Culture is one of the most important components, which form every nation. It is one occurrence that distinguishes and unites all the people who live in the world. But it is impossible to imagine the culture without music, a very big part of our life.

Every nation has one’s own music and I think that inside music are concluded all peculiarities of the nation, it is contain the key for understand the soul of people.

When I was associated with foreigners (they were Americans) I noted that they liked our folk music, they frequently listened it and each of them had without fail an audiocassette with Russian folk music. They told me about the most popular in United States Russian singers and composers. Our pop music is not famous outside Russia. But many people from other countries love our folk and classical music.

On the contrary we know nothing about American folk and classical music and I would like to discuss about it.

By my opinion a serious study of American music is arrestingly important at this time. Music has become on of American leading industries American performing standards are probably now higher than anywhere else in the world, and Americans are making rapid strides in music education. How large a part in all this activity is American music to play? How good is it? How does it differ from Russian music?

There are many signs of an awakened interest in American composition. More of it is performed, published, and recorded than ever before. This interest is not confined to the United States alone. During the past few years Russians who have always liked American popular music (like Brithney Spears, Madonna, Michael Jackson) have discovered that America have several composers in the serious field well worth its attention. As for the foundations, fortunes are being spent to discover, to train and to encourage American native talent.

We could imagine a pattern, which would include Billings, Harris and Gershwin. Each of them contributed substantially to American musical tradition, and when American can grasp their interrelationship they perceive that there is indeed an American music, a hardy one just beginning to fell its strength and destined to stand beside their other contributions to world culture.

I would like to tell about my three favorites American composers.

George Gershwin was born in Brooklyn on September 25, 1989. He was by no means a prodigy, and his musical education was spasmodic. He took lessons at the piano and later studied harmony. In his teens, he acquired a job as song plugger at one of the largest publishing houses. Before long he was writing songs of his own; and in 1919, he was the proud present of a “hit” that swept the country – *Swanee*. His rise as one of the most successful composers for the Broadway stage was rapid.

In 1924, he composed his first serious work in the jazz idiom, the historic “Rhapsody in Blue” the success of which made Gershwin famous throughout the world of music. After that he divided his activities between writing popular music for the Broadway stage (and later for the Hollywood cinema) and serious works for concert hall consumption. In both fields, he was extraordinary successful and popular. He died in Hollywood on June 11, 1937, after an unsuccessful operation on the brain.

It is mainly since Gershwin’s death that complete awareness of his musical importance has become almost universal. The little defects in his major works – those occasional awkward modulations, the strained transitions, the obscure instrumentation – no longer appear quite so important as they did several decades ago. What many did not realize then and what they now know – is that the intrinsically vital qualities of Gershwin’s works reduce these technical flaws to insignificance. The music is so alive, so freshly conceived, and put down on paper with such spontaneity and enthusiasm that is youthful spirit refuses to age. The capacity of this music to enchant and magnetize audiences’ remains as great today, even with, familiarity, as it was yesterday, when it came upon us with the freshness of novelty.

That he had a wonderful reservoir of melodies was, of course, self-evident when Gershwin was alive. What was not quite so obvious then was that he had impressed his identity on those melodies – his way of shaping a lyric line, his use of certain rhythmic phrases, the piquant effect of some of his accompaniments – so that they would always remain recognizably his.

Other my favorite American composers is Roy Harris.

Few American composers of XX century and our time have achieved so personal a style as Roy Harris. His music is easily identified by many stylistic traits to which he has doing through his creative development: the long themes which span many bars before pausing to catch a breath, the long and involved development in which the resources of variation and transformation are utilized exhaustively, the powerfully projected contrapuntal lines, the modal harmonies and the asymmetrical rhythms are a few of the qualities found in most Harris’s works.

Through Harris has frequently employed the forms of the past (toccata, passacaglia, fugue, etc), has shown a predilection for ancient modes, and en occasion has drawn thematic inspiration from Celtic folk songs and Protestant hymns, he is modern in spirit. His music has a contemporary pulse, the cogent drive and force of present –day living; there is certainly nothing archaic about it. More important still, it is essentially American music, even in those works in which he does not draw his ideas from folk or popular music. The broad sweep of his melodies suggests the vast plains of Kansas, the open spaces of the West. The momentum of his rhythmic drive is American in its nervousness and vitality. But in subtler qualities, too, Harris’s music is the music of America. “The moods”, Harris once wrote, “which seem particularly American to me are noisy ribaldry, then sadness, a groping earnestness which amount to suppilance toward those deepest spiritual yearnings within ourselves; there is little grace or mellowness in our midst”.

