THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET MUSIC POLICY, 1932-41

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(This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration)

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The politicization of musical life in Stalin's Russia is a subject which has attracted a great deal of interest among specialists and lay-people alike. For the most part, music historians have argued that the 1930s was the period which saw the 'regimentation' of Soviet musical life and the imposition of 'totalitarian controls' on composers. This dissertation seeks to test such interpretations through an exploration of the development of Party policy towards music in the Soviet Union in the aftermath of the 'Cultural Revolution' of 1928-32.

The dissertation highlights the intersections between Soviet policy in other spheres and the treatment meted out to the musical profession: both the shift towards isolationism in Soviet foreign policy in late 1935-6 and the Stakhanovite campaign in industry with its accompanying emphasis on populism and anti-élitism can be seen as having had significant input into the anti-formalism campaign. It also focuses on the structure of the musical profession itself, and the ways in which practical concerns - the fact that the state was effectively paying composers' wages - often played as significant a role as ideological factors in determining policy. What emerges as perhaps the most striking feature of this study is the absence of a coherent Party line on many issues, and the extent to which members of the musical profession themselves played a significant role in defining the boundaries within which they lived and worked.

Chapters in the thesis cover: (1) the 1920s and the Cultural Revolution period; (2) the institutional structures of the Soviet arts bureaucracy and the mechanisms of decision-making in Soviet music policy; (3) 'music and society': the social position and material conditions of members of the musical profession; the increasing professionalization of composers' work; the promotion of the amateur music movement; Soviet musical education; the attempt to create a Soviet performance school; and the introduction of central planning in the musical instruments industry; (4) the definition (or lack thereof) of 'socialist realism' in the musical context, together with the different views taken by politicians, bureaucrats and composers of individual musical genres, including classical music, opera, jazz and folk music, including the folk music of the non-Russian national groups; (5) music and foreign affairs: attitudes towards contemporary Western music; policy towards Russian émigrés; the decision to encourage Soviet participation in international performance competitions; and the policies pursued by the revolutionary music bureau of the Comintern; and (6) the anti-formalism campaign of 1936, focusing in particular on the attacks on Shostakovich; and the ways in which Soviet musical life was affected by the Stalinist Terror.
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I have been fortunate enough to have a wonderful group of friends, and would like to thank them all for their support over the last few years. Toni Erskine, Stephen Lovell and Peter Tregear have all read and commented on sections of my dissertation and have been extremely positive and encouraging about the whole project. It would all have taken considerably longer without their help. Friends in the SPS Attic have provided a congenial working environment, and I should like to thank my fellow coffee-drinkers - Bela Bhatia, Monica Badia, David Mikosz and Tanni Mukhopadhyay - for dispelling any lingering fears that I might have been consuming more caffeine than anyone else in the office. Friends in Russia, in particular Irina Khutsieva, Larissa Mashkova and Tatiana Glasnova, could not have been more hospitable during my research trip in 1996-7. Many other friends in Cambridge, Newcastle, Birmingham and elsewhere have helped to keep me sane and cheerful during the writing-up process, and I am grateful to them all.

Finally, thanks are due to my Dad, not only for the donation of a computer, but also for proof-reading the entire manuscript on Christmas Eve. This went far beyond the call of parental duty and rescued me from an embarrassing number of typos. Any remaining mistakes are entirely my own fault.
NOTE ON SPELLING

It is customary, in dissertations on Russian subjects, to adopt a standard transliteration system and then to leave the names of well-known figures in their more familiar spellings. This causes problems for the music historian, as there are a considerable number of Soviet composers who are very far from being household names but are nevertheless reasonably well-known in musical circles. Rather than seeking to draw an arbitrary dividing line between the famous and the not-so-famous, I have chosen to transliterate all Russian names according to the system established by the Library of Congress. This has resulted in a few unfamiliar spellings: for example, Chaikovskii, rather than Tchaikovsky and Prokof'ev, rather than Prokofiev, but I hope that these will not cause too many problems for the reader.
GLOSSARY

ASM (Assotsiatsiia sovremennoi muzyki) - Association for Contemporary Music (1923-32)

Cheka - security police (Civil War period)

dekada - ten-day festival of the performing arts

Dom Kompozitorov - House of Composers (apartment block built for composers in Moscow in 1937)

Glaviskusstvo (Glavnoe upravlenie po delam khudozhhestvennoi literatury i iskusstva) - Narkompros central arts administration

Glavnauka (Glavnoe upravlenie nauchnymi, nauchno-khudozhhestvennymi, muzeinymi i po okhrane prirody uchrezhdeniami) - Narkompros central board for scientific institutions

Glavpolitprosvet (Glavnyi politiko-prosvetitel'nyi komitet) - Narkompros central board on political enlightenment

Glavprofoobr (Glavnoe upravlenie professional'noy obrazovaniia) - Narkompros central board for professional education

Glavrepertkom (Glavnyi repertuarnyi komitet) - Narkompros central repertoire committee

gorkom kompozitorov - city committee for composers

Gosfil (Gosudarstvennaia Filarmoniia) - State Philharmonia

Gosplan - state planning agency

GUS (Gosudarstvennyi uchebnii sovet) - Narkompros state academic council

ISCM - International Society for Contemporary Music

khaltura - ‘hack-work’ (term of abuse)

kolkhoz - collective farm

komandirovka - official trip

Komsomol - League of Young Communists

kulak - rich peasant

Kul’tprop - Party central committee department for culture and propaganda (1930-35)

Kul’tpros - Party central committee department for cultural and enlightenment work (established 1935)

kul’turnost’ - cultured-ness, good taste

ideinost’ - ideological content

Inturist - organization dealing with foreign tourists
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khaltura - 'hack-work' (term of abuse)
kolkhoz - collective farm
komandirovka - official trip
Komsomol - League of Young Communists (komsomolets - member of the Komsomol)
kulak - rich peasant
Kul'tprop - Party central committee department for culture and propaganda (1930-35)
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kul'turnost' - cultured-ness, good taste
ideinost' - ideological content
Inturist - organization dealing with foreign tourists
LAPM (Leningradskaia assotsiatsiia proletarskikh muzykantov) - Leningrad Association of Proletarian Musicians

LASM (Leningradskaia assotsiatsiia sovremennoi muzyki) - Leningrad Association for Contemporary Music

litfond (literaturnyi fond) - Writers’ foundation

MALEGOT (Malyi Akademicheskii Leningradskii Gosudarstvennyi Opernyi Teatr) - Leningrad Maly Opera Theatre

MORT (Mezhdunarodnoe ob”edinenie revoliutsionnykh teatrov) - International Association of Revolutionary Theatres

muzfond (muzykal’nyi fond) - music foundation (run by the Composers’ Unions to help needy members)

Muzgiz (gosudarstvennoe muzykal’noe izdatel’stvo) - State music publishing house

MUZO (muzykal’nyi otdel Narkomprosa) - Narkompros music department

Narkomfin (Narodnyi komissariat finansov) - People’s Commissariat of Finance

Narkomlegprom (Narodnyi komissariat legkoi promyshlennosti) - People’s Commissariat of Light Industry

Narkomkomprom (Narodnyi komissariat prosveshchennia) - People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment

Narkomtiazhprom (Narodnyi komissariat tiazheloi promyshlennosti) - People’s Commissariat of Heavy Industry

narodnost’ - national or popular spirit

NEP - the New Economic Policy (1921-8)

NKVD (Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennykh del) - People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (security police, from 1934)

oblast’ - region (administrative division)

ORKiMD (Ob”edinenie revoliutsionnykh kompozitorov i muzykal’nykh deiatelei) - Union of Revolutionary Composers and Musicians (1924-32)

partiinost’ - Party spirit

Persimfans (pervyi simfonicheskii ansambl’ bez dirizhera) - First symphonic ensemble without a director

politotdel - political department

Prokoll (proizvodstvennyi kollektiv studentov-kompozitorov Moskovskoi konservatorii) - Production Collective of student composers of Moscow Conservatoire (1925-32)

Rabfaky (rabochie fakul’tety) - workers’ faculties (for fast-track entrance to higher education)

Rabis (soiuz rabotnikov iskusstv) - Union of Arts Workers
RAPM (Rossiiskaia assotsiatsiia proletarskikh muzykantov) - Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (1923-32)
(RAPMovtsy - members of RAPM)

Sovnarkom (Sovet narodnykh komissarov) - Council of People’s Commissars

Stakhanovite - worker rewarded for overfulfilling his quota (named after Stakhanov, a highly publicized coal miner)

TsK VKP(b) (Tsentral’nyi komitet vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (bol’sheviki)) - Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party

VKI (Vsesoiuznyi komitet po delam iskusstv) - All-Union Arts Committee (from 1936)

VOKS (Vsesoiuznoe obschestvo kul’turnoi sviazi s zagranitsei) - All-Union Association for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries

VRKD (Vseroskomdram) - All-Russian Society for Dramatists and Composers (1929-32)

VTsIK (Vsesoiuznyi tsentral’nyi ispolnitel’nyi komitet sovietov) - Central executive committee of the All-Union Congress of Soviets

VTsSPS (Vsesoiuznyi tsentral’nyi sovet professional’nykh soiuzov) - Central trade union organization

vuz (vysshie uchebnye zavedeniia) - institute of higher education

zhdanovshchina - cultural purge initiated by Zhdanov in the late 1940s against artists whose work was perceived to contain western influences
INTRODUCTION

The 1930s was a period of considerable upheaval in all spheres of Soviet life. In the political arena this period witnessed the consolidation of Stalin's rule and a massive extension of the powers of the state. In the musical world, the 1930s saw the return of Prokof'ev from emigration, the composition of several musical works of lasting value, and an impressive number of Soviet victories at international music competitions. The attacks on Shostakovich in 1936 marked the first real attempt by the authorities to direct what kinds of music Soviet composers should be permitted to write, and this episode foreshadowed the post-war cultural purges of the zhdanovshchina. The intersection between music and politics in the Soviet Union in the 1930s not only holds intrinsic interest for the historian. The investigation of this subject can also throw light on many of the wider political, cultural and social issues of Soviet history during this period, and this dissertation will seek to do just that.

The 1930s tend to be regarded as the period in which Stalin's regime succeeded in taking complete control of Soviet musical life and forced its own view of how Soviet music should sound onto composers and performers. Boris Schwarz, in the standard English-language textbook on music in Soviet Russia, describes the period as one of 'regimentation', which he contrasts with the flexibility of the preceding decade.\(^1\) In reality, the situation was very much more complex. Soviet music and musical life certainly underwent a radical transformation during the 1930s and the political authorities had an important role to play in this. The disbanding of the factional associations which had sprung up on the 'musical front' during the 1920s, the consolidation of all members of the musical profession into centralized institutions such as the Unions of Soviet Composers, and the official promotion of certain styles and genres in Soviet music were all developments which were initiated and implemented 'from above'. The depiction of the Stalin years as a period which saw music's 'complete loss of creative freedom and total subordination to the aims and tasks of Bolshevik political propaganda' is certainly exaggerated, however, and Schwarz's image of the 'regimentation' of the musical profession implies an entirely passive role for musicians themselves, which could not be further from the

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While recent research into the history of Soviet social and cultural life in this period has led to a revision of previous views, music has to a considerable extent been overlooked by historians.

This dissertation sets out to investigate the formation and implementation of Soviet music policy during the 1930s. Key issues to be addressed include the extent to which a discernible and consistent 'Party line' towards Soviet music emerged after 1932; the different levels at which policy decisions were made; the sorts of values and ideals encompassed by official policy with regard to music and how far these were subject to change over time; how the official agenda was implemented and with what success; and the various responses made by composers and musicians. What emerges from this is a complex picture of interactions between the Soviet arts bureaucracy and members of the musical profession. Decision-making was not simply influenced by 'the conviction that a truly Communist policy requires the Soviet composer to write music only for the purpose of helping to enslave the minds, the will and the 'feelings of the peoples under its sway', and musicians themselves played a significant role in shaping the conditions in which they lived and worked.3

Soviet culture in the 1930s has been approached by historians in a number of different ways. The model which has framed virtually the whole of Western research on this topic is the concept of the 'Great Retreat', put forward by the sociologist Nicholas Timasheff in 1946.4 In Timasheff's view, Russia's independence was preserved and the position of her rulers secured between 1930 and 1940 by means of a tactical retreat away from many of the most crucial tenets of the Communist experiment of the 1920s. In the field of culture, Timasheff regarded the appeasement of public opinion as the regime's main priority, with official policy directed 'towards the gratification of popular desires'.5 It is possible to trace the influence of Timasheff's model on the work of various Western scholars, notably Sheila Fitzpatrick, and one can

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3 Olkhovsky, p. xi.


5 Timasheff, p. 268.
arguably draw parallels between the idea of the Great Retreat and Trotsky's view that the original ideals of the revolution were betrayed in the 1930s by Stalinist bureaucrats. This last comparison should not be pushed too far, however, as Trotsky was following his own agenda and he offered very different interpretations of many of the processes involved in the development of Stalinism.⁶

Although there is a lot to be said for many aspects of Timasheff's model, it should nevertheless be treated with caution. In particular, the idea that there had ever been any real agreement within the Bolshevik Party over the direction which social and cultural policy should take in the 1920s is hard to substantiate. Since nothing even faintly resembling a retreat was ever made on the economic front, it seems rather incongruous to describe the social and cultural policies of the period as a 'return to the past', given that the economic framework within which they were implemented was unrecognizably different. Stephen Kotkin, in an attempt to write off Timasheff's theory altogether, has emphasized the fact that the values expressed by the new 'policies were those which would prove useful to the state.'⁷ Nevertheless, Timasheff was perfectly correct to draw attention to the ways in which Bolshevik social and cultural policy of the 1930s incorporated elements of past practices and, as Katerina Clark has pointed out, revolutions tend to incorporate conservative as well as radical elements, since the 'first premise of revolution is that the present is so bad it must be annihilated, and consequently its models tend to come from the past'.⁸

Research by Vera Dunham and Sheila Fitzpatrick into the role played by audience tastes in shaping the new Soviet cultural values fits rather neatly into Timasheff's model. Both Dunham and Fitzpatrick have highlighted the role of the new 'middle-class' elite of upwardly-mobile workers, who had taken advantage of the opportunities offered by the new regime to gain higher education. Members of this group of workers subsequently entered the hierarchy of


Soviet officialdom and came to form the social base of the Stalinist regime. Their respect for the values of the old intelligentsia and their aspirations to acquire a 'cultured' lifestyle were significant factors shaping the contours of social and cultural values in the 1930s. Attendance at concerts of classical music was certainly one of the possible means by which kul'turnost' (cultured-ness) might be acquired, and the puritan mentality, which formed one component of this new set of values, was an important factor prompting the criticisms of Shostakovich's opera Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo Uezda (Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk) in 1936 as well as many of the attacks on jazz. Richard Stites' work on popular culture also stresses the role of public opinion, which he regards as instrumental in shaping the mass culture of the 1930s. The officially-sponsored popular culture of this period was, in his view, developed 'to answer public taste as well as state goals'. This was one reason why it proved more successful than the so-called 'popular' culture promoted by associations such as the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM) during the 1928-32 period.

Although theories about popular taste can contribute a great deal to our understanding of the genesis of Stalinist culture, they do not tell the whole story. Timasheff's argument, that the cultural mores of the 1930s were part of an official policy of reverting to traditional Russian values in order to placate public opinion and thereby stabilize the regime, has much in common with Dunham's 'big deal' hypothesis. Dunham posited the notion of a deal struck between the regime and the new middle class, offering privileges in return for political loyalty, although she conceptualized the values of this 'new elite' as a middle-class phenomenon rather than as traditionally Russian. Given that the Soviet leaders themselves largely shared the values of this class, however, it seems equally plausible to regard them as having promoted a traditionalist and conservative line in social and cultural policy of their own volition, rather than as part of a bargain with the new middle class. Interpretations of this nature are weakened in any case by the fact that they fail to take account of the motivations of artists and composers: the creators of Soviet artistic culture. Perhaps the most pertinent feature of theories which focus on the


10 Fitzpatrick, Chapters 9 and 10.

importance of public opinion is the way in which they highlight the fact that, despite the absence of capitalist market relations in the Soviet Union, public tastes remained an important consideration which both artists and politicians were well advised to take into account.

More recent research has given centre stage to the role of the artistic intelligentsia and its relations with the political élite. Boris Groys regards the socialist realist aesthetic of the 1930s as a radical extension of the programme of 1920s avant-garde groups, rather than as a return to conservative cultural values. This turns on its head the traditional interpretation of Stalinist culture as the triumph of the conservative wing of the artistic intelligentsia over the avant-garde. The problem with all such analyses is that the conceptualization of 'the avant-garde' and 'the traditionalists' as monolithic groups does not stand up under scrutiny, nor indeed was the opposition between them as absolute as Groys suggests.\(^1\)

An alternative reading of relations between artists and the Soviet regime is offered by Katerina Clark, who argues that the artistic intelligentsia played at least as great a role as the Party leadership in the creation of Stalinist culture. Focusing on the artistic projects of the Petrograd intelligentsia in the 1920s, she highlights the conflict between the 'monumentalist' and 'iconoclastic' tendencies in Russian art of this period and sees the repudiation of the latter by the state as the most significant 'defining gesture' in the transition from the culture of the 1920s to that of the 1930s. She also makes the point that members of the artistic intelligentsia were still able to pursue many of their own projects in the 1930s, albeit within a greatly restricted framework.\(^2\)

There are many different possible approaches to the politics of culture, some of which are more valid than others. While it seems something of an exaggeration to state that the most common way of relating the arts to politics is 'a tendency towards idealistic twaddle, treating the artist as a creature far above the political world, which exists only to malign and distort true beauty',\(^3\) it is certainly the case that the 'ideology of autonomous art' - the assumption that art

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2Clark, pp. 27 and 295.

exists in an autonomous sphere, separate from its social and political context - has only recently been subjected to critical examination by music specialists. Other disciplines - film and literature studies in particular - have been far more ready to challenge this assumption and move over to a more sociologically informed analysis of their subjects. The argument that music's abstract and non-representational nature makes it somehow less amenable to a social-historical analysis is understandable but inadequate.

Certain characteristics of music have long been instrumental in shaping its relationship to the world of politics. Élite forms of culture - classical music, opera, modern art - have always been dependent on public or private subsidy, and such patronage has tended to give the benefactor the implied right to influence artistic decisions. Many musical institutions have traditionally been run in a very autocratic manner - opera houses, for example, or symphony orchestras - and thus, as Harlow Robinson has pointed out, governmental controls have perhaps been 'less anomalous' in the non-democratic world of music, or at least of musical performance, than in the more popular spheres of literature and film. On the other hand, the non-representational and therefore, on the face of it, less tangible character of music may have served to shield it from more extensive regulation on the part of authoritarian regimes.

In view of the enormous gulf dividing Russian and Western interpretations of Soviet music history, it seems logical to examine the development of each school in turn. Soviet interpretations of the role of the Party in the development of music have changed over time according to a predictable pattern. In the entry on Soviet music in the first edition of the Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia (Great Soviet Encyclopaedia), political involvement in the musical sphere is characterized as a wholly positive phenomenon. The picture put forward is one of a wise Party guiding composers and musicians onto the correct aesthetic path of socialist realism. In a dissertation written by Mikhail Fikhtengol'ts in 1955, this interpretation is elaborated in greater detail: Fikhtengol'ts praises Party policy for its promotion of 'realist


17BSE, 1st edn, (1938), XL, pp. 569-71.
tendencies' in Soviet music and for its timely actions in the struggle against formalism. Following the de-stalinization measures passed by the XX Party Congress and the Central Committee resolution on music of 28 May 1959 which condemned Stalin's 'subjective approach to certain artistic and creative works' as manifested during the cultural purges of the late 1940s, the standard Soviet line on music in the 1930s was altered. Without abandoning the basic conception of the 1930s as a 'rich and fruitful' period in Soviet music, during which composers turned towards the 'realist' path of development and strengthened their artistic links with the 'brother peoples' of the USSR, music historians began to put a negative gloss on the anti-formalism campaign of 1936 and described the attacks on Shostakovich's work in Pravda as dogmatic and narrow, and as having made artistic assessments which were 'unfounded and unjust'.

As in other areas of Soviet history-writing, attempts were made during the glasnost period to revise previous interpretations of the history of Soviet music. A notable example of Soviet revisionism is the dissertation completed in 1989 by N. Shliandova. She paints a picture of the 1920s as a golden age in Soviet music, during which the Party supported the free development of artistic creativity, but argues that this era came to an abrupt end in 1932 when the rise of the personality cult and the drive to subordinate everything to the centralized direction of the Party brought about the introduction of 'total controls over the development of art'. This interpretation has much in common with many of the Western analyses of Soviet culture, which depict the period of the New Economic Policy (NEP) as an age of artistic pluralism. Most Western historians, however, have tended to give more emphasis to the role of 'proletarian' associations such as RAPM in the abandonment of the 'soft line' in cultural policy, rather than holding the Party itself solely responsible for the move to more authoritarian control mechanisms.

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18M. I. Fikhtengol'ts, 'Bor'ba KPSS za razvitie muzyki kak sredstva kommunisticheskogo vospitaniia trudiasheikhkihsia' (Moscow, 1955).


21See in particular Fitzpatrick, pp. 91-114.
In recent years, articles in the Russian music journal *Muzykal'naia Akademiia* have been a useful source of published archival materials. The work done by Inna Barsova on Mosolov (1900-73), for example, and Marianna Kopitsa's recent study of the Ukrainian composer Liatoshinskii (1895-1968), have brought to light some fascinating details about the lives and work of these composers.22 A detailed and comprehensive study of the anti-formalism campaign of 1936 is to be found in Leonid Maksimenkov's recent book on the subject. Maksimenkov uses archival materials to trace the politics of the campaign, focusing in particular on the role of the chairman of the state Arts Committee, Platon Kerzhentsev. While his conclusions are not always convincing, his book is an important contribution to the literature, and deserves a wider audience.23

As far as Western histories of Soviet music are concerned, relatively little work of significant value has been produced. The field of Soviet music history was for a long time dominated by simplistic accounts which depicted Soviet music and musicians as wholly subordinate to the dictates of the Party, with artistic growth 'shaped, guided, warped, stimulated or extinguished by government order'.24 The basic reference work on Soviet music is still Boris Schwarz's book on the subject.25 While providing a comprehensive overview, at least as far as 'serious' music is concerned, Schwarz has nevertheless justly been criticized in some quarters for political naivety in his analysis of the relationship between music and politics.26

One of the most perceptive analyses of Soviet music to have been written by a Westerner is an essay by the Canadian pianist Glenn Gould. Entitled 'Music in the Soviet Union', it was originally delivered as a lecture at the University of Toronto in 1964.27 In this essay, Gould put forward his view of the relationship between music and politics throughout

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25See note 1.

26Indeed, the criticism of this kind of approach by Kraus cited above (note 14) was directed explicitly against Schwarz's work.

Russian history. He compared the role of the Soviet state in regulating music to that of the church in early modern Russia, and linked the rise and fall of artistic freedom in the Soviet Union to the fluctuating level of tension in the international situation. Despite some rather surprising statements (such as the claim that Mosolov's work had been promoted by the Soviet authorities as a model of how Soviet music should sound), the article makes several important points which have lasting validity.

The last few years have seen the completion of a number of dissertations on Soviet musical life in the 1920s, written by Western historians with an interest in music. Amy Nelson's dissertation is an examination of musical life in the NEP period, with particular emphasis given to state administrative structures and the activities of the Association of Contemporary Music. Paul Mitchinson's work concentrates on the same period, and draws some important conclusions with regard to the role played by pre-revolutionary ideas about music in the Soviet period, and Soviet musicians' desperate strivings to win state recognition and sponsorship after the elimination of the pre-revolutionary class of music patrons. Neil Edmunds' dissertation seeks to rehabilitate the 'proletarian groups' - the Proletkul't, RAPM, ORKiMD, Prokoll - which came to dominate musical life in the later 1920s. Another recent dissertation, by Susannah Lockwood Smith, examines the history of the Pianitskii folk choir during the 1927-1945 period and offers a fascinating illustration of the professionalization of musical life during the 1930s and the development of official attitudes towards folk music.

This dissertation is based on archival materials as well as on contemporary published sources. Archives consulted include the records of government bodies such as the Commissariat of Enlightenment (Narkompros) and the Sovnarkom Arts Committee (the precursor of the Ministry of Culture). Other state departments investigated include the Society

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for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries (VOKS), the Union of Art Workers (Rabis), the Union of Soviet Composers, and the Music Section of the International Association of Revolutionary Theatres (MORT). Numerous collections of personal papers were also consulted. Among published sources, all of the major journals and newspapers of the 1930s which covered musical affairs were examined. These include Sovetskaia Muzyka, Sovetskoe Iskusstvo, Rabochii i Teatr, Rabis and Muzykal'naia Samodeiatel'nost', as well as a number of in-house publications such as the Biulleten' Soiuza Sovetskikh Kompozitorov and the Biulleten' Vsesoiznogo Komiteta po delam Iskusstv. Reference has also been made to memoir sources and published diaries and letters of the period.

The dissertation is in six chapters. The first of these covers the background to the 1932-41 period, examining the development of Bolshevik policy towards the arts in the 1920s as well as the factional struggles between different associations of musicians during the 1920s and the Cultural Revolution period. The second chapter focuses on the institutional structures of the Soviet arts bureaucracy and the mechanisms of decision-making in Soviet music policy, highlighting the extent to which parallelism between the different branches of the arts administration served to make policy appear incoherent and lacking in central direction. Chapter Three examines the social position and material conditions of members of the Soviet musical profession and the increasing professionalization of composers' work assisted by the Composers' Unions. It also looks at the amateur music movement, Soviet musical education, the creation of a Soviet performance school and the introduction of central planning into the musical instruments industry. Chapter Four examines the question of exactly what constituted the 'acceptable face of Soviet music' in the 1930s: the view taken by Soviet officialdom of individual musical genres such as classical music, opera, jazz and folk music. The following chapter assesses the inter-relationship between music and foreign affairs, including Soviet attitudes towards contemporary Western music, attitudes towards Russian émigrés, the decision to encourage Soviet participation in international performance competitions, and the music policy of the Comintern. Finally, Chapter Six offers a case study on the anti-formalism campaign and the impact of the Terror on the musical world. It focuses in particular on the way in which the ethos of populism and anti-élitism, associated with the Stakhanovite campaign in industry, infiltrated the musical world by means of the anti-formalism campaign.
CHAPTER ONE
MUSIC AND POLITICS, 1917-1932

The period from the revolution until the end of the first Five Year Plan was a time of great change, both in Soviet politics and in musical life. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the extent to which, during the period from 1917 to 1932, the Bolshevik regime developed anything even approaching a clear and consistent policy where the arts in general - and music in particular - were concerned. It will examine some of the different attitudes towards music held by influential individuals in the Party and state hierarchy, as well as investigating the policies of state institutions such as the Commissariat of Enlightenment. The chapter will also chart the development of the various different movements and interest-groups which emerged at the grass-roots level in Soviet musical life in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution and during the years of the New Economic Policy. These organizations played a important role in determining which musical genres flourished during this period, and some of them were to exercise considerable influence over musical affairs during the Cultural Revolution of 1929-32. The shadow which the factional infighting of this period cast over subsequent events in Soviet music was a long one, and it is therefore important to investigate the actual nature of these groups and their activities, as well as examining the myths which came to surround them, some of which have - all too often - been accepted at face value by Western, as well as by Soviet scholars. The aim here will be to investigate the origins and trace the development of these organizations, as well as to define the precise content of their programmes.

Party Policy

The Bolshevik Party had no real blueprint to follow when dealing with artistic matters, and opinions within the Party leadership about the form which cultural policy should take were very divided. Fundamentally, Bolshevik leaders were divided over the issue of whether immediate priority should be given to social and cultural transformation, in order to further the development of proletarian class consciousness among Soviet workers, or whether economic development should precede social and cultural change. Bogdanov's belief that culture played a key role in creating the socio-economic base of society, rather than merely reflecting it, was
denounced by Lenin as a deviation from orthodox Marxism. Nevertheless, his ideas were taken up by the Proletkul't movement, which advocated the creation of a wholly new form of proletarian culture. Lenin himself, particularly after 1917, regarded the raising of basic standards of literacy as by far the most important cultural task facing the country, and Trotsky rejected the whole concept of 'proletarian culture' and saw economic policy as the Party's main priority, believing that 'the place of art is in the rear of the historic advance'.

Lenin's own attitude towards music is not easy to determine, as his only writings on the subject focused on the role of mass songs in the German workers' movement. In his famous comment to Gor'kii on Beethoven's *Appassionata* sonata, Lenin remarked:

I don't know of anything better than the *Appassionata*, I can listen to it every day. Amazing, superhuman music! I always think with a pride that may be naive: look what miracles people can perform!.... But I can't listen to music often, it affects my nerves, it makes me want to say sweet nothings and pat the heads of people who, living in a filthy hell, can create such beauty. But today we mustn't pat anyone on the head or we'll get our hand bitten off; we've got to hit them on the head, hit them without mercy.

Lenin was clearly aware of the power which music could have on the emotions, and uneasy about its class connections, and his impatience with members of the Futurist movement in the arts is well documented. He nevertheless maintained the view, typical of members of the Russian intelligentsia of that time, that the proletariat should take the opportunity to learn from the cultural legacy of the past, rather than reject it out of hand. Some of the more radical elements within the Proletkul't and later militant 'proletarian' associations were less conciliatory. Some of them believed that all attempts to learn from the feudal or bourgeois art of the past should be abandoned forthwith. The charge of cultural nihilism was one which these organizations would find it hard to shake off, and it tainted their reputation in the years following their liquidation in 1932.

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The Party's attitude towards the Russian intelligentsia is best understood in terms of a
two-fold approach. The need to retain the cooperation of skilled technical specialists in order to
implement the economic policies of the new regime drew the Party into a policy of seeking
accommodation with this section of the intelligentsia. The artistic élite was a different matter.
Even those artists described by Trotsky as 'fellow-travellers' - non-Party writers, artists and
composers who were nevertheless not wholly unsympathetic to the Communist cause - offered
little that was of immediate practical value to the Bolshevik regime. While the long-term
significance of their work was recognized as potentially valuable in the construction of a new
society, the Party was not overly concerned with harnessing or directing their activities in the
short-term, so long as they refrained from overt counter-revolution. It was for this reason in
particular that artists enjoyed a degree of relative freedom - at least from state or Party control -
in the pursuit of their creative activities during the NEP years.

State Administration

The administration of musical life during this period fell mainly within the remit of the
People's Commissariat of Enlightenment (Narkompros). Narkompros did not operate at an All-
Union level, and responsibility for education and the arts in each of the Soviet republics was
delegated to local commissariats. Although the initial measures carried out by Narkompros
(RSFSR) in the field of music - the nationalization of the conservatoires, for example, and the
requisitioning of musical instruments - were clearly dictated by ideological considerations, its
approach to cultural affairs during the NEP period was for the most part pragmatic rather than
doctrinaire. Anatolii Lunacharskii, who headed Narkompros from 1917 to 1929, maintained
that the state should assume a position of neutrality where questions of artistic culture were
concerned, and pursued what Sheila Fitzpatrick has characterized as a 'soft line' in cultural
affairs. This entailed support for variety in artistic expression and a policy of accommodation
with the intelligentsia, albeit 'within a framework of ideological control through censorship,
security police, state monopoly of the press, and restriction of private publishing'.

Lunacharskii himself took an informed interest in musical affairs, and wrote occasional
music reviews for Soviet periodicals. His respect for 'high' artistic culture was well known, and

Fitzpatrick, p. 92.
his tolerance of non-Party artists caused him to become an unpopular figure with militant Party activists. One incident which took place in 1926 provides a striking illustration of Lunacharskii's supportive attitude towards Soviet musicians. In an open letter to the journal *Muzyka i Oktiabr*, he sprang to the defence of a number of prominent composers who had been attacked as 'bourgeois' by members of the Komsomol cell of Moscow Conservatoire. He argued in this letter that although Nikolai Miaskovskii (1881-1950), Anatolii Aleksandrov (1883-1946), Vissarion Shebalin (1902-63) and Aleksandr Krein (1883-1951) were not communists nor even fellow-travellers, there was nevertheless no incongruity in his reference to them as 'our' composers, given that they had chosen to continue living and working in the Soviet Union. He warned young musicians against a 'scornful attitude towards our musical masters' and argued that they should instead concentrate their efforts on learning from these composers.⁴

Narkompros underwent considerable internal reorganization during the first decade of its existence, and responsibility for musical affairs was transferred between departments on a regular basis. The Narkompros Music Department (MUZO) was established in 1918 and headed initially by the young modernist composer Artur Lur'e (1892-1966) who was to emigrate to Berlin in 1921.⁵ In a MUZO statute dating from 1919, the department was described as the central organ responsible for 'uniting, leading, controlling and directing the entire musical life of the RSFSR'. It had separate departments which were responsible for overseeing musical education, research, publishing, concerts and the production of instruments.⁶

A number of prominent musical figures came to work in the department, including several former Proletkult activists who transferred their loyalties to the state commissariat after December 1920.⁷

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⁵Known in the West as Arthur Lourie. He died an American citizen in Princeton in 1966. The leadership of MUZO passed to Boris Krasin after Lur'e's departure.


⁷Musicians who worked for MUZO included Kastalskii, Briusova, Miaskovskii and Grechaninov. There were practical incentives for artists to work for the state apparatus, as Narkompros employees received Category Two rations during the civil war and their personal property was protected from requisitioning. Nelson, pp. 24-6.
Reorganization of the entire commissariat in the aftermath of the Litkens commission of 1921 saw the dismantling of the Narkompros Arts Sector. MUZO's functions were divided between the State Academic Council (GUS), the Central Board for Professional Education (Glavprofobr), the Central Board for Scientific Institutions (Glav nauka), the Central Committee on Political Enlightenment (Glavpolitprosvet) and a number of other minor institutions. As Amy Nelson has pointed out, the structural complexity, administrative overlap and ill-defined hierarchy of Narkompros during the NEP years would have ensured the virtual impossibility of administering a unified state music policy, even if such a policy had existed in the first place.

In a speech delivered in 1927, Lunacharskii himself accepted that the fragmented nature of the Narkompros arts administration was hindering the emergence of a single policy on the arts and causing Narkompros to appear lacking in authority where artistic affairs were concerned.

1928 saw a new attempt to centralize the regulation of the arts, with the establishment of Glaviskusstvo, 'a special organ which would provide organizational and ideological leadership in the field of the development of literature and art' within Narkompros. This was not a propitious year for such an initiative. Established at a time when the proletarian arts associations were gaining the upper hand in Soviet cultural life, the new body came under attack almost immediately from both the Central Committee Agitprop department and from militant proletarian arts organizations, which accused it of propagating cultural 'rightism'. Severely weakened as a result, its influence during the Cultural Revolution was limited. The state apparatus did not regain its former influence in Soviet artistic affairs until 1936, when the All-Union Arts Committee was established under Sovnarkom.

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8 Fitzpatrick, 'The Emergence of Glaviskusstvo: Class War on the Cultural Front, Moscow, 1928-29', *Soviet Studies*, 23 (1971), 236-53 (p. 238). A detailed analysis of the different functions of all these branches of the state bureaucracy is given in Nelson, Chapter 3.

9 Nelson, p. 88.

10 GARF f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 615, ll. 3-5.

The New Economic Policy

The effects of the more liberal economic environment of the NEP on Soviet cultural life have been interpreted by historians in several different ways. Perhaps the most significant development to accompany the introduction of NEP was a sharp reduction in the levels of state subsidy available to artistic projects, something from which the Proletkul't in particular had benefited during the years of the Civil War. Another feature of the NEP economy was the legalization of private publishing: popular sheet music, including gypsy songs and jazz dances, poured off the presses between 1923 and 1929, much to the disdain of activists from the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM).\(^\text{12}\) Contacts with the outside world flourished, and a great many foreign musicians came to visit the Soviet Union during the 1920s. Representatives of the Western modernist composition school, including Bartok, Berg and Hindemith, all made trips to the Soviet Union, as did a number of American jazz bands such as Benny Peyton and the Jazz Kings and The Chocolate Kiddies, both of which groups toured Soviet cities in 1926.\(^\text{13}\)

Party leaders may have been forced to legitimize the private market for immediate practical reasons, but they greatly disapproved of its effects. Many Party members expressed their consternation about the proliferation of 'vulgar' light music, and an apparatus of censorship organs was set up in order to maintain strict surveillance over the production and distribution of such material. Within Narkompros there was considerable concern about the effects which the NEP economy might have on music. In a letter to Sovnarkom concerning the activities of the central Philharmonia (Rosfil), a Narkompros official wrote that the disorganized state of the 'music market' was creating conditions of 'unhealthy competition' which hindered the development of musical enlightenment work with the masses and frustrated the state's attempt to exert artistic and ideological control over the repertoire and performances of foreign touring artistes.\(^\text{14}\)


\(^{14}\) This letter is undated, but was clearly written either in 1927 or 1928: GARF f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 1545, l. 1.
Although the Party may have taken something of a back seat where the cultural affairs of the 1920s were concerned, this should not be interpreted as a sign of liberalism. The degree of freedom experienced by the Soviet artistic intelligentsia during the 1920s came about more as a result of the fact that artistic concerns figured rather low on the list of Bolshevik priorities than because of any deliberate decision on the part of the regime to offer a free rein to artists. The Party leadership's intense mistrust of any artistic group which laid claim to autonomous status was clearly demonstrated in its altercations with the Proletkul't, which had its activities severely curtailed by Party decree in December 1920.15

Party policy towards the arts in this period (such as it was) lacked any real vision of the form or content which Soviet art should take. The Party resolution on literature of 1 July 1925 acknowledged that the creation of a new proletarian culture was a desirable aim, but asserted that the proletarian literary and artistic groups should achieve hegemony by their own merits, in free competition with other tendencies, rather than having it handed to them on a plate by the Party leadership.16 Although many commentators have interpreted this resolution as evidence of the Party's liberalism in the sphere of literature at this time, Paul Mitchinson is right to point out that for those who regarded the content of a literary work as more important than its form, the resolution could be read as a signal of the Party's long-term intention of supervising and prescribing literary output.17

Censorship

Lenin and Trotsky regarded censorship as a legitimate weapon in the class struggle and were quite prepared to sanction the establishment of formal censorship organs. Lunarcharskii, on the other hand, was much less happy about restricting freedom of expression, except in cases where artistic works contained obvious appeals to counter-revolution, and he wrote as much in

15See below, p. 21. In a similar fashion, the tide of Party approval turned against organizations such as RAPP and RAPM in 1931-2 partly because of the claims made by these groups that they acted in the name of the Party.


