

## PERFORMING AND TEACHING ACTIVITY OF COMPOSER NICOLAY CHIOLAK

Larisa BALABAN<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *This article is devoted to N. Chiolak who is one of the most famous contemporary musicians of the Republic of Moldova. He is a vivid example of the successful and talented combination of a conductor, a composer and a pedagogue. Nicolay Chiolak is the author of the Church music, the secular works for variously-structured choirs, the music for voice, piano, organ, cello, etc. The article describes N. Chiolak's becoming a conductor. In his performing and teaching activity Nicolay Chiolak has developed and deepened the learned principles of conducting. He is characterized by his large experience as a conductor of choirs and orchestras. He has been the Chair Head of the Ismail Pedagogical Institute, the Chair Head at the Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts for 15 years and a pedagogue at the Academy for 43 years. The list of this pedagogue's alumni is impressive not for its number only (over 160) but also for its representatives.*

**Key words:** *Nicolay Chiolak, composer, conductors, teachers from the Republic of Moldova.*

Nicolay Mihalovich Chiolak is one of the most famous contemporary musicians of the Republic of Moldova who combined the talents of a conductor, a composer and a pedagogue. He was born in May 22, 1945 in Ismail, in the family of musician Mihail Vissarionovich Chiolak. He studied at the Ismail Music School (1953–1960), at the Odessa Music College (1960–1964), at the Chisinau State Institute of Arts *G. Musicescu* (1965–1971), and then graduated from Graduate School of Leningrad State Conservatory *N.A. Rimsky-Korsakov* (in 1972-1975). He had internships as a conductor at Higher Institutions of Moscow (in 1985) and Odessa (in 1988) [1].

N. Chiolak learned conducting from such eminent musicians as Professors L. Aksenova, B. Milyutin, I. Alterman, and E. Kudreavtseva. However, one his first pedagogues who influenced him as a performer was Aleksey Korneevich Grinchenko— an accordion teacher, the conductor of orchestra at Music School in Ismail, and for N. Chiolak, „a great musician, a pedagogue and a very worthy personality” (from the conversation of the author of this article with N. Chiolak). Aleksey Grinchenko helped his student to feel not only the emotional side of music, but also to perceive and perform it as the live substance. Having accustomed the student to treat the music as the live

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<sup>1</sup> Doctor of Philosophy in History and Theory of Art, Associate Professor in Audio-Visual Arts (Musical Arts) of Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts, Chisinau, the Republic of Moldova).

phenomenon, he also explained some regularity of deciphering and word setting for proper vision of musical image and reading informational message of the author's text.

Zheltikov Vadim Fedorovich, a professor of accordion at the Odessa Music College and Conservatory, "waking" cognitive activity of his disciple has achieved excellent results: in the first year of study at the Music College, Nicolay performed the programme of the senior course. The pedagogue has formed durable creative curiosity, has inured the student to attend Opera Theatre, Philharmonic, Conservatory concerts, to pay attention to the works of arts...

The interest in art of conducting manifested at the Music College where Nicolay learned the Orchestra as a folk musician and where Choir and Choir Conducting were among his favourite subjects. Konstantin Pigrov (Konstantin Pigrov (1876–1962), one of the leading choir conductors of the USSR; the founder and the conductor of many choirs: of amateurs, of church, of study as well as of students' choir of Odessa Conservatory (1944–1962), of Choral Chapel *Doina* (1936–1940) and an initiator of foundation and, at a later date, the Head of Choral conducting chair of Odessa Conservatory (1936–1962) where he had been teaching in 1920–1930 and in 1936–1962) and Dmitry Zagretsky (Dmitry Zagretsky (1924–1987), one of the best students of K.K. Pigrov, the Artistic Director and the Chief Conductor of Choral Chapel of Odessa Philharmonic (1949–1953), the Chief Choirmaster of Odessa Theatre of Opera and Ballet (1955–1987), a conductor of students' choir. He was a professor at Odessa Conservatory. Among his students, there were many famous choirmasters such as P. Gorohov, S. Dorogoy, V. Kiose, V. Ikonnik, V. Tolkanev, G. Lioznov, E. Kuharets, V. Gazinskiy, S. Krijanovsky,

L. Butenko, etc.) who had been teaching at the college made an incredible impression on the young musician. Watching K.K. Pigrov, the master of choral art, in the work, N. Chiolak has acquired the first necessary knowledge and skills of work with the choir, has learned the particularities of work with choral modus, having noticed an important role of vocal and choral exercises and pure intonation of intervals and, in particular, the paramount importance of seconds intonation in the choral modus work. Due to D. Zagretsky he has discovered the particularities of will as the professional skill of the choir conductor, the specifics of the will interaction between the conductor and the choir itself which is the quality immanent to the behavior and the character of all outstanding masters of choral conducting art.

