

Gubaidulina's *String Quartet No.4*: Recreation of Traditions in a New Musical Context

O *Quarteto de Cordas N.4* de Gubaidulina': Recriação de tradições em um novo contexto musical

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Abstract: This study examines Sofia Gubaidulina's exploration of traditional musical idioms in her *String Quartet No.4*. Together with influences of Baroque and Renaissance musical styles, the composer experiments with the accommodation of minimalist repetitive musical texture and the European tradition of ground bass, providing a different kind of musical synthesis. Gubaidulina also explores new possibilities in several musical and technical aspects. Unexpected timbres are created in the music, providing a unique sonic experience.

Keywords: lament bass; chamber music by Sofia Gubaidulina; musical eclecticism; style synthesis.

Resumo: Este estudo examina a abordagem de Sofia Gubaidulina de expressões musicais tradicionais em seu *Quarteto de Cordas N.4*. Ao lado de influências dos estilos musicais barroco e renascentista, a compositora experimenta a acomodação da textura musical repetitiva minimalista e a tradição europeia do baixo, proporcionando um tipo diferente de síntese musical. Gubaidulina também explora novas possibilidades em vários aspectos musicais e técnicos. Timbres inesperados são criados, proporcionando uma experiência sonora única.

Palavras-chave: baixo ostinato; música de câmara de Sofia Gubaidulina; síntese de estilos; ecletismo musical.

1. Introduction

Traditional musical idioms and materials from past centuries have been used and reused in contemporary musical contexts. Many composers have undertaken to explore, experiment with and develop a range of musical styles using past musical language. One such composer is Sofia Gubaidulina; her *String Quartet No.4* (1993) illustrates the use of common idioms from past eras. Despite it sounding contemporary, the Quartet is innovative in the way in which it incorporates such idioms. The quartet is not of a classical tradition in design, but rather a synthesis of color lighting and music that attempts to find a connection between visible and instrumental colors. This study will therefore examine Gubaidulina's recreation of traditional musical idioms in her *String Quartet No.4*, with a focus only on the quartet's musical aspect.

Up to the present time, Gubaidulina has written four string quartets: *String Quartet No.1* (1971), *No.2* (1987), *No.3* (1987) and *No.4* (1993). All her quartets demonstrate Gubaidulina's interest in creating beautiful sound colors, subtle combinations of sounds and textural manipulation. In her *String Quartet Nos.2* and *3* Gubaidulina employs an oppositional

concept to create a structure in which opposing tendencies both clash with and balance one another. For instance, in her *String Quartet No.2*, distinct linear melodic identities, such as drone and melodic motive, in the first half of the composition show sharp contrast with the chord-like musical texture in the second half of the composition. In *String Quartet No.3* Gubaidulina continues showing her interest in experimenting with the oppositional concept. Apart from *pizzicato/arco* playing, Gubaidulina introduces a composite melodic line produced by different instruments in turn attacking, which creates a kind of pointillistic texture. *String Quartet No.4* shows Gubaidulina's new explorations.

Although *String Quartet No.4* may sound contemporary to many listeners, it nevertheless exemplifies well the composer's preoccupation with traditional musical vocabulary. Indeed, the piece has the characteristics that show Baroque and Renaissance influences. Gubaidulina frequently employs typical imitation techniques and musical texture that builds on parallel sixths and thirds in the music; but she also utilizes repetitive bass patterns such as ground bass in a somewhat similar way to the baroque style. Musical gestures employed recall the early vocal works of the Renaissance. Some of her musical ideas can also be referenced to the polychoral musical fashion. All these traditional techniques and ideas are introduced in a contemporary musical language, which is distinctive.

In the composition, Gubaidulina experiments with the accommodation of minimalist repetitive musical gesture and the European tradition of ground bass, providing a different kind of musical synthesis. This provides a new way of treating the ground bass. As she once said, "from time to time...it became absolutely necessary to renew the musical means, the musical language" (LUKOMSKY and GUBAIDULINA, 1998, p.8). This quartet is certainly one of her most ambitious instrumental works that demonstrates the composer's foray into conventional musical styles of previous historical periods. Thus, Gubaidulina's use of traditional musical idioms serves as a focal point for examination.

