December 16, 2009 is the day of untimely death of Mark Genrichovich Aranovsky – a prominent Russian scholar, musicologist, Doctor of Arts, Professor, Honored Worker of the Russian Federation. He gave all his life to research, first, at the Leningrad Research Institute of Theater, Music and Cinematography (currently – Russian Institute of History of Arts) and, from 1980, at the State Institute of Art Theory in Moscow. There, he has chaired the Dissertation Committee, the Division of Music and, in the recent years, his own creation, the Division of Contemporary Problems of Musical Art.

Mark Genrikhovich was a scholar-analyst, the one who stood firm in defense of the high scientific principles. His works “Melodicism of Prokofiev”, “The Quest for Symphonicism”, “Syntactic Structure of Melody”, “Musical Text. Structure and Characteristics”, “Initial Plan for M. I. Glinka’s Opera Ruslan and Ljudmila”, a cycle of essays on music of Shostakovich, a number of articles concerning the questions of musical thinking and creative process have become a part of golden collection of Russian musicological texts. In his memory, our journal publishes the following materials: an interview taken by the Chief Editor of the PMN Ljudmila N. Shaymukhametova, an article “A Word about the Teacher” by the Associate Professor of State Institute of Art Theory N. A. Ryzhkova, and the information on published materials dedicated to M. G. Aranovsky.

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Вопрос (Л. Н. Шаймухаметова)  
– Хотелось бы узнать, кто были ваши учителями?  
Q – We would like to find out, who were your teachers?

Ответ (М. Г. Арановский)  
– Первым своим учителем я считаю Юрия Николаевича Тюлина, который поддержал мой интерес к музыковедению и посоветовал поступать на теоретико-композиторский факультет Ленинградской консерватории. Далее следуют руководитель моего дипломного проекта Эмилия Лазаревна Фрид и руководитель работы над кандидатской диссертацией Михаил Кесаревич Михайлов. Это – учителя, с которыми я непосредственно общался. Второй круг учителей, – те, у которых я слушал лекции. Среди них – Михаил Семёнович Друскин, Юрий Всеволодович Келдыш, также Эмилия Лазаревна Фрид, Борис Александрович Арапов, Николай Григорьевич Приванов.  
A – My first teacher was Yuri Nikolaevich Tjulin. He had supported my interest in musicology and advised to apply for the Department of Theory and Composition at the Leningrad Conservatory. Then, I would name the supervisor of my conservatory Diploma project Emilia Lazarevna Fried and the supervisor of my Candidate dissertation Mikhail Kesarievich Mikhailov. These are my teachers with whom I have spent years in daily communication. The second circle of my teachers includes those, whose lectures I have been attending. Among them there were Mikhail Semyonovich Druskin, Yuri Vsevolodovich Keldysh, Emilia Lazarevna Fried (whom I already mentioned), Boris Alexandrovich Arapov, and Nikolai Grigorievich Privanov.

Не могу не сказать о людях, с которыми я работал и которые, несомненно, повлияли на моё профессиональное становление. Это Арнольд Наумович Сохор и Генрих Александрович Орлов. Наконец, самый широкий круг учёных, воздействие которых я на себе ощутил, – это искусствовед Генрих Вёльфлин, музыканты Борис Владимирович Асафьев, Виктор Абрамович Цуккерман, Лео Абрамович Мазель, лигнисты Юрий Михайлович Лотман, Ролан Барт.  

Но главное, как бы это ни показалось самонадёжным, я не принадлежал ни к какой школе, ни к какой традиции. Я всегда был автодидактом, то есть «учеником своих идей»: избирал те методы исследования, которые диктовали возникающие передо мной научные проблемы.  