17Mitchinson, pp. 205-7. The Resolution stated that 'while capable of judging without error the social and class content of literary movements, the Party as a whole can in no way bind itself by adhering to any one movement in the area of literary forms'.
an article published in 1921. As it turned out, Lunacharskii's stance prevailed in the 1920s, at least where music was concerned, as Soviet censorship confined itself mainly to the elimination of overtly counter-revolutionary themes without attempting to direct composers' work in any fundamental way. Nevertheless, the very existence of a formal censorship apparatus encouraged composers to practise self-censorship. Increasingly, towards the end of the decade, Soviet composers sought to write works which would gain the approval of the Party leadership in the hope of attracting state sponsorship.

The Central Repertoire Committee (Glavrepertkom) was established in 1923 and came under the jurisdiction of Narkompros. Although it was mainly involved in policing theatre repertoire, it was also responsible for music, and the modernist composer Nikolai Roslavets (1881-1944) was employed as one of its political editors. Judging from Glavrepertkom protocols of this period, the Soviet censors were principally concerned with the need to clamp down on religious and imperialist propaganda in the arts. In the musical sphere, attention was chiefly focused on text-based works. The Leningrad State Academic Choral Capella - the former choir of the Imperial court - was permitted to continue the performance of sacred music, but only of pieces which had been approved in advance, and only a certain proportion of each programme could be devoted to religious works. Glavrepertkom was particularly scathing about works of 'monarchist propaganda' in the repertoire of the Bolshoi Theatre, such as Borodin's *Kniaz Igor* (Prince Igor) and Rimskii-Korsakov's *Skazka o Tsare Saltane* (The Tale of Tsar Saltan). While the censors recognized that in the absence of a new, ideologically correct Soviet repertoire, the production of some 'monarchist and feudal operas' would have to be permitted, they nevertheless took steps to limit the harmful effects which these works might have on their audiences. In a protocol dating from August 1925, the repertoire committee ordered that cuts be made from Chaikovskii's *Pikovaia Dama* (Queen of Spades) and Rimskii-

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19 Mitchinson, pp. 155-6.


21 RTsKhIDNI f. 17, op. 60, ed. khr. 751, ll. 1-2.
Korsakov's *Noch' Pered Rozhdestvom* (The Night before Christmas), in order to remove the scenes in which Catherine the Great appeared. Wagner's *Lohengrin*, which remained in the repertoire of the Bolshoi Theatre throughout the 1920s, was condemned by Glavrepertkom as a 'mystical work', and it was suggested that it be replaced by *Siegfried*, which was regarded as more 'ideologically appropriate'.

As well as censoring inappropriate scenes from classical operas, attempts were made to 'revolutionize' the operatic repertoire by providing new libretti for certain old works. Puccini's *Tosca* was transformed into *Bor'ba za Kommuna* (The Struggle for the Commune) and Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* became *Dekabristy* (The Decembrists). The rewriting of libretti was not a Soviet invention: the alteration of opera plots to remove biblical references and anti-tyrannical messages had been common practice in Russia under Nikolai I.

Glavrepertkom also declared war on musical *khaltura* (hack-work) under which category were classed gypsy romances, foxtrots, and various other types of 'frivolous' light music. In this respect, the attitude taken by the leadership of Glavrepertkom was very similar to that adopted by the militant proletarian organizations such as RAPM, which saw it as their role to drive out what they regarded as *Nepman* music - decadent, bourgeois songs - from Soviet musical life.

Although a definitive Party line on artistic affairs was somewhat lacking in the Soviet Union of the 1920s, the Bolshevik regime did maintain a commitment to promoting members of the proletariat in all spheres of life. The 'proletarianization' of university admissions was a policy which was applied to all institutes of higher education, although the attempt to create a proletarian intelligentsia in the musical world came up against a number of obstacles. Musical training is of its very nature a protracted affair, and a professional musician cannot be created out of thin air without considerable preliminary instruction. Although entrance examinations for institutes of higher education were abolished by Sovnarkom decree in August 1918, the

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22 GARF f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 513, ll. 1-2.
23 RTSKhIDNI f. 17, op. 60, ed. khr. 757.
25 RTSKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 60, ed. khr. 805, ll. 77-8.
conservatoires succeeded in getting a special dispensation from Narkompros in September 1918 which permitted the retention of entrance tests in order to maintain their high standards.\(^{26}\)

Given that specialist musical education had, under the old regime, been available only to a small élite of the upper and middle classes, the result of this compromise was to perpetuate the domination of the conservatoires by non-proletarian elements. It was only after the introduction of a new cadres policy in 1928, which aimed at the creation of a new generation of 'Red experts', that workers' faculties or rabhaki were set up. These offered fast-track entry to the conservatoires for students from working class backgrounds, and they were created in 1929 and 1931 in Moscow and Leningrad respectively.\(^{27}\)

**Grass-roots Organizations**

With the Party declining to take the lead where cultural policy was concerned, and the state apparatus riddled with cumbersome and overlapping administrative departments, Soviet musicians were left to their own devices. The fragmentation of the musical profession is one of the most striking features of Soviet musical life during the 1917-32 period, as musicians organized themselves into different groups, both formal and informal. Such associations were held together by ideological convictions or artistic preferences, and often by a combination of the two. Some of these groups constituted the music sections of wider organizations such as the Proletkul't, while others were entirely self-contained and operated at a local level.

Terminology becomes something of a problem when writing about these different groups, as one has to distinguish between the labels employed by contemporary commentators - both hostile and sympathetic - and the modern connotations which these concepts have acquired. Generally speaking, the terminology of 'right' and 'left' can be profoundly misleading when applied to artistic movements in the Soviet Union. The tendency to refer to avant-garde, modernist, Futurist or experimental musical groups as being somehow 'left-wing' is a common one, but in the Soviet case this can give rise to confusion, given that these groups in many cases faced vehement opposition from the soi-disant 'proletarian' musical associations. If one does wish to employ such labels, it is advisable to distinguish the political stance taken by a

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\(^{26}\) V Petrogradskiuu konservatoriiu', Lunacharskii, *O muzyke*, p. 300.

\(^{27}\) On this new policy, see Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front*, Chapter 7. See also Chapter Three, pp. 82-3.
particular group from its artistic orientation. The Proletkul't was perhaps the ultimate left-wing cultural association, given that it was established with the express aim of fostering the development of a new proletarian culture, and it also included an avant-garde, experimentalist wing. Other 'proletarian' groups such as RAPM are perhaps most accurately characterized as left-wing (indeed, militantly so) in political terms but as rather less radical where their music was concerned. RAPM mass songs cannot in all honesty be described as innovative.

The Proletkul't

The Proletkul't movement enjoyed a brief heyday during the Civil War years, but its existence after December 1920 was precarious, and its activities between 1923 and its final demise in 1932 were very limited. The stated aim of the Proletkul't - that of assisting the proletariat in the spontaneous generation of its own culture - was something of a contradiction in terms, and the organization's flexibility served it both as a strength and a weakness. The lack of strong central leadership meant that local branches tended to devise their own interpretations of the Proletkul't mission, and while local autonomy helped to give the movement a broad membership and varied programmes, it also served to detract from the original proletarian identity of the organization. In Lynn Mally's words, 'the organization was not a catalyst for the creation of a unique proletarian culture; rather it was a mirror reflecting the heterogeneous cultural world of the early Soviet years'.

The Proletkul't's demand for autonomy within the cultural sphere met with opposition from the Party leadership which harboured a deep mistrust of claims to independence from any quarter. A Central Committee resolution of 1 December 1920 branded the entire movement as potentially anti-Soviet, and the organization never regained its former influence.

In terms of musical activities, Proletkul't programmes tended to be shaped by local activists' conceptions of how proletarian culture should be defined, which ranged from the composition and performance of revolutionary marching songs to the organization of violin lessons for factory workers. Choral circles proved particularly popular, with choirs performing a wide range of repertoire including folk songs, revolutionary anthems and classical works.

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There was also a small but significant wing of activists who channelled their energies into the exploration of experimental techniques in music, including the development of new instruments and scales, although artistic experimentation was never central to the Proletkult's work, and such activities were frowned on by some of the movement's leaders.\(^{29}\) Many of the professional musicians who became involved in the work of local Proletkult studios, including Reingol'd Glier (1875-1956), Arsenii Avraamov (1886-1944), Nadezhda Briusova (1881-1951) and Aleksandr Kastal'skii (1856-1926), had also been leading participants in pre-revolutionary enlightenment projects such as the People's Conservatoire, which was set up in Moscow in 1906. For such people, the Proletkult provided an excellent opportunity to continue their work of bringing 'music to the masses' through the organization of concerts and educational programmes for workers and peasants. In a curious way, the Proletkult acted as the harbinger of two of the most prominent movements in Soviet music of the 1920s, movements which - at least in public - opposed one another vehemently: the experimentalist avant-garde of the ASM and the 'proletarian composers' of RAPM.

**Experimental Music**

Projects involving the invention of electronic instruments, the composition of 'machine music' using factory whistles and sirens, and the development of micro-tonal scales were undertaken by a number of engineers and musicians during the 1920s, as part of a wider experimental movement which sought to reflect the industrial proletarian socialist utopia through art. Machine music had been championed to some extent by the Proletkult, which had sponsored the establishment of noise orchestras.\(^{30}\) Avraamov, a Proletkult activist who had predicted the advent of 'new symphonies of freedom and labour that include the sounds of motors, saws, anvils (and) factory sirens', was responsible for organizing a concert of factory whistles in Moscow as part of the October celebrations in 1923.\(^{31}\) Perhaps the most famous of

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\(^{29}\) Mally, pp. 114, 134 and 147.

\(^{30}\) Such experiments had a foreign precedent in the work of the Italian Futurist, Russolo, whose 1913 manifesto, *The Art of Noises* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1986) exhort ed composers to introduce machine noises into their work.

\(^{31}\) Edmunds, p. 70; Mally, p. 242.
these experiments was the Baku symphony of sirens, which took place in November 1922 and involved 'the foghorns of the whole Caspian Fleet... factory sirens, two batteries of artillery, several infantry regiments, a machine-gun section, real hydroplanes, and finally choirs in which all the spectators joined'.

A number of Soviet composers participated in the machine music movement, writing orchestral scores which included parts for sirens, factory whistles and a whole range of weird and wonderful percussion instruments. Some such works, including Shostakovich's Second Symphony and Mosolov's Zavod (The Iron Foundry), were to achieve renown on the international stage, a fact which was not always welcomed by Soviet officials. The performance of Zavod in the Hollywood Bowl in July 1931 sparked concern within Narkompros after one member of the Los Angeles audience, an old German musician called Rudolf von Libikh, wrote to Narkompros to express the view that music of this kind gave the unenlightened foreign listener the impression that the Soviet Union was a land of 'forced labour...terror...and oppression'. The Narkompros inspector Grinberg responded to this letter with a report in which he castigated Mosolov as a representative of the 'extreme right wing', and ruled that his music should not be presented to the West as somehow representative of 'Revolutionary Russia', as this might lead to 'political misunderstandings and unpleasantness'.

Conductorless orchestras were a notable feature of Soviet musical life during the 1920s. Lynn Mally cites a 'collective concert' which took place in Penza in 1920 under the aegis of the local Proletkul't studio as one of the forebears of the Moscow Persimfans. The Persimfans, which was founded in 1922 by the violinist Lev Tseitlin (1881-1952), was to become the most famous collective ensemble of the period. Styled by Richard Stites a 'utopia in miniature, a tiny republic, and a model workshop for the communist future', members of the Persimfans took the view that a revolution in music could best be accomplished by getting rid of the traditional (and often tyrannical) dictatorship of the conductor and collectivizing the process of decision-making within the symphony orchestra. It undertook an ambitious schedule of concerts, most of which

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33 RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. kh. 193, ll. 2-3.

34 Pervyi simfonicheskii ansambl bez dirigera (First symphonic ensemble without a conductor). Mally, p. 147.
took place in factories, garrisons or workers' clubs, and performed a wide variety of repertoire, Russian and Western, classical and contemporary. How far members of the orchestra were genuinely committed to the revolutionary aims of the ensemble, and how far they were simply ideologizing their art in an attempt to win state recognition and support remains open to question.

The Association for Contemporary Music (ASM) was set up in November 1923, and included among its earliest members a number of prominent Proletkul't and Narkompros activists, including Roslavets, Miaskovskii and Leonid Sabaneev (1881-1968). The Association played an active role in the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM), and it worked to encourage awareness and appreciation of new trends in contemporary Western and Russian music by organizing concerts and publishing articles in specialist journals. A number of visits were made by foreign musicians to the Soviet Union during the 1920s, and such tours were frequently conducted under the aegis of the ASM. A similar association was set up in Leningrad in 1926, although it had no formal links with the Moscow organization. During 1927-8 the LASM issued its own journal, Novaia Muzyka, which was co-edited by the prominent musicologist Boris Asa'ev (1884-1949). The ASM espoused a philosophy of music which was profoundly apolitical, and its president argued in article published in 1924 that 'music is not an ideology...(it) does not express ideas....it exists in its own world of sound'. It was this apolitical stance, as well as its institutional strength, which provoked the ire of the 'proletarian' musicians, and they subjected the Association to scathing criticism on an increasingly regular basis as the decade wore on. Organizations like the ASM, as well as the Circle for New Music in Leningrad, arranged performances of contemporary Western music, and these became a regular feature of the musical life of Moscow and Leningrad during the 1920s. Contemporary operas such as Berg's Wozzeck and Krenek's Der Sprung über den

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36 Mitchinson, p. 115.

37 The key ASM journals were Sovremenniaa Muzyka, K Novym Beregam, and Muzykal'naia Kul'tura. The president of the Association was Leonid Sabaneev. Nelson, pp. 42-57.

Schatten and Jonny spielt auf were produced in Leningrad and had a profound influence on a number of Soviet composers. Shostakovich (1906-75), in particular, utilized some of the techniques pioneered in these operas in his first operatic work, Nos (The Nose).

'Proletarian' Groups

The most influential branch of the 'proletarian music movement' in Soviet Russia during the Cultural Revolution period was undoubtedly the RAPM. Founded in 1923 by a handful of employees at the music department of the state publishing house, it was to become the dominant force in Soviet musical life between 1929 and 1932. Despite the title of their organization, most RAPM members did not come from working-class backgrounds and their claim to proletarian status - in common with most Bolshevik Party leaders - rested on their self-proclaimed mission to create a dictatorship of the proletariat in Soviet music. The association acquired a separate branch in Leningrad (LAPM) and established a number of music journals, some of which proved more successful than others. These included Muzykal'naia Nov (1923-4); Muzyka i Oktiabr' (1926); Proletarskii Muzykant (1929-32); and Za Proletarskuuiu Muzyku (1930-32).

RAPM was not the only 'proletarian' musical association. Factionalism within the proletarian music movement caused RAPM to split in December 1924, and the Union of Revolutionary Composers and Musicians (ORKiMD) was set up as a breakaway group by two of the founder members of RAPM: Lev Shul'gin (1890-1968) and Aleksei Sergeev (1889-1958). It represented composers who worked in the Department for Agitation of the music division of the state publishing house (Muzsektor Gosizdat), and took a more inclusive approach than that adopted by RAPM towards the classical heritage and contemporary musical trends in Western Europe. ORKiMD was effectively disbanded in October 1929 after one of its leaders, the composer Dmitrii Vasilev-Buglai (1888-1956), left to rejoin RAPM. In his official statement on his decision to switch factions, Vasilev-Buglai claimed to have recognized 'the political and tactical mistakes of ORKiMD', and it seems likely that this was basically a

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39 For details on the foundation, ideology and activities of all of the various 'proletarian' musical organizations, see Edmunds.

40 Edmunds, p. 172; Nelson, pp. 61-4.
tactical move on his part, given that RAPM appeared at that time to be the rising star on the Soviet musical horizon.\(^{41}\)

Party and Komsomol cells had been established within the conservatoires in 1922-3, and membership expanded rapidly among the student body.\(^{42}\) These organizations saw their main tasks as the raising of students' political awareness and the forging of links between students and members of the proletariat. 1925 saw the formation of yet another proletarian musical association, this time on the basis of a group of students from the Faculty of Composition at Moscow Conservatoire. This was the Production Collective (*Proizvodstvennyi Kollektiv* or Prokoll), which aimed to collectivize the process of composition by organizing group discussions of work in progress and by writing collaborative works. Prokoll members were supported in their activities by the Conservatoire's Red Professors' cell, which was created in 1924 and maintained close links with the Conservatoire Party organization. This cell, which included Briusova, Veprik (1899-1958), Kastasl'skii and Tseitlin among its members, worked to 'promote the socio-political education of students...(and)...advance the proletarianization of the student population', and it became involved in attacks on some of the more conservative Faculty members, including Miaskovskii and Vasilenko (1872-1956).\(^{43}\)

The key figure involved in the Prokoll was the composer Aleksandr Davidenko (1899-1934), who had impeccable proletarian credentials as well as a Civil War record, and was a keen activist in the amateur music movement of the 1920s and 30s. It was Davidenko who first advanced the idea of writing a large-scale collaborative work in honour of the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution: the cantata *Put' Oktiabria* (The Path of October). His song, *Nas Pobit' Pobit' Khoteli* (They Wanted to Beat Us), about a Sino-Soviet conflict in the Far East, was voted the most popular in a poll of marchers at the October demonstrations of 1931 and

\(^{41}\)Edmunds, p. 178.


\(^{43}\)Veselovskiaia, pp. 13-16; Edmunds, p. 94.
1932. Members of the Prokoll had close links with RAPM, and a number of them transferred their allegiance following graduation from the Conservatoire. In terms of ideology, the key principle to which RAPM members adhered was that the musical legacy of the past could be divided into two: 'on the one hand, the music of the toilers, the exploited and oppressed classes...on the other hand, feudal, bourgeois music'. The issue of which kinds of music should be included in which category was one which RAPM set out to determine, and although there were disagreements over certain specific issues, RAPMovtsy were nevertheless united by a core of fundamental beliefs. Light music, including jazz, dance music, gypsy romances and operetta, was generally regarded as frivolous, decadent, bourgeois, pseudo-artistic rubbish. Contemporary Western trends in musical composition were subject to attack, as were religious works and certain works of classical music which were felt to encapsulate 'bourgeois' ideology. While Beethoven and Musorgskii were hailed as composers who 'reflected in their creative output subject-matter close to the ideas of the revolutionary proletariat', certain other composers - Chopin and Chaikovskii are notable examples - were believed by many RAPMovtsy to be decadent, dilettante composers whose music could prove harmful to proletarian listeners. Folk music was a bone of contention for RAPM members, as while many of them shared the opinion that unadulterated folk tunes were simply manifestations of peasant backwardness and thus to be discouraged, there was also a general belief that folk music could play a positive role in providing the basis for original compositions.

The 'proletarian' musicians were rather better at criticizing others than at offering positive programmes of which they were most closely

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45 Edmunds, pp. 256-8.


47 Edmunds, p. 23; RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. khr. 352 l. 26. Nevertheless, RAPM did not write off the entire musical heritage as 'bourgeois', and its leaders were anxious to distance the association from charges of cultural nihilism.

48 Edmunds, p. 8.
associated was the mass song, a genre which combined propaganda functions with the capacity to reach a mass audience, while at the same time being suitable for performance by workers' choirs. Given the militants' fundamental belief that, in an ideal world, proletarian music should be composed and performed by the proletariat, they were united by a firm commitment to promoting the musical education of ordinary workers and peasants. One of the most important areas of RAPM's work, therefore, was in the continuation of the mass musical work of the Proletkul't and of pre-revolutionary activists. RAPM brigades were sent out to factories in order to teach new revolutionary songs to the workers in preparation for festivals and special occasions. They also wrote music for amateur ensembles, organized festivals of amateur music and promoted traditional instruments such as the accordion as suitable vehicles with which to cultivate initial musical literacy and education among the masses.49

A number of different interpretations of the development of Soviet culture during the NEP years have been advanced by historians. Sheila Fitzpatrick regards the 1920s as an era of expedient accommodation between Party and intelligentsia, which came to be replaced by a more militant, hard-line approach as the 'proletarian' artistic groups gained the upper hand in their respective spheres of activity during the period of the first Five Year Plan.50 Christopher Read, on the other hand, regards the introduction of ever more sophisticated techniques of control in the cultural sphere as one of the key features of the NEP, and Katerina Clark has argued that the structural and institutional changes of this period 'established many of the prevailing patterns of Soviet artistic life' in later years.51 In fact, the whole question of whether the NEP was a period of relaxation or of increasing Party controls involves something of a false dichotomy. The period from 1921 to 1928 can indeed be seen, with hindsight, to have been more relaxed than the years which followed. Nevertheless, the development of censorship institutions during this period served as an indication that state intervention in the cultural sphere had by no means receded as a potential threat to Soviet artists. It would be a mistake to

49Nelson, pp. 78-80.

50Fitzpatrick, Chapters 5 and 6.

regard the NEP market economy as an unequivocal benefit to Soviet musicians. Market forces can have a detrimental impact on artistic culture, and Soviet musicians were less-than-enthusiastic about having to fend for themselves with very little state subsidy, after the artistic patrons of the pre-revolutionary years had been removed from the scene. Musicians themselves increasingly called for Party intervention and state support as the decade drew to its close.52

The 'Cultural Revolution'

The period of the first Five Year Plan saw a massive upsurge in the activity of militant proletarian groups in the field of music. The Shakhty trial in June 1928, with its scapegoating of 'bourgeois specialists', marked a shift in official policy towards the Soviet intelligentsia, and gave carte blanche to militant groups such as RAPM to impose their own ideas and programmes on the 'cultural front'. The 'proletarian' outlook held that the defence of a pluralist musical culture was an example of 'rotten liberalism', and RAPM's main targets included the ASM and the proponents of Western popular music. Having gained control of the music publishing industry in 1929, acting from their stronghold in the Muzsektor Gosizdat politotdel (political department), the RAPMovtsy were in a strong position to impose their views on the rest of the musical establishment. The three conferences on musical issues held in Moscow and Leningrad in the first half of 1929 all reflected the dominant influence of the RAPM agenda. In April, a Glaviskusstvo conference was called in Leningrad to discuss 'Music to the masses', a RAPM-inspired theme if ever there was one. This was followed in June by two conferences on more general musical issues, the first of which was convened in Moscow by the Central Committee Agitprop department in order to lay the groundwork for the All-Union Music Conference in Leningrad later in the month.53 This conference attracted 460 delegates and featured keynote speeches by Lunacharskii and Platon Kerzhentsev, the deputy head of Agitprop. Resolutions passed by the conference emphasized the need to make music into a tool of the class struggle, as well as the importance of establishing proletarian hegemony on the 'musical front'.54

52 Mitchinson, pp. 48, 153, 248.

53 E. Vlasova, 'Venera Milosskaia i printsipy 1789 goda', MA, no. 2 (1993), 154-60. The proceedings of the Agitprop conference are published in Puti razvitiiia muzyki (Moscow, 1930).

54 Osnovnaia rezoliutsiia konferentsii', Nash muzykal’nyi front, ed. by S. Korev (Moscow, 1930), pp. 213-8.
Two of Shostakovich's stage works came in for attack by RAPM critics in 1930. His first opera, Nos, had been criticized during a preliminary public hearing at the Leningrad Music Conference in June 1929, and it came in for further criticism following the première in January 1930. Although the Leningrad Maly Opera Theatre, which staged the work, argued that its production marked the beginnings of the 'decisive Sovietization of the opera repertoire', its critics did not agree. The opera was attacked on the grounds of complexity, inaccessibility, lack of social relevance and 'leftism', and the work was deemed an inappropriate model for the development of Soviet opera.\(^{55}\) Shostakovich's anti-fascist football ballet, Zolotoi Vek (The Golden Age), which received its première in October 1930, was attacked in the journal Rabochii i Teatr as a manifestation of 'bourgeois ideology in music', despite its considerable success with Leningrad audiences. The decision to include the composer's arrangement of the popular American song 'Tea for Two' as an *entr'acte* to the third act drew particular criticism from LAPM, which had been waging a long-running campaign against 'vulgar light music' which it regarded as embodying an 'ideology harmful to the proletariat'.\(^{56}\) In both of these cases, although the works were removed from the repertoire prematurely, there was no immediate ban. Nos was given 14 performances between January and June 1930 and a further two in the following season, and although cuts were made in Zolotoi Vek the ballet remained in the repertoire until the end of the 1930-31 season.

Preventing the production of works which had not yet reached the stage often proved a more straightforward technique for RAPM activists than banning works which were already in the repertoire. The Bolshoi Theatre had intended to mount a production of Prokofiev's ballet Stal'nyi Skok (Pas d'Acier) during the 1929-30 season, but the plan was shelved following what Miaskovskii described as a 'ferocious attack' by RAPM.\(^{57}\) Likewise, rehearsals for Mosolov's opera Plotina (The Dam), a work based on the ultra-contemporary theme of the construction of a dam for a hydro-electric power station, were halted in 1931 after condemnation of the work as

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'reactionary' by members of the Artistic Council of the Leningrad State Opera Theatre and by RAPM critics.\(^{58}\)

RAPM concerns about what they regarded as the dangers of allowing decadent, bourgeois modernist music to flourish in the Soviet Union were to recur as an important theme in the anti-formalism campaigns of 1936, and indeed, in the zhidanovshchina of the late 1940s as well. Even the language used by those spearheading these attacks was the same. The use of the word 'formalism' as an all-purpose term of abuse for works of 'bourgeois music' became standard practice during the Cultural Revolution period: in 1929, for example, an article in the journal Proletarskii Muzykant accused Boris Asafev of running a 'centre of formalism in musical science' in the music department of the Leningrad Institute for the History of Art.\(^{59}\)

While the similarities between RAPM programmes and those adopted in the later 1930s and 40s are very striking, however, they should not blind one to the fact that the policies implemented by RAPM during the Cultural Revolution were in many ways rather more radical - and certainly less Party-directed - than those which followed. RAPM took a much less flexible attitude towards folk music than that espoused by the Party in the post-collectivization period, and RAPM's tough stance on light music was unmatched by any subsequent policies.

The hard line on folk music was established in 1930. In May of that year, the critic Viktor Blium launched an attack on the Piatnitskii Folk Ensemble, accusing it of playing a disorganizing role in the struggle to build socialism and bearing the marks of 'kulakism' in its songs and performance style. He argued that the performance of traditional folk music was inappropriate to the new society, that it had a regressive influence on listeners and hindered the transformation of peasants into modern socialist workers.\(^{60}\) Blium's article sparked off a heated debate on the pages of the journal Radioslushatel', which organized a 'trial' of the choir. As Susannah Smith has pointed out, the fact that 26 out of the 33 listeners' letters which were published argued in support of the choir and its simple, accessible repertoire, indicates that the

\(^{58}\)The opera did have some supporters, albeit of a politically 'unreliable' nature, including Shostakovich, Gladkovskii, Radlov and Sollertinskii. A. V. Mosolov: stat'i i vospominaniia (Moscow, 1986), pp. 125-6.

\(^{59}\)Nest'ev, p. 46.

\(^{60}\)Smith, pp. 71-7. There is some controversy about Blium's political affiliations, but his attack was certainly in the spirit of the RAPM-dominated times.
cultural policy of this period was 'neither monolithic nor uncontested': listeners felt able to express in public views which ran counter to the prevailing political line in artistic affairs, and the editors of the journal were not afraid to publish such critiques. Despite this public support, however, folk choirs continued to face attack from critics, and performance opportunities became increasingly limited. A conference on choral issues which was convened by Narkompros in December 1930 came to the conclusion that while choirs - and amateur choirs in particular - could play an extremely positive role in disseminating Soviet propaganda, the continued existence of traditional peasant choirs was undesirable because they were 'alien, harmful (and) corrupting to the class consciousness of (their) participants and listeners'.

Moscow Conservatoire became one of the focal points of the Cultural Revolution in music. In 1929, the pianist Konstantin Igumnov was replaced as director of the Conservatoire by the Party official Boleslav Pshibyshevskii. Compulsory political education classes were stepped up, and radical new teaching methods introduced, with an emphasis placed on training musical activists who could organize amateur ensembles in the factories and villages, rather than on producing virtuoso soloists. The new 'brigade methods' of work proved particularly unpopular among older Faculty members, and the Armenian composer Khachaturian (1903-78) recalled in his memoirs one incident in which all the non-RAPM professors in the Faculty of Composition resigned en masse. In February 1931 the Conservatoire was renamed the Feliks Kon Higher Music School, in honour of the old Bolshevik and head of Glaviskusstvo, who had recently celebrated the 45th anniversary of his revolutionary activity.

The proletarianization of the conservatoires was given a considerable boost during the Cultural Revolution period, particularly after the appearance of an article in Pravda in November 1928, in which it was asserted that Moscow Conservatoire was saturated by Nepman

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61 Smith, pp. 65-6.

62 Although Iurii Elagin claims that Pshibyshevskii 'was not a musician', he had in fact been educated at the Academy of Music in Warsaw and had written a number of books music history. Iu. Elagin, Ukroshchenie iskusstv (New York: Chekhov, 1952), p. 248; RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. khr. 139, l. 59.

63 A. Khachaturian, Stranitsy zhizni i tvorchestva (Moscow, 1982), p. 60; Iu. V. Keldysh, 100 let Moskovskoi konservatorii (Moscow, 1966), p. 130.

64 RTsKhIDNI, f. 135, op. 1, d. 21, l. 27. Kon also worked for the Radio Committee in the early 1930s.
and bourgeois elements. Narkompros responded to this attack by establishing a commission headed by the lawyer Nikolai Cheliapov to investigate the situation. A year later, Glavprofobr issued a resolution which noted with dismay that only 12% of conservatoire students came from worker or peasant backgrounds. It demanded that this figure be increased to at least 50% in the next round of admissions, calling for the application of more stringent selection procedures for non-proletarian applicants and urging the implementation of a 'radical purge of the conservatoire student body, both on academic and on ideological and social grounds'.

*Rabfaky* were established in the conservatoires in Moscow and Leningrad in order to accelerate the proletarianization of the musical profession.

February 1930 saw the creation of the composers' section of Vseroskomdram (VRKD, the All-Russian Society of Dramatists and Composers), a group which can be regarded as the main harbinger of the Composers' Union. The composers' section operated a far more inclusive membership policy than any of the other music associations, and by January 1932 the section had acquired 419 members in Moscow and Leningrad. These included members of RAPM and Prokoll, as well as ASM composers and representatives of the older generation such as Glier, Miaskovskii and Mikhail Gnesin (1883-1957). It set out to stimulate creativity among its members by establishing a system whereby the VRKD would issue contracts to composers to write works on specific themes. It also organized discussions and arranged show-case concerts of members' work. Although a number of *RAPMovtsy* joined the VRKD composers' section, hard-line militants did not approve. Lev Lebedinskii (1904-92), writing in 1932, characterized the leadership of the composers' section as a group of 'Trotskyists and reactionaries', and in a letter from the RAPM Party cell to the Kul'tprop department of the Party Central Committee, the VRKD leaders were described as being either 'opportunists and dilettantes' such as Lev Atovm'ian (1901-73), the secretary of the VRKD Composers' section, or 'reactionaries' like Gnesin.

65V konservatorii neblagopoluchno', *Pravda*, 16 November 1928, p. 6.


67Vlasova, p. 160.

68Lebedinskii was the chief ideologist of RAPM. Edmunds, p. 388; RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. khr. 352, l 45.
Relations between RAPM and other sections of the musical profession were complicated further by a number of developments which took place during the second half of 1931. In the autumn of that year, a group of nine prominent fellow-travellers, including Miaskovskii, Shebalin and Dmitrii Kabalevskii (1904-87), issued a statement in the RAPM journal Proletarskii Muzykant in which they indicated their decision to support RAPM's position. To lend credence to their 'declaration', members of this 'new creative association', as they described themselves, immediately set about composing works on proletarian themes. Despite their best efforts, Atovm'ian castigated members of the group in December 1931, arguing that this was a 'hypocritical' move: a pragmatic decision to protect themselves from further interference in their work.69

The VRKD plenum, at which Atovm'ian made this speech, became the scene of considerable back-biting between composers. Gnesin criticized RAPM's 'errors' and accused them of canonizing music by Beethoven, Musorgskii and by themselves, but of seeking to ban everything else. He also charged them with ignoring the issue of quality when it came to training young composers. The RAPM leader Viktor Belyi (1904-83) lashed out in response, calling Gnesin a 'reactionary' who 'stood on bourgeois nationalist religious positions', and refuting the main charges made against his association.70 Other speakers at the plenum were similarly confrontational, even the head of the composers' section of the VRKD, who admitted that relations between his organization and RAPM were 'unhealthy'. The plenum was followed by further polemics in the musical press.

Calls for some sort of Party intervention in order to help clear the air intensified in the first few months of 1932. Such demands were not limited to members of any one group, but came from several different quarters. In March 1932 Mosolov wrote to Stalin requesting that the Party intercede to end his persecution by RAPM. He described his situation in the following terms: 'I am not published or performed, I feel completely persecuted and musically disenfranchised. I do not know what I am to do, but I can no longer work in these conditions.' He finished his letter with a request either that something be done to end the attacks, or that he

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69 The statement became known in musical circles as the 'Declaration of the Nine'. Vlasova, pp. 161 and 172.
70 'Proletarian' works produced by members of this group included Shebalin's Lenin Symphony. See Chapter Six, note 19.
70 Vlasova, pp. 162 and 168.
be given permission to go abroad, as he felt that his work was held in higher esteem there than it was in the Soviet Union. This letter was a collaborative effort: the concert organizer and ASM member Vladimir Derzhanovskii (1881-1942) wrote to Prokof'ev (1891-1953) that he had helped to draft the final paragraph 'about the ridiculous conditions on our musical front and about the harmful role of the VAPM'. Gnesin wrote a similar letter to Stalin in which he gave a detailed analysis of what he saw as the errors in RAPM's whole programme. Furthermore, the RAPM Party cell sent its own letter to the Central Committee Kul'tprop department in March 1932, in which they attacked the VRKD for its alleged attempts to obstruct RAPM's work with the fellow-travellers, and called on the Party to 'intervene immediately and actively in the struggle on the musical front'. The response was rapid. On 23 April 1932 the Party issued a resolution which ordered the liquidation of all existing literary and artistic associations.

It would be facile to seek to explain the April resolution as a direct response to these demands for action. Change had long been in the air already. Indications that the Party leadership was considering a radical shift in its policy towards the intelligentsia began to appear from around the summer of 1931. Stalin's speech of June 1931, in which he rehabilitated the bourgeois engineers; his repudiation of 'petty-bourgeois egalitarianism'; and his intervention to curtail debate between historians on a question of Party history in October 1931 all signalled the end of the Party's tacit support for the militants' cause. Thus, although the Party resolution of 23 April 1932 certainly came as a shock to RAPM leaders, it was not without forewarning.

The decision to impose order on the cultural and intellectual world in this way was prompted by both negative and positive considerations. Belief that the militant activists were becoming a liability and that the factional anarchy on the 'cultural front' should be ended by imposing new organizational structures was one motivation. In terms of positive factors, the

71Barsova, pp. 89-92.
72VAPM was an alternative title for RAPM. Prokof'ev Archive, file 29, pp. 390-1.
73Barsova, pp. 89-91; Vlasova 'Venera Milosskaia i printsipy 1789 goda', MA, no. 3 (1993) 178-188 (pp. 182-5). Gnesin's letter may never have been sent.
74RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. khr. 352, ll. 45-50.
75John Barber, 'The Establishment of Intellectual Orthodoxy in the USSR 1928-34', Past and Present, 83 (1979), 141-64.
Party had by this stage decided that the time had come to create consensus around its policies. The launch of the first Five Year Plan was accompanied by a drive to mobilize all the country's forces to participate in socialist construction. From 1932, this included the Soviet arts. Artists, writers and musicians were henceforth expected to direct their art towards pragmatic ends: raising morale, dramatizing great Soviet achievements and providing the new Soviet audiences with art works, novels and works of music which would combine high quality with accessibility and provide 'cultured relaxation' for the Soviet New Man.
CHAPTER TWO
THE ADMINISTRATION OF MUSICAL LIFE IN THE 1930s

For all the politicization of the arts in the Soviet Union, music was rarely a top priority for the Soviet leadership. Policy formation in this area therefore tended to be a somewhat confused affair, with a considerable degree of parallelism and overlapping of responsibilities between different departments. While editorials in Pravda could be used as vehicles for occasional *ex cathedra* pronouncements in order to lay down the law on certain issues, there were many other 'grey areas' in Soviet musical life in which composers found rather more room to manoeuvre. The aim of this chapter is to explore the ways in which - and the levels at which - decisions were made by Soviet politicians and bureaucrats which had a direct or indirect impact on the development of Soviet music. It will include an examination of the policy-making process in the various Party and government departments which were concerned with musical affairs, including the role played by individual political leaders who had an interest in music, as well as the work of the music sections of the Central Committee Kul'tpros department, Narkompros, the Arts Committee and Glavrepe1ikom. It will also focus on the Composers' Unions, institution which played a significant part in shaping the environment within which their members lived and worked. Finally, it will include a discussion of the role played by individual members of the musical profession and by unofficial pressure groups in shaping musical opinion and in formulating the artistic response to official policy decisions. The actual substance of the decisions which were made by these different bodies - those policies which influenced the status of musicians and music-making within Soviet society and those which affected the production and dissemination of different musical genres - will be considered in detail in Chapters Three and Four below.