Like much of her music, Gubaidulina's penchant for sound palette is evident. In fact, she continues to explore new possibilities in all musical aspects and the music is full of technical flourish. From the beginning of her career, Gubaidulina displays an experimental spirit. Almost certainly, twentieth-century musical idioms of modernists and others are easily found in her compositions. Here, in this quartet, apart from her typical musical expression, Gubaidulina explores new territory, finding the relationship between sounds. Unexpected timbres are created in the composition, providing extreme sonic experience. In addition, she draws upon a variety of musical ideas from composers such as John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen. Gubaidulina has found a way of drawing all these musical ideas and styles together in a way that is at the same time new and highly individual. This quartet is not only a compositional challenge to the composer, but also a listening challenge to the audience.

Gubaidulina formulates a new attitude to the potentialities of the string quartet. There is also textural layering created by groups of instrumental sounds. Taken as a whole, Gubaidulina strikes off in old-new directions in composing this quartet. It is a piece that lies among post-war modernism, and Renaissance and Baroque traditions. Thus, it is intriguing to investigate how she employs these past traditions and develops such an individual and distinct sound world.

1.1 Overview of Recent Studies

There has been very little research on Gubaidulina's *String Quartet No.4*, as much of the attention has been given to her *String Quartets Nos.2* and *3* and her other orchestra works and pieces with evocative titles. Recent significant contributions to the understanding of Gubaidulina's music have included Martin Demmler, Cornelia Bartsch, Eduardo Luís Brito Patrício, Emily Hopkins, Miranda Wilson, and Philip A. Ewell. Most of the discussions focus on politics, religious symbolism, mysticism, articulation, motivic development and structural aspects of her music. For example, in his article Martin Demmler addresses J. S. Bach's music and religious aspects in Gubaidulina's *Offertorium* for violin and orchestra (DEMMLER, 2010). Wilson examines the relation of the composer's music with aspects of mysticism and mathematics (WILSON, 2012), and Patrício studies the aspect of motivic development (PATRÍCIO, 2010). Cornelia Bartsch explores the connection between the poem *Sayat-Nova* by the Russian poet Iv Oganov and Gubaidulina's *Garten von Freuden und Traurigkeiten*, and Hopkins discusses political issues in Gubaidulina's *Concerto for bassoon and low strings* (HOPKINS, 2011). A more recent study by Ewell provides an analytical approach to the articulation and methods of sound production, melody, rhythm, texture, and compositional writing of Gubaidulina's music (EWELL, 2013).

Although there have been studies contributing to the discussion on intertextual phenomena such as allusions, quotation, borrowings, and compositional modelling in compositions of the 20th century, only a few have focused on Gubaidulina's music. Alex Ross and Kenneth Gloag discuss aspects of postmodernism and Gubaidulina's incorporation of J. S. Bach's music, for instance the Royal Theme, in her *Offertorium*, featuring a polystylistic mix of compositional methods (ROSS, 2007 and GLOAG, 2012).

Joseph N. Straus' once remarked that "twentieth-century composers incorporate traditional elements not out of compositional laziness and lack of imagination,... but precisely as a way to grapple with their musical heritage. They invoke the past in order to reinterpret it" (STRAUS, 1990, p. 1). This has, in turn, stimulated the creative process in composers and enriched their works. Indeed, the music of composers, regardless of the period in which they wrote, often reveals selected techniques, styles and ideas associated with the diverse musical characteristics of their predecessors and from earlier periods. Nevertheless, these techniques and styles are presented in a new form and context. Most often one finds their music projects familiar, yet unique in themselves. What is clearly demonstrated in Gubaidulina's *String Quartet No.4* is not a collage technique, but rather how Gubaidulina embraces stylistic allusion.

