torrents as a tool for quick and wide access to music (as in the quote above). Some of the most avid music listeners still perceive them as a necessary format, inseparable from other music sources, while others refer to torrents as phenomena of the past.

As it was outlined above, the folksonomies of the Internet platforms used for different purposes (downloading, streaming, obtaining information, discussing, following artists) vary significantly from one participant to another.

The only overwhelmingly uniting feature for the informants is their use of VKontakte. (The most frequently named complementing platforms are YouTube and Last.FM.) However, even VKontakte is used in different ways, from downloading to streaming. It also receives mixed comments ranging from positive to scornful. Unlike Spotify, VKontakte is a metamedia that unites a broad spectrum of functions within

information and communication. Like MySpace in 2000s, VKontakte was never designed as a hub for music; it took on this role due to the national peculiarities of the music/media landscape, and due to loopholes in copyright legislation. Finally, VKontakte has inherited a crucial nationally determined media consumption pattern. It accrues cultural content as a free public resource that exists outside of restrictive copyright practices. Every user can enjoy the gigantic array of music uploaded onto Vkontakte – for free. This approach to the content follows the tradition of Soviet *'samizdat'* directly, and is not unique to developing countries [cf. with Perullo, 2013].

Unlike Spotify in the Swedish groups, VKontakte is described in a controversial way. Even more irritating than "shame music" (mainly pop tracks, which listeners prefer to listen to in a secret) is the wide presence of incorrectly named tracks. This complicates the search and disorients the listener (e.g., soundtrack from "Requiem for a Dream" labeled as Mozart's "Requiem"). The overwhelmingly positive feature of VKontakte is its flexibility, both in terms of access to any kind of music and in terms of listening modes. The SNS is appreciated as a ready-made integrated service for communication, networking and entertainment.

Unlike Pilkington (2002) in her Russian music study, we do not introduce a division of the informants (e.g., into 'normals' and 'progressives'): the profile of our informants, media students is rather homogenous. Naturally, as it appears in the narratives, they do represent different audience groups, by the speed they demonstrate in adopting innovations (Rogers, 2003): we meet innovators, early adaptors, the general majority, and laggards. Illustrating the frequency of representation within different audience groups, Jennings (2007) wisely classifies listeners by the pyramid principle, with savants (7%) on top, followed by enthusiasts (21%), casuals (32%) and indifferents (40%). The pyramid metaphor warns against overly optimistic expectations for engaging creativity.

Nevertheless, even the presence of music savants in the focus groups, the expressed appreciation of the possibility of direct contact with artist, and the well-understood and accepted convenience of the flow of

information – all of that does not lead to an increase in the users' online creativity. The informants do not see themselves as fans or online activists. The acknowledged *connectivity* does not lead to *creativity*. The findings from Russian focus groups are quite opposite to the popular concepts of a prosumer, or a social and creative music fan (Wikström, 2009). *Passive consumption*, simplified by the fast free access, is seldom complemented by online-*participation*.

Most of the discussions about music (unless about live segments) happens offline. Music, once again, is observed not as a common creative field, but rather as a private sphere, which is approached with great tact and discretion. In the narratives, references to a romantic encounter are particularly common. [Anna: "My friend once refused to go to the cinema with a guy who listened to Selena Gomez... she saw it on VKontakte": FG 16-3].

Payment practices

The informants demonstrate fairly deep knowledge of the principles of the music industry, and, especially, the nationally determined principles in the Russian context. In the Russian music industry, the *live* segment has historically dominated the *record* segment (Goldenzwaig, 2005). Within the course of the discussion, the artist and the music industry are frequently opposed to each other, whereas the artist is seen as a hard-working creator, while the industry stands for mammon. The known cases when artists deliver their product directly to the audience (e.g., Radiohead, Trent Reznor) are presented in the discussions with respect.

M: Do you buy music on the internet? Does anyone?

DENIS: That's a bad habit!

ILONA: Depends on the artist. When Radiohead released an album that you could download for free or pay for, I paid, I don't remember how much... 300... 400 rubles, just because that was respecting the artist. But generally speaking, very rarely [FG 1705-1].

The discussion about payment was the emotional peak for all groups. Young Russian listeners generally enjoy the *status quo* of easily accesible music online, but at the same time, they understand the gap between *de-jure* and *de-facto*. Moral tensions are not uncommon. Seeking a consensus is a challenge.

M: Do we have to pay for music? Or should it be free?

ANNA: Pay where? On the Internet? Or... for concerts — for sure. If you listen to live music, if you come to the concert, it is natural that it should be paid for. How would bands and artists blossom, otherwise? And on the Internet, I don't think you have to pay.

