

Psychoses in composers

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Summary – In this article, we have described the pathographies of fifty composers who were suffering from psychotic disorders. A few of them committed suicide in younger age because of schizophrenia. Others suffered from paranoid personality disorder, or were likely to have a bipolar affective disorder. The vast majority of composers who attempted to commit suicide suffered from severe depressive episodes. Progressive paralysis-neurosyphilis, as well as alcoholic psychosis were previously mentioned and published in this Journal.

Key words: composer, disease, psychosis

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article was to emphasize and summarize pathographies of eminent composers, about fifty of them, who suffered from psychoses. It is very important to state the relationship between composers' diseases and their creative work and composing.^{1–3}

Connection of ingenuity and insanity was noticed by ancient writers. For some philosophers (Schopenhauer), ingenuity is close to madness, because ingenious individuals are prone to strong emotions

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and irrational passions. An increased excitability of central nervous system is a very common cause for ingenuity and madness. On the other hand, Lomboso considered that sometimes psychotic states release fantasy and therefore might be useful for creative work. Another author, Ludwig (20th century), published in his study that the artists were likely to suffer from psychosis and suicide attempts 2–3 times more frequently than business people and scientists.^{4–7}

The first aim of this article was to highlight the significant and popular composers who suffered from schizophrenia and bipolar psychotic disorders, the second aim was to mention incidental alcohol –induced, addictive and syphilitic psychoses.

COMPOSERS (ORDERED BY ALPHABET) AND RESULTS

2.1 Johann August Bodinus (1725–1800) German composer and violinist. Due to the weakness of his hand he finished his career as a violin virtuoso, but continued conducting and organizing concerts. He could not handle his children's death, which led him to mental derangement, sometimes psychosis. He died at the age of 75.^{1,3}

2.2 Auguste Bottee de Toulmon (1797–1850) French composer, became mentally ill two years before his death. He died of worsening psychosis.^{1,3}

2.3 John Wall Calcott (1766–1821) English composer and theorist. At the top of his creative power, suffered from mental derangement and collapse. He was treated for psychosis in a mental hospital from 1807–1812. After short improvement, his disease reactivated in stronger form, and he could not recover until his death 1816.^{1,3}

2.4 Rudolf Dellinger (1857–1910) German composer and conductor. A year before his death, he suffered from mental derangement and psychosis, which was the cause of his death.^{1,3}

2.5 Francois Devienne (1759–1803) French composer, flutist and teacher. A few months before his death, he was affected by a mental disorder and psychosis and therefore placed in a mental hospital, where he died.^{1,3}

2.6 Henri Duparc (1848–1933) French composer. He was very sensitive and self-critical, he suffered from manic-depressive states too. He destroyed a large number of his scores and other pieces. He hallucinated frequently and died at advanced age of 86.^{1,3}

2.7 Adelaide Eichner (1760–1787) German composer, who suffered from difficult emotional instability, extremely depressed. She committed suicide at the age of 26, probably because of serious mental illness-schizophrenia.^{1,3,8}

2.8 Pavel Andreyevich Fedotov (1815–1852) Russian composer and painter. In the early years he came up with ideas of delusions, persecution and the grandio-

sity and finally died from psychosis at the age of 37.^{1,3}

2.9 Pierre Gaveaux (1760–1825) French painter and composer. He became mentally ill in 1812, but he recovered and worked until 1816. His condition got worse and he was placed in mental hospital in 1819, where he died six years later.^{1,3}

2.10 Stefano Gobatti (1852–1913) Italian composer. After a professional debacle he devoted to teaching and retreated to a monastery. Finally, he got mentally ill, and died from psychosis in a mental hospital.^{1,3}

2.11 Ivor Bertie Gurney (1890–1937) English composer and poet. He became prone very early to serious mental disorders, especially in composing. His mental breakdown consisted of severe depression with suicide attempts. He was suffering from paranoid schizophrenia with delusions, hallucinations and ideas of persecution. He fancied that Shakespeare's works and Haydn's compositions were his. He suffered from tuberculosis, which was the cause of his death.^{1,3}

2.12 Jacob Adolf Haegg (1850–1928) Swedish composer, became mentally ill with schizophrenia. Therefore he was placed in mental hospital where he had lived for fifteen years. He recovered partially and eventually died at the age of 78.^{1,3}

2.13 Karl Friedrich Horn (1762–1830) German composer, organist, pedagogue,

theorist. After the King's death fell into a depression and mental disorder – psychosis, which was the cause of his death.^{1,3}

2.14 Louis Jullien (1812–1860) French composer and conductor. At the end of his life, he became mentally unstable, irritable and died from psychosis very soon.^{1,3}

2.15 Joseph Kelway (1702–1783) English composer, organist and harpsichordist. In his old age he suffered from severe mental derangement – psychosis.^{1,3}

2.16 Johann Cristoph Kienlen (1783–1829) German composer, at the end of his life, he suffered from a mental derangement-disease, intellectually severe disturbances and finally died at the age of 46.^{1,3}

2.17 Otto Karl Erdmann Kospoth (1753–1817) German composer, after a fire suffered from mental disturbances and shortly thereafter died from psychosis.^{1,3}

2.18 Adrien de La Fage (1805–1862) French composer and writer. He was affected by a severe mental derangement and disturbance – psychosis, three years before his death. He was placed in a mental hospital, where he died soon.^{1,3}

2.19 Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) French philosopher, writer and composer. He showed restless nature, was emotionally unstable, often agitated and occasionally incoherent. At the age of 25, he suffered from depression, associ-

ated with hypochondria and fear of death. He fell into melancholy mood with ideas of delusions, reference and persecution. He had significant disturbances with nephrocalcinosis, dysuria, renal neuropathy, incontinence and impotence. He fell into a coma, probably due to uraemia, which was the cause of his death. The autopsy did not show any signs of genitourinary disease.^{1,3}