Other musical examples that allude to common practice musical styles of earlier periods can also be found in Daniel Bernard Roumain *String Quartet No.3* (2003), Libby Larsen's *Evening in the Palace of Reason* (2007), Joan Tower's *String Quartet No.2* (2002) and many others. Roumain uses in his quartet standard classical chamber instruments and instrumentation; nevertheless, he creates entirely new sounds; a ground bass without any harmonic implication is treated in a similar way to the repeating minimalist technique. Similarly, Larsen, often seen as a composer who favors American vernacular music, explores in her *Evening in the Palace of Reason* parallels among the musical styles of J. S. Bach, the classical period, and of our time. For instance, in the third movement, Larsen recalls classical musical chordal-like texture, demonstrating the composer's individual and unique synthesis of

conservative and contemporary musical language. In Tower's *String Quartet No.2* moments of a chain of tie-notes alternate between violins, creating a sense of forward moving momentum, and recalling the musical handling of chained suspensions easily found in the passages of Arcangelo Corelli's trio sonatas. Many compositions of the 20th and 21st centuries demonstrate a variety of compositional strategies from past eras that have been freely revised and reused in the musical context of our time.

2. Gubaidulina's *String Quartet No.4*

The Quartet was commissioned by and dedicated to the Kronos Quartet, and premiered on 20th of January 1994 in New York. It is one movement in design and divided into three main different musical layers: taped sounds A and B, and live performance. Taped sound A is pitched a quarter-tone higher than taped sound B. A sharp contrast in dynamic occurs between the taped sounds (very soft throughout) and the live performance (different dynamic levels). Throughout the music, the taped sounds and the live performance are moving at their own different tempi and distinguished by their own musical characters.

Gubaidulina once commented that the exploration of quarter-tone temperament attracts her very much (LUKOMSKY and GUBAIDULINA, 1998, p. 11), and its use is relevant to the musical language of the 20th century. "I started my experiments with quarter-tone music not because I intended to be 'new.' Many composers of the twentieth century had explored this sphere, for example, Alois Haba and Ivan Vyshnegradsky. This search in the microtonal realm seems to be very relevant to our century," she said (LUKOMSKY and GUBAIDULINA, 1998, p. 12). On the *String Quartet No.4* (KRONOS QUARTET: Night Prayers), Gubaidulina remarked that:

I was working with the idea of three aspects, juxtaposed. The first is the real, the concrete, the live playing of music. The second is the non-real, two tracks of pre-recorded music played a quarter-tone apart, like a shadow of the real. The third is the use of darkness and light, a visual experience possible when the piece is performed live.

Gubaidulina's use of the quarter-tone technique can be traced back as early as her *String Quartet No.1* (1971), in which she presents an alteration of timbre by tuning the instrument differently, for example a quarter-tone higher and three quarter-tones lower. Nevertheless, she did not begin to concentrate on experimenting with quarter-tone music until the 1990s, for example in her *Music for Flute, Strings and Percussion* (1994), and *Quartenion* (1995) for four cellos.

In this analysis of Gubaidulina's *String Quartet No.4*, references to specific rehearsal numbers will often take the form of a rehearsal number (#), followed by a period and then the measure number. For example, "rehearsal #1.1" refers to the first measure of rehearsal number 1.

The Quartet begins with an instrumental part in taped sound B and is imitated/echoed either a beat or a few measures later in the same instrumental part of taped sound A. As in her *Quartenion* and *Music for Flute and Strings* Gubaidulina aims to create a separation of two spaces. "My experiment was aimed at a separation of the two spaces, that I tried to make audible," she said (LUKOMSKY and GUBAIDULINA, 1998, p. 11).

Since the taped sounds B and A are a quarter-tone apart, they generate a sense of spatially

separated effect. The imitation/echo continues as each individual part reveals itself. Each layer of sound is added slowly as the music progresses. The music is certainly linear and polyphonic in character, which in some respects could represent a move towards a more traditional language. Indeed, the idea of the interplay between taped sounds A and B, taped sounds and live performing here can also be referenced to polychoral singing, *cori spezzati*, in which two or more groups sing to one another. This musical handling in the quartet not only demonstrates a different way of Gubaidulina's experimenting with musical tradition, but also reveals a way she establishes a link to polychoral singing.