Party Leaders

Political decision-making in the Soviet Union underwent something of a transformation during the 1930s. The marked decline in the number of meetings of the central Party organs - the Politbiuro, the Orgbiuro and the Secretariat - from 1933 provides one indication of the degree to which collective decision-making at the highest level was abandoned as Stalin
consolidated his rule.1 Within the Politbiuro, Stalin himself had particular responsibility for dealing with cultural affairs and he took a considerable degree of personal interest in matters connected with Soviet musical life.2 His fondness for the opera is well known: the frequency of his visits to the Bolshoi attests to this, as does his wife's letter of September 1930, in which she recommended the Armenian composer Spendiaron's opera Almast to her husband. His comments made in January 1936 to the conductor Samuil Samosud (1884-1964) concerning the latter's production of Tikhii Don (Quiet Flows the Don) by Ivan Dzerzhinskii (1909-78) likewise displayed a keen interest in the future development of the genre.3

Stalin was also partial to certain kinds of folk music: one member of the Tbilisi opera company who attended a reception in the Kremlin given for participants in the festival of Georgian culture in January 1937 described in a newspaper article how Stalin sang folk songs to his guests in order to show them how it should be done.4 Svetlana Allilueva recounts how her father had an impressive collection of Russian, Ukrainian and Georgian folk song recordings, although her claim that he 'didn't recognize the existence of any other kind of music' seems implausible. Molotov also recalled Stalin's love of Russian folk songs in his conversations with Feliks Chuev, and mentioned that he 'had a pleasing voice' and would occasionally sing church songs and 'sometimes even White Guard songs' after dinner.5

Other high-ranking members of the Party leadership who shared an interest in musical matters included Molotov, a second cousin of the composer Skriabin, who had learned to play the violin in his youth. Khrushchev recounted in his memoirs that Molotov had once told his fellow Politbiuro members that when he was in exile in Vologda in 1909-11 he used to play the

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1E. A. Rees, 'Stalin, the Politbiuro and Rail Transport Policy' in Soviet History 1917-53, ed. by Julian Cooper, Maureen Perrie and E. A. Rees (Basingstoke: St Martin's Press, 1995), pp. 104-33. The principle of holding monthly sessions of the Politbiuro was abandoned after 1935.


violin in a restaurant to entertain drunken merchants. An official biography of Molotov dating from 1929 states that he played 'quite well, with great strength of feeling and expressiveness'. As he was the head of the Soviet government, it is hardly surprising that musical matters figured in Molotov's correspondence from time to time. Nevertheless, it is probable that his reputation as someone not altogether indifferent to the musical world would have influenced some musicians in their decision to turn to him for assistance in their affairs, rather than to any other member of the Party leadership.  

Voroshilov and Kaganovich were known to be jazz enthusiasts and they shared an interest in capitalizing on the various social functions of the genre: Voroshilov by encouraging his officers to learn jazz dancing, and Kaganovich by promoting the establishment of amateur jazz ensembles among railway workers. Voroshilov also took an interest in film music: he made special mention of the Leningrad composer Gavriil Popov (1904-72) in his praise for the film Chapaev and was a particular fan of the musical comedy film Veselye Rebiata (The Happy Guys). Kaganovich's involvement in amateur and folk music initiatives was quite extensive: he was responsible for helping to establish an amateur song and dance ensemble among the miners of the Donbass region in 1938, and he also played a role in setting up folklore collection projects, most notably in Moscow oblast' in 1934.

Zhdanov was another member of the Party leadership who became increasingly involved in cultural affairs during the 1930s. His speech at the Congress of the Writers' Union in 1934 marked him out as someone with an interest in artistic matters, and he became a regular companion to Stalin during the latter's trips to the Bolshoi. Molotov recalled how Zhdanov,

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7 See for example Molotov's intervention in the case of Prokof'ev's Kantata k 20-letiiu sovetskoi vlasti, Chapter Four, pp. 109-10 and his alleged role in the Borisovskii affair of 1938, Chapter Five, pp. 152-3.

8 See Chapter Four, pp. 120-1.


10 A. Livshits, 'Shakhterskii ansambl' pesni i pliaski', SM no. 5 (1939), 74-5. See Chapter Four, p. 128. A group of collective farmers from Medvedki village sent a letter to Sovetskoe Iskusstvo in 1933 in which they called on comrade Kaganovich to come and hear their balalaika ensemble in concert: 'Nyche nash konser', SI, 7 November 1933, p. 3.
who was 'something of a pianist, although an amateur' used to play the piano in Stalin's dacha at Kuntsevo. As head of the Leningrad Party organization from 1934 he frequently received letters concerning the musical affairs of that city. Zhdanov's appointment as head of the Central Committee Kul'tpros department in September 1938 cemented his position as one of the leading figures in the Party hierarchy in cultural and ideological affairs.

**The Party Apparatus**

The Department for Culture and Propaganda (Kul'tprop) of the Party Central Committee was established in 1930. Following internal restructuring in 1935, a separate Department for Cultural and Enlightenment work (Kul'tpros) was created under the leadership of Aleksandr Shcherbakov, which was made responsible for Party regulation of the arts, including the supervision of the cultural unions. In practice, however, following the creation of the state Arts Committee in January 1936, Kul'tpros found its leading role in cultural affairs frequently supplanted by this new institution. One of the reasons for this, as Leonid Maksimenkov has pointed out, is probably the fact that the Arts Committee enjoyed far greater stability of leadership during the period 1936-8 than did Kul'tpros, which saw five different leaders come and go over the course of the two years. Viktor Gorodskii (1902-58), who headed the Kul'tpros Music Sector during the first two years of its existence, was unusual among Soviet

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11 Molotov remarked that 'it was clear that at the piano, he felt free', *Sto sorok besed*, pp. 256 and 296.

12 Such as Shcherbakov's letter of 11 January 1936 on the work of the Leningrad Maly Opera Theatre: see Chapter Six p. 169. He also became involved in a struggle between the Leningrad Conservatoire and the Arts Committee in February 1938, when a group of Conservatoire professors turned to him to complain about Kerzhentsev's decision to exclude the pianist Vladimir Niphson from the Brussels piano competition: RGALI f. 962, op. 10, ed. khr. 28, l. 20.

13 'O reorganizatsii apparata TsK VKP(b)', *Partiiinoe Stroitel'stvo*, no. 2 (1930), 70-2. The Agitprop department, which had formerly held responsibility for cultural affairs, was split into two separate sections: the Department of Culture and Propaganda, and the Department for Agitation and Mass Campaigns.

14 Or at least, those cultural unions which operated on an All-Union level, eg the Writers' Union: 'O reorganizatsii kul'tpropa TsK VKP(b)', *Pravda* 14 May 1935, p. 1. Between 1934 and 1936 Shcherbakov also held the post of General Secretary of the Union of Soviet Writers.

15 Maksimenkov, p. 55. From 1936, Kul'tpros was headed in turn by Shcherbakov, Angarov, Shablovskii and Lukov, before the appointment of Zhdanov to the post in September 1938.
arts bureaucrats in that he was actually a specialist in his field, having graduated from Leningrad Conservatoire in 1929.\textsuperscript{16}

**State Institutions: Narkompros**

The Commissariat of Enlightenment continued to play an important role in musical affairs until 1936, when increasing criticism of its activities culminated in the decision to create a separate institution for the state supervision of the arts. Aleksei Bubnov took over the position of Commissar from Lunacharskii in 1929, but he did not share his predecessor's deep personal interest in musical matters. One of Bubnov's first initiatives on the 'musical front' was his convocation of a meeting with composers in Moscow in April 1932. This conference coincided with the publication of the Central Committee resolution on the liquidation of the proletarian arts organizations, and participants discussed the baleful influence which RAPM had exerted on Soviet musical life in recent years. They also talked about the importance of uniting all composers - not just those who concentrated their energies on mass song composition - into a single organization in order to direct their activity towards addressing the needs of the Soviet state.\textsuperscript{17}

The role and tasks of the Narkompros Arts Sector were set out in a document dating from 1933.\textsuperscript{18} The Music Section was formally charged with the 'general ideological leadership of music' and with serving the musical needs of the workers of the RSFSR. This included the supervision of the activity of all concert organizations and musical theatres, the compilation of plan targets in the field of musical education, and the organization of cooperative links between professional musicians and amateur ensembles. Bubnov himself held occasional meetings with officials from the Composers' Union and other musical organizations in order to discuss matters such as the material conditions of Soviet composers.\textsuperscript{19} Control over musical repertoire also fell

\textsuperscript{16}Maksimenkov, p. 73-5. Gorodinskii was also a prolific journalist on musical affairs, and he edited *Sovetskoe iskusstvo* between 1938 and 1940.

\textsuperscript{17}A. Kut, 'Kompozitory u tov. A. S. Bubnova: zadachi muzykal'nogo fronta', *SI*, 27 April 1932, p. 4. See also Popov, pp. 62-3 and 353-4.

\textsuperscript{18}Polozenie o sektore iskusstv i literatury NKP RSFSR', RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. khr. 11, l. 74-9. At this time, the Arts Sector was headed by Mikhail Arkad'ev, and the Music Section by Boleslav Pshibyshevskii. Both men were to be denounced as enemies of the people in autumn 1937. See Chapter Six, p. 199.

\textsuperscript{19}Priemu tov. Bubnova', *Bul'leten' SSK*, no. 3 (1934), 11.
within the remit of Narkompros: Glavrepertkom came under Narkompros jurisdiction from its foundation in 1923 until 1937. It therefore fell to Bubnov and Arkad'ev to decide whether or not to permit the production of Shostakovich's opera *Katerina Izmailova*. Following a private viewing of the work in concert performance in May 1933, Bubnov 'approved the music and proposed that careful work be carried out on the libretto... in order to clean up the language'. After a further viewing in December 1933, he endorsed the opera's production.

Mounting criticism of the shortcomings of Narkompros in the artistic sphere led to a major reconfiguration of the Soviet arts bureaucracy in 1936. Bubnov's department came under fire from various quarters for its alleged neglect of the amateur arts movement and for its failure to pay sufficient attention to the provision of musical education in schools. The fact that Narkompros did not operate at the All-Union level also counted against it. In the final account, Narkompros fell victim to a drive for bureaucratic centralization, as the Party leadership came to the conclusion that a wholly separate institution was needed in order to provide the 'concrete and specialist' leadership of the arts which the people 'demanded'.

**Kerzhentsev and the Arts Committee**

The All-Union Arts Committee, which came under the jurisdiction of Sovnarkom, was set up in January 1936 and took over the task of political leadership of the arts from Narkompros. Platon Kerzhentsev (1881-1940), an Old Bolshevik and ex-Proletkul't activist, was appointed chairman of the new Committee. Having studied history at Moscow University and spent time as an emigrant in Paris, London and New York before the Revolution, Kerzhentsev had worked in journalism and later in diplomacy before taking up a post in the...
Agitprop department of the Party Central Committee between 1928 and 1930. As deputy head of Agitprop in 1929, he delivered two keynote speeches at the music conferences held in June of that year.\textsuperscript{42} Between 1933 and 1936 he held the post of chairman of the Radio Committee. He was also the author of a number of books on Soviet culture, concentrating mainly on the theatre which he regarded as the most important branch of the arts.\textsuperscript{26}

Provincial and republican sections of the Arts Committee were established in various cities outside Moscow. Zhdanov articulated the main reasons for the restructuring of the arts bureaucracy in a speech delivered in Leningrad in April 1936, in which he asserted that the creation of a network of local Arts Committees, united under central leadership, had become necessary now that 'the main practical questions of socialist construction... (had been)... resolved' and the Party was in a position to pay more attention to artistic matters. He argued that this new system of administration had become 'essential, given that weakness of ideology and organizational leadership on this front will destroy us'.\textsuperscript{27} From December 1936 the Committee was given the status of a Commissariat and Kerzhentsev was awarded full membership of Sovnarkom.\textsuperscript{28}

The main Arts Committee department which was involved in the direction of musical affairs was the Board of Musical Institutions (\textit{Upravlenie Muzykal'nykh Uchrezhdnenii}). Established in August 1936, apparently on Molotov's instigation, it was made responsible for overseeing the activity of the conservatories, the philharmonias, the music publishing house and the various state music ensembles such as the State Symphony Orchestra and the Leningrad State Academic Choral Capella.\textsuperscript{29} The first director of the Board was Shatilov, who was succeeded in April 1938 by M. M. Grinberg, the former head of Muzgiz.\textsuperscript{30} The Board's work

\textsuperscript{21}See Chapter One, p. 29

\textsuperscript{26}His books included \textit{Revoliutsiia i teatr} (1918), \textit{Kul'tura i Sovetskaia vlast'} (1919) and \textit{Tvorcheskii teatr} (1919).

\textsuperscript{27}'O plane raboty upravleniia po delam iskusstv pri Lensovete' (4 April 1936): RTsKhDNI f. 77, op. 1, d. 569, l. 12.


\textsuperscript{29}'Ob organizatsii upravleniia muzykal'nykh uchrezhdnenii vsesoiuznogo komiteta po delam iskusstv', \textit{Biulleten' VKI}, no. 3 (1936), 36; RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 102, l. 8.

\textsuperscript{30}Grinberg was replaced by V. N. Surin, formerly the Secretary of the Music Board's Party Committee in February 1939: 'V komitete po delam iskusstv', \textit{SI}, 24 April 1938, p. 4; \textit{Biulleten' VKI}, no. 5 (1939), 16.
chiefly consisted in inspecting philharmonia concert plans, compiling control figures and plan targets for musical institutions and convening meetings with composers and musicians to discuss the pressing issues of the day.\textsuperscript{31}

As with virtually every other state institution in the Soviet Union, the Arts Committee came in for a considerable amount of criticism over the course of 1937-8. Central departments, as well as local branches of the Committee, all came under attack for various alleged deficiencies and abuses: weak direction of repertoire policy, lack of attention to organizational questions, and failure to stimulate the creation of large-scale operatic and symphonic works of great ideological depth. Arts administrations in the non-Russian republics were criticized for manifestations of bourgeois nationalism. Kerzhentsev himself was subjected to scathing criticism by Zhdanov in a speech delivered at the first session of the Supreme Soviet in January 1938. Zhdanov attacked him for his failure to act earlier to close down the Meierkhol'd theatre; for his alleged attempts to bar certain young pianists from participation in an All-Union piano competition on the grounds that they had relatives who were politically suspect; and for his alleged moves to close down the Department of National Cadres in Moscow Conservatoire. In a report to Molotov from the Commission of Soviet Control, it was claimed that Kerzhentsev had done nothing to liquidate the consequences of sabotage in the Arts Committee and that he should be replaced.\textsuperscript{32} Kerzhentsev was removed from his post and replaced by A. I. Nazarov.\textsuperscript{33}

After his dismissal from the Arts Committee, Kerzhentsev was sent to work for the editorial board of the \textit{Malaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia}. Despite this demotion, he received an official obituary in \textit{Pravda} on his death in 1940, and retained his entry in the second edition of the \textit{Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia}.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31}RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 52, 63 and 102.

\textsuperscript{32}RGALI f. 962, op. 10, ed. khr. 31, ll. 1-3.


\textsuperscript{34}Nekrolog: P. M. Kerzhentsev', \textit{Pravda}, 3 June 1940, p. 6; \textit{BSE}, 2nd edn (1953), XX, p. 554.
Censorship

State censorship of musical works was carried out by Glavreptkom. This committee was responsible for keeping tabs on all types of public performance, including concerts and productions of operas. By 1929 it had worked out a system of categories, according to which the degree of ideological acceptability of different musical and theatrical works could be classified. They could fall into one of four categories:

Class A: highly recommended, ideologically acceptable works, including classical works which had not lost their social and political significance for Soviet audiences.

Class B: ideologically acceptable works.

Class C: works which did not merit an absolute ban, but which should be treated with extreme caution by local organs of control.

Class D: Agitka or agitational works which could be used for propaganda purposes in political campaigns.

Works could also be banned altogether.35

A handbook issued in 1935 laid down the official statutes of the Committee: it was to conduct political, ideological and artistic checks on all types of repertoire, and all theatrical, cinematic and musical works had to be submitted to it before permission could be granted for public performance or the distribution of recordings. Works could be banned from circulation if they were considered to contain agitation against Soviet power; if they gave away state secrets or excited religious or nationalist fanaticism; or if they were judged to be mystical, pornographic, ideologically unbalanced or 'anti-artistic'. All concert halls and opera houses had to be registered with the Committee, and concert organizations were required to seek approval for their repertoire plans in advance of each season.36

Lists of repertoire with their official classification codes were published periodically in the journal Repertuarnyi Biuleten'. As a general rule, the only works which merited an outright ban tended to be religious music, such as Glier's piano piece Mol'ba (Supplication), or works

35 N. A. Ravich, Repertuarnyi ukazatel' GRK (Moscow: Teakinopechat', 1929), pp. 4-5.

which took overtly tsarist themes, such as Verstovskii's Prolog po Sluchaiu Koronatsii Gosudaria Imperatora Nikolaia I (Prologue on the Occasion of the Coronation of Emperor Nicholas I). Some works were only permitted with certain provisos: for example the list of songs authorized for performance by gypsy ensembles included a special category of pieces which could be performed only in thematic concerts, as musical illustrations of the life endured by gypsies under the old regime.38

Although in principle the local organs of the Central Repertoire Committee enjoyed a considerable degree of discretion, in practice the Moscow leadership could and did step in to alter local decisions in cases where they considered them to have been made incorrectly. Perhaps the most notorious case of this kind was the controversy which engulfed Gavriil Popov's First Symphony in the spring of 1935. This symphony had won the second prize in a competition held in 1932 which had been sponsored jointly by the newspaper Komsomol'skaia Pravda and the directorate of the Bolshoi theatre. The work was discussed at a meeting of the Leningrad Composers' Union held in spring 1933, in the course of which several participants spoke of their admiration for the work and commented on its 'revolutionary content', although others remarked that listeners were likely to face problems in understanding the symphony at the first hearing.39 The première did not take place until 22 March 1935, when it was performed in the Leningrad Philharmonia.

On the day after this performance, Obnorski, the head of the Leningrad Repertoire Committee wrote to Ossovskii, the artistic director of the Philharmonia, banning the symphony on the grounds that it reflected 'an ideology of classes which are hostile to us'. This move, together with the publication of a damning article in Krasnaia Gazeta by Vladimir Iokhel'son, the secretary of the Leningrad Composers' Union, sparked off a heated debate among Leningrad composers. Iokhel'son attacked the work on the grounds that it offered a 'limited representation of reality and thereby distorts it'. Nevertheless, a number of Popov's colleagues spoke out in

37 Repertuarnyi Biulleten', no. 2-3 (1936), 27-38; no. 8 (1936), 22-4.
38 Repertuarnyi Biulleten', no. 3 (1937), 27-8.
39 Shostakovich was particularly impressed by the symphony: LGALI f. 348, op. 1, d. 4, 5, published in Popov, pp. 357-8.
support of the work and registered their indignation at the action of the Repertoire Committee. The matter was only resolved at the end of April when Litovskii, the head of Glavrepertkom in Moscow rescinded the original ban. An article by the Tur' brothers which appeared in Izvestiia two months later recounted the history of the affair and attacked the Leningrad Repertoire Committee in no uncertain terms for its 'ridiculous' decision to ban a work which contained no obvious religious, monarchist, fascist or counter-revolutionary musical themes.

Officials from the Repertoire Committee were not the only people who took an interest in new works of music. Kerzhentsev himself paid close attention to the work of Soviet opera composers and he kept a beady eye on their work by means of personal correspondence and meetings with composers. The conductor Aleksandr Gauk (1893-1963) mentioned in his memoirs how both Kerzhentsev and Shatilov, the head of the Arts Committee Music Board, would attend the rehearsals of new Soviet works before they were premièred.

The Arts Committee did not enjoy complete freedom of action in the field of censorship, and its decisions were always liable to be overturned by higher Party authorities. Mosolov's harp concerto was restored to the programme of a concert held during the festival of Soviet music in Moscow in December 1939, following orders from on high. The work had been removed from the programme by Khrapchenko, the acting head of the Arts Committee at that time. Khrapchenko had evidently come to the decision that discretion was the better part of valour when it came to handling works by figures of Mosolov's reputation. Mosolov had been renowned in the 1920s for his works of machine music and he gained notoriety in 1936 after being expelled from the Moscow Composers' Union for dissolute behaviour and moral

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40Shaporin remarked that the ban reminded him of 'the worst times of RAPM'. Shebalin characterized the symphony as 'one of the most striking and talented works of Soviet music of recent years' and described the ban as 'a clear example of unnecessary and harmful administration'. Popov, pp 86-7, 260, 362-3, 403.


42See Chapter Four, p. 117

corruption. In the case of his harp concerto, it appears that intervention by Molotov may have been instrumental in causing the work to be restored to the programme.

The clearest examples of direct intervention from above in musical affairs came in 1936 with the publication of the Pravda articles criticizing Shostakovich's opera Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo Uezda and his ballet Svetlyi Ruchei (The Sparkling Stream) on the grounds of formalism. This episode is considered in detail in Chapter Six below. Suffice it to say at this point that the attack on Ledi Makbet very clearly emanated from the highest level of the Party leadership, and Pravda editorials, as well as oral comments made by political leaders, were to become one of the key ways by which the official line on cultural affairs could be made plain both to artists and to members of the general public during the period of the anti-formalism campaign and beyond. Despite the condemnation of the work in Pravda, however, the opera was not removed from the repertoire immediately. Two further performances of the work, under its alternative title Katerina Izmailova, went ahead in the Nemirovich-Danchenko theatre on 16 February and 7 March 1936 before the opera was 'voluntarily' withdrawn.

Local Party organizations could also play a hand in music censorship. In the case of Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony, the decision to withdraw the work from performance in the autumn of 1936 while it was still in rehearsal came about after the intervention of officials from the Leningrad Party organization and from the Leningrad Composers' Union. According to the memoirs of Shostakovich's friend, the literary critic Isaak Glikman, who had been present at the rehearsals, 'One fine day, Iokhel'son, the secretary of the Composers' Union appeared at a rehearsal with a leading figure from Smolnyi, Iakov Smirnov, following which the Philharmonia' director I. M. Renzin asked D. D. [Shostakovich] to come to his office'. Renzin had been informed that the work should be withdrawn, and requested that Shostakovich himself refuse to allow the performance to go ahead, so as to avoid the need to use 'administrative measures'.

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44K. Vaks, 'Kompozitor Mosolov iskliuchen iz SSK', SM, no. 3 (1936), 104. See Chapter Three, p. 73.
45RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 510, l. 72; Barsova, p. 74.
47Maksimenkov, pp. 45-6.
48I. Glikman, Pis'ma k drugu: Dmitrii Shostakovich - Isaaku Glikmanu (Moscow: DSCH, 1993), pp. 12-13. Memoirs are not, of course, the most reliable sources of information, but Glikman's story is believable.
The musicologist Liudmilla Mikheeva has presented this decision in an interesting light: in her view, the local Party officials were in fact acting in Shostakovich's best interests at the time, because the symphony did not fit in with the standard formulae of socialist realism and would almost certainly have given rise to renewed attacks on the composer. Nevertheless, it seems more plausible to assume that the local Party organization was guarding its own back, rather than acting purely from altruistic motives.

**Patronage**

Official patronage came in various shapes and sizes. Prizes, awards and honorary titles were distributed to those composers and musicians who won the favour of the Soviet authorities. Decorations could be handed out in recognition of distinguished long-term service in a particular institution: a number of Moscow Conservatoire professors were awarded titles in 1937 in recognition of their 'exceptional merit in the field of training musical cadres', and the conductor Samosud became the recipient of various awards for his work at the Leningrad Maly Opera theatre. Awards were also made in acknowledgement of specific individual exploits: participants in the Moscow Conservatoire concert brigade which visited the Arctic in 1936 were awarded with prizes - including record players, radios, watches and a grand piano - on their return; members of the State Symphony Orchestra and Choral Capella were granted an additional month's salary in December 1936 as a reward for their excellent performances of the *Internationale* and of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at a concert given for delegates of the Congress of Soviets; and David Oistrakh (1908-74) and Emil Gilel's (1916-85) were given the Badge of Honour in June 1937 following their victories at international performance competitions in Vienna and Brussels.

One award which attracted particular interest among composers was the Order of the Red Flag presented to Isaak Dunaevskii (1900-55) in December 1936 in recognition of his work in the field of popular song composition. Dunaevskii had been recommended for this award by

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50 *Postanovlenie prezidiuma TsIK SSSR*: RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khr. 21, ll. 53-4; In June 1937 Samosud was awarded the Order of Lenin and the title 'People's Artist of the USSR', *Biulleten' VKI*, no. 6 (1937), 6-10.

51 *Biulleten' VKI*, no. 6 (1937), 11; no. 6 (1936), 5-7.
Kerzhentsev's deputy, Boris Shumiatskii, and the Komsomol leader Kosarev in a letter to Stalin: they praised his work in writing genuinely popular mass songs and advocated giving him a title as a means of stimulating his further activity, and of encouraging others to work in this genre. Several speakers at the conference on jazz held in the Leningrad Composers' Union in January 1937 commented on the significance of the award, which was regarded (correctly) as an indication of the extent to which his particular brand of light music had received the official seal of approval from the regime.

The Stalin Prizes, which were awarded for outstanding creative work in the fields of science and the arts, were established by Sovnarkom decree in 1940. Committees of experts were set up to adjudicate on the various works submitted, with the Committee on Art and Literature headed by the theatre director Nemirovich-Danchenko and including the composers Glier, Gol'denveizer (1875-1961), Miaskovskii, Dunaevskii and Shaporin (1887-1966) among its members. The first prizes awarded to works of music went to Miaskovskii's 21st Symphony and Shostakovich's Piano Quintet.

Another notable form of official patronage was the issuing of invitations to solo musicians and ensembles to provide entertainment to accompany banquets held in the Kremlin. Singers from the Bolshoi opera company - particular favourites included Natalia Shpiller (1909-95) and Ivan Kozlovskii (1900-?) - were frequent recipients of such invitations, and the decision to invite Ziegler's Jazz Revue to perform at a Kremlin function in November 1934 was regarded as a significant indication of the official approval of jazz. Folk ensembles were also prized for their entertainment-value, and the Piatnitskii Folk Choir and the Moiseev Ensemble were invited to the Kremlin on more than one occasion.

52 *Builetten' VKI*, no. 1 (1937), 6; RTsKhIDNI f. 17, op. 163, d. 1094, l. 103, published in Maksimenkov, p. 166.
53 RGALI f. 2062, op. 1, ed. khr. 331, II. 3-4 ob. st.
54 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 873 II. 3-4, 51. See Chapter Five, pp. 163-4.
55 Starr, p. 126; Smith, pp. 133 and 153; *Igor' Moiseev, la vspominatiiu...* (Moscow: Soglasie, 1996), pp. 45-51; RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 366.
The Union of Composers

Although Composers' Unions were set up in most of the main urban centres of the USSR during the 1930s, the first moves to create a centrally unified apparatus for a Union-level body were not made until the end of the decade, and it was not until 1948 that the Union of Soviet Composers of the USSR was finally established. Its first congress, held in April of that year, was the occasion on which the Union statutes were first approved by the membership and its leaders were elected. Unlike the Writers' Union, which was founded at the Union level within two years of the April 1932 Party resolution, seven years passed before a Composers' Union organizational committee (orgkom) was established, and sixteen years passed before the Union of Soviet Composers was finally created. Nevertheless, local Composers' Unions were founded at the oblast' level in Moscow and Leningrad in 1932 and separate branches were established in the Soviet republics and in a number of other Russian cities over the course of the decade. The expectation was expressed at the inaugural meeting of the Moscow Composers' Union in the summer of 1932 that once such Unions had been formed in all the major cities of the USSR, it would be possible to convene a Congress at the All-Union level. No timetable, however, was set for work towards achieving this end.

The basic task of the Moscow - and by implication, of every other - Composers' Union was described as that of 'uniting composers and musicians... for their active participation in the construction of socialism'. Early slogans of the Union included: 'For Socialist Music' and 'For a Magnitostroi in Music', and it was emphasized right from the start that the creation of the Union was not in any way intended as a means of slowing down or bringing about the abandonment of the class struggle in music. The first Chairman of the Moscow Union was the Narkompros official Mikhail Arkad'ev, who was to be succeeded within the year by his Narkompros colleague, the jurist and writer on constitutional law Nikolai Cheliapov (1889-1937).

56'Oblast' conferences of composers, held with a view to setting up local Union cells, were organized in Voronezh, Sverdlovsk, Rostov and Samara as early as 1933: Biulleten' SSK no. 5 (1933), 12. By January 1939 RSFSR Union branches had been set up in Karelia, Voronezh and Tambov, and efforts were underway to organize them in Rostov on Don, Saratov, Gorkii, Kazan, Northern Osetiia and Sverdlovsk. 'Novye soiuzy kompozitorov', SI, 25 January 1939, p. 1.


58V soiuzve sovetskikh kompozitorov', SM, no. 1 (1933), 140-1; Kut, 'Sozdan soiuiz'; RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. khr. 352, ll. 16-19.
Cheliapov had previously worked in the Narkompros Glavprofobr section, and had been the head of the 1929 commission charged with investigating the internal affairs of Moscow Conservatoire.\(^5^9\)

The apparatus of the Moscow Composers' Union was subject to frequent reorganization during its early years.\(^6^0\) From October 1933 the Union included four main sectors, dealing with creative work; mass propaganda; amateur music; and organizational and financial affairs. It also had three individual sections which were responsible for musicology and criticism; performance; and military music. Each of the sectors contained separate groups which dealt with different aspects of that sector's work: for example, the Creativity sector included groups with responsibility for contracts; for the organization of composers' meetings in order to discuss work in progress; and for planning seminars and consultation sessions. The work of the sectors was coordinated through the Union Board which in its turn was directed by a Presidium consisting of the chairman, his deputy, the organizational secretary and the leaders of the four Union sectors.\(^6^1\) The never-ending process of administrative restructuring did not make life easy for Union members. In a letter to Prokof'ev, written in February 1934, the composer Miaskovskii complained that:

> The situation in the Union at present is such that you don't know which string to pull in order to get anything done. We now have such a division of functions, and the heads of sectors are either lazy or, on the contrary, quite active, but they are bureaucrats, so I literally do not know which way to turn.\(^6^2\)

The Leningrad Composers' Union was established in August 1932, although it did not begin active work until October of that year. The Union's first chairman was Boris Fingert, a Party member of long standing who was known chiefly for his book on political education. Like Cheliapov, he had no specialist musical credentials, but unlike Cheliapov he played virtually no role in the affairs of the Union whatsoever, as he was chronically ill for most of his

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\(^{59}\)See Chapter One, p. 33; Vlasova, p. 158.

\(^{60}\)L. Atovm'ian, 'God raboty soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov', \textit{SM}, no. 6 (1933), 131-41. The Union underwent at least three structural reorganizations in the course of the first year and a half of its existence.

\(^{61}\)L. Atovm'ian, 'Struktura soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov', \textit{Bul'leten' SSK}, no. 3-4 (1933), 6-9.

\(^{62}\)\textit{Perepiska}, p. 420.
chairmanship. In 1936, indeed, it was claimed by one of his critics that he was in fact not even living in Leningrad, but in Tbilisi.63 The leadership of the Leningrad Union thus fell to a considerable degree upon the shoulders of the Chief Secretary of the Union Board, Vladimir Iokhel'son.

Membership

The original draft of the April 1932 resolution which came before the Politbiuro included a clause which stipulated that separate Unions should be set up for composers and musicians. This clause was excised from the final version of the resolution, but the representation of musicians within the Union was an issue which did not go away. In an address to composers shortly after the promulgation of the Central Committee resolution Arkad'ev emphasized the need for a spirit of inclusivity and an absence of revanchism in the new 'Union of Soviet Musicians', which would include among its members composers, performers, teachers, students and amateur musicians.64 This particular blueprint was eventually rejected, and membership of the new Unions of Soviet Composers was made open to all composers, musicologists and critics, with the proviso that in special cases, highly qualified performers might also be admitted on an individual basis.65 By September 1933 the Moscow Union had 150 members, and a breakdown of the membership into different social categories looked like this:

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64RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. kh. 352, II. 16-19.

65V soiuze sovetskikh kompozitorov', SI, 16 October 1932, p. 3; 'Ustav vserossiiskogo dobrovol'noho obschestva soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov', RGALI f. 2077, op. 1, ed. khr. 1, l. 4.
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Union membership

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<td>Over 40</td>
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Source: 'Osnovnye materialy o rabote SSK', Biulleten' SSK, no. 2 (1933), 14-16.

Prospective members submitted an application directly to the Union Board, and were charged an annual membership fee. In January 1934 this fee was set at 2% of the composer's earnings, plus an initial entrance charge of 5 rubles.66 Concern was expressed in early 1933 by one Union member, the ex-Prokoll composer Marian Koval' (1907-71), who complained that many people who did not merit the title of Soviet composer - for example, people who had written a few pieces of music a long time ago and then produced nothing since, or pianists who improvised music to accompany films - had been admitted as members. He argued that while it would be neither feasible nor desirable to create a Union peopled entirely with composers of genius, it was nevertheless important to ensure that the Union did not end up saturated with untalented mediocrities.67 In fact, the entrance criteria were evidently quite tough, as out of the 300 applicants to the Moscow Union in 1932-3, only half were admitted for membership.68

66 Postanovlenie prezidiuma SSK o chleneskikh i iuridicheskikh vznosakh, Biulleten' SSK, no. 1-2 (1934), 5.

67 Marian Koval', 'Kompozitor i sreda: zametki o soiuze sovetskikh muzykantov', SI, 20 January 1933, p. 2. It is interesting that Koval', inaccurately, describes the Union as one of 'Musicians' rather than of 'Composers'.

68 Those rejected were said to be mainly composers working in provincial theatres, cinemas and public gardens. Atovm'ian, 'God raboty'.
The status of performers was raised again in 1937 when a group of Soviet pianists wrote an article criticizing the Composers' Union performance sections which they claimed were 'in the position of poor relations' and 'under daily threat of liquidation'. They argued that the existing structure of the Composers' Unions did not 'answer the demands of the country, the Party and the Resolution of 23 April 1932' and they called for the reorganization of the Union 'into a mighty and authoritative creative Union of Soviet Musicians' which would ensure equal rights for, and cooperation between, all those involved in the creation of Soviet musical culture.\textsuperscript{69} Although several quite prominent conservatoire professors spoke out in favour of the idea - notably Gol'denveizer and Oborin (1907-74) - the proposal was not implemented.\textsuperscript{70}

Following widespread criticism of the work of the Composers' Unions in 1936-8, new Union boards were elected in both Moscow and Leningrad.\textsuperscript{71} The Leningrad Union held elections in the summer of 1937, following a ten day general meeting of composers. The position of Chairman of the Union Board was filled initially by Shcherbachev (1889-1952) and later by the popular song composer Dunaevskii, and a Presidium based on the model of the Moscow Union was established at the same time.\textsuperscript{72} In April 1938 the Moscow Composers' Union elected a new governing board by secret ballot. This board chose the composer Reingol't Glier to be its chairman, with Aram Khachaturian as his deputy.\textsuperscript{73} Thus for the first time in its history, both of the main Composers' Union branches were headed by practising composers, rather than by full-time bureaucrats.

Radical restructuring of the Unions did not take place until 1939, although arguments in favour of reform had been put forward many times in previous years. Nazarov, the head of the Arts Committee, and Chemberdzhi (1903-48), the acting head of the Moscow Composers' Union boards were elected in both Moscow and Leningrad. The Leningrad Union held elections in the summer of 1937, following a ten day general meeting of composers. The position of Chairman of the Union Board was filled initially by Shcherbachev (1889-1952) and later by the popular song composer Dunaevskii, and a Presidium based on the model of the Moscow Union was established at the same time. In April 1938 the Moscow Composers' Union elected a new governing board by secret ballot. This board chose the composer Reingol't Glier to be its chairman, with Aram Khachaturian as his deputy. Thus for the first time in its history, both of the main Composers' Union branches were headed by practising composers, rather than by full-time bureaucrats.

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\textsuperscript{70}'Sozdatim soiuz sovetskikh muzykantov', SI, 17 April 1937, p. 2. The counter-argument, put forward by Khrennikov, was that a new Union of Musicians would be an 'unneccesary affiliate' to the existing Union of Arts Workers (\textit{Professionallnyi soiuz rabotnikov iskusstv}).

\textsuperscript{71}See Chapter Six, p. 196.

Union, pointed out in a letter to Molotov and Andreev written in March 1938 that during the six years since the Central Committee resolution of April 1932 the network of Composers' Unions had outgrown their original narrow organizational framework, and that this was holding back the future development of Soviet music. The fact that each Union branch led a wholly independent existence meant that issues such as the realization of socialist realism in music, the development of Soviet opera, the struggle with formalism and so forth were discussed separately, without the possibility of reaching any common conclusions.

In the autumn of 1938, Sovnarkom drafted a resolution which called for the creation of an All-Union body which could unite all Soviet composers under one roof, and established an orgkom and a muzfond (music fund) to help bring these plans to fruition. The orgkom, which comprised twenty-four leading composers and musicologists, included representatives from seven of the Union republics as well as from the Russian republic. Its first Plenum was held in May 1939, at which Glier gave a report on the tasks which had to be carried out before an All-Union congress could be convened. Despite all intentions, however, the upheaval caused by the war meant that a gap of nine years elapsed between the formation of the orgkom and the first Congress of the Union of Soviet Composers.

Individuals

As V. I. Mutnykh, the director of the Bolshoi Theatre, recognized in 1936, providing artistic leadership was a far from straightforward task for the Party. Although Pravda could indicate the correct path composers and musicians should be following, 'not even Stalin' could tell them how to conduct their work in order to achieve the goal of creating an ideologically acceptable Soviet musical culture. The interpretation of Party directives was for the most part left up to the individuals concerned.

74 RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 218, ll. 1-4. This resolution was formally passed in May 1939: RGALI f. 2085, op.1, ed. khr. 1180, l. 13.