Such moods as noisy ribaldry, sadness, groping earnestness are caught in Harris’s music, and to these moods are added other American qualities; youthful vigor, health, optimism and enthusiasm.

Harris was born in the Lincoln country, Oklahoma, on February 12, 1898. While still a child, he learned to play the clarinet and the piano. In 1926 he went to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger. In Paris he wrote his first major works: of them, *The Concerto for the Piano, Clarinet and String Quartet* (1927) was the most successful. His *Fifth Symphony* has been dedicated to the *“Heroic and Peace-loving People of the Soviet Union”*.

I guess, we know nothing about American folk music excepting jazz-singers and composers. The sole and the most famous of them is Louis Armstrong. I believe that all people know this name and I would like to tell about my favorite album of his legendary music, it’s called “Louis and the Good Book”.

Anyone who has ever read a history book on jazz knows that there’s a connection between jazz, spiritual music, work songs and the blues. But often historians don’t explain this relationship clearly enough. The phrasing of the arrangements for the brass and read sections in big jazz bands are of course a direct inheritance from the preacher’s call and the parishioner’s customary response in church. The some is true for today’s funky songs, which derives from gospel. But all this illuminates only specific styles without saying anything about the antecedence and legacy of jazz in general. This album introduces some aspects of this history and by my opinion is the best album of Louis Armstrong.

During the first three years of his recording career, Louis Armstrong played blues and stomps. In fact, that was what he recorded in his very first session with king Oliver in 1923. Then same rhythmical airs and other hits of that era were added. During those years his technique and musical concepts acquired such a degree of substance and affluence that he became the first jazz virtuoso. Beginning with the late 20’s he added a new kind of melody to his repertoire: the “ballad”. In these interpretations another side of his talent unfolded, incorporating a whole series of standards into his jazz repertoire. Standards refer to themes taken up by all musicians. Thus, he not only demonstrated that jazz phrasing is applicable to these kinds of melodies and tempos, but he did it so well that the mood of show ballads became an integral part of every form of jazz. This is not the first time that Louis Armstrong interprets spirituals. In 1938 he recorded same versions of four pieces with the Lynn Murray choir for MCA. *Shadrack*, based on the traditional form of spirituals, *Jonah and the Whale*, *Going to Shout All Over the God’s Heaven and Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen*. Two years later he did a version of *Cain and Abel* with the big band he was directing at that time. He had actually recorded *Motherless Child* in 1930. While the melody is identical to the second part of the *Dear Old Southland* interlude by Creamer and Layton, which he recorded in a duo with the near legendary pianist Buck Washington, the melody of *Motherless Child* is also very close to others that he used in several blues, better known in their broad versions: *Steady Roll, Round the Clock, My Daddy Rock Me*. So, a number of spirituals are blues at least in form.

*On My Way* in this volume obviously belongs to the blues, which are most commonly known in the 12 measures from today. One stanza, musically of four measures – iambic pentameter in prosody – the stanza is repeated and finally a third stanza which rhymes with the first, completing the couplet. Some maintain that in its most archaic form of the blues the first stanza was repeated three times instead of twice, thus arriving at a verse of 16 measures. *On My Way* is precisely of this format. *Rock My Soul* belongs to a different category of blues with 16 measures. Each chorus consists of a verse with eight-measures played in “stop-time”, each time in a variation ending with the same refrain every time. If you know *Georgia Grind*, which Louis Armstrong recorded in 1926, or *Hesitating Blues*, by Handy, which he recorded in 1954, or even *Blue Suede Shoes*, you know the shortened version in 12 measures of this type of blues with refrain. *Go Down Moses* in this album is structured in this manner.

A jazz musician playing spirituals? In a sense that Louis Armstrong has been doing all along.

A few other features need to be painting out. The second chorus in *Down By the Riverside* starts with a break (the steady rhythm being interrupted for an instant) just the way it is in dozen of work songs.