The term *cori spezzati* is Italian, dating from the 16th century (ARNOLD and CARVER). According to Denis Arnold and Anthony F. Carver, one of the distinct ways of double-choir polyphony that emerged in the second half of the 15th century was "through the splitting of multi-voice texture into distinct voice groups, often in a canonic or imitative relationship," and this musical handling can be seen in the music of Pierre de la Rue, Josquin and Mouton (ARNOLD and CARVER). Gubaidulina's penchant for Baroque and earlier music is evident. Not only does she write compositions that are named in terms of the Baroque genre, for instance *Chaconne* (1962), *Toccata-Troncata* (1971) and *Invention* (1974), but she also analyses the music of J. S. Bach.

Gubaidulina has also employed musical materials from Baroque composers; for example, a quotation from Heinrich Schütz is used in her *Seven Words* (1982). In addition, Gubaidulina's creative processes reflect a number of diverse stimuli. In an interview, she once said,

During my long professional life I have experienced plenty of attractions. I love a lot of things from music history. I had a period of a strong attraction to Wagner, then a period of affection for the Russian classical school (Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky), then a period of devotion to the 16th century (Josquin, Gesualdo), then a period of special interest in the Second Viennese School. But the figure to whom I experience a constant devotion is J. S. Bach. His works are still a great source of learning for me (LUKOMSKY and GUBAIDULINA, 1999, p. 27).

As a composer, Gubaidulina accepts musical traditions, in terms of style, forms and techniques; nevertheless, she has molded them to her own need. This is why her music never sounds completely traditional.

From the beginning of the quartet the taped music shows sound and manner quite distinctive from the live music. It is soft, of the same dynamic level, having unchanging musical gestures and uninterrupted flow with no goal direction throughout. There is also no "dialogue" and interaction between taped sound and live performance. This continuous static taped sound provides a musical flow in the composition. Each instrument takes turn to present a group of pitches that form different descending tetrachords in tremolos. The music begins with viola using the pitches of B flat-A-G-F, followed by violin II with E-D#-C#-B (rehearsal #6), violin I with B-A#-G#-F# (rehearsal #9.1) and cello with E-E flat-D flat-C flat (rehearsal #10.2). All these pitches can be treated as different transpositions of the tetrachord in viola.

Not all tetrachords are reiterated throughout the composition in the taped sound. As the music progresses, a slow changing of pitches begins to taken place in violin I and cello. What keeps all the parts coherent within the taped sound is that they share and repeat a similar rhythmic pattern and musical gesture throughout. Generally, although the repeating musical gesture can be easily grasped as a whole, it is difficult for the listener to detect its individual

voice. Moreover, this musical character creates a meditating and hypnotic effect. Such musical manner is reminiscent of minimalist musical texture and style. This also suggests that the work shows some influence of minimalism. The prominent features of minimalist style include a steady pulse with gradual alteration in pitch or rhythm, often reiterating musical phrases or smaller units such as figures and motives. Taken as a whole, this taped sound is a musical layer that can be treated as background music to the live performance.

What is interesting here is that Gubaidulina has successfully combined the minimalist technique of repetitive and static texture with the European rootedness tradition of ground bass musical handling, providing an ultimate new synthesis. Throughout the taped sound, the repeated descending melodic gesture in viola (B flat- A-G-F) and violin II (E-D#-C#-B) reminds one of a common musical pattern of baroque basso ostinato or ground bass, that is, descending tetrachord, sometimes called lament bass. Figure 1 illustrates both the melodic gestures of viola and violin II.