75 Such tasks included the drawing up of Union statutes, including new rules on membership, and the discussion of issues connected with the promotion of Soviet music across the USSR: ‘Pervyi plenum soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov SSSR’, SI, 27 May 1939, p. 4.

76 RGALI f. 648, op. 2, ed. khr. 1033, l. 40 ob. st.
Campaigns to promote criticism and self-criticism became a commonplace in all spheres of Soviet life during the 1930s, and participants in the anti-formalism debates of 1936 laid considerable stress on the importance of such practices as a way of encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their own actions. While direct evidence of self-censorship is obviously hard to come by, it is clear that many composers concentrated their work in spheres and on genres which would be unlikely to cause offence: film music was usually a safe option, as were works based on folk music themes. Komsomol and Party cells existed in most music institutions: by 1939 the Moscow Conservatoire Party cell contained 47 members and 15 candidate members, while the Komsomol organization boasted 600 members.

Communist concepts and vocabulary were often applied to the 'musical front'. One example of this is the introduction of methods of 'socialist competition' by pedagogues at Moscow Conservatoire. Professors Vasilii Nechaev (1895-1956) and Pavel Lamm (1882-1951), for instance, signed a contract by which they agreed to train concert brigades, to give extra help to backward students and to include more Soviet works in their classes.

The work of musicologists and critics was regarded as essential to the development of Soviet music: they were expected to take a thoroughly politicized approach in their assessments, and not to be afraid to pass judgement on the social significance of new Soviet works. In one of the anti-formalism debates held in February 1936, Kabalevskii remarked that critics should concentrate their attention on the social value of works of music, rather than on their formal merits. Although certain musicologists had played a very active role in promoting the creation of a new Marxist-Leninist school of aesthetic theory, it was nevertheless argued by Kerzhentsev in 1937 that they had failed in their basic duty of helping composers to develop their work along the 'correct' lines. He accused musicologists of 'burying their heads

77 Za podlinnuiu samokritiku', SL, 5 February 1936, p. 3; RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 43, I. 5 ob. st.
78 See Chapter Four, p. 106.
79 K. Vasina, E. Meleshko, 'Na Partsoobranii v Moskovskoi Konservatorii', SL, 25 January 1939, p. 2. In 1934 the total student membership of the Conservatoire was 719: GARF f. R-6283, op. 12, ed. khr. 239.
80 'Dogovor po sotsiozrenovaniu mezhdu pedagogami MGK', GTsMMK, f. 299, d. 50. Undated, but apparently signed in 1935-6.
81 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 268, II. 9-12 ob. st.; RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 38, I. 21 ob. st.
like ostriches' by concentrating their attention on the music of dead composers like Chopin, rather than on contemporary Soviet works.\(^\text{82}\)

Composers and musicologists themselves were involved in many of the attacks on institutions such as the Arts Committee and the Composers' Unions in 1936-7. Denunciation of those in authority could, as Sheila Fitzpatrick has pointed out, serve a number of different ends: the settlement of private feuds was certainly one motivation, but it is also the case that genuine grievances lay behind many of the complaints which were voiced at this time.\(^\text{83}\) Tikhon Khrennikov (1913-)’s letter to Pravda in April 1937 criticizing the work of the Moscow Composers' Union is a case in point. He argued in his letter that the leadership was incompetent; that creative issues were not placed at the heart of the Union's activities; and that the Party cell was failing to offer adequate political leadership. Such sentiments were shared by many other members of the Union rank and file.\(^\text{84}\)

Although organized pressure groups did not have a formal existence in Soviet musical life in the 1930s, nevertheless composers and musicians who worked in specific genres tended to be very active in promoting their own particular 'patch'. In order to illustrate the way in which such interest groups operated, two examples are offered: first, the proponents of jazz, and then the champions of the contemporary modernist music of Western Europe and America.

The jazz lobby was extremely vocal in support of its favoured genre: advocates of 'Soviet jazz' (as distinct from the supposedly degenerate and bourgeois Western variety) dominated proceedings during the Leningrad Composers' Union discussion of jazz in January 1937. They argued that the 'disparaging attitude' of Soviet composers in general and of the Composers' Union in particular towards almost all forms of popular light music should no longer be tolerated.\(^\text{85}\) Soviet jazz fans were in a strong position to advance their cause at this time: not only had Dunaevskii, who was widely recognized as the king of Soviet light music,

\(^\text{82}\)RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 268, l. 11. For musicologists' own injunctions to one another, see V. Tobol'kevich, 'Ob otvetstvennosti sovetskogo muzykonzaniia', SM, no. 5 (1933), 112-3; GTsMMK, f. 296, d. 478, l. 42, ob. st.


\(^\text{84}\)Tikhon Khrennikov, 'V soiuze sovetskih kompozitorov neblagopoluchno', Pravda, 6 April 1937, p. 6.

\(^\text{85}\)RGALI f. 2062, op. 1, ed. khr. 331, ll. 43-51.
recently received a state award, but a series of polemical articles on the subject of jazz in the newspapers Pravda and Izvestiia in November and December 1936 had provoked Kerzhentsev to come out in support of 'healthy', 'proletarian' jazz. 86

Although in general, contemporary Western trends in music were frowned on by the Soviet authorities, there were nevertheless a number of authoritative figures in the musical world who continued to regard such music in a positive light, even after the anti-formalism campaign. Prokof'ev, who enjoyed something of a privileged position in the Soviet Union following his return from emigration, was a particularly outspoken advocate of the virtues of Western music. He argued at an Arts Committee Music Board meeting in August 1936 that young Soviet composers lagged behind their Western counterparts by 40 years, and that they needed to master Western techniques if they were to rescue Soviet music from its provincial backwater. 87

While such pressure groups rarely won any direct concessions, they certainly did succeed in raising the profile, and sometimes also the respectability, of the genres which they supported. The distinction which the light music lobby drew between the two supposedly separate schools of jazz - Western and Soviet - was later adopted by the political authorities, and the sovietization of jazz reached its high point in 1938 with the formation of the government-funded State Jazz Orchestra of the USSR. Although the supporters of contemporary Western music faced an up-hill struggle in their attempts to win respectability for this repertoire, nevertheless such music did continue to appear in concert programmes, even in the post-1936 period. 88

The era of the Cultural Revolution had been remarkable in the extent to which militant grass-roots organizations such as RAPM had been able to impose their own ideas about music on the rest of the profession. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that even in the post-1932 period, when Party involvement in musical life became much more extensive and increasingly formalized, pressures on composers and musicians continued to come almost as much from within their own ranks as from the Party leadership and the arts bureaucracy.

86Starr, Chapter 8; P. Kerzhentsev, 'O muzyke', Pravda, 4 December 1936, p. 4. See Chapter Four, p. 120.

87RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 42, l. 60. See Chapter Five, pp. 148-9.

88See Chapter Five.
It is certainly true to say that Soviet musical life underwent a considerable degree of centralization during the 1930s. This centralization, however, was very far from being total. While the 1930s did indeed witness the creation of an extensive arts bureaucracy and the adoption of an increasingly active role in the direction of musical affairs by the Party leadership, intervention from above nevertheless remained a sporadic and unpredictable affair. Policy-making tended to be rather erratic, with relatively low-ranking officials at times compelled to guess what line the leadership would be likely to take on certain issues. The parallelism which existed between the different branches of the Party and state bureaucracy responsible for the administration of the arts meant that music came to be used as a pawn in inter-departmental struggles. The result of such bureaucratic manoeuvrings was that music policy often appeared somewhat incoherent and lacking in central direction.

While it is understandable that examples of official criticism and censorship of musical works should have received the lion's share of attention from music historians, it is important to recognize that positive incentives in the form of official patronage, contracts, titles, prizes and so forth were available to those composers and musicians who were prepared to work within the system. Quite apart from official incentives of this kind, pressures on members of the musical profession to conform to Soviet ideological and artistic norms in their work also came from their own colleagues as well as from the Party leadership and state bureaucracy.

Although Composers' Unions had been set up in many of the main urban centres of the USSR by the end of the 1930s, no Union-level body was set up until 1948. The Unions tended to concentrate their efforts on providing material benefits for their members, rather than in pursuing any distinctive policy on music of their own. Assertions about the 'regimentation' of Soviet music during the 1930s, and its absolute subjection to 'centralized totalitarian control' can therefore be very misleading. The controls applied to the arts during the post-war period of the zhdanovshchina were considerably more draconian than any measures introduced during the 1930s.

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89 Taruskin states that by 1936 'centralized totalitarian control of the arts was now complete', Taruskin, p. 514; Schwarz characterises the period from 1932 to 1953 as one of 'regimentation', Schwarz, p. 110.
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CHAPTER THREE
MUSIC AND SOCIETY

The Soviet state was, of its very nature, predisposed to play an active role in the lives of its individual citizens: composers and musicians included. This tendency should not necessarily be viewed solely in negative terms. While it is certainly true to say that an increasing number of official demands and requirements came to be made of Soviet composers and musicians during the 1930s, it nevertheless remains the case that the material benefits available to this group were such as to inspire the envy and awe of many of their foreign colleagues. The living and working conditions of members of the Soviet musical profession at this time differed greatly from, and were arguably vastly superior to, those of their immediate contemporaries abroad, as well as those of their Russian forefathers.

This chapter will address the question of exactly what it meant to be a member of the musical profession in the Soviet Union during the 1930s. It will examine the social position and material conditions of musicians and composers, together with the various provisions made for them by the Composers' Unions and the Soviet state. The chapter will also look at some of the duties which the political authorities expected of Soviet composers and musicians: these included the requirement that professional musicians should devote at least part of their working lives to the task of bringing 'music to the masses' through the organization of amateur music projects, musical education and concert tours. Such projects were intended to help raise the cultural level of the general public and develop their musical tastes, as well as to increase awareness of Soviet music among the wider population. In the spheres of education and performance, musicians were expected to contribute to the promotion of the Soviet Union as a world-class centre of musical excellence. A reputation for high quality was also sought within the musical instruments manufacturing industry. Instruments factories and concert organizations were included as aspects of Soviet 'musical production', and targets were set for their output levels.

1 W. H. Kerridge, who visited the Moscow in September 1934, commented that Soviet Russia was 'a Paradise on earth' for active musicians: 'The Union of Soviet Composers', The Musical Times, December 1934, pp. 1073-5.
Social Status

Paradise or not, composers and musicians made frequent complaints about their living conditions and levels of earnings throughout this period. A number of different sources of income were available to those who sought to carve out a career in music, and most practitioners - like musicians the world over - took on a number of different jobs in order to earn their keep. Teaching was always a standby occupation and most musicians spent a considerable part of their working lives teaching in the conservatoires or in music schools. The salaries paid to music teachers were described as being distinctly ungenerous: Aleksandr Gol'denveizer remarked at an Arts Committee meeting held in August 1936 that Moscow Conservatoire professors such as himself earned less than the people who sold fizzy water on the streets. Even Shatilov acknowledged in 1937 that music professors earned less than teachers in other institutes of higher education, and a Politbiuro resolution of the same year called on Sovnarkom to consider increasing the salaries of professors at the conservatoires in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and Tbilisi.

Heinz Unger, a German conductor who worked for several years in Leningrad, recalled in his memoirs how a great many members of the Leningrad Radio Orchestra had at least one, if not two other jobs. Unger regarded this situation as far from satisfactory as it meant that his players were often too tired to give their best performances. The violinist Mikhail Gol'dshtein described in his memoirs how he and his brother Busia (Boris) had to take on innumerable concert engagements, and he recalled some of the difficulties which could ensue from trying to combine concert tours with teaching responsibilities. Music journalism was another source of income for the Gol'dshteins, and prize money from performance competitions provided an occasional boost to their finances. Competition prizes could sometimes be quite substantial: in

\[ \text{\textsuperscript{2}See note 1.} \]
\[ \text{\textsuperscript{3}RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. kh. 42, l. 53.} \]
\[ \text{\textsuperscript{4}RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 102, l. 8 ob. st; RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 21, l. 56.} \]
\[ \text{\textsuperscript{5}He lobbied hard to get salaries raised so that his players could devote themselves solely to the Radio Orchestra: Heinz Unger, } \textit{Hammer, Sickle and Baton: The Soviet Memoirs of a Musician} \text{ (London: The Cresset Press, 1939), p. 197.} \]
\[ \text{\textsuperscript{6}M. Gol'dshtein, } \textit{Zapiski muzhchinta} \text{ (Frankfurt: Posev, 1970), pp. 27 and 41.} \]
May 1933 the pianist Emil Gilel's won 4,000 rubles as the first prize in an All-Union performance competition.\textsuperscript{7}

Students of music were placed in a particularly difficult financial situation: Grigorii Frid, a student at Moscow Conservatoire during the 1930s, received a stipend which amounted to a mere 35 rubles a month, with only limited prospects for earning extra income. Teaching was one possibility, but Frid found a number of other part-time jobs: working as an instructor with a military choir based at a garrison outside Moscow, and preparing a manuscript of letters by Chaikovskii for publication.\textsuperscript{8} Extra-curricular activities of this kind were frowned on, however, by the Conservatoire directorate, as it was believed that they would distract students from their studies. Shatilov argued in a speech delivered to the Moscow Conservatoire Party cell in 1937 that students should be banned altogether from working in outside orchestras.\textsuperscript{9}

Musicians' salaries from different orchestras and ensembles could be subject to wide variation. The conductor Aleksandr Gauk described in his memoirs how the establishment of the State Symphony Orchestra in 1936 generated antagonism between musicians, as the salaries offered to members of the state ensemble were considerably higher than those available to musicians in other orchestras.\textsuperscript{10} Music directors, concerned that the level of musicians' salaries might cause instability within ensembles as performers constantly changed jobs in search of more pay, inundated the Arts Committee with petitions. These prompted a resolution in February 1937 which ruled that musicians could only move jobs with the approval of their former and prospective employers, and that they could not receive any increase in pay until they had completed a year's service in the new post.\textsuperscript{11} Figures dating from 1938 indicate that while a prominent soloist in the Red Army ensemble could earn as much as 2,000 rubles a month, a

\textsuperscript{7}L. Barenboim, \textit{Emil Gilel's: tvorcheskii portret artista} (Moscow: Sovetskii Kompozitor, 1990), p. 52.


\textsuperscript{9}RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 102, l. 4.

\textsuperscript{10}Gauk, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{11}Letter from the director of the Bolshoi theatre to Kerzhentsev, 22 November 1936: RGALI f. 648, op. 2, ed. khr. 1052, l. 52; 'O poriadke priema na rabotu', \textit{Biuletten VKI}, no. 3 (1937), 4.
member of the Bolshoi Theatre chorus was paid between 350 and 655 rubles, even though she would be required to perform far more often.\textsuperscript{12}

It is evident from one letter written in September 1933 by the pianist Mariia Iudina (1899-1970) to the head of the Leningrad Philharmonia that concert organizations could occasionally offer assistance to their top performers in cases of illness or personal difficulties. Iudina, who had fallen ill with typhoid during the summer, put forward a request for an advance of 600 rubles, equivalent to the standard fee which she had received for concert appearances during the previous season.\textsuperscript{13}

One of the key aims of all the various composers' associations which existed at this time - the Composers' Unions, the composers' gorkom and the Union of Art Workers - was the professionalization of composers' work. Gorodinskii reported in 1932 that many composers were being forced to work in fields entirely unconnected with music in order to make ends meet, because it was virtually impossible at that time for them to support themselves on the proceeds of composition alone.\textsuperscript{14} The establishment of a contracts department by the Union was a key policy aimed at enabling composers to earn a living from their creative work. A report published in the Moscow Composers' Union bulletin in early 1934 indicated that the average composer earned around 300 rubles per month, of which 13\% consisted of fees from publishing houses; 37\% came from performance royalties; and the remaining 50\% came in advances received from the Union for work in progress, for which a contract had been signed in advance.\textsuperscript{15} The organizational and financial work of the Union and the material position of composers were discussed in detail during a meeting held between representatives of the Moscow Composers' Union and Bubnov in March 1934.\textsuperscript{16} In September of that year, a

\textsuperscript{12}RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 367, ll. 73-4. To provide some measure of comparison, the average wage of a worker in state employment in 1935 was 190 rubles per month, although at the height of the Stakhanovite movement in 1935-6, some workers could earn over 1000 rubles per month: Vladimir Andrl, \textit{Workers in Stalin's Russia}, (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), pp. 45-6.


\textsuperscript{14}V. M. Gorodinskii, 'Sovetskiiu muzyku na vysshuiu stupen", \textit{Muzykal'nyi Almanakh: sbornik statei} (Moscow, 1932) 5-18 (p. 5).

\textsuperscript{15}'Zarabotok kompozitorov', \textit{Biuleten' SSK}, no. 1-2 (1934), 5-8.

\textsuperscript{16}'Priemu tov. Bubnov'.
Sovnarkom resolution was passed which ordered a review of the basic rate of authors' fees for different types of musical work. The resolution stipulated that extra funds should be allotted to the Moscow and Leningrad Unions to be used for ordering works from composers and organizing concerts. Various provisions were also made for acquiring scores from abroad, improving the quality of Soviet-produced musical instruments, and disseminating Soviet music in the West. Finally, Sovnarkom ordered Gosplan and Narkomfin to give consideration to the Composers' Union petition for a private apartment block designated for composers.17

The system of contracts instituted by the Union provided a means by which composers could be assured a degree of financial security. It also allowed the Union to maintain close supervision over all the stages of the creative process.18 The whole procedure was coordinated by the Union contracts sector, which liaised between the contracting institutions and composers, in order to determine the theme and genre of the work to be commissioned. Composers were usually given a two month period in which to 'master the creative material', including any trips which might have to be made in order to gather local colour for the work. A further period was then allotted for the actual composition: two months for writing short pieces, or seven months in the case of longer works. During this time, the contracts sector would pay the composer between 100 and 300 rubles per month.19 Over the course of the first nine months of 1933, contracts were issued to 107 members of the Moscow Composers' Union.20 Over 150,000 rubles was spent on contracts by the Moscow Union in 1932-3, and the Union claimed that as a result of the new system, around 40 members who had previously been forced to work in areas entirely unconnected with music were given the opportunity to devote themselves entirely to composition.21

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17. Postanovlenie SNK SSSR: 'ob uluchshenii usloviy tvorchestva sovetskikh kompozitorov', GARF f. R-5283, op. 12, d. 239, II. 5-6. On the apartment block, see below, p. 71.

18. Polozenie o kontraktatsii kompozitorov', Biuleten' SSK, no. 1 (1933), 7-8.

19. Polozenie'.

20. This compared with 51 contracts issued in the previous year. 'Osnovnye materialy (svedeniya) o rabote SSK', Biuleten' SSK, no. 2 (1933), 14-16.

The Leningrad Composers' Union initially set up a contracts department for its members, but by 1935 it had disbanded it. In a letter to Gnesin written in September 1935, Iokhel'son described the scheme operated in Leningrad. Rather than the Union issuing contracts to composers on the same model as its Moscow counterpart, members were required to put forward their creative plans on an annual basis, and a monthly advance would then be calculated and paid to them. The actual amount to be received was determined by the Union Secretariat, based on the qualifications of the various composers and the nature of their applications.

The contracts system may have suited composers very well, but it was not cheap to run, and Narkomfin was distinctly unenthusiastic about the whole scheme. In 1938, Narkomfin officials argued that it was not the place of creative organizations (such as the Composers' Unions) to offer material assistance to their members, and that contracts for musical works should be concluded directly between the interested parties, without the Union acting as an intermediary. The Moscow Union responded by drawing attention to the fact that since composers' work was not regulated by labour contracts, they had no access to any form of social insurance and that therefore the Composers' Unions, together with the Union of Art Workers (Rabis), had to provide some form of material help to their members in cases of temporary illness or disability.

In a separate petition to Narkomfin, the Arts Committee pointed out that composers were already worse off than their colleagues in the literary community as they had no equivalent of the litfond, a foundation which offered grants to writers in cases of need. Plans to set up a muzfond had been in preparation for some time, but it had been recognized that such a foundation would be essentially unworkable until such time as a centralized Union of Soviet Composers had been established. It was partly in response to such petitions that Sovnarkom

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22RGALI f. 962, op. 1, ed. khr. 885, l. 11.
23Leningradskii soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov', SM, no. 4 (1934), 50.
24Letter from Narkomfin to the Composers' Union, 7 April 1938: RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 367, l. 59. Popov noted in his diary on 7 May 1938 that 'the LSSK has now been deprived of the right to render material help to its members in terms of their creative affairs': Popov, p. 268.
25RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 367, ll. 64-5. The Union and Rabis put forward a joint petition to Sovnarkom in 1938 for 146,500 rubles to be assigned to help needy composers.
26RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khr. 28, ll. 34-5. An attempt to begin operating a muzfond under the Union from the beginning of 1935 had come to nothing: RGALI f. 2743, op. 1, ed. khr. 263, l. 72.
issued its resolution of 4 May 1939 ordering the establishment of a Composers' Union orgkom and muzfond.27 Once established, the muzfond was charged with issuing grants and loans to composers in cases of temporary disability or medical emergencies. It also offered assistance to invalids, pensioners, pregnant women and composers with children, and helped fund trips to sanatoria and resorts.28

One early Union initiative was the establishment of an office where composers could get copies of their scores made. This proved extremely constructive for younger composers. Concert organizations refused to pay for copies, and the high prices charged by professional copyists put their services beyond the means of many composers.29 The Union also lobbied to improve the provision of manuscript paper. A 1933 memorandum issued by the Moscow Composers' Union and the composers' gorkom stated that the situation with regard to the supply of manuscript paper was 'catastrophic'. During that year, the gorkom had managed to secure only 15,000 sheets of poor quality paper to be shared between all the composers working in Moscow and Leningrad, which had worked out at approximately 30 sheets per composer. For 1934, they requested that supply be increased to at least 400 sheets per composer.30

A composers' city committee or gorkom was set up in Moscow in May 1932 as a professional organization under the Union of Art Workers, with the stated aim of 'rendering broad assistance in developing creative work and increasing its artistic level'.31 Composers had previously been admitted to the Moscow Writers' gorkom, and one report dating from August 1932 stated that composers had not in fact benefited from the decision to go it alone. The Composers' gorkom had no independent financial resources, and the split with the writers meant that composers no longer had access to the canteen and house-building cooperative run by the

27RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 28, l. 39; RGALI f. 2085, op. 1, ed. khr. 1180, l. 13. See Chapter Two, p. 57.

28‘Polozhenie o poriadke okazaniia chlenam muzykal'nogo fonda material'nego sodeistviia v tvorcheskoi rabote’, RGALI f. 2077, op. 1, ed. khr. 25. Khachaturian became the first chairman of the muzfond board.

29A copy of the score of a symphony could cost between 800 and 1000 rubles: Atovm'ian, 'O material'no-bytovom polozhenii', pp. 156-9.

30RGALI f. 2743, op. 1, ed. khr. 263, l. 48.

31Sozdan gorkom kompozitorov', LG, 29 May 1932, p. 4. A Leningrad composers' gorkom was established in September 1932: K. Arenkov, 'Ob itogakh i zadachakh gorkomu kompozitorov', in Itogi pervoi godovshchiny postanovlenie TsK VKP(b), ed. by V. I. Tobol'kevich (Leningrad, 1933), pp. 25-7.
writers' gorkom. Composers' gorkom sectors were established to deal with issues such as the protection of authors' rights; housing; social insurance; the establishment of sanatoria; and the supply of manuscript paper to composers. The gorkom also set up links between composers and amateur musicians, provided a system of social insurance and medical care for composers, and organized nurseries for composers' children. In 1937 it initiated a discussion among female composers of specific questions connected with their living and working conditions, focusing in particular on the issue of childcare. Parallelism between the gorkom's work and that of the Moscow Composers' Union was the cause of some friction between the two institutions, and several gorkom departments were closed down in November 1932 on the grounds that they were duplicating work carried out by the Union.

'Creative Assistance'

The creative sectors of the Composers' Unions were involved in organizing 'comradely discussions' of work in progress, as well as debates on issues such as 'Soviet symphonism', socialist realism in music, and the development of Soviet opera. Initiatives of this nature were taken very seriously by the Composers' Unions which, in common with the other arts unions set up after 1932, were expected to act not merely as professional organizations, but also to offer advice and assistance on creative issues. Some members were less than appreciative of their

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32 Uluchshit' rabotu gorkoma kompozitorov', Rabis, no. 23 (1932), inside front cover.

33 RGALI f. 2743, op. 1, ed. khr. 263, l. 2, 5, 9, 16-17; 'Postanovlenie prezidiuma tsentral'nogo komiteta RABIS po dokladu gorkoma kompozitorov', Biulet'en' SSK, no. 1 (1933), 11-13. Atovm'ian, 'O material'no-bytovym polozenii', (pp. 156-9).

34 RGALI f. 2743, op. 1, ed. khr. 263, l. 116. The situation of female composers had been raised publicly shortly before this particular gorkom initiative: the composer Z. Levina (1906-76) had complained in December 1936 that the Moscow Composers' Union had a contemptuous attitude towards female composers and completely ignored their work: RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 107, l. 18-20.

35 V SSK', SI, 27 November 1932, p. 1. The two organizations essentially shared the same personnel, in terms both of their membership and of their leaders.

efforts. Prokof'ev remarked in 1936 that the Moscow Union was of little help to him in his creative work, although it did 'render many valuable services with respect to every-day life'.

The absence of a genuinely creative atmosphere was one of the main criticisms made against the Composers' Unions during 1936-7. Composers claimed that they were discouraged from bringing their work to the Union for discussion, because they perceived there to be an atmosphere of cold indifference and an unwillingness to offer constructive advice. Following the election of new governing boards in both Unions in 1937-8, particular priority was given to rectifying this situation, and statements issued by the new Union leaders emphasized the measures being taken to ensure that a comradely and inclusive atmosphere was cultivated, and that creative issues were taken seriously. In Leningrad, Dunaevskii - the new chairman of the Union Board - claimed that in the aftermath of the 1937 elections a more friendly atmosphere had been created, and that the new discussion club had been a significant success.

Accommodation

A Sovnarkom resolution of July 1933 gave composers equal status with writers and scientific workers with regard to living space, granting them the right to one additional room for study. Composers nevertheless continued to face considerable difficulties with regard to housing. The composer Mikhail Gnesin, when planning his move from Moscow to Leningrad in 1935, was warned by Iokhel'son that the Leningrad Composers' Union would not be able to guarantee him accommodation. Iokhel'son mentioned that the Leningrad Soviet had promised the Union five flats for the use of composers, but that these had not yet materialized.

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37 Letter to the wall newspaper of the Moscow Composers' Union, 18 April 1936: RGALI f. 1929, op. 2, ed. khr. 123, l. 1.
39 Speech to an open meeting of the Leningrad Union, March 1939: RGALI f. 2062, op. 1, ed. khr. 573, l. 19-20. He remarked that the improved atmosphere could not be put down simply to the acquisition of a billiards table.
40 Postanovlenie Sovnarkom SSSR: 'Ob uluchshenii zhilishchnych usloviu sovetskikh kompozitorov', Biulleten' SSK, no. 2 (1933), 2.
41 The Union had had to buy a flat for Shostakovich out of its own funds: RGALI f. 2954, op. 1, ed. khr. 885, l. 11.
Construction work on the Dom Kompozitorov (Composers' House) proceeded slowly, and the block of flats was not completed until 1937. The composer Tikhon Khrennikov recounted in his memoirs the relief he felt on being able to move away from an unheated dacha and into his new accommodation. A meeting held by Kerzhentsev with Soviet composers in November 1937, ostensibly in order to discuss creative issues, was dominated by the housing question. More than one speaker drew attention to the fact that the Armenian composer Khachaturian had nowhere to live in Moscow. Although Kerzhentsev pointed out that it was quite possible to write good symphonies in Erevan, other participants argued that this would retard Khachaturian's career, as his works would not automatically receive a hearing in Moscow.

Students, unsurprisingly, fared particularly badly where housing was concerned. Moscow Conservatoire owned two hostels during the 1930s, one of which was situated a long way from the Conservatoire and consisted of cramped dormitories with 16 students to a room. The other was centrally located and luxurious by comparison: students shared in groups of between four and six, and each of the rooms contained a piano. Singers were particularly sought-after as room mates, as they tended not to practise in their bedrooms. Lack of space in the Conservatoire became a particularly critical issue in the later 1930s, and in one of her petitions to Molotov, the Conservatoire director Valentina Shatskaia (1882-1978) claimed that many students were being forced to live in barracks due to the absence of hostel places for them. The position in Leningrad seems to have been little better, and in 1932 it appeared that lack of hostel space would soon come to mean that only local students could be admitted to the Conservatoire.

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42 Tikhon Khrennikov, Tak eto bylo (Moscow: Muzyka, 1994), p. 45.
43 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 310, ll. 6, 12 ob. st., 25-6.
44 This was the hostel in which Frid lived between 1932 and 1939: Frid, pp. 11-12.
45 To have a brass player as a room mate was, in Frid's words, 'absolute torture'.
47 P. Kharlip, 'Profkom LGK ne bespokoit' priemnuiu komissiiu', Rabis, no. 22 (1932), 3.
Publishing

Music publishing in the Soviet Union during the 1930s was concentrated in the state music publishing house Muzgiz. From 1930 it operated as an independent publishing house under the aegis of the new Association of State Publishers (Ogiz). From March 1936 Muzgiz was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Arts Committee.\textsuperscript{48} Music publishing came under RAPM domination in the late 1920s, but this influence was shaken off in 1932. Inspections of the work of Muzgiz carried out in 1932 by delegations from Narkompros and Rabis revealed an unsatisfactory state of affairs where relations between the publishing house and Soviet composers were concerned.\textsuperscript{49} Composers themselves complained of the 'soulless, bureaucratic attitude' of Muzgiz workers who ignored even the most modest requests of authors with regard to epigraphs and dedications. Other reports spoke of a negligent attitude towards account-keeping and contracts which had been mislaid.\textsuperscript{50} Composers from Leningrad and from the provinces complained that Muzgiz displayed a pro-Muscovite bias when it came to selecting works to be published.\textsuperscript{51} In a letter to Prokof'ev, written in February 1936, Miaskovskii remarked on the new director of Muzgiz, Moisei Grinberg, that 'I do not know whether or not he will be better than Khavenson [the previous director], but he can hardly be any worse'.\textsuperscript{52}

Criticisms of the work of Muzgiz focused in particular on its failure to meet the demand for scores and teaching materials from amateur ensembles, educational establishments, professional musicians and from abroad.\textsuperscript{53} Lack of paper was an on-going problem for publishing houses throughout the Soviet period, and the music publishers were no exception. In a letter to the Party Central Committee written in March 1936, Kerzhentsev complained that Muzgiz output was failing to meet demand. He attributed this failure to deficiencies in the

\textsuperscript{48}BSE, 2nd edn (1954), XXVIII, p. 493. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 114, ed. khr. 600, l. 41.

\textsuperscript{49}RGALI f. 2743, op. 1, ed. khr. 263, l. 13.

\textsuperscript{50}N. Ber, 'Muzgiz plokho rabotaet', SI, 11 February 1935, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{51}RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 97; B. Va'arianov, 'Nerentabel'naia muzyka: Muzgiz i Leningradskie kompozitory', SI, 23 November 1934, p. 1. The head of Muzgiz, Khavenson, had allegedly described works by Leningrad composers (with the exception of Shostakovich) as 'unprofitable'.

\textsuperscript{52}Perepiska, p. 447.

supply of paper to the publishing house and requested that an additional 460 tons of manuscript paper be made available to them.\textsuperscript{54} He pointed out that the growing demand for musical literature from amateur ensembles made the publication of large editions of folk music and mass song collections an imperative. Kerzhentsev also remarked on the need to increase the number of classical scores available for teaching purposes in music schools and conservatoires.

'Responsibilities'

The various rights and privileges enjoyed by Soviet composers and musicians came with corresponding responsibilities. In the words of the Encyclopaedia, 'having provided composers and performers with the opportunity to devote themselves entirely to creative activity, the Party demands of them a high level of integrity, and the honest service of their people and the cause of socialism'.\textsuperscript{55} A member of the Soviet musical profession was expected to conform to certain standards of behaviour, and to contribute to the general artistic enlightenment of the working classes. Conservatoire students were expected to spend a certain period of time working in the provinces after graduation, as a way of fulfilling their obligations to the state which had provided them with such advantageous conditions for study.\textsuperscript{56}

Those musicians who failed to live up to the high standards expected of them were publicly ostracized. Aleksandr Mosolov was one such composer: after his expulsion from the Moscow Composers' Union in February 1936, his erstwhile colleagues were swift to condemn, describing him as a 'disgrace to the family of Soviet composers' and his behaviour as being 'incompatible with the honoured calling of a Soviet composer'.\textsuperscript{57} Between 1936 and 1937 Mosolov was commissioned to work in Ashkabad on a set of works on Turkmen themes, but reports of his allegedly dissolute, 'debauched' and 'counter-revolutionary' behaviour in the republic continued to be published in the central press.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{54}RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 14, l. 70.

\textsuperscript{55}BSE, 1st edn (1938), XL, p. 570.

\textsuperscript{56}E. Grosheva, M. Kanter, 'O raspredelenii kadrov', \textit{SI}, 29 September 1939, p. 2. This rule was extremely unpopular among students.

\textsuperscript{57}N. Cheliapov, 'O nedostoinom postupke kompozitora Mosolova', \textit{SI}, 11 February 1936, p. 4.

Incidents in which performers were said to have demanded too much money in payment for concert appearances were reported in the press in tones of outrage. The singer Ivan Kozlovskii was criticized for allegedly high-handed behaviour on more than one occasion. In July 1933 he is said to have refused to perform in a concert in Gor'kii unless the concert organizers promised to present him with a car from the local factory. The report of this incident demanded that touring musicians should learn to respect proletarian audiences, and called for an end to such 'petty-bourgeois lack of discipline'. The film star Liubov' Orlova (1902-75) faced similar criticism during her concert tour of the Ukraine in 1938, when she insisted on a fee of 3,000 rubles per concert from the Odessa Philharmonia. Such conduct was described as 'unworthy' of a Soviet artist. In a statement rebutting the accusations which Orlova wrote to the Party Central Committee, she argued that she would be perfectly willing to perform for a fee of 750 rubles, but only on condition that the price of concert tickets was lowered from 25 to 3 rubles, so that every worker could afford to attend.

Amateur Music

The campaign to spread musical literacy to, and encourage musical activity among, members of the peasantry and proletariat had its roots in the pre-revolutionary period. The composer Balakirev had established a Free Music School in St Petersburg as early as 1862, and a People's Conservatoire was set up in Moscow in 1906 by Taneev. Both institutions offered a basic musical education to members of the working classes, principally in the form of classes in choral singing. The aim behind such ventures was to bring music closer to the masses and thereby raise their 'cultural level'.

Although amateur music-making has generally been regarded in a favourable light in most societies, the priority given to this sphere of activity by Soviet music policy makers is very

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59 Kontsertnyi 'sluchai', SI, 20 July 1933, p. 3. 'What would have happened in Magnitogorsk?' the critic demanded: 'would he have demanded a blooming-mill?!'. Kozlovskii came in for attack again in September 1936 for another incident of a similar nature: M. L'vov, 'Kaprizy 'dushki-tenora'', SI, 17 September 1936, p. 4.

60 Nedostoinoe povedenie', SI, 10 June 1938, p. 4.

61 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 371, ll. 21-3.

62 BSE, 1st edn (1926) IV, p. 455, (1937) XXXIV, p. 34.
striking. Quite apart from the belief that the encouragement of amateur activity would help to increase the level of kul'turnost' among the general population, grass-roots participation in music circles was also regarded as an important means by which to strengthen class solidarity. Lenin himself had written of the importance of workers' choral societies to the proletarian movement in Germany, and had remarked that 'no amount of police harassment can prevent the singing of the hearty proletarian song about mankind's coming emancipation from wage-slavery in all the great cities of the world'.\textsuperscript{63} It could also help to foster the emergence of professional cadres from the ranks of the proletariat and peasantry. Amateur music-making has long played an significant role in Russian life, and continues to do so today. John Scott remarked of his time spent living in Magnitogorsk in the 1930s that 'I never ceased wondering at the high percentage of Russian workers who could play the balalaika'.\textsuperscript{64}

Proletarian musical organizations such as RAPM had placed particular emphasis on the need for professional musicians to work with amateur groups, in order to build up a reservoir of proletarian talent which could act as the seed-bed from which the proletarian music of the future could develop.\textsuperscript{65} Amateur music projects were perhaps the least controversial area of RAPM activity, and several former RAPMovtsy continued their work in this field after the liquidation of the proletarian artistic organizations in 1932.\textsuperscript{66} Although, as Neil Edmunds has pointed out, later initiatives in the sphere of mass musical activity were not accompanied by the 'messianic zeal' characteristic of RAPM, nevertheless work of this nature continued to be regarded with official approval, and participation in such projects was actively encouraged.\textsuperscript{67}

A number of different institutions were involved in coordinating the activities of professional composers and musicians in the sphere of amateur music. The Composers' Unions, the central Trade Union organization and the Krupskaia House of Amateur Art all participated in the organization of different amateur music projects. The activities of the Moscow

\textsuperscript{63}The Development of Workers' Choirs in Germany', \textit{V.I. Lenin on Literature and Art}, p. 78-9.


\textsuperscript{65}Edmunds, p. 31; See Chapter One.

\textsuperscript{66}Such as Davidenko and Lebedinskii.

\textsuperscript{67}Edmunds, p. 164.
Composers’ Union were coordinated through its Sector for Amateur Art, which was reorganized in March 1934 as the Sector for the Mass Music Movement. The main functions of this sector included the compilation and issuing of specialist literature for amateur circles; the organization of concerts of Soviet music in factories and kolkhozy and at construction sites; the identification of the best amateur circles, which could be brought to Moscow to perform on the professional stage; the establishment of mutual links between amateur and professional musicians; and the organization of conferences to discuss questions relating to amateur artistic activities.