N. Chiolak took the state examination as an accordionist and a conductor of folk choir with consolidated orchestra of the Music College and Conservatory. During the 4<sup>th</sup> year of study while working with Chiolakon state programme, pedagogue V.V. Kasyanov (Vladimir Vasilievich Kasyanov, the professor, the Chief of popular instrument chair of Odessa Conservatory) who conducted the orchestra and was Nicolay's professor of conducting set him an example to the other Conservatory students. The director of orchestra has noticed the conductor's abilities of his disciple.

After having graduated the Odessa Music College and having worked for one year at Music School in Ismail, N. Chiolak was getting ready to enter one of Moscow Higher Institutions, on a specialty the conductor of military band. However, the professor of the Pedagogical Institution Aleksey Mihailovich Manoilov (A.M. Manoilov who graduated from Chisinau Conservatory, was a conductor and one of music and choir workers in Ismail, the Chief of Music Chair of the Ismail

Pedagogical Institute and the director of students' choirs of the Institute and of city choirs) introduced him to L.V. Aksenova who invited Nicolay to study at the choral department of Chisinau Institute of Art.

Another outstanding choir conductor and pedagogue L.V. Aksenova also paid attention to this student's talent. „Lydia Valeryanovna laid the foundation of the unique technique, developed by herself, educated the conductor's will, industry, self-criticism”, N. Chiolak said. The school of pedagogue Aksenova is not the conducting based on intuition only. On the contrary, it is the detailed working out of all elements of a gesture, the rationally built and science-based system where each element makes sense and disconnected with the objective. („Every lesson was like a holiday for me because there was a performance as well as at the concert Lidya Valerianovna did not forgive any meaningless look or gesture. She was taking out of a student everything good. The next lesson had to be better than the previous one. I strove to understand her from the half word” — Nicolay Mihailovich says.) For the formation of certain elements of technique, she applied exactly elaborated and specially selected exercises for each student individually.

N. Chiolak had an excellent opportunity to progress and gain necessary professional skills from the successor of the best Russian choral conducting traditions. As a conductor Aksenova is a disciple of the famed pedagogues such as S.L. Ratner and N.F. Maslova. („The genealogical tree” branch of symphonic conducting which comes from Ratner includes the names of I.A. Moosin, N.A. Maliko, A.V. Gauk, N.N. Cherepnin, are well as N.A. Rimsky-Korsakov. In the field of choral conducting „the genealogical tree” of Aksenova goes back to composer N.A. Rimsky-Korsakov and his students which are K.I. Davidov,

M.M. Ippolitov-Ivanov, P.G. Chesnokov and N.F. Maslov.) Adopting the mastery of her conducting teachers she actually absorbed the experience of several generations of performers and best representatives of Moscow and St. Petersburg conservatories and then, for more than 60 years, has been sharing it with her students.

Being in the class of professor Aksenova, N. Chiolak began to attend from the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of study an optional course of symphonic conducting of B.S. Milyutin (Boris Semionovich Milyutin (1905–1993), a student of N.A. Maliko, A.V. Gauk, I.A. Moosin; the Chief Conductor and the Artistic Director of State Symphony Orchestra (1936–1953), the Chief Conductor of National Theatre of Opera and Ballet (1961–1962). Since 40-ies he had been teaching at Moldova State Conservatory *G. Musicescu* at Opera Training Chair, had the Symphony Conducting class (Associate Professor in 1950 and professor in 1968)), and from the 4<sup>th</sup> year of study — the course of opera and symphonic conducting of I.M. Alterman (Isay Moiseevich Alterman (1910–1985), a student of A.V. Gauk. During 1958–1961 and 1969–1985 years, the Chief Conductor of Chisinau Theatre of Opera and Ballet, the professor of Chisinau Institute of Arts *G. Musicescu* (conducting and opera training class), — they both are the eminent representatives of world famous St. Petersburg conducting school. These two professors as disciples of N.A. Malko, A.V. Gauk and I.A. Moosin gained the same schooling of symphonic conducting as Aksenovadid.

„Professor Milyutin helped me to acquire special skills of symphonic conducting, cultivated taste for symphonic literature and music analysis of the symphonic conductor creative work... With professor Alterman I learned the basics of opera conducting. He was able to create with

singers special artistic image, which was persuasive, vivid and lively. He made singers think in terms of meaningful singing. Isay Moiseevich taught me good lessons of opera and ballet management particularities; under his supervision I tasted the beauty of music and scenic art...” Nicolay Mihailovich said.