In *This Train* there is so-called stop-time interlude, which Louis Armstrong used so successfully in several of his instrumental renderings during the 20’s. The “call and response” formula can be heard in *This Train, Didn’t it Rain, and Go Down Moses.*

But for me Louis Armstrong’s greatest talent is the way he handles the exposition of a melody. The trumpet solo in *Swing low, Sweet Chariot* and *down By the Riverside* sow what I mean. Of course his play is forceful and convincing. But there are suspensions; almost imperceptible melodic changes showing his offbeat rhythm. All this will immediately and most directly bring out the melody, enhancing it to a point of opening up new vistas that might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

The arrangements are by Sy Oliver who was also the musical director. Oliver’s career as trumpeter – composer – arranger goes back to the time of Zack Whyte’s orchestra in the early 30’s and he, more than anyone else, created the style of Jimmy Lunceford’s powerful orchestra between 1933 and 1939. After that, he was Tommy Dorsey’s arranger and has since become one of the principal arranger – directors for MCA.

As for pop American music I believe that since death of Frank Sinatra in the U.S have not anyone real pop-singer. By my opinion “Sinatra was America and America was Sinatra”.

Frank Sinatra has been called the greatest popular singer of the century. Whether that is true, in a century that also offers us Bing Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald and many others is, of course, a matter of personal emotional choice and, therefore, unknowable. What can be said is that under the intense and fickle scrutiny of the pop marketplace for nearly two-thirds of a century, Sinatra's music was in the air the world breathed and fell out of fashion only long enough for the deserters either to grow up or recognize that what was offered in its place was almost always trash by comparison.

Sinatra was born December 15, 1915, in Hoboken, N.J., and as a schoolboy nursed ambitions to be a journalist. The earliest known example of Sinatra on record come from his 1935 performance on the Major Bowes Amateur Hour, in which he was matched with three other aspirants to sing "Shine." After the program they were sent out as a group, the Hoboken Four, on a Major Bowes road show.

Sinatra touched the big time in 1939 when Harry James, fresh out of the Benny Goodman band and not yet a major star in him own right, hired him to be vocalists in his new band. In August he recorded "All Or Nothing At All" with James, but the record would not become a major hit until Columbia reissued it during the recording ban in 1943. Sinatra was on a fast trajectory to the top himself. He left James to take an offer from Tommy Dorsey, with whom he recorded more than 90 songs before he left. The Dorsey years connected him to Axel Stordahl, who would arrange and conduct the first four Sinatra records under his own name in 1942 and become his chief musical architect for the next decade. He also made two movies with Dorsey, *Las Vagas Night* at Paramount and *Ship Ahoy* at MGM. But aside from two pictures with Gene Kelly, Sinatra's film career would be of passing interest until the 1950s.

The band singer period ended in September 1942. When Sinatra went out on as a soloist, it was to join the stock company of vocalists on the weekly "Lucky Strike Hit Parade." But there was buzz in the air about Sinatra, and it burst wide open when in 1943 when he was booked as a supporting act to Goodman at the Paramount Theater. Goodman introduced him, turned to kick off his band, and before he could lower his arm heard an ear-shattering scream of 3,000 mostly female fans explode behind him. "What they hell is that?" Goodman muttered.

During the bobby-sox years, Sinatra recorded for Columbia and turned out a steady flow of romantic ballads backed by Stordahl's tasteful orchestrations. But nothing as intense as the Sinatra phenomenon of the '40s could sustain indefinitely. The energy ran out of the Sinatra boom and by the 1952, it is said, he was washed up.

With the '40s behind him, however, the stage was set for his golden age. Capitol Records signed him up and concentrated on marketing him to young adults through carefully planned long playing albums organized around a mood, an idea, a feeling, a concept. *In the Wee Small Hours*, crafted by Nelson Riddle, became the matrix for his recording career from then on. Among the ballad albums, *All Alone*, arranged by Gordon Jenkins in 1962, stands in a class by itself for its stark sense of melancholy.

After *Wee Small Hours*, Sinatra turned to develop a side of his musical personality that had never been exploited -- the swinging Sinatra doing upbeat tempos against jazz-styled big band charts that caught some of the feeling that the new Count Basie band was generating on the instrumental side.

The albums and a string of successful films took Sinatra into the '60s at the top of his fame and form. He played the Newport Jazz Festival in the '60s, recorded with the Basie and Ellington, and played the Chairman to a colorful Clan that included Dean Martin, Sammy Davis and other chums. Talent was the admission ticket.