Coverage of amateur musical affairs between 1933 and 1936 was concentrated in the specialist journal *Muzykal’naia Samodeiatel’nost*. The editorial committee of the journal included a number of former members of RAPM, such as Lebedinskii and Vinogradov (1907-83), and its editorial stance was virtually identical to that of the former RAPM mouthpiece *Za Proletarskuiu Muzyku*. Articles included reports of amateur music festivals; analyses of the links between the Composers' Unions and amateur groups; discussion pieces on the future development of amateur music; and specialist articles covering such topics as the evolution of the Soviet accordion, the history of underground revolutionary song, and reports on the musical affairs of foreign countries. Publication of the journal ceased in 1936, when the anti-formalism campaign brought renewed attacks on the influence of former members of RAPM in Soviet musical life.

In the countryside, the political departments of Machine Tractor Stations acted as focal points for the organization of cultural work among kolkhozniki. The Moscow Composers' Union forged particularly strong links with the politotdel of the MTS in Venekskii raion in Moscow oblast'. A contract was signed in January 1934 under which members of the Composers' Union undertook to organize four amateur ensembles within the local kolkhozy: a choral circle, a balalaika ensemble, a jazz band and a wind ensemble, and to ensure that all of

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68 Atovm’ian, ‘Struktura soiuza; ‘Rabota sektora massovogo muzykal’nogo dvizheniia soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov’, MS, no. 10 (1934), 20-23.

69 Atovm’ian, p. 6.

70 Edmunds, p. 395. After 1936, no journal devoted entirely to amateur music was put out until 1958, when *Muzykal’naia Zhizn* began publication.

71 ‘Derevenskuiu muzykal’nuiu samodeiatel’nost’ na vysshuiu stupen”, MS, no. 2-3 (1933), 1-3. The politotdele were established in January 1933.
these circles were provided with qualified consultants. It also pledged to set up a music library under the politotdel; to send Union representatives to the region on a regular basis to act as consultants; and to organize concerts of Soviet music in the kolkhozy together with lecture courses and discussions.  

Aleksandr Davidenko, the former Prokoll activist and mass song composer, was a keen participant in this project. He spent the last four months before his death on 1 May 1934 working in the kolkhozy of this region.

The result of this particular initiative was that the kolkhozy in Venevskii raion ended up turning into quasi-Potemkin villages where music was concerned. The composer Glier described in an article in Vecherniaia Moskva how the Bezbozhnik kolkhoz, which he visited in 1935, was the proud owner of no fewer than two grand pianos. He nevertheless felt obliged to point out that 'on the evidence of my colleagues, who have visited other kolkhozy, 'Bezbozhnik' is in an exceptional position in this respect. As a rule, there are hardly any grand pianos'. For all the glowing pictures of kolkhoz life, with its happy peasants and vibrant cultural scene portrayed in the central press, the activities of professional composers and musicians were in fact little more than a drop in the ocean. Musical ensembles in the vast majority of kolkhozy were limited to amateur choirs directed by untrained instructors.

One field of mass work which saw considerable input from professional musicians was the organization of concert and lecture tours in far-flung corners of the Soviet Union. Brigades made up of students and professors from Moscow Conservatoire were sent out to Sevastopol, Arkhangel'sk, Ukraine, Siberia, the Far East and the Arctic. These brigades would give concert performances for local workers and kolkhozniki; help to organize choirs and other amateur groups at the local level; give lectures and conduct discussions; and carry out their own research activities into the indigenous folk music traditions of the particular area. One concert brigade


73'Otzyv o rabote tov. A. A. Davidenko v Venevskoi MTS', Biulleten' SSK, no. 4-5 (1934), 4-5.

74'Muzyka v kolkhoze', in Reingol'd Moritsevich Glier: stat'i, vospominaniia, materialy (Moscow: Muzyka, 1965), pp. 258-9.
from Moscow Conservatoire was despatched in 1938 to give concerts to Soviet army units in the Far East, where it almost got captured by the Japanese near Khasan lake.  

Amateur music-making, of its very nature, is difficult to monitor or control. Amateur groups sprang up in the most unlikely places in the Soviet Union, including even the Gulag. One should therefore be wary of accepting official figures on amateur music-making at face value. Nevertheless, figures indicating participation in large-scale amateur music projects were compiled by the Arts Committee in 1936:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of ensemble</th>
<th>Total ensembles</th>
<th>Total participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSFSR: Choirs</td>
<td>23,790</td>
<td>356,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSFSR: Orchestras</td>
<td>17,220</td>
<td>143,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR: Choirs</td>
<td>29,590</td>
<td>432,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR: Orchestras</td>
<td>24,470</td>
<td>210,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: SM, no. 4 (1937), 15)

Given the size of the Soviet Union, these figures do not seem terribly impressive. Trade Union clubs were often involved in organizing amateur music circles for workers. Nevertheless, an article written by the secretary of the VTsSPS (the central trade union organization) in January 1936 acknowledged that 454 out of the 3226 Trade Union clubs did not have music circles, and that many of the circles which did exist were unsatisfactory. In particular, the quality of training which members received was said to be low, the leadership of these circles was inadequate and the repertoire performed was said in many cases to be 'vulgar' or 'low-grade'. Although the petty-bourgeois tastes of some circle directors was claimed to be partly responsible for weaknesses in repertoire policy, blame was also laid at the door of Soviet

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75 Veselovskaia, pp. 44-8. Letters from soldiers to the Conservatoire directorate praised the musicians and thanked them for supplying 'interesting and cultural relaxation', going on to add that 'their playing and songs inspired us to decisive struggle with the enemy'.

composers. It was alleged that they were failing to write appropriate repertoire for amateur groups. The author of this particular article maintained that while workers and kolchozniki did not demand a special repertoire, they did nevertheless require composers to produce 'simple and artistic Soviet works' which they could perform.\(^\text{77}\)

The question of what kind of repertoire Soviet composers should be writing for amateur performance was one which gave rise to considerable debate. The old RAPM arguments about the need to counteract the pernicious influence of vulgar Western-style light music with healthy Soviet mass songs and dances resurfaced from time to time in discussions about the provision of new music for amateur circles.\(^\text{78}\) Although it was generally accepted that amateur musicians would need to build up considerable experience before they would be in a position to perform large-scale works, nevertheless a small number of composers did turn their hands to writing operas for amateur performance. The two most notable examples are 1905 God (The Year 1905 (1934)) and Rodina Zovet (The Motherland Calls (1937)), both of which were co-authored works composed by former members of the proletarian music movement.\(^\text{79}\)

A 'thematic plan' of contracts issued to composers working on music for amateur ensembles was issued by the Moscow Composers' Union in the spring of 1934. This document lists the different types of musical works which were most in demand, including pieces for special occasions such as Red Weddings and sowing campaigns; dance music for ensembles of folk instruments; marches for wind orchestra; and choral works suitable for performance by kolchozniki, workers, komsomoltsy and pioneers.\(^\text{80}\) Music and songs played an important role in many Soviet events and festivals. Concert brigades were mobilized during election campaigns to liven up election meetings and to encourage voters to turn out on the day.\(^\text{81}\) Composers were encouraged to write new Soviet marches which could be played in the streets on festival days:

\(^\text{77}\)The Count's song from Verdi's Rigoletto was mentioned as the ideal model which Soviet composers might wish to emulate.

\(^\text{78}\)A. Gladkovskii, 'Bytovaia muzyka - odna iz boevyh zadach sovetskogo kompozitora', in Tobol'kevich, pp. 46-7. See also Gorodinskii, 'Sovetskuu muzyku', p. 15.

\(^\text{79}\)The first was composed by Davidenko and Boris Shekhter (1900-61), the second by Genrikh Bruk (1905-) and Vasilev-Buglai. See Chapter Four, p. 115.

\(^\text{80}\)Tematicheski plan kontraktatsii po sektoru samodeiatelnogo iskusstva, Bulleter SSK, no. 3 (1934), 5.

\(^\text{81}\)O meropriiamiakh po podgotovke k vyboram v verkhovnyi sovet SSR', Bulleter VKI, no. 9-10 (1937), 18-19.
one article deplored the fact that in the absence of new repertoire, marching bands were forced to play 'old, petty-bourgeois, hackneyed, lachrymose' Austro-German marches, which 'in no way reflect our heroic struggle for socialism'.

The involvement of professional composers in amateur projects was believed to be beneficial to composers and workers alike. One of the speakers in the anti-formalism debates held in February 1936 remarked that it was only through interaction with the masses that a composer could find his true creative path, and he recommended that each composer should pay a visit to a factory, kolchoz or construction site at least once a year. Following the criticism in Pravda of Shostakovich's kolchoz ballet Svetlyi Ruchei, mass work in the kolchozy was accorded particular significance by the Composers' Unions and special trips to kolchozy were organized.

Despite the encouragement given to composers to participate in amateur projects, this sphere of activity tended to be dominated by a small group of enthusiasts, with other composers joining in only when it seemed prudent to do so. An Arts Committee report on the activities of the Moscow Composers' Union in the mid-1930s praised the work of the kolchoz group in organizing trips to the kolchozy of Moscow oblast but commented that the majority of composers who made such visits went only once, and their trips tended to be very short in length. An internal information sheet about the work of the Union in the kolchozy confirms this point: although 70 trips, involving 50 people, had been made during the first two months of 1936, it was claimed that 'a significant number of members are not involved'. The former Prokoll member Marian Koval' commented in the aftermath of the Moscow Olympiad of music

82 'Ozدورовит' мaршевый repertuar', S/1, 20 September 1933, p. 4.
83 Speech by Fardi, GTsMMK, f. 296, d. 478, l. 12.
84 Shostakovich's music was said to have 'nothing in common either with kolchozy or with the Kuban': 'Бaлeтнаяia фaш', RGALI f. 2743, op. 1, ed. khr. 263, l. 96; V. Vinogradov, 'Nado izuchat' novyi byt' kolchoznikov', SM, no. 4 (1936), 53-6; RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 25, l. 10.
85 The report is undated, but seems to have been written in 1936 or 1937. RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 25, ll. 10-11.
86 'Информационный листок: о рабote SSK v kolchozakh Moskovskoi oblasti', RGALI f. 2743, op. 1, ed. khr. 263, ll. 96-9. One member, Senderei had refused to make a trip on the grounds that he was overworked, thereby demonstrating - it was claimed - a 'lack of understanding of the tasks of Soviet art' and failing to realise that such a trip 'would give him a new creative impetus'. 
and dance held in the summer of 1935 that it was a pity that so few composers attended the festival, and that the Composers' Union had not done more to encourage their involvement.  

Among the other arguments put forward to encourage the active participation of professionals in amateur music projects, particular emphasis was placed on the need to root out the class enemies who were said to be channelling their energies into work with amateur musicians. Priests and kulaks, it was claimed, were operating through amateur ensembles, setting up choirs and promoting anti-Soviet chastushki. A report submitted to the Central Committee Kul'tpros department by the Krupskaia House of Amateur Art warned that the lack of vigilance paid by regional organizations to amateur artistic activity could result in this sphere ending up entirely in the hands of class-hostile elements. Leaving the rhetoric of class war aside, it seems more than likely that many of the amateur choral groups which operated in the countryside during this period were indeed based on the nuclei of the old church choirs, and they no doubt used much of the same repertoire.

Education

The early decades of Soviet rule saw considerable expansion in the network of specialist institutions for musical education. In a speech delivered to the Union of Art Workers in December 1936, Kerzhentsev noted with pride that seven new conservatories had been set up across the Soviet Union since the revolution, together with 61 new music schools. Further expansion was planned for the period of the third Five Year Plan. Party recognition of the importance of maintaining the highest possible standards in musical education came in April 1937 with a Politbiuro resolution devoted to the subject. This called on Sovnarkom to conduct

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87 Koval', 'Bo'she derzaniii i mysli kompozitora ob olimpiade', SI, 5 August 1935, p. 2.
88 V. Gorodinskii, Muzykal'nyi front SSSR (hereafter Muzykal'nyi Front), (Moscow: Muzgiz, 1933), pp. 40-41; G. Polianovskii, Lindi i pesni (Moscow, 1938), p. 8; GARF f. A-628, op. 1, d. 35, l. 16 ob. st.
90 IV plenum TsK soiuza rabotnikov iskusstv: doklad tov. P. M. Kerzhentseva', SI, 17 December 1936, p. 1. His figures may be slightly inaccurate: the Encyclopaedia puts the number of conservatories operating across the Soviet Union in 1936 at 12, rather than Kerzhentsev's figure of 10. These were in Moscow, Leningrad, Baku, Kiev, Minsk, Saratov, Sverdlovsk, Odessa, Kharkov, Tashkent, Tbilisi and Erevan: BSE, 1st edn (1937), XXXIV, p. 35.
91 RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 63, ll. 16 and 47.
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87 Koval', 'Bo'lishche derzhanii i myсли kompozitora ob olimpiade', SI, 5 August 1935, p. 2.


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91 RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 63, ll. 16 and 47.
a review of the entire system of musical education across the Soviet Union and to start planning the construction of new music schools and new buildings for existing conservatories.\textsuperscript{92}

\textbf{Conservatoires}

The immediate aftermath of the Central Committee resolution of April 1932 witnessed a certain degree of normalization within the conservatoires after the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. The real turning-point in their affairs, however, came with the TsIK resolution of September 1932 entitled ‘On the study plans and the regime in the higher schools and technicums’.\textsuperscript{93} Moscow Conservatoire resumed its old name, a new director, Stanislav Shatskii (1878-1934), was appointed, and professors such as Miaskovskii, Glier and Shebalin who had either resigned or been pushed out during the period of RAPM hegemony returned to work. One-man management was reinstated in place of the Party committees which had taken over the running of Conservatoire affairs during the Cultural Revolution. A purge of the Conservatoire Party cell was carried out in 1933 as part of the campaign to kick over the traces of the Cultural Revolution, and the cell continued to operate as an active force in the life of the vuz.\textsuperscript{94} The 1930s saw the establishment of a number of new (and the reorganization of some of the old) institutions within the conservatoire structure. In Moscow, these included two music schools for children; special postgraduate departments for talented performers and specialist musicologists; a series of national studios; and an opera studio.\textsuperscript{95}

Workers' faculties, or \textit{rabfaky}, operated in the Moscow and Leningrad Conservatoires during the first half of the 1930s. As in other higher education institutions, the \textit{rabfaky} were intended to offer entrance to specialist courses for workers who lacked formal qualifications. In autumn 1923 the Moscow Conservatoire Party cell had helped to set up a music department within the Moscow united arts \textit{rabfak}.\textsuperscript{96} A Conservatoire \textit{rabfak} proper was established in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{92}Postanovlenie politbiuro TsK VKP(b): o muzykal'nom obrazovanii', RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 21, l. 56.
\item \textsuperscript{93}Veselovskaia, pp. 37-8.
\item \textsuperscript{94}Vyvody po chistke iacheiki VKP(b) Moskovskoi gosudarstvennoi konservatorii v 1933g', SM, no. 5 (1933), 161-4. It played an active role in the rooting out of alleged 'enemies' from the Conservatoire in 1937-8: see Chapter Six, pp. 201-3.
\item \textsuperscript{95}BSE, 1st edn (1937) XXXIV, pp. 34-5.
\item \textsuperscript{96}Nelson, p. 148.
\end{itemize}
1929, and by 1932 it boasted 130 day and 120 evening students.\textsuperscript{97} In Leningrad, the Conservatoire \textit{rabfak} expanded rapidly after its creation in 1931, more than doubling the number of students registered for its day classes between 1932 and 1933.\textsuperscript{98} Students had to have studied music for at least two years prior to entrance to the Moscow day \textit{rabfak}, although those attending evening classes and students from national minorities needed only one year's experience.\textsuperscript{99} The Moscow \textit{rabfak} was closed down in 1935 and its Leningrad counterpart in 1936, as it was argued that the cultural level of workers was sufficiently high as to make such schemes unnecessary.\textsuperscript{100}

While a number of graduates from the \textit{rabfaky} did indeed go on to make careers for themselves in music, they can hardly be said to have constituted a significant cohort, and the vast majority of conservatoire students continued to come from white-collar and intelligentsia backgrounds. Talent triumphed over social class as the most important criterion for admission, and Shatilov even went so far as to argue, in a speech delivered at a Party meeting in Moscow Conservatoire in 1937, that it would be better not to admit any students at all than to spend state money on providing a conservatoire education for untalented musicians.\textsuperscript{101}

In terms of students' levels of political consciousness, a Narkompros protocol dating from the immediate post-Cultural Revolution period depicted Moscow Conservatoire as saturated by apolitical, non-Party elements and with insufficient space in the curriculum devoted to political education.\textsuperscript{102} Instruction in dialectical materialism, Marxism-Leninism and Party history were compulsory elements in all Soviet higher education institutions. Official statements put forward in the name of the Moscow Conservatoire Party cell spoke of the need for Soviet musicians to be 'educated in philosophy... to have mastered Marxist-Leninist theory

\textsuperscript{97}Veselovskaia, p. 19; P. Kharlip, 'Profkom VMSh'.

\textsuperscript{98}The figures increased from 60 to 141 in the day \textit{rabfak}, and 120 to 179 in the evenings: Iu. Kremlev, \textit{Leningradskaja gosudarstvennaia konservatoriia, 1862-1937} (Moscow, 1938), p. 137.

\textsuperscript{99}Kharlip, 'Profkom VMSh'.

\textsuperscript{100}Kremlev, p. 137; Veselovskaia, p. 19. \textit{Rabfaky} were phased out gradually during the later 1930s, and by 1940 they had ceased to exist altogether. Fitzpatrick, \textit{Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union: 1921-1934} (Cambridge: CUP, 1979), pp. 236 and 324.

\textsuperscript{101}RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 102.

\textsuperscript{102}RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. khr. 345, l. 32 ob. st.
and to construct their daily work on its basis. Practical work with amateur ensembles and working-class audiences was regarded as one of the most important means by which students and pedagogues could imbibe the spirit of Marxism-Leninism. The more politically oriented conservatoire professors regarded such work as central to the educational experience.

History teaching was always a sensitive subject in the Soviet education system. Stalin's own pronouncements on the topic focused mainly on the need to get back to more traditional methods of research and teaching, with emphasis placed on personalities rather than on the abstract forces of historical development. Soviet teachers of music history had a difficult line to tread and attacks on their work issued forth with alarming frequency. A proposed curriculum for the teaching of music history in secondary schools was criticized at length during a session of the Arts Sector of the Leningrad Narkompros in January 1933. Speakers commented unfavourably on the lack of weight given in the syllabus to the history of the class struggle in music, and to the contemporary period.

The Moscow Conservatoire Faculty of History and Theory became one of the newspaper Muzyka's earliest targets for attack. In a series of articles published in February and March 1937, the teaching of music history came in for wide-ranging criticism. It was alleged that the teaching methods used reflected a 'dry academism' and a 'soulless attitude' towards music history, with only very superficial analyses of musical works and insufficient attention devoted to the evolution of Russian and Soviet musical culture. The Faculty had failed to draw practical conclusions for its own work from the instructions on history teaching issued by the Central Committee in May 1934: critics claimed that its courses were dictated by a bourgeois musicological agenda and insufficient attention was paid to folk music. New courses on

103 Veselovskaiia, p. 41.
104 Briusova was very much of this opinion: RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. khr. 37.
105 RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. khr. 345, l. 5.
Russian and Soviet music history were set up in the aftermath of this attack, but critics continued to complain about the sidelining of Soviet music history within the curriculum.  

Schools

Although music was taught in the curriculum of ordinary Soviet schools, specialist musical education tended to be concentrated in music schools, the network of which increased significantly during the 1930s. Pedagogy was made a compulsory subject for students in the conservatoires, and courses were set up for music teachers with the aim of encouraging them to increase their qualifications.  

One music school which gained particular reknown as a hot-house for talented young musicians was the Stoliarskii music school in Odessa, which opened in October 1933 with 60 pupils aged between 7 and 14. Petr Stoliarskii (1871-1944) had run a school at his flat in Odessa for many years and he counted both Oistrakh and Milstein among his former pupils. The number of virtuoso violinists to emerge from Odessa during the early decades of Soviet rule is quite remarkable, and the majority of these, including Liza Gilel's, Busia Gol'dshtein and Misha Fikhtengol'ts, received their initial instruction at the hands of Stoliarskii. Figures for 1937 showed that the Stoliarskii school had 190 pupils, 40 of whom were the children of kolkhozniki. In an article on the training of young musicians written in February 1935, Stoliarskii described certain aspects of his philosophy. He laid particular emphasis on the need to work with parents, to ensure that they did not overestimate their children's talents and thereby foster excessive self-confidence and conceit.


108 GARF f. R-5283, op. 12, d. 239, l. 11-13; RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 42, l. 16.


110 RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 21, l. 50.

In Moscow, the central institution for the education of talented young musicians was the Moscow Conservatoire special children's group, which was later merged with the ordinary conservatoire music school to form the Central Music School. The children's group had been set up in 1932 with the aim of ensuring the careful nurturing of young talents. Limits were placed on the number of concerts they were allowed to take part in and serious attention was paid to their general education.\(^\text{112}\) Such, at any rate, such was the image portrayed to the outside world. Other evidence, however, points to a less-than-idyllic state of affairs. Professor Tseitlin described conditions within the children's group in the most uncomplimentary terms in a statement to the Conservatoire Party cell. He remarked on the harmful spirit of \textit{wunderkind}-ism (\textit{vunderkindstvo}) created around the group by the 'uncultured' parents of its pupils; on the favouritism displayed by pedagogues towards some of their charges; and on the atmosphere of 'unhealthy competition' generated among pupils, which had a 'pernicious effect' on their development.\(^\text{113}\) In a report on conditions within the Central Music School, published in February 1938, Zverina commented on the deleterious effect which the behaviour of pushy and 'toadying' parents had on the atmosphere within the school.\(^\text{114}\)

\textbf{Performance}

The promotion of works by Soviet composers, both at home and abroad, was taken very seriously by Soviet decision-makers. A decree issued by Narkompros in November 1933 directed that all concert organizations should include at least one Soviet work in every programme, with exceptions permitted only in the case of special thematic concerts. Music directors in cinemas and public gardens were required to devote at least one third of each programme to works by Soviet composers.\(^\text{115}\)

A considerable number of complaints were made against institutions which failed to fulfil this obligation in the months which followed. Cinema and circus managers claimed that

\(^{112}\) E. Dzhian, 'Gastrolerstvo ili ucheba? O molodykh darovaniakh', \textit{SI}, 14 April 1933, p. 4.

\(^{113}\) L. M. Tseitlin, 'Zaiaavlennie v partkom Moskovskoi gosudarstvennoi konservatorii', GTsMMK f. 179, d. 908.

\(^{114}\) She cited a number of examples of parents using bribery to advance their children within the school. R. Zverina, 'V tsentral'noi muzykal'noi shkole', \textit{SI}, 8 February 1938, p. 4.

\(^{115}\) \textit{Biulleten' SSK}, no. 3-4 (1933), 1.
the lack of appropriate Soviet works made it impossible to meet these requirements, and the composers' representatives who met with Bubnov in March 1934 complained about the failure of music organizations to discharge their obligations. Composers were particularly keen to ensure that the ruling was implemented, as they would benefit from increased performance royalties. Subsequent to this meeting, Bubnov issued a further order which reminded concert organizers of their obligations and made the Repertoire committees responsible for ensuring that the new system was put into effect. Even after this development, concert organizations were still criticized for their lack of discrimination in selecting Soviet works for performance, and for failing to recognize that certain new works would need to be allotted considerable time for rehearsal.

The Radio

The radio was one of the most important vehicles for the circulation of music among the general population. Soviet radio broadcasting began in February 1919, and the first radio concert took place in September 1922. By 1928 there were reported to be 57 radio stations in operation, with 12 more under construction. The overall proportion of radio output devoted to music was more than 60%, and 400 to 500 concerts were put out every month from Moscow alone. According to the Encyclopedia, there were more than 20 million regular radio listeners by 1938, although in a country the size of the Soviet Union, this was hardly an impressive statistic. Figures dating from the late 1930s indicate that only a quarter of all village clubs possessed a radio set, and that many of these were out of order. Nevertheless, one radio

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116Postanovlenie finansovo-pravovoi komissii SSK', Biuleten' SSK, no. 5 (1933), 10-11; 'Priemu tov. Bubnova'.

117Biuleten' SSK, no. 4-5 (1934), 2.


120Smith, 'Soviet Arts Policy', p. 40.

121BSE, 1st edn (1941) XLVIII, pp. 58-9.

set can reach a great many listeners, and the significance of the new technology for the
dissemination of music should not be underestimated.

Radio broadcasting was one aspect of Soviet musical life which RAPM activists had
dominated during the Cultural Revolution, and one of the principal complaints made about
radio programmes in the early 1930s was that they continued to operate according to a RAPM
agenda. Critics demanded more programmes of light music. They also argued that access to
the airwaves should be made available to all Soviet composers, rather than just a select few.\footnote{Goriaeva, p. 57. See Chapter Four, pp.109-10.}

During the period 1933-6 the State Radio Committee was directed by Platon
Kerzhentsev. A memoir of the time, written by Aleksandr Gauk who worked as a conductor
with the Radio Orchestra, describes how during that period the Radio was quick to respond to
the appearance of any new artist or piece, and it made the systematic promotion of music by
Soviet composers central to its work. The Radio Committee had two orchestras at its disposal
at this time, and it gave regular open symphonic concerts in Moscow.\footnote{RTsKhiDNI, f. 135, op. 1, d. 218, ll. 32, 52-3.}

Various measures were undertaken to help increase the proportion of new Soviet works
broadcast. A contract was signed in December 1933 between the Radio Committee and the
Moscow Composers' Union, whereby the Union guaranteed to provide a certain number of new,
unpublished Soviet works for radio performance. The Union would be paid a fixed fee for each
work, and the Radio Committee was given exclusive performance rights for one year in
return.\footnote{Gauk, p. 84-5. A Radio Committee Resolution of February 1934 called for an increase in the number of such
concerts, as a means by which to 'strengthen ties with workers and radio listeners, and familiarize them with the
best examples of music.' Iz postanovlenie no 34 VRK pri SNK SSSR 'ob uvelichenii kolichesta otkrytykh kontsertov', Goriaeva, p. 55.}
Contracts could also be concluded directly with the composers themselves:
Prokof'ev's \textit{Kantata k 20-letiiu Sovetskoi Vlasti} (Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of Soviet
Power) was ordered by the Radio Committee in 1935, although the work was not performed
until 1966.\footnote{"Dogovor", Biulleten' SSK, no. 1-2 (1934), 15-16.} In September 1939 the Radio Committee sought to regularize the broadcasting of

\footnote{"Dogovor", Biulleten' SSK, no. 1-2 (1934), 15-16.}
Soviet music and ordered the establishment of a special commission for the selection of the best new works to be broadcast.\textsuperscript{127}

Criticism of radio repertoire, from listeners and critics, ranged from general complaints that too much vulgar light music was being broadcast, to very specific attacks on the alleged activities of 'enemies' working in the radio. In the absence of opinion polls or listener surveys it is extremely difficult to assess the general mood of the listening public. Most of the listeners' letters - published and unpublished - to \textit{Sovetskoe Iskusstvo} which commented on radio programmes complained that not enough serious classical music was being broadcast, or that the airwaves were being polluted by too much jazz. More than one correspondent drew attention to the fact that the editors of music programmes often omitted the slow movements of symphonic works in order to maintain a lively and cheerful tone.\textsuperscript{128} One critic argued in 1938 that the Radio Committee was repeating RAPM's mistakes by flooding the air with mass songs and failing to take account of listeners' demands.\textsuperscript{129} During the period of the Terror, accusations were hurled at the enemies who had allegedly infiltrated the radio and had broadcast gloomy music on days of national celebration, and vulgar dances on days of national mourning.\textsuperscript{130} Listeners also complained about the commentary offered by radio presenters: one Stakhanovite who was asked for his views by the radio journal \textit{Govorit' SSSR}, argued that the commentary was too complicated and often more difficult to understand than the music itself.\textsuperscript{131}

**Philharmonias**

Concert organizations known as philharmonias had existed in Russia since 1802. The first Soviet philharmonia was founded in Petrograd in 1921 on the basis of the State Symphony

\textsuperscript{127}Prikaz no. 427 po vsesoiuznomu radiokomitetu o sozdanii komissii po otboru novykh proizvedenii sovetskikh kompozitorov, GTsMMK f. 302, d. 371.

\textsuperscript{128}RGALI f. 672, op. 1, ed. khr. 6, l. 368; A. Gol'denveizer, 'Takim ne dolzno byt radioveschchanie', \textit{SI}, 6 February 1938, p. 4. Gol'denveizer complained that such wanton destruction of the 'internal dialectic' of the work reduced its artistic value.

\textsuperscript{129}G. Elenina, 'Odnoobrazie i bezvkusitsa', \textit{SI}, 10 January 1938, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{130}The central radio had allegedly broadcast dance music on the day Gor'kii died. S. Korev, 'Za vysokuiu ideinost' muzykal'nogo veschchanii', \textit{Muzyka}, 26 July 1937, p. 2.

Orchestra, which was itself the successor to the orchestra of the Tsarist court. Attempts to create a central philharmonia which could assume responsibility for overseeing all the provincial and republican concert organizations were not an unmitigated success. Three central institutions - Rosfil, Sofil and Gosfil - followed one another in rapid succession between 1925 and 1934, and in 1936 the whole system of concert organization in the Soviet Union was transferred to the jurisdiction of the newly-created state Arts Committee. A network of provincial philharmonias developed gradually, on the basis of existing local symphony orchestras. From 1937, the organization of concert tours across the Soviet Union became the responsibility of a special department, Gastroliuro.

The work of performance collectives was included within the Plan: targets set in 1937 for the third Five Year Plan covered the projected number of new professional ensembles to be created by 1942:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ensembles</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1942</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symphony orchestras</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folk instrument orchestras</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choirs</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber ensembles</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song and dance ensembles</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind orchestras</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance ensembles</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

132 Golubovskii, p. 131.

133 BSE, 1st edn (1936), LVII, p. 353; GARF f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 733; M. Grinberg, 'Tribuna muzykal'noi kul'tury', SI, 29 August 1934, p. 4.

134 It took over from the Moscow Philharmonia tour bureau. RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 25, l. 22.
It also covered the total number of concerts to be given, and the expected number of listeners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1942</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of ensembles</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of concerts</td>
<td>18,672</td>
<td>45,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of concerts</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per ensemble per year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of listeners</td>
<td>9,592,000</td>
<td>26,243,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of listeners</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per concert</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Articles criticizing the work of the philharmonias became a regular feature of the specialist music press. It was alleged that they retained a pre-revolutionary obsession with profits and refused to organize tours or showcase concerts for talented young musicians, arguing that such enterprises would be unprofitable. Even when young performers were offered concert engagements, these were often so poorly advertised that audiences were limited to family and friends. The offhand attitude of some concert administrators was criticized by musicians: members of the Beethoven quartet claimed that the Moscow Philharmonia did nothing to widen their audiences and that competition between the Philharmonia and the Radio Committee caused problems for them in arranging their concert schedules. The duty of

135 "Organizatsiia ispolnitel'skikh sil", SI, 2 November 1933, p. 2; Grigorii Ginzburg, 'Somnit'el'naia kommertsia', SI, 23 June 1935, p. 3; G. Polianovskii, 'Kogo i kak organizuet filarmonia?', Rabis, no. 5-6 (1933), 26-7.

136 Article submitted by a Moscow Conservatoire postgraduate to Sovetskoе Iskusstvo, 19 April 1937, 'Pokaz molodykh ispolnitelei Moskovskoi filarmonii protivopokazan', RGALI f. 672, op. 1, ed. khr. 6, ll. 282-3.

concert organizations to conduct work with listeners was something which the philharmonias were often accused of neglecting. Rather than simply offering cheap concert tickets to workers, the philharmonias were expected to organize lectures and introductory concerts in factory clubs as a means by which to generate interest in their main concert programmes.  

The network of state-sponsored musical ensembles underwent considerable expansion in the 1930s. By September 1939 there were eight state ensembles: the State Symphony Orchestra, the State Ensemble of Folk Dance, the State Choir, the Leningrad State Choral Academic Capella, the State Wind Orchestra, the State Orchestra of Folk Instruments, the State Jazz Orchestra and the State String Quartet. Some of the state ensembles - such as the State Symphony Orchestra and the State Jazz Orchestra - were established as wholly new institutions, whereas in other cases existing groups were granted state sponsorship in recognition of their achievements. State ensembles came under the jurisdiction of the Arts Committee Music Board and were required to conduct additional activities beyond their normal concert schedules. These included working with audiences, ordering new compositions, and organizing training programmes for their members. State ensembles received funding directly from the government and occupied a prestigious position in Soviet musical life.

Performance Style

The 1930s was a period in which a number of highly talented young musicians first rose to prominence on the Soviet, and later on the international stage. Soviet explanations as to why such a cluster of musical talent should have been concentrated in the USSR tended to be couched in propagandistic terms. Lunacharskii offered a number of possible reasons for the high quality of Soviet musicians in a speech delivered in the mid-1920s. He pointed out that young musicians in the Soviet Union were drawn from much wider layers of the population.

138 M. Grinberg, 'Tribuna muzykal'noi kul'tury?', SI, 29 August 1934, p. 4.

139 Such had been the case with the State Academic Capella of Leningrad, which won state backing in 1922: Gosudarstvennaia akademicheskaia kapella imeni M. Glinki, ed. by I. Gusin and D. Tkachev (Leningrad, 1957), p. 82. The Piatnitskii Ensemble became a State Ensemble in 1940, when it was renamed the Piatnitskii State Russian Folk Choir: Smith, p. 154.

140 Polozhenie o direktsii gosudarstvennykh muzykal'nykh kollektivov SSSR', 11 August 1939, Biiulleten' VKI, no. 21 (1939), 6-9.
than were their counterparts in capitalist countries; that Slavs and Jews were, in his view, naturally gifted musicians; and that the collectivist spirit of the Soviet Union had something in common with the true spirit of the orchestra.\(^{141}\) The large number of Soviet victories at international performance competitions during this period was cited as proof of their superiority, and was explained by reference to the fact that the Soviet state was far more concerned for the artistic development and general welfare of its young musicians than were the countries of the bourgeois capitalist West.\(^{142}\)

Discussion of performance technique in the press and among musicians tended to focus in particular on the need to develop a distinctive new Soviet style of performance. A conference held by the Central Committee of Rabis in December 1933 sparked off a public debate on this question.\(^{143}\) An editorial in *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* on the eve of the conference drew attention to the alleged prevalence of the bourgeois psychology of the 'lone artist' among Soviet musicians, and commented that the search for a new style encompassed a struggle for quality, profound content and technical skill in performance, combined with a struggle against alien artistic influences and survivals of the 'dead traditions' of the past.\(^{144}\) The first All-Union performance competition was held in 1933, and such competitions became a regular event, offering opportunities for outstanding young musicians from across the Soviet Union to display their talents.\(^{145}\)

Many Soviet musicologists and critics were of the opinion that the style in which a piece of music was performed could serve to impart a particular ideological orientation to the work in question. In a review of a concert given by David Oistrakh in Sochi in 1937, the critic described how Oistrakh was able to 'rehabilitate' Chaikovskii through his performance of the Violin Concerto, opening up the work anew and giving it a cheerfulness and optimism which

\(^{141}\)It was this spirit, he said, which had helped to make the *Persimfans* orchestra such a success: 'O khudozhestvennom vospitani: doklad tov. Lunacharskogo' (1926-7), GARF f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 615, ll. 33-34.


\(^{143}\)Zadachi kontsertnogo dela: na konferentsii ispolniteli', *SI*, 2 December 1933, p. 2.

\(^{144}\)Vnimanie ispolnitelui!', *SI*, 26 November 1933, p. 1.

\(^{145}\)Such competitions were usually limited to one particular instrument or group of instruments. M. Sokol'skii, 'Oktiabr'skoe pokolenie: pervye itogi konkursa', *SI*, 26 May 1933, p. 3; V. Bogdanov-Berezovskii, 'Zamechatel'nye uspeki', *SI*, 5 March 1935, p. 2.
had not been in evidence in interpretations offered by earlier performers.\(^{146}\) Music teachers and conservatoire professors were encouraged to foster the new style in their pupils. The violinist Lev Tseitlin maintained in an article written in 1933 that he tried to teach his students to perform in a monumental and 'heroic' style, so as to convey through their music the epoch of socialist construction. He added that he did his best to get rid of the sugary and sentimental phrasing which often infected his students' performances.\(^{147}\)

One review of a concert given by Emil Gilel's in January 1934 praised the young pianist's extraordinary talent, but drew attention to what the critic - Grinberg - regarded as his unhealthy preoccupation with acquiring a virtuoso technique. Grinberg admitted that an attraction to virtuosity was natural in young performers, but warned that Gilel's should pay more attention to the non-virtuoso heritage and to modern Soviet works, in order to impart a 'deeper content' to his playing.\(^{148}\) In an article on Gilel's performance of Chopin, Gorodinskii lamented the fact that the pianist had unfortunately fallen too much under the influence of the Romantic performance tradition. He recommended that Gilel's should forge closer contacts with the proletariat, as a means by which to bring a Bolshevik style to his playing.\(^{149}\)

The question of how far Soviet musicians could or should learn from the technique of Western performers was a subject which was raised whenever foreign musicians toured the Soviet Union. In a review of a concert given by the Polish pianist Artur Rubinshtein in 1933, Grinberg praised the musician's virtuoso technique but went on to remark that this was really little more than a cloak behind which the true emptiness of his art could be concealed. He warned Soviet musicians against studying Rubinstein's performance style.\(^{150}\) Nevertheless, other touring musicians, such as the émigré violinist Jascha Heifetz, were said to offer a useful model for Soviet performers from the technical point of view.\(^{151}\)

\(^{146}\)RGALI, f. 672, op. 1, ed. khr. 6, ll. 524-6.

\(^{147}\)L. M. Tseitlin, 'Novyi stil' ispolneniia', \(SI\), 26 October 1933, p. 3. It is a moot point how far such 'sentimental phrasing' was ever eliminated from Soviet performance style.

\(^{148}\)M. Grinberg, 'Rastsvetaiushchii talant: na kontserte Emilia Gilel'sa', \(SI\), 8 January 1934, p. 4.