VERA: For us, of course, it would be nice if it remained free.

ANNA: Remained free, yes.

[...]

VERA: I think, only a small percentage of people in Russia have a credit or e card that can be tied to payment systems. Yes, first of all, payment systems steal a lot, second, just in order to adapt to Internet payments, you must first order a regular credit card, and then register it at the payment system. It's such a bore.

[...]

DARYA: For example, in the West, people buy music. Because there's no open access to it. And, in order to download a song you have to pay a few pennies. That's it.

GALINA: Well, it's just a question of payment, that it is easy enough.

DARYA: Well, yes... it's organized in a more convenient way for the consumer, not as here with us, where it's impossible.... [laughter and approval] We're not used to it yet.

GALINA: Yeah. So it turns out that music will then be available only to people who are able to cope not only with the technology, but also with payment... [FG 1610-3].

Awareness of the contradictions between the Russian and international practice once again leads to the emergence of national markers in the narratives: "in Russia," "we," "here," and "in the world," "the West," "they," "there," etc: the audiences, by Pilkington

[2002] are "reconfiguring the West" and "living with the West," and it does not happen without friction. The emotional tension of the debates shows that the payment question is sensitive: it does lie within the scope of cultural identification. Informants refer to the lack of national legislation in the music sphere or in creative industries in general. At the same time, they demonstrate appreciation of the non-limited availability and access to music. The well-understood moral obligation to pay is constantly clashing with the convenience of the *status quo*.

Attempts to find an appropriate, convenient payment mode during the discussion do not lead to sound conclusions. However, we may outline the spheres where the participants are most and least willing to pay for their music. The absolute majority rejects the idea of paying for something immaterial, including music on the Internet. The materiality factor presents itself vividly, as the informants often state that they would eagerly buy a CD or a vinyl. Nevertheless, we lack evidence to claim that this really is a frequent, mainstream form of consumption. And the only sphere where the participants unanimously expressed willingness to pay is, once again, *live* music: concerts and music-related events.

Where next?

The Internet and new mobile technologies have significantly broadened access to music. Music is ubiquitous in the everyday life of young people. It is strongly incorporated in the daily routine, and it is primarily associated with mood regulation and adaption to urban environments.

Predictably, the effects of broad access to music result in the integration of online and offline-activities related to music. However, we also observe a contrast of the utilitarian effects of wide access, and the growing demand for materiality, privacy and expertise in music (cf. with Anderson's imperatives for The Long Tail businesses [217, 2007]: 1. Make everything available 2. Help me find it!"). While music creators

seek to reach maximum exposure [Goldenzwaig, 2011], music users are confronted with a choice of numerous music listening strategies.

In spite of affordable Internet access, young people demonstrate a strong appreciation of physical music carriers, own private music collections in a physical or digital form, and encounters with live music. Many listeners associate the ubiquity of music with a decrease of the emotional investment into it, and furthermore, with a decrease in the value of music.

The challenge of interpreting the value of music is encapsulated in the discussion about payment for music. In the discussion, national patterns of media consumption conflict with morality, and questioning the authority of the music industry is combined with the respect for the artists and their work.

National differences present themselves transparently in patterns of music consumption. In Russia in particular, music is frequently interpreted as a means of identification with the nation. Many of young Russians, in line with the national *samizdat* tradition, tend to approach all cultural content on the Internet as free.

The study reveals that in 2012, music related activities in Russia were very concentrated in the social networking platform, VKontakte.

Even though it was not initially created as a music hub, VKontakte serves as the main website for streaming, downloading/uploading, sharing, seeking and providing information about music. VKontakte is followed, at a noticeable distance, by the complementary platforms YouTube and Last.FM. Patterns and processes related to VKontakte form complex folksonomies of online and offline listening, intertwined with experiences of live music.

It is important to note that the expected launch of Spotify in Russia in 2014, announced at the time of editing this article, may significantly influence national patterns of music consumption.

The transnational character of the challenge that the Internet creates for music listeners goes beyond the geocultural specifics. In both national contexts music is transforming from an object of fandom, from

a community-building platform, to a highly private, utilitarian practice, with a sense of nostalgia for value and social meaning. Open Internet acess, the availability of mobile devices, the new possibilities of social media, have yet to turn the music listener into an active enthusiast. Once again, we have to be weary of a utopian interpretation of the audiences' engagement with musical practices on the Internet. The analysis of the effects of technological development on cultural practices should continue in order to explain what modern audiences *really* expect from music in the age of the Cloud.

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