Figure 1: Repeating descending melodic gesture in viola (B flat- A-G-F) and violin II (E-D#-C#-B)

Lament bass is built on a descending tetrachord that spans the interval of a perfect fourth, with possibilities of both chromatic and diatonic notes filling the gap of a fourth (BROVER-LUBOVSKY, 2008, p. 152). Bella Brover-Lubovskiy writes that lament bass is “distinguished within the entire genera of bass patterns built on a descending stepwise motion, which itself comprises one of the most fundamental bass procedures in the music of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries” (BROVER-LUBOVSKY, 2008, p. 151). Examples can be seen in Monteverdi's *Lamento della ninfa* (Lament of the Nymph) in his eighth book of madrigals, J. S. Bach's *Crucifixus* from *Mass in B*, BWV232, and in the works of many other Baroque composers such as Benedetto Marcello, Antonio Caldara, Francesco Geminiani, Antonio Vivaldi and Francesco Veracini.

Moreover, lament bass often contains “a steady rhythmic gesture, stressed triple meter, and

slow tempo” (BROVER-LUBOVSKY, 2008, p. 153). As in a lament bass, each descending tetrachord in the taped music is about four measures long, and slow in tempo. Gubaidulina uses the descending tetrachord gesture purely for the purpose of providing background music to the live performance. Indeed, unlike the traditional lament bass, in her music there is no harmonic progression built on the descending lines. As Brover-Lubovsky claims, “the lament bass has long been recognized as one of the most firmly molded harmonic progressions,” and “in order to be considered a species of the lament bass genera each step of the descending tetrachord should be newly harmonized” (BROVER-LUBOVSKY, 2008, p. 152). It was in the eighteenth-century that “the tetrachord bass pattern, coupled with the harmonic vocabulary it supports, served as a standard formula for every European composer” (BROVER-LUBOVSKY, 2008, p. 153).

One other prominent musical feature of past traditions found in this quartet is the frequent use of “point of imitation” in the live performance to create a Renaissance textural sound world. The compositional technique refers to a series of imitative entrances in ordered arrangement. It was commonly found in the sacred music of composers such as Jocab Obrecht and Josquin des Prez during the Renaissance, and even earlier composers such as Lorenzo da Firenze (d. 1372 or 1373) and others. In Gubaidulina’s Quartet point of imitation is easily recognizable throughout the music. It is first demonstrated at rehearsal #5 where four parts enter at half measure intervals; nevertheless, it breaks away as the music progresses (Figure 2).

The image shows a musical score for rehearsal #5, marked with a box containing the number '5'. The score is for a string quartet and includes parts for Violin A (Vla A), Violin B (Vla B), Cello (C), and Violin I (Vl. I). The Cello part is labeled '(hellblau) (light blue)' and the Violin B part is labeled '(schwarz) (black)'. The score features a series of imitative entrances in the lower strings, starting with the Cello. The Cello part begins with a descending tetrachord gesture, followed by the Viola, Violin II, and Violin I. The score includes various performance instructions such as 'ord. vibr.' (ordered vibrato), 'p' (piano), and 'vibr.' (vibrato). The tempo is marked as '5:3' and the key signature is one flat. The score is written in a standard musical notation with a common time signature.

Figure 2: Technique of point of imitation that begins in cello, viola, violin 2 and violin 1

Although the music is generally linear in design, there are moments when Gubaidulina introduces passages in the live performance in which intervals are built entirely from thirds and sixths that recall the musical traits of the 16th century. A clear example is at rehearsal #18 where each part plays its melodic line in double stops, creating sixths and thirds in alternation and parallel motions (Figure 3), though the music never sounds tonal in a traditional sense.

The image shows a musical score for rehearsal #18 of Gubaidulina's *String Quartet No. 4*. The score is for Violin I (Vi. I), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and a double bass (L. 3.). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 48, and the time signature is 4/4. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The score shows a passage where each part plays a melodic line in double stops, creating sixths and thirds in alternation and parallel motions. The dynamics are marked as fortissimo (ff). The Viola part is marked 'senza sord.' and the Violoncello part is marked 'arco'. The double bass part has a 'violet violet' marking and a wedge-shaped dynamic marking. The double bass part also has '(schwarz) (black)' written above it.