\(^{149}\)V. Gorodinskii, 'Vospitanie Emilia: o pianiste Gilel'se', \(SI\), 17 February 1934, p. 2.

\(^{150}\)M. Grinberg, 'Laureaty oktiabria: rozhdenie stilia', \(SI\), 2 June 1933, p. 3.

\(^{151}\)M. Sokol'skii, 'la Kheifets', \(SI\), 17 April 1934, p. 3; Heifetz left Russia in 1917 and became an American citizen in 1925.
Instruments

A number of measures were taken by the regime in the early years of the revolution in order to regulate the ownership of musical instruments. Keyboard instruments had to be registered with the music department of Narkompros, and grand pianos were initially subjected to a special tax. In 1920 a resolution was passed under which instruments which were deemed to be 'historical' or 'rare' were subject to confiscation by the Cheka. These instruments were then transferred to the State Musical Instruments Collection and a Narkompros committee was set up to oversee arrangements whereby they could be loaned out to talented musicians. According to the violinist Mikhail Gol'dshtein (brother of the more famous Busia) this system was less altruistic than the propaganda would suggest. Rather than lending the instruments, they were in fact hired out to musicians who had to pay a monthly sum for the privilege as well as paying for any repairs out of their own pockets. The instrument could be demanded back at any time, if it was decided that another young virtuoso was more deserving of it.

In August 1933 the Central Committee of the Party issued two resolutions on improving the production of musical instruments and of gramophones and gramophone records. The resolutions were passed on the recommendation of a commission which had been set up two months earlier, under the chairmanship of Kaganovich, to look into the music industry. Condemning the industry's work as 'completely unsatisfactory', the Central Committee resolved to divide responsibility in this area between Narkomtiazhprom (the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry), which would take charge of the production of gramophones and records; and

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152 Muzykal'naia zhizn' Moskvy, p. 233; Following a petition by Lunacharskii in February 1918, Sovnarkom decided to exempt practising musicians from this particular tax: Lunacharskii, O muzyke, pp. 292 and 383.

153 Lunacharskii, V mire muzyki, p. 454.

154 The Stradivarius Quartet were one of the first groups of musicians to benefit from this system. V mire muzyki, pp. 454-8.

155 Gol'dshtein, pp. 25-6.

156 Maksimenkov, p. 33. Voroshilov and Bubnov were included among its members.
Narkomlegprom (the People's Commissariat of Light Industry) which was to retain control over the rest of the musical instruments industry.\textsuperscript{157}

Before the revolution, musical instruments had either been imported from the West or produced by individual craftsmen operating in small workshops. Factory production of musical instruments - which was essential to the amateur music movement - began in the 1920s. The 1933 Central Committee resolution included target figures for the output of musical instruments: by 1937 the industry was expected to be producing 28,000 keyboard, 55,000 brass, 30,000 woodwind, and 2,135,000 stringed instruments per year, together with 250,000 accordions. The resolution also ordered that prices be reduced in order to make these instruments more accessible to amateur performers, and that all the relevant Commissariats should ensure that the supply of raw materials to the musical instruments industry was sufficient to meet demand.\textsuperscript{158}

Output increased rapidly during the 1930s: the Red October factory in Leningrad began producing keyboard instruments in 1927, and by 1937 its output had reached 11,000 instruments per year. Likewise, the Lunacharskii factory was producing 630,000 plucked instruments annually by 1937, including guitars, mandolins, balalaikas, domras and banjos.\textsuperscript{159} Another plucked instruments factory, set up in 1933 in the Chuvash Republic, was ordered to produce non-Russian folk instruments such as the Central Asian \textit{dumbra} and the Caucasian \textit{tara} as well as the usual balalaikas and guitars. Rather than making faithful reproductions of traditional instruments, however, these instruments were to be adapted and 'improved', to give them greater sonority and a more extensive range, so that they could be used to perform music from cultures other than their own.\textsuperscript{160}

The shift towards factory production of musical instruments ran up against opposition in some circles. A stringed instruments factory, which was set up in Moscow in 1935, met with...
opposition from specialist craftsmen who were concerned that the factory's technical director was striving for quantity at the expense of quality.\textsuperscript{161} Two elderly piano tuners from Leningrad pointed out in an article published in \textit{Sovetskoe Iskusstvo} in May 1938 that the conveyor-belt system of production in piano factories meant that none of the workmen employed ended up with a comprehensive understanding of how a piano was constructed.\textsuperscript{162} Small workshops continued to produce high quality instruments, however, and a competition held in October 1933 for the makers of stringed instruments produced some impressive results.\textsuperscript{163}

A wide-ranging debate about the development of the Soviet musical instruments industry took place on the pages of \textit{Sovetskoe Iskusstvo} in the summer of 1933. Critics complained that the industry was failing to meet the demands placed on it, and that the quality of Soviet-produced instruments was insufficiently high.\textsuperscript{164} Musicians called on the industry to standardize the production of certain instruments: the principal clarinet at the Bolshoi Theatre pointed out that each of the four factories which produced clarinets followed a different model.\textsuperscript{165} Tuning forks were also in need of standardization, because different musical institutions disagreed on the question of the level at which the correct pitch should be set.\textsuperscript{166} On the issue of tuning, concern was expressed in print on several occasions during the decade about the fact that very little was being done to train a new generation of piano tuners. In the past, piano tuners in Russia had generally been foreigners, and the few specialists who remained were growing increasingly elderly. In 1934 there were said to be only nine or ten piano tuners

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Sovetskie smychkovye instrumenty: skripka, al't, violonchel"}, \textit{SI}, 5 May 1935, p. 3.
\item E. Korzun and A. Brempel, 'Neobkhodimo gotovit' smenu', \textit{SI}, 14 May 1938, p. 4.
\item E. Vitachev, who ran the stringed instruments workshop at Moscow Conservatoire, took first place in this competition. 'Pobeda sovetskikh masterov', \textit{SI}, 14 October 1933, p. 3.
\item \textit{Sovetsko muzyke krepkuiu proizvodstvenno-tekhnicheskuiu bazu', 'Muzykanty i instrumentarii: o sostoianii muzykal'noi promyshlennosti', SI}, 8 June 1933, pp. 1 and 2.
\item 'Muzykanty i instrumentarii: o sostoianii muzykal'noi promyshlennosti' \textit{SI}, 8 June 1933, p. 2.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
working in Moscow, and touring pianists had to take their own tuners with them to certain cities.\textsuperscript{167}

While the Soviet authorities ultimately aimed to dispense with the need to import musical instruments from the West, they nevertheless recognized that Western assistance could be extremely valuable in helping Soviet craftsmen to improve the quality of the instruments they produced. To this end, the editors of \textit{Sovetskoe Iskusstvo} recommended that foreign specialists be invited to the Soviet Union to share their expertise, and that Soviet craftsmen be sent abroad in order to study Western techniques.\textsuperscript{168} The question of how to achieve autarky in the sphere of raw materials was raised by some contributors to the \textit{Sovetskoe Iskusstvo} debate, and certain types of wood which grew in the Caucasus were mentioned as possible substitutes for imported rosewood for making woodwind instruments. One writer even suggested that the wood from discarded icons be used in the construction of stringed instruments.\textsuperscript{169}

Despite all the efforts made in this field, however, a shortage of high quality Soviet-produced instruments meant that professional musicians remained dependent on foreign imports, mainly from Germany and America. On more than one occasion, the Arts Committee had to apply to Sovnarkom for hard currency in order to acquire instruments from abroad.\textsuperscript{170} In a memorandum sent to Molotov in 1938 by Nazarov, it was claimed that the shortage of instruments was putting severe restrictions on the development of concert life in the Soviet Union: very few concert organizations owned a good grand piano, and symphony orchestras were only able to hire harpists and bassoon players who possessed their own instruments, a state of affairs which held back the progress of many talented young musicians.\textsuperscript{171} Targets set for the musical instruments industry in the third Five Year Plan were aimed at freeing Soviet musicians

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{167} S. Shatskii, 'Vospitanie muzykanta: plany i teobvaniia Moskovskoi konservatorii', SI, 23 May 1934, p. 2; E. Kann, 'Zabytaia professiia', SI, 29 October 1934, p. 4; Korzun and Brempel'. The authors of this last article both worked as piano tuners at the Leningrad Conservatoire: one was aged 64, the other 102.
\item \textsuperscript{168} Sovetskoj muzyke krepujuiu proizvodstvenno-tekhnikeskuui bazu'; 'Bor'ba za instrumentarii: nasha zaiaavka Narkomlegpromu', SI, 26 June 1933, p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{169} Muzykanty i instrumentarii'; S. Shatskii, 'Podtianut' muzykal'nuui promyshlennost", SI, 14 June 1933, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{170} 852,000 rubles were requested in December 1936, for an order including 19 grand pianos and 50 violins; in 1938, 245,700 rubles were requested in order to acquire ten grand pianos, seven harps and eight bassoons: RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 11, l. 98; RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 371, l. 82-3.
\item \textsuperscript{171} RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 371, ll. 82-3.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
from dependence on imports altogether, and particular emphasis was laid on the need to ensure that the instruments produced were of a high quality.\(^{172}\)

The potential significance of the gramophone as an instrument of propaganda was recognized by Soviet planners. Whereas in the West, the gramophone was described by Soviet critics as 'the distributor of opium in the hands of the bourgeoisie', in the Soviet Union it was a 'mighty tool of struggle', offering a means by which good music could be delivered to mass audiences.\(^{173}\) Production targets were set by the Party Central Committee in its September 1933 resolution: the annual output of gramophones was expected to rise dramatically:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>1937</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gramophones</td>
<td>155,000</td>
<td>1.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gramophone records</td>
<td>3 million</td>
<td>40 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: 'Razvernut' proizvodstvo', Pravda, 15 September 1933)

A summary of the achievements of the Second Five Year Plan in music, drawn up in 1937, indicated that between 1935 and 1937 two million gramophones had been produced by Soviet factories, together with 80 million records.\(^{174}\)

The Central Committee further stipulated in its 1933 resolution that an Artistic Council, headed by Bubnov, should be set up to oversee the recording industry, with the aim of raising its 'political and artistic level'. Recordings were expected to cover a wide range of repertoire, including classical and contemporary music, folk music of all the Soviet nationalities and dance music, and particular attention was drawn to the need to provide recordings of dance music suitable for children and young people.\(^{175}\) Figures for the planned output of gramophone

\(^{172}\)Narkommestprom was ordered to master the production of wind instruments such as the flute and the oboe, which were still being imported in large numbers. RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 63, l. 35.

\(^{173}\)L. Volkov-Lannit, 'Plastinka i ee primenenie', SM, no. 7 (1937), 77-89 (p. 79).

\(^{174}\)RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 63, l. 9.

\(^{175}\)Razvernut' proizvodstvo'. The Council included composers and musicians as well as bureaucrats, including Gol'denveizer, Ippolitov-Ivanov, Glier and Shostakovich. Maksimenkov, p. 35.
records for 1937 indicate that the lion's share of recordings - 790 out of 1740 - were to be devoted to Soviet folk music. It was also planned that at least 100 of the records released during 1937 should be of works celebrating the 20th anniversary of the October Revolution. 176

**Electronic Instruments**

Soviet expertise in the field of inventing electronic instruments was established in the 1920s with the invention of the *Termenovoks* by Lev Termen (1896-1993). This instrument, which the performer played by waving his hands in front of two antennae, became well-known in Western Europe and America during the 1930s, after it was introduced to the West by its inventor, who spent the period from 1927 to 1938 living in New York. 177 A Narkompros memorandum dating from 1934 pointed out that the Soviet Union was the birthplace of electronic musical instruments, and maintained that it was important that the USSR should retain its superiority over the West in this area. 178

Instruments produced by Soviet engineers during the 1930s included the *Sonar*, which was invented by Anan'ev; the *Emiriton*, the creation of the Leningrad inventors A. Rimskii-Korsakov and Ivanov; and the *Ekvodin*, designed by Koval'skii and Volodin. 179 The *Sonar* was capable of a wide range of timbres, dynamics and phrasings, and was said to be relatively easy to play. A special Narkompros commission which was convened in March 1934 in order to discuss the *Sonar* emphasized the importance of Anan'ev's invention - one speaker advocated including a *Sonar* section in Soviet orchestras - and recommended that foreign components be imported in order to improve the technical operation of the instrument. 180


177 Stephen Montague, 'Rediscovering Leon Theremin', *Tempo*, 177 (1991), 18-23. Termen became known in the West as Leon Theremin, and his instrument as the Thereminvox or Theremin. On his return, Termen was promptly arrested and sent to the Gulag for eight years. He later worked in the field of acoustics research, and died in Moscow in November 1993.

178 RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 5, l. 31.

179 RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 4; 'Novyi muzykal'nyi instrument', *SI*, 29 August 1935, p. 4; Evgenii Braudo, 'Novyi instrumentarii', *SI*, 23 December 1935, p. 3.

180 Rezoliutsiia komissii NKPa po voprosu ob elektromuzykal'nom instrumente 'Sonar' inzh. N. S. Anan'eva', 1 April 1934, RGALI, f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 4, l. 5. The commission also recommended that experimental *Sonar* workshops be organized and that groups of conservatoire students be taught to play the instrument.
The *Emiriton* received its first public demonstration in August 1935, and was described as being simpler and more accessible than either the *Termenovoks* or the *Sonar*. According to one description it resembled a harpsichord, except with a finger board instead of a keyboard, on which the player could combine pianistic techniques with finger glides and vibrati, as on a stringed instrument. It had 15 fixed timbres, a range of 7.5 octaves and considerable scope for dynamics. It was claimed that if mass production were to become possible, *Emiritony* would not cost more than about 100 rubles each.\(^{181}\)

The *Ekvodin* made its first public appearance in December 1935 at a concert in the Great Hall of Moscow Conservatoire, devoted entirely to electronic musical instruments. Works by Bach, Mozart, Grieg, Chopin, Wagner and others were performed on the *Termenovoks*, the German *Trautonium*, the *Sonar*, the *Emiriton*, and on adapted guitars and violins. A demonstration of the *Ekvodin* followed the main concert programme.\(^{182}\) Despite these developments, however, a number of participants at a discussion of electronic instruments convened by the Arts Committee in the summer of 1938 expressed their disappointment in the protracted nature of some inventors' work. Many engineers, it was claimed, had been working in the field since 1921 and had not produced anything at all.\(^{183}\)

* * *

State support, which composers and musicians had been so anxious to win during the uncertain economic climate of the NEP, was finally secured in 1932. Admittedly, living and working conditions continued to leave much to be desired, but the establishment of the contracts system and the recognition that composers should be entitled to extra living space were important steps towards the professionalization of composers' work. The Composers' Unions played an important role in implementing such reforms, and they were also involved in

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\(^{181}\)Ivanov gave a demonstration of Rimskii-Korsakov's *Shmel'* (The Flight of the Bumble Bee) on the *Emiriton* for members of the Arts Committee: 'Novyi muzykal'nyi instrument', *SI*, 29 August 1935, p. 4; 'Emiriton', *SI*, 6 July 1938, p. 4.

\(^{182}\)Kontsert elektromuzykal'nykh instrumentov*, *SM*, no. 2 (1936), 71.

\(^{183}\)'Emiriton'.

initiatives aimed at assisting composers in their creative work. The material benefits were certainly appreciated, but they came with a price tag attached. In return for providing the opportunity for composers and musicians to dedicate themselves entirely to their artistic work, without constantly having to worry about their finances, the state expected them to participate in the project of bringing music to a wider Soviet audience. This could mean getting involved in amateur music activities, taking part in special concert performances for factory workers or kolkhozniki, or participating in musical education campaigns. Those who refused to join in, or who brought dishonour on the profession in other ways, courted disapproval from the authorities as well as from their colleagues.

The propaganda role which music could serve was not overlooked by Soviet officials. High standards of music-making were valued internationally as the mark of a civilized country, and the drive to encourage musical activity throughout society was partly aimed at enhancing the image of the Soviet Union both at home and abroad. It was also expected to contribute to the generation of a unified musical culture which could bind Soviet society together. Centralization and coordination were the order of the day in the philharmonias, in musical education and in the instruments industry, helping to unite all aspects of Soviet musical culture in the hands of the regime. More important, however, than the questions of how and where people made music or listened to it, is the question of what sort of music they played or listened to. It is this question which the next chapter will address.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE ACCEPTABLE FACE OF SOVIET MUSIC

As has been demonstrated in Chapter Two, the creation of a Party line in music was far from being a simple matter of direction from above. Guidelines to composers and musicians concerning the kinds of music considered suitable for Soviet composers to write and Soviet musicians to perform emerged through a complex process of interaction between the various parties involved, and were circulated via a number of different routes. With so many agencies having input into the decision-making process where music policy was concerned, it is hardly surprising that the Party line in this field lacked consistency. Nevertheless, general trends can be identified in the official Soviet attitude towards music. The use of the word 'official' here is taken in a fairly broad sense to mean views which can clearly be seen to have been espoused by members of the Party or government hierarchy, as well as opinions held by the governing board of the Composers' Unions and the central Soviet press.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the question of exactly what constituted the 'acceptable face of Soviet music' during this period. This will encompass analysis of the development of the concept of socialist realism in music, as well as examination of several different musical genres. Such an investigation will help to highlight some of the points of intersection between official policy in this area and the programmes put forward by the proletarian music movement during the period of the Cultural Revolution. It will also serve to emphasize the degree to which Soviet attitudes towards different musical trends were shaped by considerations of internal politics, and the extent to which the Party line in music in some ways differed little from views held more widely by musicians and audiences in the West.

A key theme of this period in Soviet musical life is the great degree of emphasis placed on the need for music to be accessible. A two-pronged policy was adopted whereby efforts were made both to 'raise the cultural level' of workers and peasants in order to enable them to appreciate the artistic heritage of pre-revolutionary Russia and of world art; and to encourage Soviet writers, artists and composers to produce works which would be accessible to the common man. Such concerns were in no way unique to the Soviet leadership: unease at the elitist nature of much of the music produced by modernist composers was a feeling shared by many Western music critics and commentators at this time. Indeed, insofar as the modernist
movement in the arts was motivated to a considerable extent by the desire on the part of cultural élites to preserve aesthetic exclusivity, it seems fair to say that the Soviet regime may have been justified in criticizing modernist music on the grounds of inaccessibility.¹

Many of the impulses feeding into the music policy of this period also found reflection in Soviet attitudes towards other art forms. The goal of raising the cultural level of the masses was pursued by means of literacy campaigns and educational programmes, while a broad policy of attempting to ensure that all works of Soviet art and literature should be accessible to the new audiences and conform to the aesthetic standard of socialist realism was conducted in all spheres of Soviet cultural life. Certain non-Party figures such as Gor'kii and Stanislavskii gained authoritative status in their own fields and a new classical literary and artistic canon was created, which supplied the models against which Soviet works could be judged.

Socialist Realism

A standard analysis of socialist realism is that offered by Leonid Heller, who sees it as encompassing features of ideological commitment, Party-mindedness and national or popular spirit.² Although this interpretation certainly covers the main attributes of the aesthetic in its developed form, it would be a mistake to regard socialist realism as it existed in the 1930s as constituting a comprehensive set of principles. Guidelines for artistic activity were, as illustrated above, in the process of being formulated by state officials and individuals as the decade progressed. Although regular discussions of the concept were held on the pages of the Soviet music press, no single agreed definition of exactly what constituted socialist realism in the musical sphere was ever put forward.

The lack of clarity where the practical implications of socialist realism were concerned was keenly felt by Soviet composers. Gorodinskii's attempt to elucidate the concept as applied to music, which appeared in the first issue of Sovetskaia Muzyka, came in for outspoken criticism from Shostakovich. He pointed out that Gorodinskii's article - which certainly raised many more questions than it answered - was of little help to composers, as it gave them no real

¹Taruskin, p. 88.

direction when it came to mastering the method of socialist realism. Cheliapov's analysis of the concept was equally unhelpful. He maintained a liberal and inclusive position, observing that it would be intolerable if socialist realism came to be used as a label by which to classify a composer's ideological 'proximity' to Soviet power, but shrank from offering any more precise guidance to composers concerning their working practices.

The rather tentative nature of most of the discussion pieces on socialist realism published in the musical press at this time was almost certainly a deliberate tactic on the part of music theorists. The fact that the Party did not, at least until 1936, make any effort to define its position so far as socialist realism in music was concerned meant that musicologists and critics - who were all too conscious of the fate which had befallen RAPM - were well advised to keep their prescriptions to composers fairly vague. Of course, music's essential nature as a non-representative art form has always made it more open than literature or the visual arts to conflicting interpretations: in an article written in 1933 Pshibyshevskii put forward an argument which many others have advanced, both before and since, that 'music is much more limited than other art forms in its possibilities of providing a realistic reflection of reality'.

Guidelines for Soviet composers were spelled out rather more clearly in the aftermath of the anti-formalism campaign, when socialist realism came to be defined in broadly negative terms as the opposite of 'formalism' in music. 'Formalism' itself essentially implied the elevation of form over content, although at the height of the campaign, according to one composer who suffered attacks on his work, 'everything the slightest bit complex is described as formalism'. Initially, however, the protagonists of the anti-formalism campaign focused their attack on what they perceived as Western influences in Soviet music: Shostakovich was alleged to have begun writing in an alien voice after spending too much time in a milieu of foreign

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3 Gorodinskii, 'K voprosu'; D. Shostakovich, 'Sovetskaia muzykal'naia kritika otstaet', in Tobol'kevich, Itogi pervoi godovshechiny, pp. 48-9. Gorodinskii concluded his article with the constructive observation that it was the responsibility of every Soviet composer to formulate his own individual musical response to the demands of the epoch.

4 N. Cheliapov, 'Zadachi soiuza sovetskih kompozitorov', Rabis, no. 7-8 (1933), 17-18.

5 Boleslav Pshibyshevskii, 'K voprosu o sotsialisticheskom realizme v muzyke', SI, 26 May 1933, p. 2. Of course, repetition does not increase veracity: one could argue that the non-visual nature of music makes it better able to depict sweeping canvasses and 'reflect reality'.

music, cut off from 'reality'. Shostakovich's music was attacked in *Pravda* for its 'deliberately dissonant, confused stream of sounds', its lack of melody and expressiveness, its borrowings from jazz, and its overall negation of 'simple, accessible musical speech'. Soviet composers who had been regarded as avant-gardists in the 1920s, such as Roslavets and Mosolov, found it virtually impossible to get their works published or performed. Composers who had come under attack and sought rehabilitation generally turned their attention to the safer mediums of symphonic music based on folk song themes, or on writing music for the cinema. Writing music for films was a way in which composers who preferred to write non-text-based music could link their works to an overtly socialist realist programme.

**Musical Genres**

The interpretation of the genesis of Stalinist culture during the 1930s put forward by Katerina Clark lays considerable emphasis on the increasing domination of a 'monumental' style in art over the iconoclastic movements of the preceding decade. Although the extent to which Soviet music of the 1920s can truly be characterized as 'iconoclastic' is somewhat debatable, it is certainly the case that a bombastic, heroic style came to be the hallmark of much of the music written during the Stalinist period. A shift towards writing music in large forms paralleled contemporaneous moves in Soviet literature to move away from the short stories favoured by RAPP and return once again to writing lengthy novels with individual heroes.

Cheliapov commented, in a speech made to a meeting of artists, composers and writers convened by Gor'kii in April 1935, on the complete *volte face* which had taken place in the choice of genres favoured by Soviet composers following the Central Committee resolution of April 1932. Whereas during the period of RAPM supremacy, composers had concentrated their efforts mainly on mass songs, the new era saw them rushing to write vast works for choir and orchestra, which could last for up to one hour and fifty minutes and often proved difficult to

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7 'Sumbur vmesto muzyki'.


perform. Certain genres came in and out of fashion as the decade wore on, a phenomenon which was remarked on by several music critics. At a discussion held in the Leningrad Composers’ Union in 1937, Mikhail Chulaki (1909-89), the head of the Leningrad Philharmonia, charted the rise and fall of dominant genres since 1932, when first symphonies, then operas, then lyric songs had gained a position of ascendancy. He speculated (correctly) that next in vogue would be jazz-inspired mass songs on the model developed by Dunaevskii.

Views differed over the relative desirability of individual musical genres. Opera in particular was held up as potentially the most important element in Soviet musical culture. Cheliapov declared in December 1936 that the operatic genre gave composers much greater potential to meet the demands of Soviet society and reflect Soviet reality than did abstract symphonies. He also expressed his concern that the preference among composers for writing large-scale works was leading to smaller forms being discredited, and he argued that mass songs and chamber music should not be neglected.

Despite such admonitions, it is clear that Soviet concert administrators did maintain an aversion to chamber music, which seems to have been regarded as too 'academic' and inaccessible for audiences. The All-Union string quartet competition of 1938, which certainly helped to raise the profile of chamber music, became the occasion for attacks in the press on 'ignorant' philharmonia bureaucrats for their 'lack of faith in the ability of the masses to appreciate serious classical music'. In general, however, composers tended to take the view that the form of a musical work was less important than its content. Kabalevskii asserted, in an article written in 1934, that Soviet musical culture should not exclude any genres except for those which were 'boring and vulgar'. Shaporin, writing in 1939, argued that the division which

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10 RGALI f. 631, op. 15, ed. khr. 44, l. 25. Cheliapov commented further that excessive length meant that 'an unprepared listener is often overwhelmed half-way through the work'.

11 Dela i dni' (p. 14). He remarked that, in his view, this hypertrophy of one genre at the expense of others was an unhealthy development.

12 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 107, ll. 5-6. Kerzhentsev shared this view: RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 310, ll. 37-8.

13 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 107, ll. 7-9; V. Shcherbachev, 'V chem zlo?', SI, 23 November 1934, p. 2.

some people tried to make between 'accessible' and 'inaccessible' musical forms was unhelpful and had a detrimental effect on composers' work.\textsuperscript{15}

**Soviet Themes**

Calls for composers to 'reflect the Soviet epoch' through their music resulted in the mass-production of programmatic works based on themes taken from socialist construction. Although the observation that 'Soviet reality presents an inexhaustible source of themes' became something of a commonplace at this time, the range of material used was in fact remarkably narrow, and reflected the standard iconography of the period.\textsuperscript{16} Typical examples of works on Soviet themes include Miaskovskii's *Kolkhoz* Symphony, Shteinberg (1883-1946)'s *Turkisib* symphony, dedicated to the Turkestan-Siberian railway construction project, and Chemberdzhi's symphony of 1933 which depicted in music the history of the Stalingrad tractor factory.\textsuperscript{17} Special events and anniversaries also provided the inspiration for musical works. Issues of *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* from the spring of 1933 were full of calls for Soviet composers to write works about the spring sowing campaign, and preparations for the composition of new music dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the October Revolution were already underway in April 1935.\textsuperscript{18}

The excessively narrow selection of themes used by Soviet composers came in for occasional criticism in the press and at meetings of musicians. In an article which appeared in *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* in 1937, composers were berated for their failure to write works on anti-religious themes in support of the campaign against the church.\textsuperscript{19} Lyricism in music, which had

\textsuperscript{15}Protiv poshlosti: o muzyke 'legkoi' i 'ser'eznoi', *SI*, 23 December 1934, p. 3; Iurii Shaporin, 'Tvorchestvo i masterstvo', *SI*, 27 April 1939, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{16}Gorodinskii, 'Sovetskiiu muzyku', (p. 12).

\textsuperscript{17}N. Cheliapov, 'Opera i simfoniia: puti sovetskoi muzyki', *SI*, 7 November 1933, p. 2; 'Delo doblesti', *SI*, 2 October 1933, p. 4. Chemberdzhi had spent 2 months at the factory during the preparation of this work. He later repudiated it as excessively dry and schematic, and claimed that the 'stilted pomposity of this work' was a result of it having been written under the degenerate influence of RAPM: N. Chemberdzhi, 'O chuvstve otvetstvennost', *SI*, 17 February 1936, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{18}*Iskusstvo-sevu', *SI*, 26 February 1933, p. 4; RGALI f. 631, op. 15, ed. khr. 44.

\textsuperscript{19}V. Gradov, 'Muzyka v bor'be s religiei: pochemu molchat kompozitory?', *SI*, 23 July 1937, p. 2. Gradov pointed out that while Soviet composers were ignoring the struggle against religion, priests were 'making cunning use of music' as a means of enticing young people into their churches.
been sidelined somewhat during the period of RAPM hegemony, came back into fashion during the 1930s. In lokhelson's first report as secretary of the newly-formed Leningrad Composers' Union, he remarked that 'when two members of the Komsomol who are lovers go for a sail on the lake, they're not going to sing *Nas Pobit*, *Pobit' Khoteli*; they need lyrical love songs with which to serenade one another.'

Celebration of the personality cult through music was to become a standard feature of the work of certain Soviet composers, and a great many works based on overtly political themes came to be written at this time. In a letter to Kaganovich written in January 1933, Gor'kii remarked that the recent Plenum of the Party Central Committee would make the perfect subject for an oratorio, and he expressed the opinion that Soviet composers must be deaf not to recognize the enormous potential of such occasions for inspiring new music. Mikhail Iudin (1893-1948) was one composer who was particularly prolific in this area: he announced in 1937 that he planned to follow up his *Kirov Requiem* and *Cantata on the Stalin Constitution* with a new Oratorio in honour of the forthcoming anniversary of the Revolution.

Prokof'ev also wrote a number of works on political texts: he was commissioned by the Radio Committee to compose a *Kantata k 20-letiiu sovetskoi vlasti* in 1935, and originally planned to base the work entirely on quotations from speeches by Lenin. This plan became the subject of some controversy within Party and government circles. Officials at the Arts Committee regarded the decision to compile a text from unconnected quotations as unacceptable, and they recommended the use of material by Soviet poets as a means of unifying the work. Molotov, who was approached by Tukhachevskii on the composer's behalf, rejected the objections of the Arts Committee leadership and said that the choice of text for the oratorio should be left to the composer to decide. The final version of the cantata, which required two

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23. RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khrr. 9, l. 4.
mixed choirs and four orchestras, was banned by the Arts Committee on the grounds that its music was allegedly incomprehensible and the setting of the words was insufficiently heroic.\textsuperscript{24}

**Classical Music**

The question of the view which a proletarian dictatorship should take towards the classical artistic heritage became the subject of wide-ranging debate in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. Following the Party resolution of April 1932, however, all such discussions were terminated. The attitude which had been adopted by certain elements in the Proletkul't - that the classical heritage was a repository of values alien to the proletariat - was wholly repudiated, and a new canon was established in which particular value was attached to the nineteenth century Russian classical school. Those who had espoused an iconoclastic approach to the classical legacy did not, in fact, make very great progress during the 1920s. Although the Cultural Revolution period saw the removal of certain 'bourgeois' works from concert programmes, this campaign had been spearheaded by RAPM extremists and composers such as Chaikovskii were soon reinstated.\textsuperscript{25} Despite the notoriety which such acts of cultural nihilism achieved, as well as the claims of later Soviet writers, it was only in fact a small minority in the proletarian music movement that ever advocated the rejection of the artistic heritage of the past.

The musical legacy of pre-revolutionary Russia was given a prominent position in the Soviet Union of the 1930s, both as approved repertoire for concert performances, and as providing suitable models for Soviet composers to follow. Of course, the oft-quoted maxim that Soviet composers should strive to create new 'classics' on the basis of the past legacy automatically raises the question of which of the old classics should be used. Russian nationalism came to be a distinctive aspect of Stalinism in the 1930s, and the nineteenth century Russian classical school became a particular object of veneration among musicians. Works by the group of composers known collectively under the sobriquet of the Moguchaia Kuchka ('mighty handful') - Balakirev, Borodin, Cui, Rimskii-Korsakov and Musorgskii - were especially revered during this period. Moreover, the nationalistic musical writings of the

\textsuperscript{24}The cantata received its first performance in 1966. I Nest'ev, Zhest' Sergeia Prokof'eva (Moscow, 1973), pp. 402-3. It is ironic that Kerzhentsev - who as head of the Radio Committee in 1935 had been responsible for commissioning the work - was the person who eventually rejected it.

\textsuperscript{25}See Chapter One.
nineteenth century critic Vladimir Stasov came to occupy a prominent place in Soviet musicological thought. Iokhel'son argued in an article published in May 1933 that the underestimation of the significance of the legacy of Russian musical culture was a 'peculiar manifestation of petty-bourgeois tendencies'.

These composers were celebrated in various ways: statues were erected in their honour, their works were revived and their anniversaries celebrated. The centenary of Musorgskii's birth in 1939 was marked by lectures, jubilee concerts, the publication of effusive articles and brochures on this 'composer of genius' and the relevance of his works for present-day Soviet listeners, as well as the establishment of 'Musorgskii scholarships' at the Moscow and Leningrad Conservatories. Articles detailing the lives and works of these composers tended to dwell at considerable length on the use which they had made of folk music sources and the extent to which their music was imbued with a spirit of narodnost' and realism. The canonization of certain composers and their works was also a feature of contemporary German music policy: in a speech delivered in Regensburg in June 1937, Goebbels appropriated the image of Bruckner to suit Nazi propaganda purposes.

The reinterpretation of the life and works of certain non-Russian classical composers in a Marxist-Leninist light was a project undertaken by a number of Soviet musicologists. Beethoven, who in the 1920s had been adopted by RAPM as little short of an honorary Russian, continued to be held in the highest regard by the Soviet musical establishment of the 1930s. In an article on Beethoven which appeared in the newspaper Muzyka in March 1937, the composer was depicted as a passionate democrat and convinced republican, who embodied in his music


28 For example G. Khubov, 'N. A. Rimskii-Korsakov', Pravda, 21 June 1938, p. 6. One musicologist who disliked the banal character of the articles produced during jubilee years remarked in 1938 that: 'every jubilee figure is said to be a realist, and his work - close to the people': M. Grinberg, 'Posle konferentsii muzykovvedov', SI, 22 July 1938, pp. 2-3.

the highest and most progressive ideals of his era. Kerzhentsev, in a speech made in April 1937, picked out the musical legacies of Beethoven and Wagner as particularly valuable for Soviet composers to study. He characterized their music as incorporating great philosophical themes such as the struggle of mankind for human rights and against oppression.

Controversy over the issue of what the correct Soviet view of Bach should be reached the pages of Sovetskoe Iskusstvo in the summer of 1932, when the critic Blium came under attack for allegedly seeking to prove that all of Bach's works were penetrated with religious content. Blium retorted in his defence that Bach and Beethoven were great artists, rather than revolutionaries, and that to view them in anything other than an apolitical light was 'vulgar simplification'. A book written by the musicologist Georgii Khubov, published in 1936, put forward what was to become the official Soviet line on Bach. He argued that although, given the historical period in which he worked, Bach had hardly been in a position to reject religion, his ambivalence towards the church was clearly revealed through his music in the way in which he refused to recognize or accept the 'aesthetic norms' of the church music of his day. One way of getting over the problem of Bach's use of religious texts was suggested in 1938 by the pianist and Moscow Conservatoire professor Genrikh Neigauz (1888-1964), who remarked in an interview that it would surely be possible to write new texts to those works by Bach which had 'become out of date'.

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30 Liudvig Van-Betkhoven', Muzyka, 26 March 1937, p. 1. The writer claimed that the true worth of Beethoven's music was only properly understood by Soviet audiences. This echoed a review of the performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the closing ceremony of the Congress of Soviets in December 1936, which remarked on how the composer's dreams about the liberation of mankind were only now being realized in the Soviet Union: A. Al'shvang, 'Deviatiaia simfoniiia Betkhovena', SM, no. 3 (1937), 57-64. The conductor on this occasion, Aleksandr Gauk, ended up having to perform the symphony more than 25 times over the following three months, and became rather fed up with the work as a result: Gauk, p. 94.

31 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 268, l. 4. He did, however, warn against the dangers of canonizing two composers at the expense of all the rest.


34 Ts. Plotkin, 'Beseda s masterom', Sf, 2 October 1938, p. 3.
Opera

Opera was a genre which achieved a particularly elevated status in the Soviet Union during the second half of the 1930s. The operas which were promoted by the Soviet authorities nevertheless had to conform to certain standards. The canonization in 1936 of Dzerzhinskii's *Tikhii Don* as the ideal Soviet 'song opera' came in the wake of years of debate as to the path which Soviet opera should follow, the correct models to imitate and appropriate themes to use.\(^{35}\)

Attempts to revolutionize old operatic libretti had been abandoned after the Cultural Revolution, and the whole project came in for sharp criticism at a meeting of employees at the Bolshoi held in February 1936.\(^{36}\) Nevertheless, the re-working and occasional complete rewriting of libretti in order to adapt operas to the prevailing political climate continued throughout the 1930s. Perhaps the best example of this is provided by the case of Glinka's *Ivan Susanin*, which underwent two metamorphoses in the Soviet period. In 1924 it was produced in Odessa under the title of *Za Serp i Molot* (For Hammer and Sickle) and given a contemporary plot. In 1939 the work was revived at the Bolshoi with a new libretto which removed all mention of the Tsar and portrayed the Poles in the worst possible light.\(^{37}\) Anti-Polish sentiments were strong in the Kremlin at this time, and Bulgakov had been criticized by a Party official in April 1937 for his sympathetic portrayal of the Poles in the libretto to *Minin i Pozharskii* (Minin and Pozharskii).\(^{38}\) A notable production of a revised version of a classical opera was Meierkhol'd's innovative staging of Chaikovskii's *Pikovaia Dama* at the Leningrad Malyi Opera Theatre in 1935.\(^{39}\) His decision to commission a new libretto for the work from the poet Stenich became the focus of considerable criticism, as although the new version was

\(^{35}\) 'Song opera' was a term used to describe many of the Soviet operas written in the 1930s which concentrated on lyricism and the use of folk themes.

\(^{36}\) RGALI f. 648, op. 2, ed. khr. 1033, II. 34-5.


\(^{38}\) *Dnevnik Eleny Bulgakovoy* (Moscow, 1990), p. 138.

\(^{39}\) The première was held on 25 January 1935, and the production was subsequently taken on tour to Moscow in January 1936.
closer to Pushkin's original text, it was said to have deprived Chaikovskii's score of much of its thematic sense.  