Yet, the force of youth movement and rock music in the late '60s and early '70s seemed to shake his own confidence in his own hipness, and he tried to embrace some of the new material. But after a period of retirement and a few false starts in the recording studio, he returned to form doing the kind of music that told stories worth telling. In the '90s his stubbornness paid off. The youth icons of the '60s and '70s finally came to him to sing his song on his terms. *Duets* may have received mixed critical reaction, but once again Sinatra was king of the hill, scoring the largest album sales of his career.

Sinatra received the Kennedy Center Honors in 1983. He died May 14, 1998, at the age of 82.

In 1998, Sinatra was elected by the Readers into the Down Beat Hall of Fame.

From the times of the Pilgrims American people have liked music and made it a part of their lives. They have played and sung and fashioned their own songs for all occasions.

There were, however, no European courts for the cultivation of art music and opportunities were rare for the training and development of individual talents. When sufficient number of professional musicians had arrived to establish centers of serious musical culture American role as a backward province of European music was firmly established. I was only natural that the foreign arbiters of taste would regard any deviations from European musical thinking as deplorable savagery to be resolutely put down.

Small wonder, then, that a serious dichotomy developed in the field of American composition. American educated young people, fresh from French or German influences, did their loyal best to write good German or French music. For subject matter they turned to “remote legends and misty myths” guaranteed to keep them from thinking about the crudities of the land, which they found so excruciating upon their return from abroad. They did, however, bring back with them a professional competence, which was to be their significant contribution to the American scene.

Meanwhile the uneducated creator, finding good stuff about him, carried on a rapidly developing music speech, which was a blend of European folk music, African rhythm, and regional color, and discovered that the public the public liked his music and was ready to pay for it handsomely. As a result via the minstrel ballad, through ragtime into jazz, a genuine popular American music made its appearance and was given every encouragement by the entertainment industry. European musicians were quick to recognize the originality and value of this music and, beginning with Debussy, accepted it as a new resource.

The American serious group, however, anxious to preserve their new-found dignity, nervously dismissed this music as purely commercial (a lot of it was and is), and until it was made respectable by the attention paid to it by Ravel and Stravinsky there were only occasional attempts to borrow from its rhythms and melodies. The highly successful popular group, on the other hand, has developed the notion that the technique of composition is not only unnecessary but an affectation. Such needs as may arise for their concerted numbers, ballets, and orchestrations they can well afford to pay for from the hacks (the underprivileged literate musicians). Gershwin’s contribution to the American scene is significant beyond his music itself in that he was able to reconcile the two points of view and achieve popular music in the large traditional forms.

Americans are ex – Europeans, to be sure, and as such have responsibilities to the preservation and continuance of European culture, but American are also a race – and a vigorous one – and it is increasingly evident that we are capable of developing cultural traditions of our own.

As for Russian music it is impossible to describe its contribution to the world musical culture, and will be difficult to estimate it. Of course, the great musical occurrence is the Russian classical music, and I would like to tell about my favorites Russian composers.

Sergei Procofyev was five when his mother gave him his first piano lesson. At the age of six he was already composing and actually writing small pieces for the piano and a few years later he write an opera to his own libretto called *The Giant*. Procofyev graduated from the Conservatoire in the spring of 1914. Taking his final exams as a pianist, he won the highest distinction: the Anton Rubinstein gold medal and prize.

Procofyev worked for nearly fifty years in all spheres and genres of music. His powerful and original talent has won universal recognition. His best works – and these are not few – have enriched the legacy of world musical culture.

Procofyev belonged to the older generation of Soviet composers who entered upon the scene before the October Revolution. He was a pupil of Rimsky – Korsakov and Lyadov who educated the young composers of their time in the spirit of the finest Russian classical traditions, which they strove to protect from modernistic influences.

Procofyev was a man of independent thinking who traveled his own way. He was one of the greatest masters of the new, Soviet period in the history of the Russian music. Never satisfied with his achievements, Procofyev was forever probing, forever working on new ideas. The development of music in the first half of this century is unthinkable without him.

Operas and ballets held an important place among the works he created. The opera *Love for Three Oranges* was written in1919 and has become very popular. Procofyev wrote another opera in the twenties – *The Flaming Angel*, but did not live to see it on the stage. No more than two fragments of it were performed in his lifetime.