Figure 3: Sixths and thirds in alternation and parallel motions

The fact is that the parallel thirds and sixths are one of the more popular musical traits of the development of counterpoint; they can be found in musical passages of Palestrina and Josquin des Prez. In the 20th century, composers often employ harmonic parallelism and parallel thirds, and sixths along with parallel fourths and fifths in their compositions; suffice to mention Debussy. Here in the quartet, Gubaidulina is certainly aware of the rules of the 16th century counterpoint and carefully avoids parallel 4ths and 5ths in the music. The passage demonstrates Gubaidulina's musical language in her own way.

The taped sounds subside and disappear at the end of rehearsal #29. At the end of the quartet, at rehearsal #44 (Figure 4) in violin II, Gubaidulina does something quite intriguing: she turns what seems to be a static, unimportant, repeated descending tetrachord taped sound in viola, into an essential musical event in live performance. She draws final attention to the tetrachord which first appeared at the opening of the composition, giving a complete whole to the music.

The image displays two systems of a musical score for rehearsal #44. The first system covers measures 44 to 47, featuring a 3/4 time signature and a tempo of 60. It includes staves for Violin I (VI. I), Violin II (VI. II), Viola (Vla), and Violoncello (Vc.). The second system covers measures 48 to 51, with a 5/4 time signature and a performance instruction 'P. G.'. The Viola and Violoncello parts include color markings: '(hellblau) (light blue)' and 'schwarz black'. The score also features various performance techniques like 'arco vibr.', 'p arco', and 'p'.

Figure 4: The returning of the opening tetrachord at rehearsal #44

Apart from the use of quarter-tones in the composition, there are unexpected timbres created in the live music. For example beginning at rehearsal #26.6, wavy lines move quickly in *sul ponticello* and *tremolo* in high pitches in strings, creating an effect of electronic sound that brings to mind one of the best-known pieces by Krzysztof Penderecki, *Threnody: to the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960). This approach in the quartet also suggests that Gubaidulina has been influenced by electronic-acoustic music. Indeed, Gubaidulina's interest in experimenting with string instruments to produce electronic sound can also be seen in her *String Quartet No.3*, as well as many of her other compositions.

Throughout her career, Gubaidulina has also written music that uses electronics; an example is her *Vivente-Non Vivente* for ANS Synthesizer (1970)—an electronic musical instrument created by Russian engineer Eugeni Murzin, from 1937 to 1957 (FUMAROLA, 1997, p. 4). In Gubaidulina's later compositions, she turns away from electronic instruments. "We've got enough wealth even without electronics, the latter only adds more." she said (DESIATERYK, 2012).

Other new textures and timbres are also introduced through a wide variety of playing techniques. For example, a *ricochet* bowing technique is used to produce a bouncing staccato sound effect. Other performance techniques also include *col legno*, *glissandi*, *sul ponticello* and *pizzicato*. The enduring fascination with *ricochet* bowing, *col legno*, *glissandos* and *tremolos* has become part of Gubaidulina's love for color in many of her compositions. "In the 1970s I was interested in such things as interval and timbre concepts... I experimented with

all kinds of non-traditional methods of sound production with different instruments and wrote music for uncommon combinations of instruments," she said (LUKOMSKY and GUBAIDULINA, 1998, p. 34). Suffice to mention her early composition *Pantomime* (1966) for double and piano and her other string quartets.

Typical of Gubaidulina's compositional techniques is *rubato*, polyrhythms such as 5:4, 7:6, 8:6, 8:9, 9:6, and constant changing meters employed in certain passages, as well in the music of live performance. Gubaidulina enjoys the freedom of incorporating styles and techniques, and which she felt encouraged to explore in her composition. All these sound effects are introduced in different musical events through distinct ideas. The music is written in such a way that each musical event tends to sound like an individual moment in the composition. In most cases, breaks, pauses and rests are used to indicate the end of each musical event. It is not surprising that the listener is never sure what is going to happen next. This musical effect certainly reminds one of Karlheinz Stockhausen's "moment form"—a series of self-contained sections found in a piece of music. Such form is first introduced in Stockhausen's *Kontakte* (1958-60). In fact, the incorporation of moment form in the music can also be found in Gubaidulina's *String Quartet No.3*. In that quartet, each musical idea seems to occupy a unique moment separated from those surrounding it, and it does not give a sense of continuity at first hearing.