N. Chiolak continued his study as a conductor at the Graduate School of Leningrad Conservatory in the class of choir conductor Elizaveta Petrovna Kudreavtseva-Murina. (E.P. Kudreavtseva-Murina (1914–2004), a student of M.G. Klimov (who in his turn was a student in conducting class of professors N.N. Cherepnin and A.A. Egorov, the latter one was a student of professors N.S. Klenovsky and E.S. Azeev.) In 1931–1961, he was a conductor and in 1935–1936, 1941–1944, 1953–1955, the Chief Conductor of Leningrad Academia Chapel, where she had been activating for more than 30 years. The founder (in 1958) and the Artistic Director (for 45 years) of Academic choir of singing amateurs of Choral society and joint choir of Conservatory. Since 1947 till 2004, he was a professor at Leningrad Conservatory. She was the first woman-conductor of a professional choir in Russia, the Professor of St. Petersburg Conservatory, the Academician of Peter the Great Academy, Academician of Estonian Academy of Music, the Laureate of Music, the Laureate of the 1<sup>st</sup> prize in the field of art of mayor of St. Petersburg. She collaborated with many outstanding composers and conductors of the 20th century (E.A. Mravinsky, S.S. Prokofiev, D.D. Shostakovich, E.B. Britten, V.A. Gavrillin, etc.). She was one of the best pedagogues of the USSR, the founder of her own school of choral conducting and choir mastering, who educated many well-known musicians. According to Nicolay Mihailovich, „Elizaveta Petrovna taught

their students how to abstract themselves while working on compositions of different styles and trends, and made them think broadly. Paying special attention to the essence and artistic images, she worked on dramaturgy of a composition as a whole, revealing its stylistic features and transferring them by means of gesture very truthfully and emotionally. Even the most reserved student has been changing in a varying degree”.

Any graduate student had to deal in public with the students of all courses of Leningrad Conservatory. Many years later Elizaveta Petrovna applied the same method of the demonstrative lessons. „In my class at the Conservatory there are only boys, sporty, interested and curious ones. We perform a lot. I teach in the presence of students and graduate students of my class. It is a lesson for everybody”, she wrote in one of her letters to N. Chiolak with whom she shared lasted and strong friendship. Sustained creative ”flame”, purposefulness, thirst for knowledge and industry — all these qualities are necessary for success of a musician. (It is quoted the letter written by E.P. Kudreavtseva in 1974 and addressed to N. Chiolak.)

In Nicolay Mihailovich opinion, Professors L. Aksenova and E. Kudreavtseva have much in common: their understanding of profession essence and their ability to evaluate the experience accumulated by conductors of previous generations, their extensive knowledge in choral and symphonic music of different countries, periods, styles and trends. These two pedagogues are the example of inexhaustible enthusiasm and strictest professional exactingness along with kindness and care about their students.

The basics of the conducting school N. Chiolak skillfully developed in his performing and pedagogical activity. He is characterized by the desire to maintain the traditions of the conducting art, rich

practical experience (he worked as a conductor-assistant of National Theatre of Opera and Ballet (N. Chiolak was a conductor of Opera theatre performances (in 1969–1971): *Gisele* by Adolf Adam, opera *Zaporogets beyond the Danube* by Semion Gulak-Artemovsky, *Tsar's Fiancée* by Nicolay Rimsky-Korsakov, *Heroic ballad* by Aleksey Stircea etc., took part in concerts and tours of the Theatre Academy Choral Chapel) of Moldova Republic, a conductor-choirmaster of Academic Choir Chapel *Doina* (in *Doina* N. Chiolak had been working for 5 years (1973–1977). He knew by heart all the *Doina's* repertoire, which had been performed in tours throughout the USSR, conducted at Leningrad Conservatory, participated in concerts for the members of government, performed with Symphony Orchestra of State Philharmonic) and conducted the students' choirs of Institute of Arts and then of the University of Arts. (N. Chiolak had been conducting the choir of stationary for 15 years and constantly had been performing with it at Philharmonic and other concert halls of the Chisinau, at educational institutions, cultural and educational institutions and on Television. High performing mastership of this choir was awarded many distinctions.) Nicolay Mihailovich is the founder and the Artistic Director of the choir of Music-Choral Association from Moldova (On asking of Tamara Ceban, Nicolay Mihailovich organized the choir of Music and Choir Association in 1979. At the beginning, it was women's choir *Melody*. Then it was reorganized into a mixed one *Luceafărul*. It was awarded numerous diplomas (in 1979–1981).), the regent of Pokrovsky Cathedral in Ismail. (Many years later (in 1992) he regenerated the choir of Pokrovsky Cathedral, where Gavriil Musicescu was the Regent (between 1866–1974).

