

## Challenges of Performing *Tragédie Lyrique* at the Sheremetev Serf Theater (1775-1797):

Based upon the Correspondence between Count Nikolai Petrovich Sheremetev and Monsieur Hivart (a Musician of the Paris Opera)

MORIMOTO Yoriko

The Sheremetev Serf Theater (1775-1797), managed mainly by Count Nikolai Petrovich Sheremetev (1751-1809), was one of the few theaters that imported and performed the French genre *tragédie lyrique*, which was never staged in any other Russian theaters (not even the court theater). This paper aims to present the facts regarding the performances of *tragédie lyrique* at the Sheremetev Theater according to the handwritten correspondence, in French, between Count Nikolai and Monsieur Hivart (date of birth and death unknown), a musician of the Paris Opera, which is preserved at the Russian State Historical Archive. Furthermore, this work aims to promote appreciation of said theater's activities.

Many performances of *tragédie lyrique* were held at the Sheremetev Theater between 1784 and 1791. Count Nikolai was increasingly interested in *tragédie lyrique*, including the fashionable operas by C. W. Gluck and his followers, which were imported into the theater every year. When these operas were performed, the troupe expended great effort on preparing the performances under the leadership of Count Nikolai. For example, *Renaud*, by A. Sacchini, was imported with much assistance from Monsieur Hivart, and the entire text was translated into Russian, with great difficulty. Ultimately, Count Nikolai ordered Monsieur Hivart to create an opera in three acts, *Tomiris reine des Massagètes*, which has choruses, dances, and *récitatif* (that is, the same qualities as *tragédie lyrique*). Given the challenges of performing *tragédie lyrique*, Count Nikolai demanded character in the music, spectacle, and festivity of the opera. He demonstrated his utmost concern for the performance of fashionable works.

These challenges reveal the Sheremetev Serf Theater as an “opera theater” capable of staging full-scale operas. In addition, the circumstances suggest that the foundation for the flourishing of the operatic culture in the 19th century was laid by nobles in the late 18th century.