Soviet attitudes towards Wagner - perhaps the most politicized of all opera composers ever - were subject to considerable fluctuation. His operas became the focus of attack during the Cultural Revolution period, and the Society of Wagnerian Art was shut down in 1930. A resurgence of interest in his works in 1932-3 was cut short by Hitler's rise to power in Germany, following which performances of Wagner's music in the Soviet Union became increasingly infrequent. There nevertheless remained a number of Soviet critics who continued to champion Wagner's work, and 1937-8 saw the publication of two articles by Soviet Wagnerians in the central press, both of which portrayed the composer as a revolutionary and argued that the appropriation of his music by the Nazis served only to 'falsify' his musical legacy.  

During the early 1930s the concern was raised frequently on the pages of the musical press that opera was in danger of becoming 'the most backward front' of Soviet theatre as a whole. Concern was voiced about the apparent reluctance on the part of opera theatres to produce new works by Soviet composers. Although there had been a marked increase in the number of opera theatres in existence across the Soviet Union since the revolution, theatre managers generally preferred to hedge their bets, staging classical works by composers such as Verdi which could guarantee reasonable audiences, rather than branching out with productions of contemporary works. Encouraging theatres to cooperate in the staging of new Soviet operas was therefore placed at the top of the agenda, and proposals were put forward concerning

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43By 1932, opera houses had been built in several provincial cities including Rostov, Samara and Saratov. 'Rekonstruktsiia muzykal'noi teatra', *SI*, 20 January 1932, p. 2. Cheliapov, 'Opera i simfoni'. One audience member complained in a letter to the editor of *Rabochii i Teatr*, no 3 (1937), 46, that the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad had not staged any Soviet operas for the last six years.
the need to provide opera composers with good libretti and material support during the writing process.  

Even in instances where new operas were commissioned by theatre directors, the productions did not always get off the drawing-board. Such was the case with the opera 1905 God, co-authored by two of the founder members of the Prokoll, Davidenko and Shekhter. Commissioned by Stanislavskii and completed in 1934, it was only ever performed on the radio from the piano score. This particular opera provides an interesting example of one of the paths of development which Soviet opera might have taken as a whole. Written on an overtly revolutionary theme, and intended primarily for proletarian performers and audiences, the opera made particular use of musical symbolism, including themes taken from popular revolutionary songs, as well as sound effects using machine music techniques. The leading role in the opera was given to the chorus, with musical 'conversations' between individual characters and the chorus echoing certain scenes from Musorgskii's Boris Godunov. Despite several favourable comments on the work made during a discussion of Soviet opera held jointly by the Composers' Union and the All-Union Theatre Society in April 1935, Cheliapov remained unimpressed. He claimed that the work represented a stage in the development of Soviet opera which had already been passed, and that the main characters in the opera were treated as symbols rather than as real people.

The really decisive moment for the future development of Soviet opera came in January 1936 with the two articles which appeared in Pravda, one praising Dzerzhinskii's Tikhii Don and the other condemning Shostakovich's Ledi Makbet. This intervention by the Party leadership set the parameters within which Soviet opera composers were expected to work, and 'song operas', based on the model of Tikhii Don, came to dominate the scene in Soviet opera-writing. Dzerzhinskii laid great emphasis on his use of folk song themes, and on the importance

44 G. Khubov, 'Dela i plany opernogo teatra', Pravda, 29 July 1938, p. 4.

45 Neil Edmunds, 'A Soviet Proletarian Opera: The Year 1905 by Aleksandr Davidenko and Boris Shekhter', Muziek & Wetenschap, 4 (1994), 191-208. Davidenko's death in May 1934 meant that the work was never orchestrated. The radio performance took place on 9 December 1935 as part of the celebrations of the anniversary of the 1905 revolution.

46 Diskussia o sovetskoi oper'e, SM, no. 7-8 (1935), 38-55 (p. 44).

47 See Chapter Six, pp. 170-1.
of using lyrical melodies as well as marching songs in operatic works. It was not until 1936, therefore, that the 'correct' future path for Soviet opera was clearly laid down, and the ideas of those who sought a more experimental and innovatory direction were finally and decisively rejected. Stalin's appeal to opera composers to create a new repertoire of 'Soviet classics' was taken up enthusiastically by several composers, particularly by members of the younger generation, and the drive to write new Soviet operas was accompanied by a debate in the press on the question of what kinds of themes were deemed suitable for opera composers to use. Their attempts to create a Soviet operatic repertoire were attacked in 1938 by the critic Aleksandr Shaverdian (1903-54), who asserted that 'a topical theme and correct creative intentions... do not ensure music of a high ideological and stylistic standard' and criticized Dzerzhinskii, Oles' Chishko (1895-1976) and Khrennikov for failing to explore the most important musical and dramatic elements of the genre.

Platon Kerzhentsev took particular interest in the development of Soviet opera. In a speech delivered to the Moscow Composers' Union in April 1937 he repeated the call for composers to write works which were 'saturated with political content', and then proceeded to clarify this by stating that operas which had no obvious political theme could still be regarded as political if they explored some aspect of Soviet life in a creative way. He commented that in his view, too many composers were working on themes taken from the Civil War, and that it was imperative for them to broaden their purview to include more varied subject-matter. In a letter written in July 1937 to Samosud, who at that time occupied the post of music director at the

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48I. Dzerzhinskii, 'Mysli kompizitora', RT, no. 1 (1937), 10-11. Prokof'ev was less than flattering in his assessment of Dzerzhinskii's music, which he described in his notes for a 1939 speech as 'illiterate'. RGALI f. 1929, op. 2, ed. khr. 111.

49The Composers' Union discussions which followed the attacks on Shostakovich saw accusations levelled at the musicologist, Ivan Sollertinskii (1902-44), that he had encouraged Soviet composers to emulate operatic works by Krenek and Berg.

50S. Samosud, 'Novyi etap v zhizni nashego teatra', Pravda, 21 January 1936, p. 5.

51A. Shaverdian, 'Zametki o sovetskoi opere', SI, 28 June 1938, p. 3.

Bolshoi, Kerzhentsev outlined his commissioning plans for 1938. He stressed the need to commission heroic, monumental operas, written in a Wagnerian style, and recommended the Paris Commune and Tolstoi's War and Peace as suitable themes. He also emphasized the importance of writing Soviet comic operas and operettas, and suggested works by Gogol, Ostrovskii and Molière as possible sources.53

Despite calls from various sources for composers to turn their attention to writing Soviet operettas, little was produced in this field during the 1930s. In a resolution dating from 1928, Glavrepertkom had pronounced that while operetta was an important genre, Soviet composers should be careful to avoid elements of 'farce, pornography, adultery, triteness and salon intrigues' common to operettas of the Viennese school.54 The lack of Soviet operettas was remarked on by Arkad'ev in an article which appeared in 1935, in which he commented that a 'scornful attitude' existed among dramatists towards the genre, and that composers were relying too heavily on adaptation and imitation.55

Beyond such general guidelines, Kerzhentsev also took an active role in holding discussions and conducting correspondence with opera composers concerning their work. He gave detailed advice to Chishko, Dzerzhinskii, Asafev and Kabalevskii concerning virtually every aspect of their work, closely scrutinizing the choice of themes, libretti, orchestration, melodic development and treatment of folk songs.56 Despite this level of official scrutiny, however, the Arts Committee came under fire from the Party Central Committee in 1940 for its 'incorrect and harmful policy of non-intervention in theatre repertoire', in particular with regard to Soviet opera theatres. It was claimed that neither the Arts Committee nor the Composers' Unions had proved capable of stimulating composers to write new operas on contemporary

53RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 331, l. 57. He cautioned, however, that any opera based on War and Peace should take as its theme the struggle of the Russian people against foreign invasion, rather than the romance between Pierre and Natasha. Kerzenstein's view of opera was essentially Wagnerian: he regarded it as a deeply progressive 'total' art form, by means of which themes of great philosophical content could be presented in an accessible way: RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 310, ll. 37-8.

54Ravich, pp. 6-7.

55M. Arkad'ev, 'Za sovetskuiu operettu', SI, 4 February 1935.

56RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 331. Chishko for one seems to have been less than impressed with the advice he was given concerning the orchestration of his opera Bronenosets Potemkin (Battleship Potemkin): he thanked Kerzhentsev for his suggestions, but said that he thought it best to leave the orchestration as it stood.
themes, and that the 'low ideological and artistic standard of performances' was the main reason for the decline in audience figures.\(^57\)

The lack of high quality libretti for Soviet composers to work with was a constant problem. In an attempt to address the situation, the Arts Committee made a ruling in April 1936 which stated that composers should submit their proposed libretti for inspection by the Committee before starting work on the music.\(^58\) This precaution resulted in the premature abandonment of a number of operatic projects. The novelist, Mikhail Bulgakov, who worked as a librettist at the Bolshoi after his departure from the Moscow Arts Theatre in September 1936, was criticized by Kerzhentsev on more than one occasion, particularly for his failure to write libretti on an epic scale and his reluctance to make sufficient dramatic use of the chorus.\(^59\) Perhaps the most famous example of an opera being banned because of an unsuitable libretto was the case of Dem'ian Bednyi's comic opera \textit{Bogatyri}. In November 1936, an Arts Committee resolution was passed, which criticized the work for its supposedly inaccurate portrayal of history.\(^60\)

**Jazz**

Debates about whether jazz should essentially be regarded as the music of the oppressed blacks of the American South or whether - on the contrary - it symbolized the decadent culture of the Western bourgeoisie surfaced periodically in Soviet Russia without any firm conclusions ever being reached. Perhaps the most notorious attack on jazz ever launched in the Soviet press was contained in Gor'kii's article 'On the Music of the Gross', which appeared in \textit{Pravda} in 1928, in which he condemned jazz as both a cause and a symptom of the collapse of Western civilization.\(^61\) Gor'kii's argument was taken up enthusiastically by members of RAPM during

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57RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 125, d. 11, ll. 30-4.

58RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khr. 14, l. 56.

59RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 331, l. 95. Kerzhentsev disliked Bulgakov's libretti for two joint projects with Asafev: \textit{Minin i Pozharskii} and \textit{Petr Pervogo} (Peter I). 'Neizvestnoe proizvedenie mastera', \textit{SM}, no. 2 (1988), 48-9. The opera \textit{Rashel} (Rachel), with music by Glier was the only operatic work by Bulgakov to reach the stage. It received its première in 1943 after the writer's death.

60\O p'ese 'Bogatyri' Dem'iana Bednogo', \textit{Pravda}, 14 November 1936, p. 3. The piece was set to music by Borodin.

their campaign against degenerate and bourgeois musical influences during the period of the first Five Year Plan, and Lunacharskii was outspoken in his attacks on jazz at the Leningrad Music Conference of 1929.\(^{62}\)

Although Gorkii and the RAPM critics of jazz failed in their crusade to banish this degenerate form of music from the Socialist Motherland, nevertheless its opponents did not give up the struggle, and attacks on jazz resurfaced in the Soviet press in 1936. The \textit{Pravda} editorial on \textit{Ledi Makbet} accused Shostakovich of borrowing 'nervy, convulsive, epileptic music from jazz', and later in the year the editorial board of \textit{Izvestiia} provided jazz-haters with a mouthpiece for their views. The opening salvo in the \textit{Pravda - Izvestiia} polemic on jazz of November to December 1936 was both an attack on the whole genre by a pair of conservative musicians who clearly disliked jazz \textit{per se}, and a cry for help on financial grounds: the two writers were alarmed at the way in which jazz bands were beginning to usurp the position of 'serious' musicians in places of entertainment at summer resorts.\(^{63}\) The fact that jazz artistes tended to command significantly higher salaries than classical musicians was a major bone of contention within the musical profession at this time.\(^{64}\)

Of course, the Soviet Union was not the only country to witness attacks on jazz during this period. America had been the scene of jazz controversies in the 1920s, with Henry Ford's \textit{Dearborn Independent} magazine spearheading a campaign against the genre, which it described as ruinous to public morals; while in Nazi Germany jazz was attacked by critics who regarded it, somewhat ironically, as a manifestation of 'cultural Bolshevism'.\(^{65}\) The key difference between these attacks and the Soviet campaigns against jazz was that Soviet critics did not seek

\(^{62}\)Lunacharskii was particularly hostile towards jazz dancing, which he regarded as a flagrant display of unhealthy eroticism, dreamed up by the Western bourgeoisie who wanted men to live 'not so much by their heads as through their sexual organs': A. V. Lunacharskii, 'Sotsial'nne istoki muzykal'nogo iskusstva', in Korev, pp. 16-27 (p. 26).

\(^{63}\)See Starr, Chapter 8 for further details of this episode.

\(^{64}\)William Campbell, \textit{Villi the Clown} (London: Faber, 1981), p. 69. Jazz stars, such as Aleksandr Tsfasman (1906-71) and Leonid Utesov (1895-1982) commanded huge salaries and enjoyed extravagant life-styles.

to exploit the race card when formulating their arguments as to why jazz was a decadent musical genre.

Despite the vehemence of many of the articles published in Izvestiia, however, jazz was able to muster some powerful supporters within the Arts Committee, including Kerzhentsev and his deputy, Boris Shumiatskii, both of whom contributed articles to Pravda in defence of the genre. While neither went so far as to claim that jazz constituted a model example of genuinely proletarian music - an argument which had been advanced by some Soviet jazz fans in the past - both held to the view that it was possible to distinguish between vulgar and decadent commercial Western bourgeois jazz, and a more positive and healthy variety of 'proletarian' jazz music. This tenuous distinction between two supposedly entirely separate forms of jazz had received its first airing in the Soviet press in the mid-1920s, and had mainly been put forward by jazz fans who hoped to carve out a niche for their own favoured musical genre in the USSR. The obvious popularity of jazz - in particular among members of the 'new élite' of Soviet bureaucrats - helped to secure its position in Soviet society, and recognition of the fact that jazz was there to stay was probably the main reason for the resurrection at this time of the theory of 'proletarian' jazz.

Leaders of the Arts Committee were not the only supporters of jazz to be found in high places. Individual Party leaders who were known to be jazz-fans included Voroshilov, who is

66 Anti-semitism, however, may well have been a factor inspiring a dislike of jazz among some critics. A high proportion of successful Soviet jazz musicians - including Utesov and Tsfasman - were of Jewish origin.

67 B. Shumiatskii, 'Protiv khanzhei i sviatosh', Pravda, 24 November 1936, p. 6; Kerzhentsev, 'O muzyke'. They called on jazz composers to work on improving the quality of their output. This intervention is illustrative of Kerzhentsev's broadly liberal attitude towards the arts, since he made no secret of his own personal dislike of popular music. Utesov recorded a conversation he had with Kerzhentsev on the subject, when he pointed out that Lenin did not share Kerzhentsev's antipathy towards light music. Krupskaia, Utesov pointed out, had recounted how Lenin used to enjoy going to hear the popular singer Montegues singing at Montmartre. 'Yes, but you are no Montegues' was Kerzhentsev's response. 'Well, you are no Lenin, Platon Mikhailovich' replied Utesov. L. Utesov, Spasibo serdtse! (Moscow, 1976), p. 256.

68 Starr, p. 97.

69 This 'new élite' were in a position to spend their leisure time at restaurants such as the Savoy, the Metropol and the National in Moscow, all of which provided jazz bands. The proliferation of jazz bands at this time gave rise to some concern among Arts Committee officials, who noted in 1937 that the popularity of jazz had 'led to the spontaneous organization of little-qualified, sometimes hack-work jazz ensembles'. They were particularly concerned that this problem had not been addressed in the third Five Year Plan; RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 63, l. 88.
said to have ordered his Red Army officers to take dancing lessons, and Kaganovich, who in November 1936 initiated a project with the help of Leonid Utesov to set up jazz bands among Soviet railway workers.\textsuperscript{70} The fact that certain jazz musicians and ensembles were able to win the patronage of Soviet leaders was clearly a useful point in their favour, and jazz bands were invited to play at Kremlin functions on more than one occasion.\textsuperscript{71}

The aftermath of the \textit{Pravda-Izvestiia} debate saw jazz placed in a position which, while somewhat precarious, was far from being doomed. Indeed, Utesov remarked in his memoirs that after the final \textit{Pravda} article on jazz in December 1936, the atmosphere surrounding jazz lightened and it became considerably easier to work.\textsuperscript{72} A debate on the subject of jazz was held in the Leningrad Composers' Union in January 1937, and many of the speakers reinforced Kerzhentsev's distinction between the two separate schools of jazz, and called on composers to turn their attention to the cultivation of a new genre of 'Soviet jazz'.\textsuperscript{73} This discussion also served to highlight the low esteem in which light music in general had been held within the Union. Several speakers made reference to the 'disparaging attitude' of Soviet composers in general, and of the Union in particular towards almost all forms of popular light music, and argued that such condescension should no longer be tolerated.\textsuperscript{74} Dunaevskii - the king of Soviet light music in the 1930s - commented on more than one occasion during 1937 that there was no such thing as a Soviet style in jazz, for the simple reason that very few Soviet composers worked in the sphere of jazz composition. He recommended that the Union should overcome its 'lordly' attitude towards light genres and encourage suitably qualified composers to write works for jazz ensemble as an initial step towards the creation of a separate school of Soviet jazz.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{70}Stites, \textit{Russian Popular Culture}, p. 75; Leonid Utesov, 'Kak sozdalsia pervyi zheleznodorozhnoe dzhaz-orkestr', in \textit{Kak organizoval' zheleznodorozhnye ansambl' pesni i pliaski i dzhaz-orkestr}, (Moscow, 1939), pp. 67-9; G. Polianovskii, 'Ansambli i dzhaz zheleznodorozhnikov', \textit{Pravda}, 20 July 1937, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{71}Starr p. 126. See Chapter Two, p. 50.

\textsuperscript{72}Utesov, \textit{Spasibo}, p. 257.

\textsuperscript{73}RGALI f. 2062, op. 1, ed. khr. 331, ll. 20-24.

\textsuperscript{74}RGALI f. 2062, op. 1, ed. khr. 331, ll. 43-51.

\textsuperscript{75}RT, no. 8 (1937), 50.
It was intended that Soviet jazz should constitute a recognizably different form of light music, which should enjoy genuine popularity amongst ordinary listeners. Whereas RAPM ideologues had sought - without success - to create an alternative repertoire of popular songs which would eschew all elements of jazz, the strategy which came to be adopted in the later 1930s encouraged composers to make liberal use of jazz influences in the creation of the new genre. A number of Soviet composers had been advocating the development of a high-quality, non-frivolous jazz repertoire for some time, and they had been vehement in their criticism of the tendency among some of their colleagues to regard light music as somehow second rate.\footnote{76 V. Shebalin, 'Protiv poshlosti', Shecherbachev, 'V chem zlo?', SI, 23 November 1934, p. 2.}

Some critics argued in favour of using adaptations of folk and classical music in the search for a new jazz repertoire, and Dunaevskii called for the creation of large symphonic and concerto forms for jazz ensembles to play.\footnote{77 Muzyka v foie kino' and I. Dunaevskii, 'Sovetskому dzhazu - novyi repertuar', Muzyka, 6 March 1937, p. 5. Such views were not shared by everyone: Marian Koval' was of the opinion that jazz worked best when no attempts were made to integrate it with other genres: 'Talantlivaia ekstsentriada ili bezkusitsa?', Muzyka, 26 March 1937, p. 6.} One of the main priorities in this search for new forms of light music was the distancing of Soviet jazz from blatant Western influences, and articles on the subject tended to lay particular emphasis on the extent to which the new Soviet jazz repertoire differed from decadent Western themes and techniques.\footnote{78 B. Renskii, 'Za sovetskuiu tematiku', Muzyka, 26 March 1937, p. 6. See Chapter Five, pp. 149-50.}

The Sovietization of jazz was taken a step further in 1938 with the establishment of the State Jazz Orchestra of the USSR. It was intended that this ensemble of highly-qualified musicians would provide leadership 'in relation to general artistic tendencies and in the field of repertoire policy' to other Soviet jazz ensembles, and it was hoped that prominent Soviet composers and directors would be attracted to work with the orchestra.\footnote{79 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 371; 'V komitete po delam iskusstva', SI, 8 July 1938, p. 4.} Despite the large sums of money invested in the venture, however, the State Jazz Orchestra was not a resounding success. Its core repertoire was comprised of versions of light classical works by Rakhmaninov and Chaikovskii; Shostakovich's \textit{Suita dlja Dzhaza} (Suite for Jazz Orchestra); and adaptations

\cite{76,77,78}
of folk tunes and mass songs. By all accounts, its audiences were generally unimpressed with the performances they attended.  

Mass Songs and Light Music

The genre of mass song, so beloved by RAPM, increased its popularity with audiences in the 1930s, despite the liquidation of its former champion. The reason for this is partly a result of the fact that many of the composers who worked in this field in the 1930s began to incorporate elements of jazz, particularly syncopated rhythms, into their work. Although a significant body of opinion continued to regard mass song as an important 'means of direct agitation', many of the mass songs of this period, in particular those written by the Leningrad composer Isaak Dunaevskii, tended to revolve around themes of the 'happy life' enjoyed by Soviet citizens, rather than overtly promoting the class struggle of the proletariat.

Dunaevskii's music became extremely popular during the 1930s, thanks chiefly to his composition of the scores for musical comedy films such as Veselye Rebiata (1934), Tsirk (Circus: 1936) and Volga Volga (1938). Richard Stites has argued that these films exemplified the officially-sponsored Soviet popular culture, through which people could be encouraged to enjoy themselves within a controlled framework of order and morality. Films of this kind certainly attracted large audiences. Comparisons were made between Dunaevskii and Chaikovskii in terms of the popularity each enjoyed with mass audiences. Dunaevskii had his critics: one speaker at the Leningrad discussions on formalism in February 1936 described Veselye Rebiata as 'a deeply harmful film', and characterised the lyrical song Serdtse (Heart) from this film as 'a disgraceful phenomenon of Soviet music', and Prokof'ev regarded Dunaevskii's music as vulgar and socially regressive. Nevertheless, he won himself a number of friends, or at least admirers, in high places. Veselye Rebiata was greatly admired by members of the Politbiuro when they watched it at a private showing in July 1934, and


81Speech by Belyi, 1932: RTsKhIDNI f. 540, op. 1, d. 21, l. 25.

82RGALI f. 2062, op. 1, ed. khr. 331, l. 36; GTsMMK f. 296, d. 481, l. 39; RGALI f. 1929, op. 2, ed. khr. 111.
Dunaevskii's status as a highly-favoured composer received official confirmation in 1936 when he was awarded the Order of the Red Flag.83

Dunaevskii's style of mass song composition made considerable use of techniques borrowed from jazz, and all of these films drew heavily on Hollywood models. Gerald S. Smith has drawn attention to the way in which songs of this type, with their tone of relentless optimism and sentimental Soviet patriotism, could be used to propagandize official myths - none better than Dunaevskii's *Pesnia o Rodine* (Song of the Motherland) - but he fails to stress the genuine popularity which many of these works enjoyed.84 Dunaevskii aside, however, a great many of the mass songs written at this time were exceptionally clichéd and banal, and were recognized as such by Soviet critics.85 In a discussion of the genre held in the Moscow Composers' Union in 1938, speakers drew attention to the dangers inherent in the mechanical repetition of musical material, and Kabalevskii remarked on the way in which 'the most varied themes find completely identical musical embodiment in songs by different authors'.86

Two other branches of light music which became embroiled in controversy in the Soviet Union during the 1930s were gypsy music and the music of the variety stage or estrada. Both genres came under attack during the Cultural Revolution and in the years which followed: for example, in March 1935 a ruling by Glavrepetikom drew attention to the proliferation of vulgar, low-quality musical ensembles which were performing 'pseudo-gypsy romances' and 'vulgar tavern songs' on the variety stage and in restaurants. It criticized local repertoire committees for their lack of vigilance in this area and called on them to conduct systematic checks on the concert programmes of venues of this kind.87 The use of the phrase 'pseudo-gypsy' as a term of abuse in this context would seem to imply that 'genuine' gypsy music was considered to be perfectly acceptable. This impression is reinforced by articles such as the one which appeared

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83 Murin, 'Ochen' sil'no'. See Chapter Two, pp. 49-50.


86a. Solodukho, 'Diskussiiia o masssovoi pesne', *Sl*, 8 February 1938, p. 3.

87 *O kontrole*, pp. 56-7. Variety music was probably the most popular musical genre of this period.
in *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* in 1936, in which the singer Luk'ianchenko was attacked for performing songs which had 'nothing in common with genuine gypsy folk art'. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that gypsy music ever enjoyed official favour. The fact that gypsy ensembles had figured prominently as one of the traditional forms of upper-class entertainment in Tsarist Russia made it unlikely that the Soviet leadership would ever extend its wholehearted approval to the genre.\(^{88}\) A tour of the Russian Far East by the Shishkina gypsy ensemble became the subject of official investigation by the local NKVD organs of Khabarovskii *krai* in 1935. Their report alleged that the musicians had been performing banned tavern romances and songs from the Odessa criminal underground, and that one of their concerts had been followed by a drunken orgy.\(^{89}\)

**Folk Music**

Discussions of Soviet policies towards folk music need to take account of the different sub-categories included under the general heading of *narodnaia muzyka*.\(^{90}\) Although the traditional folk songs and dances of the various peoples of the Soviet Union constituted the main elements of the genre, these could be adapted in performance to an almost unrecognizable degree without forfeiting the generic title of 'folk music'. Also included under the umbrella heading of folk music were contemporary songs written in a traditional folk style, a genre to which a considerable number of Soviet composers turned their attention during this period. Proletarian music groups such as RAPM had taken an ambivalent attitude towards traditional folk music. Although Lenin was known to have praised the work of the Piatnitskii Ensemble, which specialized during the 1920s in the field of 'authentic' folk music performances, a strong body of opinion in Proletkult and RAPM circles took a hostile view of folk art.\(^{91}\)

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\(^{88}\) Nevertheless, a gypsy orchestra continued to operate at the Prague Restaurant in Moscow throughout the 1930s: *O pseudonarodnom iskusstve*, *SI*, 5 April 1936, p. 1.

\(^{89}\) RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khr. 14, ll. 134-7. They called on the Arts Committee to implement stricter controls over touring ensembles.

\(^{90}\) The term *narodnyi* can be translated as 'national', 'folk' and 'people's'.

\(^{91}\) Lenin’s meeting with Piatnitskii in September 1918, following a concert given in the Kremlin, is documented in M. Koval, *S pesnii skvoz' gody* (Moscow: Sovetskii Kompozitor, 1968), p. 67. The term 'authentic' is used here in a broad sense to mean traditional folk music, as opposed to contemporary works written in a folk music idiom, or large-scale symphonic works which made use of folk themes.
their philosophy, folk music was one aspect of the backward legacy of peasant culture which reflected the ideology of the former ruling classes and could serve to promote kulak attitudes. Folk music was one area where RAPM and ASM attitudes tended to coincide, with members of the Association of Contemporary Music sharing the view that traditional folk singing was undesirable in that it could serve to promote a cult of the pre-revolutionary village. Despite this antipathy on the part of RAPM towards authentic folk music, however, Movtsy nevertheless acknowledged the importance of folk music sources as a basis for original composition.

In the aftermath of collectivization, a notable shift can be seen in the portrayal of the peasant in Soviet culture. Once the 'peasant problem' had finally been laid to rest, folk culture lost its stigma as a source of values antithetical to the interests of the state, and the image of the peasant in the Soviet media became a positive one. Gorodinskii, writing in 1933, asserted that it was 'leftist deviation' to argue that peasant songs were a regressive influence. The process of rehabilitating the image of the peasantry was furthered in particular by Maxim Gor'kii in his speech delivered at the Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers in 1934. In stressing the optimism of folklore, its capacity for expressing the deep aspirations of the masses and its high artistic value, he indicated to all concerned that folk art had received the official seal of approval. Once the concept of folk art as the embodiment of the genuine collective creativity of the Soviet peoples had hardened into official scripture, the use of folklore for social and political purposes became standard practice.

It is not hard to discern the main reasons why folklore came to play a more visible role and acquire a more positive image in the Soviet Union of the 1930s. Folk culture generally tends to incorporate conservative, hierarchical and patriarchal values, and Russian folk culture

93Smith, 'Soviet Arts Policy', Chapter 2.
94Edmunds, 'Music to the Masses', p. 8.
was no exception in this regard. The increasing centralization of power in the Soviet Union during the 1930s, together with Stalin's repudiation of egalitarianism and the emergence of a new élite, made the promotion of such conservative cultural values an attractive proposition to the Soviet leadership. Furthermore, James von Geldern has pointed out the way in which the reformulation of Soviet identity in the 1930s was accompanied by a major shift in cultural geography, with the assimilation of folk culture in the 1930s initiated not at the local level, but from the centre.

The apparently contradictory phenomenon of a twentieth century folklore revival taking place in an industrial or industrializing country was in no way unique to the Soviet Union. A great many Western countries saw the rise of folk music movements at this time, and these revivals had their roots in a number of different, often entirely conflicting, contemporary movements. In America, for example, the folk music revival was championed both by communist and left-wing music associations, particularly after the proclamation by the Comintern of the Popular Front; as well as by white conservative pressure groups which feared that the rise of immigrant ghettos posed a threat to traditional Anglo-American cultural values.97 Judging from this example, as well as from the parallel folk music revivals which took place in England and Germany at this time, it appears that folk revivalists, from whichever end of the political spectrum, shared several common concerns. The belief that a cultural crisis had been engendered by industrialization, urbanization and the emergence of commercial popular culture led different groups to seek to reforge a sense of community by calling for a return to the perceived social cohesiveness of the pre-industrial village.98

Practical activities conducted during the 1930s in the field of folk music can be divided into three broad categories: the collection of folk music materials; the use of folk themes or folk

97Left-wing music groups in the USA came under a considerable degree of Soviet influence at this time, and it is worth noting that left-wing groups in America went through exactly the same shift from opposition to active support of folk music as had occurred in the USSR. Carl Sands (Charles Seeger), a member of the Workers' Music Association Composers' Collective, wrote in 1934 that 'many folksongs are complacent, melancholy, defeatist, intended to make slaves endure their lot - pretty but not the stuff for a militant proletariat to feed upon'. Nevertheless, in the later 1930s the American Music League came out in active support of the use of folk music as a vehicle by which to propagate revolutionary ideas. Robbie Lieberman, 'My Song is My Weapon' (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), pp. 28-36.

genres as a basis for original composition; and the promotion of folk music repertoire among amateur ensembles. The more large-scale and prominent folklore-collection projects included one launched by Kaganovich in Moscow oblast' in 1934; the expedition made to Kuibyshevskii krai in 1935-6; and the series of trips made by a brigade from Moscow Conservatoire to the Arctic to record Chukchi and Eskimo music, the first of which took place in 1936. The music sections of these brigades tended to concentrate on the recording of folk songs, which would then be compiled for publication in Moscow, although brigades were also involved in setting up local centres for the study of folklore, and with amateur music activities in the local collective farms. Urban folk culture was not neglected: a Commission was established by the folklore section of the Academy of Sciences Institute for Anthropology and Ethnography in 1937, which was charged with collecting and recording pre-revolutionary workers' songs.

The participants in these projects were not expected to take an objective stance in their approach to the materials under investigation, but had to decide which forms of folk culture should be encouraged as 'healthy' and 'Soviet', and which should be discarded as examples of 'counter-revolutionary' or 'hooligan' folklore. Members of the folklore-collection brigades reported hearing chastushki on counter-revolutionary themes sung by kolkhozniki in Moscow oblast', and the need to drive out such ideologically alien cultural influences by producing and popularizing more suitable musical forms was given considerable emphasis in the Soviet press.

The celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of the October Revolution in 1937 became the occasion for the publication of a number of folk song collections. The Arts Committee, which was involved in the organization of such projects, put out a resolution at this time which highlighted the importance of coordinating and regulating the collection, recording, research

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99 On amateur music, see Chapter Three.
100 GARF f. A-628, op. 1, d. 273; GTsMMK f. 299, d. 1-4.
101 RTsKhiDNI f. 135, op. 1, d. 237 contains a letter from the head of the Commission (the musicologist Mikhail Druskin (1905-91)) to the old Bolshevik Felix Kon, requesting that Kon come and sing any of the revolutionary songs which he could remember, so that their texts and melodies could be recorded for posterity.
102 GARF f. A-628, op. 1, d. 25, l. 16 ob. st. See also GARF f. A-628, op. 1, d. 268, l. 61, and Georgii Polianovskii, 'Muzyku - na kolkhoznye polia!', Rabis, no. 4 (1933), 19-20 for details of the struggle with anti-Soviet chastushki.
and publication of folk music. Among the collections issued at this time was one volume of 'Folk songs of the Soviet peoples about Lenin and Stalin'. The inclusion of new folk stylizations of this nature under the generic heading of folk music was by this time standard practice in Soviet parlance.

One notable phenomenon of the period was the rise to public prominence of many of the performers of folk music. The Piatnitskii choir acquired fully professional status in 1936, and won state sponsorship in 1940, although in the process of professionalization the choir lost most of its original folk roots. Folk singers - non-Russian as well as Russian - were encouraged to write new works in a traditional style, taking their subjects from aspects of Soviet life. Pseudo-folk works describing the Moscow Metro, praising collectivization and lamenting the death of Kirov were among those composed in the mid-1930s, and the performers of such 'new songs' received extravagant praise in central Soviet newspapers and were invited to Moscow to give performances. One folk singer whose songs about tractors, electrification, the kolhozy and the elections to the Supreme Soviet were praised in Pravda was the Kazakh nomad Dzhambul Dzhabaev (1846-1945).

The adaptation and elaboration of folk themes by Soviet composers for use in symphonies, operas and other large-scale works was a technique which clearly enjoyed official approval. One of the means by which Kerzhentsev suggested that Shostakovich might seek to free himself from the pernicious influence of modernist expressionism, and rehabilitate himself in the aftermath of the criticisms of his work in Pravda in 1936, was through immersion in folk culture. The Ukrainian composer Liatoshinskii, whose second symphony was attacked in 1937 both by orchestral musicians while the work was in rehearsal and in print in the newspaper Muzyka, clearly understood that rehabilitation could lie through using folk themes in his work.

103 'O rabote po sobraniiu i izdaniu materialov po muzykal'nomu fol'kloru narodov SSSR', Biulleten' VKI, no. 1 (1937), 15.

104 'Pesni o Lenine i Staline', LG, 5 July 1937, p. 6.

105 Improvisation was abandoned, for example. Smith, pp. 114-5.


107 See Chapter Six, pp. 184-5.
In a letter to Glier in May 1940, he wrote that over the previous two years he had made a deliberate effort to write 'more simply', making use of Soviet themes and 'folk intonations', but he admitted that this particular strategy had not worked for him. He was not happy with his more recent works, claiming that they demonstrated that he had stopped being true to himself, and he drew the conclusion that not every composer could benefit from 'tinkering with folk song'.

Ivan Dzerzhinskii was a particularly ardent advocate of the use of folk music materials in original composition. In an article in the Leningrad arts journal, *Rabochii i Teatr*, in 1937, he challenged the view which some had advanced that socialist realism could best be achieved by the exact reproduction of folk songs, arguing instead that the correct approach was to use folk song as a source, and 'transform it through the prism of one's own creative persona'. Dunaevskii's mass songs were also said to draw on intonations borrowed from folk music, and critics argued that this was the main reason for their success: they embodied the spirit of the collective rather than simply imitating the light music of the West. Kerzhentsev even went so far as to argue that some of Dunaevskii's songs - in particular *Pesnia o Rodine* - were so closely connected with the life of the masses that they had become a part of folk culture themselves. Composers were expected to take a responsible attitude towards the task of selecting and adapting folk music themes for use in their work. One section of the article 'False Ballet', which criticized Shostakovich's ballet *Svetlyi Ruchei*, attacked the composer for taking a 'devil-may-care attitude towards the folk songs of the Kuban'.

The use of folk themes as a basis for symphonic works provides one notable strand of continuity between the work of pre-revolutionary Russian composers and their Soviet counterparts. The reasons for adopting such a technique were nonetheless very different. In the West, and in pre-revolutionary Russia, folk revivalism, as Richard Taruskin has pointed out,

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108 Letter to Glier, 19 May 1940, Kopitsa, p. 34.

109 Dzerzhinskii, 'Mysli'.

110 RGALI f. 2062, op. 1, ed. khr. 331, l. 14.

111 'IV plenum'.