2.20 Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

German composer, pianist, conductor and musicologist. He was burdened by a positive heredity for mental illness. His childhood was marked by long depression and sister's suicide. Thereafter he became anxious and depressed occasionally, with insomnia. He had depressive phases associated with hypochondria, and auditory hallucinations. He mentioned noises and expressed auditory hallucinations, sometimes he was thinking about suicide. His hallucinations were very clear, with ideas of persecution, and his thinking probably not only dissociated but incoherent. During one of his panic attacks, he ran out of his house and threw himself off a bridge into the Rhine River. He was drawn by fishermen against his will, thereafter he felt miserable and he was settled in mental hospital. His psychoorganic and psychotic state got worse. He died at the age of 46 from pneumonia and sudden heart failure. Depression, hypomania, schizoid to schizophrenic states, what's more fluctuating schizoaffective psychosis alternated dur-

ing his life with frequent auto-therapy and psychoactive substances use.^{1,3,9–12}

2.21 Pierre Scudo (1806–1864) French composer, critic and librettist. Near the end of his life, he became mentally ill and a few months before death was placed in a mental hospital, where he died.^{1,3}

2.22 Kalman Simonffy (1831–1888) Hungarian composer. Before the end of his life, he suffered from severe depression, and psychosis – mental disturbances which were the causes of his death.^{1,3}

2.23 Nicola Spinelli (1865–1909) Italian composer, conductor and pianist. He became mentally ill at the age of thirty. His psychosis increasingly worsened and he died early at the age of 44.^{1,3}

2.24 Alexander Vladimirovich Stan-chinsky (1888–1914) Russian composer and pianist. His psychosis was diagnosed early, as schizophrenia with suicidal ideas. He committed suicide by drowning at the age of 26.^{1,3,8}

2.25 George Putnam Upton (1834–1919) American composer, critic and writer. He became psychotic at old age, probably his psychosis was caused by atherosclerotic or vascular dementia. He died peacefully at 85 years of age.^{1,3}

2.26 Alexey Nikolayevich Verstovsky (1799–1862) Russian composer, who suffered from severe depression because of the professional failure in the last years of his life. He died at the age of 63.^{1,3}

2.27 Peter Warlock (Philip Heseltine) (1894–1930) English composer, who suf-

ferred from cyclothymia and bipolar psychosis. Manic states alternated with more frequent and more deeply depressed-melancholic states. He was creating and composing in manic states, while on the other had he was completely paralysed in severe depressive states. In the frame of his personal and financial disturbances he was likely to commit suicide leaving gas valves open in his room at the age of 36.^{1,3,8}

Composers who suffered from syphilitic psychosis were: Carlo Andreoli (1640–1908), Emanuel Chabrier (1841–1894), Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848), Alexander Lvovich Gurilev (1803–1858), Vjekoslav Karas (1821–1858), Adrien de La Fage (1805–1862), Gregor Lange (1540–1587), Edward MacDowell (1861–1908), Josef Mysliveček (1737–1781), Eugeniusz Pankiewicz (1857–1898), Luigi Ricci (1805–1859), George Robertson (1863–1917), Emanuel Schikaneder (1751–1812), Franz Schubert (1797–1828), Bedřich Smetana (1824–1888) Hugo Wolf (1860–1903).^{1,2,12,13}

Composers who suffered from alcohol related psychosis were: Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782), Mihail Ivanovich Glinka (1804–1857), George Frederic Handel (1685–1759), Ferencz Liszt (1811–1886), Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky (1830–1881), Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) These composers were previously mentioned and published in this Journal.^{14–20}

DISCUSSION

Schizophrenia as a psychotic disorder occurred in composers rarely in simplex or hebephrene form, because such disorders disable the creativity in youth. We can mention several examples. Eichner (27 years) committed suicide in the schizophrenic process, emotionally unstable, depressed very early, Stanchinsky, committed a suicide by drowning very early (26 years), because he suffered from schizophrenia. Warlock and Fedotov died from paranoid schizophrenia, committing suicide. A large number of composers died after developing a paranoid picture as Rousseau, Schikaneder, Bottee, Callcott, Duparc, Gurney, Haegg, Horn, Kelway, Kospoth, Spinelli, Upton, Verstovsky. Older composers died from age-related psychoses. Psychotic diagnose has been set more accurately in recent times. In this group, the most composers with psychosis were Germans, French and Russians. The average life expectancy in this group is 54.94 years. They lived longer than composers who died of neurosyphilis and progressive paralysis, at about 50 years of age.¹

CONCLUSION

From this article, we can conclude that a large number (49) of composers had different personality disorders, psychosis resembling schizophrenia and bipolar disorders. Syphilitic psychosis and ad-

dictive-alcoholic delirious psychosis are just mentioned in previous articles in this Journal.

PSIHOZE U SKLADATELJA

Sažetak – u ovom radu smo obradili pedesetak skladatelja koji su bolovali od psihotičnih poremećaja. Nekolicina od njih su u mlađoj

dobi počinili suicid zbog shizofrenog poremećaja. Drugi su bolovali od paranoidnog poremećaja ličnosti, ili su najvjerojatnije imali bipolarni afektivni poremećaj. Velik je broj skladatelja koji su pokušali suicid u sklopu teških depresivnih epizoda ili progresivne paralize, kao i alkoholne psihoze, što je samo spomenuto.

Ključne riječi: skladatelj; patografija; psihoza

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