In addition, some of Gubaidulina's musical ideas in *quartet No.4* are derived from modernist techniques. For example, she often employs groups of notes in a particular rhythmic pattern in non-metrical episodes (with time frames indicated) at the end of a musical event. The use of time frames is to indicate a period of time during which the music must begin and end. This musical handling is commonly found in the late works of John Cage, such as *Music for More* (1984-1987). The influence of Cage on Gubaidulina can be seen in her other music such as *Rejoice!* (1983), which also offers varying degrees of freedom within the notation and instructions for the performers, drawing on aleatoricism.

How does Gubaidulina create cohesion and unity in the entire quartet? To some extent, one may refer her approach to conventional handling. She uses the descending tetrachord as opening material for the composition, and also recalls the musical gesture back at rehearsal #44 to bring a sense of closure at the end of the work. Gubaidulina integrates the initial tetrachord musical gesture that was introduced in the taped sound into the live performance, developing a link, and thereby bringing the music to a complete whole.

Another approach to connect the entire composition is the use of a semitone intervallic idea. The semitone idea is certainly derived from the tetrachord that appears in the viola from the taped sound. It is often used to expand and introduce a musical idea. A clear example is the point of imitation that begins at rehearsal #5. The five-note melodic line begins with the pitches F-F#-G-F#-A#. In addition, at rehearsal #30, a descending semitone musical gesture of the descending tetrachord is recalled. In some cases Gubaidulina uses performance techniques such as *Bartók snaps*, *vibrato* and *trills* to emphasize and to draw attention to the semitone.

3. Conclusion

Throughout musical history composers have continued to use ideas, techniques and styles from their predecessors, yet renewing and presenting them in their individual and unique ways. Their creative power is enormous. Indeed, to most composers it is not a simple return to a traditional view and use of these techniques and ideas, but is a further examination and exploration for their possibilities. By doing so, it can present quite a challenge to composers and provide sonic experiences to listeners.

Although *String Quartet No.4* demonstrates a highly developed treatment of traditional techniques, in general, the music does not sound tonal. Inevitably, some listeners may have some difficulty in following and comprehending it. Nevertheless, Gubaidulina not only shows different approaches to musical presentation, but also successfully recreates traditional musical style in a contemporary context, giving it a fresh and individual manner. The music certainly demonstrates Gubaidulina's sensitivity to the musical tradition, yet she does not move away from her own musical vocabulary. Indeed, the quartet shows how Gubaidulina experiments with a broad range of techniques from early historical periods, along with those of post-war modernists. Thus the composition shows how Gubaidulina uses different means to achieve musical synthesis.

In the music there is no conflict created between the static in the taped sound and the lively, energetic musical gesture in the live performance. Instead, they complement each other; static texture functions as the background music that supports the live performance and provides cohesion to the music. Moreover, the live performance moves at a quicker pace than the surrounding texture and therefore brings to the music a sense of forward momentum. Gubaidulina has found her own way of balancing her music. Throughout the quartet she has provided great variety of musical texture and timbres that create layering effects.

Indeed, exploring with diverse sound colors has characterized Gubaidulina as a composer; she has never moved away from many of her typical musical styles that can be related to contemporary musical fashion. For example, in the quartet one finds the absence of themes and the use of a high level of dissonance and rhythmic complexity. Flexibility in the music also suggests her interest in modernist music. Experimenting with different sound colors and techniques in strings also has been a prominent feature in the quartet. Despite a sense of moment created in the music, continuity is achieved through the static musical texture in the taped sounds that keep the flow of the music, and through the descending tetrachords and semitone motive. The work's hybrid approach in styles and compositional techniques reveals Gubaidulina's brilliant consolidation of a broad variety of resources. The piece certainly provides fascinating insights into Gubaidulina's compositional writings that draw on conventional ideas and styles.

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