Ballet music appealed to Procofyev even more than the opera. Besides his *Buffoon* he wrote three other ballet scores while abroad – *The Age of Steel, The Prodigal Son*, and *On the Dnieper*. The *Fourth Symphony*, the last to be written abroad, was the most interesting.

Procofyev’s best works, written after his return to the Soviet Union are: the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* (1935 - 1936), the symphonic fairy – tale *Peter and the Wolf* (1936), the heroic cantata *Alexander Nevsky* (1938 – 1939), the opera *War and Peace* (1941), the *Fifth Symphony* (1944), the ballet *Cinderella* (1944).

The last five years of his life brought such important works as the Seventh Symphony, the oratorio On guard of peace, the symphonic suite Winter Fire and the ballet The Stone Flower. Unforgettable are Procofyev’s sonatas and concertos for violin and many other compositions revealing the finest qualities of his tremendous talent.

Other greatest Russian composer is Igor Stravinsky.

Stravinsky was a pupil of Rimsky – Korsakov, but his reputation was made by the music he wrote for the Diaghilev Ballet in Paris (The Firebird, Petrouchka, The Rite of Spring). This period is marked by interest in Russia folk song and brilliant orchestral coloring. The most varied rhythms are used for percussive effects to accentuate the brutally harsh sonorities, and a highly dissonant harmony results from the use of polytonality.

About 1920, Stravinsky struck out in directions that were new, partly in technique and partly in the kinds of subjects and mediums employed. His technique showed a new restrained, a less dissonant and more tonal style, and greater clarity of form; in short, a tendency toward the neoclassic style. His material was typically drawn from the classics of the eighteenth century. The great variety of the musical types after 1920 is astonishing: oratorios, chamber music, concertos, ballets, symphonies, pieces for a piano, and so on. Every work of Stravinsky’s has a special individuality, and in each he achieves a uniqueness of style and solves a problem to which he seldom returns. Directly after first World War, Stravinsky wrote a number of works marked by economy of means and expression, using a few solo players (*The Soldier’s Tale; The Wind Octet*). Later, in his “third” period, he returned to the larger forms of the symphony (*Symphony in Three Movements,* 1945). Stravinsky’s early interest in American jazz rhythms dates from *Ragtime* (1918). A more ambitious work , *Ebony Concerto* (1945), for jazz band, appeared after he had settled permanently in the United States.

On the whole, Stravinsky’s style is essentially anti-romantic. The elasticity and primitive vigor of his rhythms was calculated to represent his non-romantic subject matter, and his melodies, especially in later works, are deliberately matter – of – fact, dry, and occasionally commonplace, as a reaction to the expressive melodies of Romanticism.

Stravinsky uses the tonal material of the diatonic (seven – tone) scale, sometimes combined with the old modes. His early polytonality is replaced later by clearer tonality, but his dissonant harmony is often the result of the combination of polyphonic voices. A special feature of his style is parallel dissonant chords or intervals.

Stravinsky was always a virtuoso orchestrator. A fondness for the dry brilliant sonorities of the woodwinds and particularly the percussion instruments tended to relegate the strings to the background. To individualize the voice parts of chords, Stravinsky often used instruments of different timbre.

As a young man, Stravinsky burst on the musical scene with ballet *The Rite of Spring*. It excited everybody, exhilarated a number, and outraged more. Stravinsky’s later styles were also viewed with alarm – often by those who had just accustomed themselves to his earlier style. They were dry, the wells of inspiration had run out, some said. The truth was, of course, that Stravinsky was simply being himself, and like every great artist, his style changed, as he did, from work to work. No one, however, has ever denied Stravinsky’s consummate draftsmanship, his deep respect for the past, or his extraordinary impact on the music of the present day.

As for Russian pop music I could say almost nothing. I don’t know a contemporary pop singer or compositor who, by my opinion, bring in world musical culture anything really great. But I think that our time arranges to make anything memorable in the musical area and may be soon we could see a birth a new Russian musical talent.

In conclusion I should say that music is the greatest occurrence in our life. From this work we can see that music don’t has limits and however it try to unite the people in the world. Someone famous said that mathematics is the universal language. I’m ready to argue – music is the universal language, because this language understands everyone. If you want understand foreigner – listen his native music and you will see his true soul.