I have to mention also the people I have been working with, those who have influenced my professional becoming. These include Arnold Naumovich Sokhor and Genrich Alexandrovich Orlov. And, at last, I would like to name a wider circle of scholars, whose influence I have sensed during these years: an art critic Genrich Woelflin, musicologists Boris Vladimirovich Asafiev, Victor Abramovich Zuckerman, and Leo Abramovich Mazel, linguists Yuri Mikhailovich Lotman and Rolland Barthes. But most importantly, no matter how strange this may sound, I never belonged to any school, to any tradition. I have always been an autodidact, that is, “the student of my own ideas”; I always chose those methods, which were dictated by the scientific problems I had to solve.

Вопрос (Л. Н. Шаймухаметова)  
– Какой из ваших опусов был первым?  
Q – What was your first opus?

Ответ (М. Г. Арановский)  
– Моим первым печатным опусом является статья в сборнике ЛГИТМИК «Вопросы теории и эстетики музыки», вып. 4 – «Романтизм и русская музыка».  
A – My first printed opus was an article, placed in the Collection of Works of LGITMIK “The Questions of Theory and Aesthetics of Music”, volume 4. The title of my article was “Romanticism and Russian Music”.

– Вы – автор многих книг и фундаментальных исследований в разных областях музыковедения, которые во многом определили качественное состояние современной научной мысли. О них говорят: «У Арановского что ни статья – то концепция, что ни концепция – то открытие». А между прочим, у писателей, режиссёров, актёров обычно есть особая – центральная тема творчества. Наверное, она есть и у учёного?  

A – You have authored many books and fundamental studies in various areas of musicology, which, in many aspects, have defined the high standards of contemporary scholarly thought. They say about your works: “Each article of Aranovsky presents a concept; each such concept is a discovery.” By the way, actors, writers, theatrical directors – each have a central theme. Perhaps, there is such theme in the life or a scholar, as well?

Ответ (М. Г. Арановский)  
– Да, действительно, у меня есть центральная проблема, которой я занимался на протяжении долгих лет, исследуя её с разных сторон. Это – проблема музыкального мышления.  
A – Yes, true, there is a central problem, which I have been working on throughout many years, approaching it from different angles. It is the problem of musical thinking.

Вопрос (Л. Н. Шаймухаметова)  
– Российскую науку принято официально делить на академическую и вузовскую, и неофициально – на столичную и периферийную. Это – формальное деление или Ваше зоркое профессиональное око видит между ними качественные различия?  

A – Russian music scholarship is officially divided into academic and university-based, and unofficially, into central and peripheral. Is it a mere formality, or your well-trained professional eye sees here a qualitative differentiation?

Ответ (М. Г. Арановский)  
– Мне кажется это деление условным и несущественным. Всё зависит от таланта исследователя, от его свежего взгляда на проблему.  
A – I think that this division is conditional and unimportant. Everything depends on the talent of the researcher and on his or her fresh perception of a problem.
In Russian language, the word “science” (нauка) has the root “to learn” and applies to all scholarly fields, including, besides what is commonly called science in Anglo-Saxon tradition, humanities in general and, the art theory in particular. The translator is aware of this discrepancy and offers a compromise: in this context, Russian musicology, due to many reasons, material one being not the least of them, becomes less and less appealing to young people.

A – I think that it is very bad. The science has to be nourished by the exchange of ideas. This applies to musicology just as it does to physics, medicine, and other natural sciences.

Q – Is it common nowadays to discuss the “inflow” and the “outflow” of young people in and out of science. Has the situation changed in the recent years?

A – I think, it is mostly the outflow. Unfortunately, musicology, due to many reasons, material one being not the least of them, becomes less and less appealing to young people.

Q – How about the State Institute of Art Theory? What is the percentage of the young among the degree candidates?

A – It is not more difficult to defend a dissertation at the Institute than in any other Dissertation Council. Everything depends on the quality of the work, to which we, indeed, approach with serious, academic requirements.

Q – For a long time the sciences in Russia and in the West existed in the parallel worlds. Nothing has kept our scholars from successful work in complete isolation and from making great discoveries. The science in the world is still developing autonomously and independently from Russian musicology.

A – To always remain honest—in relation to people, as well as in relation to the research material.