Nicolay Chiolak had been teaching at educational institutions such as the Ismail Music School (1964–1965) and the Ismail Pedagogical Institute (1992–1993). Since 1971, for 43 years, he has been working at the Academy of Music, Theatre and Arts (formerly known as the State Institute of Arts, Conservatory, and the University of Arts) in Chisinau. At present, he is an acting professor of Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts. The list of his alumni is impressive not only for its number (over 160), but also for its representatives. (Among his alumni there are the following: L. Bineva, the professor of Chisinau State Pedagogical University *I. Creangă*, the conductor of folk choir of the University, the laureate of choral festivals; G. Scribcaru, the professor of Teacher College *A. Mateevici*, the laureate of Amateurs Artistic Creation Festivals of the USSR; R. Tereshiuk, Doctor, Associate Professor of Chisinau State Pedagogical University *I. Creangă*; G. Murzakov, the choir conductor, *Honoured Cultural Worker* of MSSR; M. Radu, the choir conductor, *Master of the Arts*; T. Sobetsky, the choir conductor, a teacher of School of Arts *A. Stircea*; A. Jian, the choir conductor, the Head of Chair of Teacher College *Alexandru cel Bun*, Laureate of the International Competitions; A. Rachilo, the choir conductor, the Director of the Music School; M. Bakova, the laureate of choral festivals, a teacher of School of Arts *V. Poleakov*; T. Bostan, the children's choir conductor, a teacher of Theoretical Lyceum *V. Vasilake*, the laureate of Republic Choral Competitions; M. Golovko, the conductor of Ukrainian Ethnographic choir *Coliory*, the laureate of Republic Choral Competitions and so on). All these people share love and great respect for their pedagogue who is a man of great erudition, versatile abilities and polished professionalism, high intelligence, who always eradicates inner light and goodness and fills everybody with

irrepressible hunger for knowledge and enthusiasm for music and choral art.

Speaking of teaching and education N. Chiolak underlines, „Everything that I have learned from my pedagogues I try to share with my students. The main principle is not to put down professional and moral positions of my mentors”. With this statement of the master echoes earlier expressed opinion of musicologist S. Pojar, „Chiolak took upon himself the mission of some kind of link between generations, he is characterized of that professionalism, intellectuality and high spirituality as only the old masters were [2].

N. Chiolak had been leading the Chair of Ismail Pedagogical Institute (1992–93) and for 14 years (since 1974) the Chair of the Chisinau State Institute of Arts *G. Musicescu* (at that time the Chair of Choral Conducting of Cultural and Educational Work Department, then the name of the Choir has been changed from time to time) which gave impetus to get high education and start a career in pedagogy or conducting for many people.

Having been invited by N. Chiolak many notable choirmasters started and continued their activity as pedagogues and conductors: Moghila Alexander (later the principal choirmaster of Opera Theatre, was awarded the title of Honoured Culture Worker), Veronica Galescu (later she was elected Dean of Faculty), Tudor Zgureanu (who subsequently became the Head of the Chair), Enache Evghenya, etc. During this period of time here taught Lidya Aksenova, Anna Iushkevich, Efim Bogdanovsky (transferred from other chair, he had been working here for 10 years), Vasily Kondrea, Valentin Budilevsky, Ion Popescu (the founder of this chair), etc. Nicolay Chiolak had been inviting perspective and best musicians of Moldova, venerable pedagogues and choirmasters worked here, those who marked the history of music art in Moldova what had a positive impact on the quality of the chair activity.

Scientific and methodological activity of N. Chiolak connected with the problems of educational process improvement and with teaching conducting and choral subjects, with elaborating of didactic principles of conductor’s professional skills formation as well as with practical work with the choir, is beyond the scope of the high educational institution. Being the author of numerous methodical works, he regularly took part in scientific and practical conferences and seminars at both Soviet Union and Republic of Moldova levels, held permanent consultations for the choir conductors from our country.

Nicolay Chiolak has many decorations for his creative and community activity: the distinctions of *Socialist Competition Winner* (in 1977 and 1980), *Excellence in Culture of Moldova Soviet Social Republic* (in 1985) and *Eminent Worker of High School of USSR* (in 1986); *Honorable Mentions* of the Ministry of Culture of Republic of Moldova (in 1996 and 2006), *Moldovan Music-Choral Association* (in 1980), *Musicians Union of Moldova* (in 2006), *Ministry of Education of RM* (in 2010); *Medal Labour Veteran* (in 1989) and *Medal Saint Paisius Velichkovsky* from Orthodox Church of Republic of Moldova (in 2011).

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