112 'Baletnaia fal'sh'.
involved not so much a 'going to the people' as the appropriation of their musical artifacts for use in works intended for an élite audience.\footnote{113 Taruskin, p. 150.} Moreover, such revivalism was motivated, at least in part, by nostalgia on the part of urban élites for a mythical countryside. In the Soviet period, by contrast, such nostalgia was rejected, and the genres and themes of folk culture were appropriated as tools with which to shape a new collective Soviet identity. Hence the emphasis on accessibility and on the need to write music for the mass audience of Soviet listeners.\footnote{114 I am grateful to Susannah Lockwood Smith for sharing her thoughts on this subject.}

Non-Russian Folk Music

Given that the Soviet Union was a multi-national state, any discussion of the treatment of folk culture has to take account of the fact that more than one 'folk' was involved. Soviet policy towards non-Russian folk music tended to mirror developments in Soviet nationalities policy more generally, and the slogan that the artistic culture of the non-Russian peoples should be 'national in form and socialist in content' was used as a guiding principle by policy-makers. The 1920s marked the beginning of the era of 'nation-building' in the Soviet Union. This involved the promotion of national cultures and local languages, as well as the 'indigenization of cadres' policy (korenizatsiia). Although the long-term goal remained the merger (sliianie) of nations into a unified state, it was believed that fostering the development of local élites would help in the short term to stabilize Soviet rule in the republics, and win the support of the non-Russian peoples for the new regime. In the musical sphere, this policy manifested itself in the establishment of local conservatoires and branches of the Composers' Union, as a way of training and providing support for local composers and musicians.\footnote{115 BSE, 2nd edn (1953) XXII, pp. 401-3. By 1940 conservatoires had been established in Riga, Tallin, Baku, Erevan, Tbilisi, Minsk, Tashkent, Kishinev, Kiev, Odessa, Kharkov and L'vov.} Graduates of Moscow and Leningrad Conservatoires were usually sent out for a set period of time to teach in music schools in provincial Russia and in the republics. This was regarded both as valuable experience for the individuals concerned, who were given the opportunity to immerse
themselves in the riches of the folk music of the local area, and as an important means by which to bring teaching expertise to these regions.\(^\text{116}\)

Although training composers and musicians locally was generally regarded as the main priority, steps were also taken during the 1930s to enable highly talented non-Russians to study in Moscow and Leningrad. The question of whether to grant non-Russians preferential treatment in the admissions process to the Moscow Conservatoire rabfak was debated in the summer of 1932, with the decision eventually taken to promote the position of non-Russians at the Conservatoire through the creation of national studios.\(^\text{117}\) These were intended to help further the development of the Conservatoire into a genuinely 'All-Union' musical centre. The movement to set them up began in the autumn of 1932 with the opening of the Bashkir national studio, and by 1936 conservatoire studios had been set up to train national cadres for the Kazakh, Tatar, Uzbek and Turkmen republics.\(^\text{118}\)

Another means by which the Soviet arts administration sought to foster non-Russian artistic development was through the organization of dekady, or ten-day cultural festivals, which started in 1936. The dekady were not exclusively celebrations of non-Russian culture: Russian and Soviet dekady were also held, but they were particularly significant in that they could provide a showcase for artistic collectives - in particular music and dance groups - from the non-Russian republics to demonstrate their creativity and talent in Moscow, Leningrad and other cities.\(^\text{119}\) The dekady attracted considerable attention from the Soviet press, especially when members of the Politbiuro attended the lavish productions of non-Russian operas put on in the Bolshoi, and these festivals certainly proved a very effective way of arousing interest in non-Russian artistic culture. During the period of the dekada of Azerbaidzhani art in April 1938, some Politbiuro members - in particular Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Mikoian and Kalinin - visited the opera almost every single night. The dekady tended to be followed by the

\(^{116}\)Murzykanty-komsomol'tsy Moskvy (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1938), p. 7.

\(^{117}\)Kharlip, 'Profkomm VMSH'.

\(^{118}\)Veselovskaia, p. 49-50; BSE, 1st edn (1937) XXXIV, pp. 34-5. In 1949 the national studios were integrated and given the status of a Faculty: BSE, 2nd edn (1954) XXVIII, p. 396.

\(^{119}\)Keldysh, ed., p. 11. Shatilov, the head of the Arts Committee Music Board, was convinced that Soviet audiences were keen to hear the music of other Soviet nationalities: RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 43, l. 10 ob. st.
granting of state awards - occasionally even the Order of Lenin - to members of the various opera theatres, concert organizations and dance ensembles represented.\textsuperscript{120}

Given the extent to which Soviet composers were encouraged to draw inspiration from folk music, it is hardly surprising that non-Russian folk music was regarded as a rich source of potential themes. Suites written by Shekhter, Knipper (1898-1974) and Davidenko in the early part of the decade made use of Turkmen, Tadzhik and Chechen folk tunes respectively, and the composer Fainberg became known for his work on adaptations of Chuvash folk songs.\textsuperscript{121} In a speech delivered in the Moscow Composers' Union in December 1936, Cheliapov made the point that so many composers were now working on non-Russian folk music, that the Russian folk heritage itself was in danger of being neglected.\textsuperscript{122} One of the ways in which discredited modernist composers like Mosolov and Roslavets attempted to rehabilitate themselves during the 1930s was by making deliberate efforts to use non-Russian folk themes in their work. Mosolov spent considerable periods of time working in Daghestan and Turkmenia during this period, and he signed a contract in August 1936, obliging him to write a number of works based on Turkmen folk songs.\textsuperscript{123} Roslavets worked in Tashkent between 1931 and 1933 as director of the Radio Centre and conductor of the Music Theatre of Uzbekistan. His ballet Pakhta, which took as its theme the struggle for the independence of the cotton industry, and his symphony Sovetskii Uzbekistan (Soviet Uzbekistan) both date from this period.\textsuperscript{124}

The traffic of musical influences did not flow solely in one direction. A resolution passed by the Communist Party of Uzbekistan in June 1933 emphasized the importance of enriching Uzbek music with Russian influences, and attempts were made to popularize Russian music in the republic.\textsuperscript{125} Traditional Central Asian music was subject to considerable

\textsuperscript{120}See for example 'Dekada Ukraïnskoi muzyki', SI, 5 March 1936, p. 1; 'Ukaz prezidiuma verkhovnogo soveta SSSR: o nagrazhdenii...uchastnikov dekady Azerbaidzhanskogo iskusstva v Moskve', Pravda, 18 April 1938, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{121}Cheliapov, 'Opera i simfoniia'; RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 107, l. 3.

\textsuperscript{122}RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 107, l. 4.

\textsuperscript{123}Barsova, p. 71. These supposedly included a Turkmenian Kantata o Staline (Stalin Cantata), but the manuscript for this work has never been found. The Turkmenian Arts Administration was less than enthusiastic about having Mosolov working for them: 'Prenia', SI 29 March 1937, p. 4.


\textsuperscript{125}Vyzgo, p. 114.
manipulation during the Soviet period. The project of reinforcing national identities in the region, in order to defuse the potential of pan-Islamic movements, led the Soviet authorities to create artificial divisions within a common cultural heritage. The traditional Shash maqam, which traced its roots to the Uzbek, Tadzhik and Bukharin Jewish musical traditions, was nationalized in the individual republics, and separate categories of 'Uzbek classical music' and 'Tadzhik classical music' were established. Another feature of Soviet nationalities policy in Central Asia was the ideological programme of encouraging cultural rapprochement with Europe. European musical genres were introduced, with the creation of operas and instrumental music for large ensembles, neither of which had previously been part of the traditional culture of the area.

Two significant innovations of the Soviet period in non-Russian music were the imposition of the Western system of musical notation on non-Russian musical traditions, many of which had previously been unwritten; and the 'enrichment' of non-Russian orchestras and ensembles with Western musical instruments. Gorodinskii posited a parallel between the musical notation issue and the alphabet reforms of 1929-31 when the Roman alphabet was imposed on the Turkic languages of the Soviet bloc, and he commented that the resistance of some 'bourgeois nationalists' to the introduction of European instruments in their republics was 'as absurd and reactionary as the refusal to use European notation'. Work was also undertaken to Westernize some of the traditional folk instruments of these regions. The Karelian kantele, for example, was given a chromatic tuning, which made it possible to perform classical and Soviet works on the instrument, as well using it to perform or accompany Karelian folk tunes.

A change in the priorities of Soviet nationalities policy can be charted from around the middle of the decade, when the perceived danger of local 'bourgeois nationalism' came to be regarded in policy-making circles as more of a threat to the stability of the USSR than that of

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127 *Muzykal'nyi front SSSR*, pp. 73-4.

128 V. Gudkov, 'Karel'skii ansambl' kantelistov', *SI*, 14 August 1939, p. 2.
Great Russian Chauvinism. The years of the Terror saw a great many accusations of bourgeois nationalism levelled at members of the arts bureaucracies of the non-Russian republics. These 'enemies' were accused of seeking to isolate the music of their national groups from the 'art of the great Russian people' and from Soviet art in general; of refusing to permit performances of European and Russian classical music and new Soviet works in their republics; and of 'undermining in every possible way the great international ties of the brother peoples of the Soviet country'.

In addition to such general charges of isolationism, 'enemies' in the Tadzhik, Azerbaidzhan and Uzbek republics were also accused of seeking to hold back the development of music in their republics by attempting to block the introduction of the Western system of musical notation. It was argued that such a policy was deeply regressive and would serve to obstruct the drive to record folk melodies, and preserve these non-Russian musical traditions in an archaic, primitive state. In Kirgizia, bourgeois nationalists were reported to have been trying to obstruct the development of Kirgiz music. It was claimed that they had denied musicians the opportunity to study the European and Russian classical legacy, and had attempted to preserve Kirgiz music in a backward form by opposing the introduction of modern methods of voice training and European instruments. They had allegedly argued that singing with an open throat was a national characteristic, and that Kirgiz folk melodies would be distorted and lose their beauty if they were played on European instruments. The official government line, put forward by Kerzhentsev in December 1936, stated that orchestras of folk instruments were an important part of non-Russian musical life, but that it would be quite

129 The Russian language was made compulsory in Soviet schools in 1938, and propaganda began to refer to the Russians as the 'first among equals'. A new slogan of 'Soviet patriotism' also came into use at this time. Gerhart Simon, Nationalism and Policy towards the Nationalities in the Soviet Union (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), p. 148-50.

130 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 410, l. 16; 'Izgnat' burzhuaznykh natsionalistov iz sovetskoi muzyki', Muzyka, 26 September 1937, p. 1. Arts Committee officials assumed that ties of international brotherhood would be particularly strong between musicians from the republics of the Caucasus: 'O deiatel'nosti upravleniia po delam iskusstv pri SNK Gruzinskoi SSR v oblasti muzykal'noi raboty', Biulleten' VKI, no 2 (1938), 13-15. See also Chapter Six, pp. 200-1.

131 'Izgnat'.

132 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 410, l. 17; V. Vlasov and V. Fere, 'Razoblachat' posledyshch burzhuaznykh natsionalistov!', S/1, 17 October 1937, p. 3.
wrong to regard such instruments as superior to the violin or the oboe. The Ukrainian Composers' Union was another institution which faced accusations of attempting to keep their national music in a primitive state: Union officials were said to have discouraged composers from working on adaptations or elaborations of folk songs, arguing that this technique would only spoil the original work.

**Popular Tastes**

The discourse of popularity was used quite widely both by members of the political establishment and by individual music journalists as a stick with which to beat Soviet composers. As noted above, the promoters of 'Soviet jazz' based their arguments on the premise that this genre would appeal to the 'healthy' tastes of the masses and enjoy genuine popularity among ordinary listeners. Such an approach was also followed in the *Pravda* criticisms of Shostakovich: one of the main grounds for the attack on his work was that it appealed to the 'perverted tastes of the bourgeois audience' rather than to the Soviet masses who demanded 'good music' rather than the 'deliberately dissonant, confused stream of sounds' in Ledi Makbet.

Arguments of this nature could be backed up with reference to listeners' letters which were published occasionally in newspapers such as *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo*. Although it would obviously be entirely wrong to see these letters as in any meaningful way representative of the views of ordinary concert-goers, it is nonetheless interesting to observe the various uses to which such letters could be put. The letters which got published tended to focus on one of two main issues: requests from workers for more lecture-concerts of classical music to be given in workers' clubs, in order to help proletarian concert-goers 'understand the classics'; and criticisms of concert organizations and radio stations for concentrating too much attention on 'vulgar' jazz and foxtrot music rather than on light classical music by composers such as Offenbach or Johann Strauss. Letter-writers were careful to use the kind of language which would spur the authorities into action, while music critics and bureaucrats - and there was often considerable

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133 Kerzhentsev, 'O muzyke'.

134 A Breskin, 'V soiuzе sovetskikh kompozitorov Ukrainy', *SI*, 26 December 1937, pp. 4-5.

135 Kontsertnyi sezon: predlozheniia slushatelei', *SI*, 29 July 1936, p. 3; RGALI f. 672, op. 1, ed. khr. 6, ll. 358, 364, 368.
overlap between these two groups - were able to use the demands expressed in such letters as ammunition to fuel their own campaigns.\footnote{136}{A good example of this would be the critic Daniil Zhitomirskii's attack on jazz on the radio, in which he quoted from listeners' letters, one of which requested that radio listeners be liberated from the 'hooting and rattling' of the indistinguishable stream of foxtrots polluting the airwaves: D. Zhitomirskii, 'Traktirnaiia estetika: esche o dzhaze', SI, 29 October 1934, p. 3.}

A further way in which audience tastes were instrumental in the shaping of Soviet cultural values, and thereby of Soviet music policy, can be seen through examination of the role played by the 'new élite'. This new middle class of upwardly-mobile workers had taken advantage of the opportunities offered by the regime to gain higher education, and entered the hierarchy of Soviet officialdom in the 1930s, forming the social basis of the Stalinist regime. Their respect for the values of the old intelligentsia, and their aspirations to acquire a 'cultured' lifestyle and thereby to cement their new social status seem to have been significant factors shaping the contours of Soviet social and cultural life in the 1930s.\footnote{137}{See in particular Fitzpatrick, The Cultural Front, Chapters 9 and 10.} Attendance at concerts of classical music was certainly one of the possible means by which to acquire kul'turnost', and their generally anti-modernist and pro-classical musical tastes were something which this new élite shared with members of the Soviet leadership, many of whom came from similar social backgrounds.

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A wide variety of different musical genres was allowed to flourish in the Soviet Union of the 1930s, although this variety was not infinite. There were definite attempts to direct the kinds of music composers should write and musicians should perform, and there was a clear tendency in favour of the creation of unified Soviet schools in each of the different approved genres. Soviet opera was expected to combine lyricism with monumentality; Soviet symphonies should draw on themes from Soviet folk music; Soviet jazz should be recognizably different from the decadent Western variety and Soviet folk music should express only the 'progressive' aspects of peasant culture. A very instrumentalist view of musical culture was adopted, whereby composers were expected to write in styles and genres which would either
serve a propaganda purpose or provide 'cultured relaxation' for Soviet workers. The Russian tradition of assessing the value or merit of a work of art according to the service which it provided to society meant that such a conception of the purpose of music was not in any way foreign to Soviet composers themselves.

The new Soviet culture was expected to have a genuinely 'mass' nature, and to be shared by all Soviet citizens. Considerable emphasis was placed on the need for Soviet music to be accessible to audiences, although this was not supposed to mean that composers should somehow 'talk down' to their listeners and patronize them as if they were incapable of understanding complex works. Rather, composers were expected to emulate the great classical 'realist' composers, such as Beethoven, and write high quality music which could be appreciated and enjoyed by the mass listener. The growth of listeners' 'cultural demands' was a constant theme in the Soviet media at this time. Attempts made by composers in the 1920s to create a new Soviet musical culture either by utilizing new techniques, instruments and scales, or by seeking to expel all so-called decadent and bourgeois music from the Soviet Union at one fell swoop did not find favour with audiences. While the work of ASM composers was regarded by many as elitist and incomprehensible, RAPM's failure to offer a popular replacement for the light music they so excoriated meant that their vision of how Soviet music ought to sound was never likely to command widespread appeal. Soviet arts officials in the 1930s learned from RAPM's mistakes, and by promoting genres which already enjoyed popularity among listeners - jazz and folk music in particular - they facilitated and encouraged the creation of a genuinely popular Soviet musical culture. The music of the Stalin period arguably reflected and was closer to the lives of Soviet citizens than the music of the 1920s had been.
CHAPTER FIVE
MUSIC AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The twin spurs of ideological prejudice and political pragmatism, which combined to produce so many of the contradictory elements in Soviet music policy in the 1930s, can be illustrated particularly well through a consideration of the interactions between music and the realm of foreign affairs. Soviet foreign policy in the musical sphere tended to hover between two stools. Suspicion of the bourgeois capitalist West, together with the conviction that Western culture was going through the final stages of degeneration, fuelled the arguments of those who wanted to keep Soviet music and musical life pure and uncontaminated by such Western pollutants as atonalism, neoclassicism and the more innovative forms of jazz. However cultural nationalism, as in China, could cut both ways, and the desire to 'beat the West at its own game' led to a policy of encouraging Soviet participation in Western music competitions and promoting Soviet music in the West, as a means by which to demonstrate the natural superiority of the Soviet system in every walk of life. Although sweeping generalizations were a characteristic feature of Soviet rhetoric, 'the West' was not in fact regarded as a homogeneous entity and distinctions were drawn between different foreign interest-groups. Thus, links were forged between Soviet composers and left-wing music organizations in various countries, even where a broadly negative view was taken of the government of the country concerned.

Conflicting pressures played an important role in the shaping of all aspects of Soviet foreign policy at this time. Hitler's rise to power prompted a shift away from the strategy followed since the Rapallo pact of 1922 of maintaining friendly relations with Germany while at the same time exploiting antagonisms between capitalist countries in order to stave off the possibility of the Western powers uniting against the Soviet Union. Although Litvinov's pursuit of collective security dominated the foreign policy agenda for most of the decade, dissenting voices could still be heard. The orientation towards Germany, a policy which had been initiated by Lenin, remained something of a tradition among certain groups within the Kremlin, and intermittent attempts were made to revive the old alliance. Stalin himself held a deeply xenophobic view of the outside world, and although he was willing to accept that the Soviet Union could not afford to maintain an isolationist stance, xenophobic attitudes nevertheless
surfaced periodically in Soviet dealings with the West. The Comintern followed its own line in foreign policy throughout this period, a line which changed direction dramatically in the mid-1930s, as revolutionary internationalism gave way to the Popular Front strategy: the attempt to create a united front with socialist parties, directed against fascism. Elements of all of these different policies can be detected to varying degrees in aspects of Soviet music policy in the international arena.

This chapter will examine two aspects of the interactions between music and foreign affairs in the Soviet Union: first, the various attitudes taken towards Western music and musical life by Soviet policy-makers, bureaucrats, composers and musicians; and second, the ways in which Soviet musicians became involved with the wider world of international musical affairs. What emerges from this investigation is first of all the extent to which, despite an official policy which was broadly antagonistic to Western musical developments, contemporary Western music was nevertheless performed and admired in the Soviet Union; and second, the two-pronged nature of Soviet engagement on the international arena. Soviet involvement in musical affairs abroad seems to have been designed both to increase international proletarian solidarity, and to improve the standing of the Soviet Union on the world stage.

**Views of Western Music**

Attitudes towards contemporary Western music and musical life were shaped by several factors. Political prejudice against the countries involved, particularly on the part of Party decision-makers, tended to generate an automatic bias against modern Western music. Many composers, including those who held or came to hold leading positions in the Composers' Union, were more open-minded where the question of Western influences was concerned, even though they had to bow to political pressure at times and eliminate or camouflage such influences in their own work. The degree to which Soviet musicians and music policy-makers were aware of current trends in Western music and performance practice is important here, as an indicator of how far attitudes in this field were based on actual exposure to the music concerned, and how far they stemmed from simple bias.

Although there were fewer international contacts in the 1930s as compared with the previous decade, Western music - including popular music - continued to infiltrate the Soviet Union through a variety of different routes. Foreign musicians continued to visit the Soviet
Union even during the second half of the decade, and the repertoire they brought with them provided their Soviet hosts with a valuable introduction to new Western works. Alan Bush (1900-95), for example, conducted four concerts of contemporary English music in Moscow in the autumn of 1938, which included his own music, as well as works by Vaughan Williams, Ireland and Bax. Western jazz bands, such as the Czechoslovak Ziegler's Jazz Revue, which toured the Soviet Union during 1934-7, brought recent repertoire and performance styles with them, sometimes winning very favourable reviews in the Soviet press. When compared with the NEP period, during which high-profile composers such as Hindemith, Berg and Honegger came to visit the Soviet Union and the ASM promoted contemporary Western works in their concerts, the 1930s appears to have been considerably more isolated with respect to international musical developments. Nevertheless a fair level of contact was maintained. The fact that a number of foreign conductors - some of them émigrés from Nazi-occupied territory - were offered engagements with Soviet orchestras, often on long-term contracts, also helped to increase awareness of new foreign music amongst Soviet musicians.

Tours by foreign musicians of a long- or short-term nature brought mixed propaganda for the Soviet Union, as the visitors gave varying reports of their impressions on their return home. The Lithuanian pianist Balis Dvarionas (1904-72), who visited Russia in 1933, subsequently gave several interviews to newspapers in Lithuania in which he expressed his enthusiasm for the Soviet Union and its musical culture. Paul Robeson (1898-1976), who made a number of trips to the Soviet Union during the 1930s giving concerts of spirituals and protest songs, offered extremely positive assessments of Soviet life and, in particular, of Soviet nationalities policy. He even had his son educated in a Soviet school between 1936 and 1938. On the other hand, the German émigré conductor Heinz Unger, who worked with the Leningrad

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2 Starr, pp. 123-5; Mikhail Druskin, 'U istokov dzhaza', SI, 17 August 1935, p. 3.
3 Foreign conductors working with Soviet orchestras in this period include the Germans Oskar Fried (1871-1941) and Heinz Unger (1895-1965), the Austrian Fritz Stiedry (1883-1968), and the Hungarians Georges Sebastian (1903-?) and Eugene Szenkar (1891-1977). Frid, 'Frozhito - perezhitoe', p. 13.
4 GARF, f. R-5283, op. 12, d. 223, l. 6 ob. st.; d. 222, l. 13.
Radio Orchestra from 1933 until 1937, later wrote a book which was damming in its criticism of the way in which - as he saw it - musical affairs were controlled in the Soviet Union. He described the atmosphere surrounding the 1936 anti-formalism campaign as 'like being back in the Germany of 1933'. In 1937, in an atmosphere of heightened xenophobia and as part of the measures taken to combat alleged 'sabotage' in Soviet musical life, foreign conductors working in the Soviet Union were expelled, and in a letter to the Soviet Ambassador to Austria dated 23 September 1937, Kerzhentsev presented this move as having been prompted by the low quality of the work carried out by many of these conductors. The director of the Moscow Philharmonia expressed the opinion in a memo to the Arts Committee in April 1938 that foreign conductors had tended to take a disparaging attitude towards Russian classical composers and to drop their works from the repertoire.

The policy of refusing to invite foreign conductors to work in the Soviet Union only lasted for one season, however, and from September 1938 invitations were extended to, although not taken up by, several prominent Western conductors including Toscanini, Walter and Klemperer.

Correspondence with foreign composers and music associations was a means by which Soviet composers were able to acquire the scores of recent Western works. The correspondence conducted between the Composers' Union Foreign Department and various groups and individuals in different countries was intended as a means of facilitating the international exchange of repertoire, and it is interesting to note that the list of works received from abroad by the Moscow Composers' Union in 1933 included Stravinskii's Symphony of Psalms. At the level of individual contacts, Miaskovskii was able to acquire several scores by contemporary Western and Russian émigré composers, including Poulenc, Ravel, Rachmaninov and

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6Unger, Hammer, p. 224; Unger had also worked in the Soviet Union during the 1920s. For Soviet reactions to this book, see RGALI f. 2077, op. 1, ed. khr. 9, l. 149.

7RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 190, l. 49; RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed khr. 23, l. 18. An exception was made in the case of Oskar Fried. In a letter to Schoenberg dated 8 December 1937, Fritz Stedry wrote: 'I have been kicked out of Russia just as I was kicked out of Germany in 1933.' Peter Heyworth, Otto Klemperer: His Life and Times, 2 vols (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), II, p. 71.

8RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 396, II. 43-7.


10RGALI f. 2077, op. 1, ed. khr. 9, l. 6; 'Spisok not innostrannykh kompozitorov poluchennykh iz-za granitsy', Biulleten' SSK, no. 1 (1933), 10.
Stravinskii, from Prokof'ev, when the latter was living in Paris. Foreign jazz records were likewise brought to the Soviet Union through unofficial channels: Western diplomats sometimes proved a useful source of such material, and records were also occasionally brought in by Soviet officials who were permitted to travel abroad, as well as being smuggled in illegally by black marketeers. The music on these records could then be transcribed for Soviet jazz bands to use.

It was rare for Soviet composers, as opposed to performing musicians, to get the chance to travel abroad. Those who were given the opportunity for foreign travel were usually sent either as performers, as in the case of Shostakovich's trip to Turkey in 1935 and Prokof'ev's regular concert tours of Europe and America which continued for several years after his return to Moscow in 1933 (his last foreign trip took place in 1938); or as jury members at international competitions. Plans, supported by Narkompros, for a Soviet delegation - including Pshibyshevskii, Asaf'ev, Miaskovskii and Shostakovich - to participate in the International Music Congress held in Florence in the spring of 1933 floundered due to indifference on the part of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Alan Bush's appeals for Soviet composers to join and play an active role in the International Society for Contemporary Music also fell on deaf ears. Composers' Union officials expressed concern as to the political tendencies held by the majority of members, the role of the ISCM in fascist countries, the issue of whether or not Richard Strauss was a member, and the involvement of White Russian émigrés in the society.

Opportunities for Soviet composers to sample Western musical life at first hand were rather more restricted in the 1930s than they had been in the previous decade. Besides the various composers - such as Rakhmaninov - who had received permission to travel abroad in the early years of the Soviet regime and had never returned, some Soviet musicians were sent

\[\text{References}\]

\[\text{11} \text{Perеписка, pp. 369, 372-4, 380-1, 431, 439.}\]

\[\text{12} \text{Starr, pp. 109, 118-20.}\]

\[\text{13} \text{Krestinskii, the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs was said neither to oppose nor support the proposal. RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. khr. 139, ll. 59-70. An Arts Committee proposal to send a group of composers and conductors, including Samosud, Dzerzhinskii and Kabalevskii, to the Salzburg festival in July 1936 also failed to win the necessary support at high levels: RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khr. 15, 1.98.}\]

\[\text{14} \text{RGALI f. 2077, op. 1, ed. khr. 9, ll. 8-27. Despite Bush's reassurances concerning all of these issues, the Composers' Union remained aloof from the organization.}\]
abroad in the 1920s for the express purpose of studying Western musical techniques. In 1926, Leopold Teplitskii was sent to Philadelphia to master new trends in American jazz, and similarly, Aleksandr Veprik visited Germany, Austria and France in the course of a five month *komandirovka* in the spring of 1927, during which he studied Western methods of musical education and instrumentation.\(^{15}\) In the 1930s, however, most composers had to gain their knowledge of contemporary trends in Western music by means other than personal experience gained from foreign travel.

Examples of concerts of modern Western music held in the Soviet Union in the 1930s are more numerous than one might expect. The Composers' Union organized occasional review evenings during which new Western works were played, and a series of lectures on the history of opera given in 1932-4 by Mikhail Ivanov-Boretskii (1874-1936) included discussion of works by Schoenberg, Berg and Hindemith.\(^ {16} \) While one might have expected that the performance of such works would have been phased out altogether in the restrictive and xenophobic atmosphere which accompanied the anti-formalism campaign of 1936, this was not in fact the case. A meeting of the Arts Committee Music Board in August 1936 resolved to include the most interesting works by Western European modernist composers in the forthcoming concert plan of the Moscow Philharmonia, and a cycle of new chamber works by composers such as Krenek, Hindemith, Schoenberg and Poulenc was included in the 1936-7 concert plans of the State Philharmonia and the Radio Committee.\(^ {17} \) It thus appears that a fair degree of autonomy was available to lower-level decision makers working in this field. One would suspect, however, that such leeway was the result either of accidental oversight on the part of higher organs of control, or of the fact that music was not felt to be sufficiently significant to warrant the careful surveillance conducted in other fields of artistic culture. The likelihood of it having been the outcome of a deliberate decision to pursue a liberal policy


\(^{16}\) These lectures were organized by the Rabis Arts University. RGALI f. 2743, op. 1, ed. khr. 263, l. 60; 'Muzykal'nyi dnevnik', *SI*, 29 March 1934, p. 4; 'Khronika', *Biulleten' SSK*, no. 4-5 (1934), 21; *M.I. Ivanov-Boretskii, stari i issledovaniiia*, ed. by T. N. Livanov (Moscow: Sovetskii Kompozitor, 1972), p. 30. Ivanov-Boretskii had been a member of the Moscow Conservatoire Red Professors' cell during the 1920s.

\(^{17}\) 'Kontsertnyi sezon', *SI*, 5 September 1936, p. 3; RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 25, l.86.
towards the use of contemporary Western music in concert programmes seems decidedly remote.

While the bulk of RAPM's programme had become the subject of widespread condemnation in 1932, their hostility towards modern Western music was not perceived as an 'exaggeration'. Although such music was performed publicly in the Soviet Union during the 1930s, the Composers' Unions, Narkompros and the Comintern Revolutionary Music Bureau were almost universally critical of developments in contemporary Western music. Exceptions were made only in the case of works by certain left-wing Soviet sympathizers. Statements issued by the Composers' Union tended to advocate a critical attitude towards music by bourgeois Western composers. Rather than calling for its wholesale acceptance or outright rejection, composers were expected to examine this music and utilize only those aspects of it which could prove constructive in the development of Soviet music, while discarding its harmful and decadent elements.¹⁸ The 1936 Pravda article on Ledi Makbet condemned Shostakovich's use of an 'intentionally dissonant' musical language, with borrowings from jazz, which suited only the 'perverted tastes of formalist aesthetes' and the bourgeois public abroad. The official line on the use of contemporary Western musical influences by Soviet composers could not have been laid down more clearly.

Soviet ideological critiques of Western music were coloured by their views of the impact which a capitalist environment could have on composers and their music. Gorodinskii, a keen analyst of Soviet music and its place in the modern world, argued in an article written in 1932 that the intellectual impoverishment of the bourgeoisie was reflected in the music of capitalist countries. Since capitalism was unable to provide any new forms of creative inspiration, composers directed their energies either into neo-classicism - a movement which Soviet commentators tended to characterize as backward-looking and 'unprogressive' - or towards the decadent formalism of atonality and abstraction.¹⁹ Neoclassicism in music - which tended to involve the parody or distortion of classical techniques - should be distinguished from the Soviet school of 'recycled classicism' which was arguably a much more backward-looking movement. Soviet critics tended to be less than precise in their conception of the exact nature of

¹⁸Tobol'kevich, Itogi, p. 99; Muzykal'nyi Almanakh, p. 9; Muzykal'nyi front, p. 57.
¹⁹Muzykal'nyi Almanakh, p. 10.
atonality, and preferred to make sweeping generalizations about how atonal music encapsulated the 'disintegration of the integrity of musical self-consciousness, characteristic of the ideology of the modern bourgeois West', rather than subjecting modern compositional techniques to more detailed analysis. They were not alone in making such sweeping judgements. One German review of the première of Berg's atonal opera Wozzeck in 1925 described the music as 'truly frightful...the nastiness and lack of justification of the polyphony breaks even Schoenberg's own world record....The work is a catastrophe in our musical development'.

It is intriguing to note that Nazi critics tended to describe the use of atonal musical techniques as symptomatic of 'degeneracy and artistic bolshevism'.

Neoclassicism and atonality were not the only trends in modern Western music which came in for criticism by Soviet commentators. Works such as Krenek's Jonny Spielt Auf, which cannot be said to fall into either category but which made considerable use of jazz influences as well as machine music techniques, also came under fire in the 1930s. This opera had been produced in Leningrad in 1928 and attracted a number of reviews which described it as revolutionary and progressive. Only five years later, however, critics were arguing that it had been canonized quite erroneously and that it constituted a 'slander against the revolutionary proletariat and its movement'.

One of the standard Soviet criticisms of Western composers was that they wrote their music for élite audiences: music 'for the few' rather than 'for the many'. Krenek, for example, was attacked on the grounds that he strove 'to make music the property only of the chosen few', and this was taken as evidence of deep ideological crisis in the West. The Pravda editorial on Ledi Makbet argued that the opera had achieved success with bourgeois audiences abroad through its appeal to their 'distorted tastes'. Reviews of Shostakovich's works prior to 1936 had commented on the influence of Western modernism on his music, and it was claimed at the ensuing discussions in the Composers' Unions that Shostakovich had been corrupted by his

22Muzykal'nyi front, pp. 57-8.
23Molodey kompozitory za rubezhom', SI, 30 October, 1938, p. 2.
exposure to works by Stravinskii, Berg, Krenek and Hindemith during his student years in 1920s Leningrad, and that he had fallen onto an 'erroneous path' when he allowed his work to become influenced by Western compositional techniques. Gorodinskii, speaking at an Arts Committee debate on the subject of Soviet opera in March 1936, claimed that Shostakovich had been 'raised on German expressionism' and that *Ledi Makbet* had been strongly influenced by Alban Berg.

Despite such attitudes, however, positive appraisals of modern Western music by Soviet composers were nonetheless fairly widespread, particularly during the first half of the decade. Glier and Shostakovich both called for an increase in the number of Western works performed in Soviet concerts, claiming that it was vital that Soviet composers should study Western techniques and learn from the most recent music being produced. Mikhail Druskin, a musicologist at Leningrad Conservatoire, was a regular reporter on musical events in Germany and an enthusiastic champion of the work of left-wing German composers such as Hanns Eisler (1898-1962).

The most outspoken advocate of Arnold Schoenberg's music in the Soviet Union, the Leningrad musicologist Ivan Sollertinskii, was keen for VOKS - the All-Union Association for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries - to invite the composer to the USSR in 1932. Together with Eisler, he supported the proposal that Schoenberg should settle in Moscow following his expulsion from Germany in 1934. In a short pamphlet on the composer, written in 1934, Sollertinskii characterized Schoenberg's twelve-tone system as a deeply expressive and innovative attempt to push out the boundaries of musical language. In addition, with a nod in the direction of political correctness, he expressed the belief that life in the Soviet Union would enable the composer to overcome his rarefied brand of aestheticism and become an active

24 M. Grinberg, 'Nepreodolennye soblazny: avtorskii kontsert Dm. Shostakovicha', *SI*, 14 March 1933, p. 3; RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 38, l. 18-20 ob. st.
25 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 71, l. 64.
26 RGALI, f. 2085, op. 1, ed. khr. 357, l. 25; D. Shostakovich, 'Schast'e poznaniiia', *SI*, 5 November 1934, p. 7.
27 Tobol'kevich, pp. 56-8.
28 GARF f. R-5283, op. 12, ed. khr. 222, l. 11 ob. st.
supporter of world proletarian revolution. This view was not, however, shared by Narkompros officials. In his reply to a letter from Eisler, Boris Krasin, the Narkompros Music Inspector, stated that although the Soviet authorities recognized Schoenberg's talent and his high standing in the musical world, they were concerned by the 'decadent' nature of his most recent work. Moreover, they feared that if, as had been proposed, Schoenberg were to take up a teaching post in Moscow Conservatoire, he could have a most undesirable influence on young Soviet composers. During the anti-formalism discussions in Leningrad in 1936, Shatilov argued that the recent proposals by Leningrad professors that invitations be extended to exiled German composers to move to the Soviet Union were mistaken, because these composers displayed in their work the 'emptiness of the dying class', the bourgeoisie.

Sollertinskii was one of those who publicly recanted his support for modern trends in Western music in 1936, although his speech at the meeting of the Leningrad Composers' Union in February 1936 was obviously delivered under duress. He characterized his earlier endorsement of the music of Alban Berg - he had for a long time championed Wozzeck as a suitable model for Soviet opera composers to emulate - as a serious error of judgement. Nevertheless, he claimed that one of the reasons why he had been drawn to Berg's music was out of sympathy for those composers who had been ostracized by the Nazis, and he maintained that he had never been an apologist of Shostakovich's opera Nos, or of Krenek's music. Other musicologists who followed his lead included Julian Vainkop, who confessed to having occupied a formalist position in 1927 when he had penned an apologia for Stravinskii.

There were some Soviet composers who continued (to a greater or lesser extent) to espouse the virtues of Western music even after the anti-formalism campaign of 1936 had abated. Prokof'ev was one composer who continued to maintain the view that Soviet music

30RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 5, II. 40-49 ob. st. Soviet musicians themselves were divided over the proposal: Litinskii, head of the Conservatoire Faculty of Composition was against the idea, whereas Neigauz supported it in principle.
31RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 43, II. 3-4.
32GTsMMK, f. 296, d. 478, l. 17 ob. st.
33GTsMMK, f. 296, d. 481, l. 44.
could only be enhanced by the integration of new Western techniques. His assertion at an Arts Committee Music Board meeting in August 1936 that young Soviet composers lagged behind the West by 40 years and needed to master Western techniques in order to catch up marked him out as a 'Westernizer' in such matters. This stance came in for official condemnation in the following year, when Kerzhentsev criticized him in a speech delivered at the Composers' Union in April 1937 for allegedly suggesting that the mastery of Western technique was essential in the quest to create a new Soviet style in music. The former RAPM composer Belyi was, somewhat surprisingly, another person who supported calls to increase Soviet exposure to contemporary Western European music at the August 1936 meeting. This move was surprising given that, quite apart from his RAPM credentials, Belyi had made some particularly pointed attacks on Western music in 1933 when he condemned atonalism and jazz, which he described as one of the 'means by which the bourgeoisie deaden the psyche of the working class'. Nevertheless, in his 1936 speech, Belyi remarked that the Soviet Union had now 'reached the stage of musical culture where we hardly need to fear infection or suppression by the musical culture of Western composers'. Other participants at this meeting argued that it was essential to perform contemporary Western music so that Soviet composers could make an educated decision about whether or not it was the correct path for them to follow.

As noted above, the question of whether jazz should be seen as having its roots in the music of oppressed black slaves, or as a symbol of the decadence of American capitalist society was never resolved by Soviet critics to anyone's satisfaction. The idea that there were in fact two wholly separate types of jazz - bourgeois salon jazz and authentic 'proletarian jazz' - received the official seal of approval from Kerzhentsev. This was one way of addressing the problem. Subsequent years witnessed a proliferation of attempts by composers to distance themselves from Western influences and create a wholly new genre of 'Soviet jazz'.

34RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 42, l. 60. Prokof'ev himself explicitly rejected such a label.

35RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 268, ll. 13-16.

36This speech had been delivered at the inaugural meeting of the Music Section of the International Association of Revolutionary Theatres. Muzikal'nyi front, p. 118.

37RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 42, l. 45.

38Kerzhentsev, 'O muzyke'.
Rejection of Western-style jazz was not in any way a new departure in 1937: Gor'kii's 1929 article had attacked jazz as a specifically Western genre, and Soviet jazz musicians frequently came under attack if they were seen to be adhering too 'slavishly' to Western models.\textsuperscript{39} Composers were expected to do their bit to help 'oust the old foxtrot repertoire with accessible, light, beautiful, healthy...Soviet dance music'. An article in praise of Dunaevskii which appeared in the Leningrad journal \textit{Rabochii i Teatr} in 1937 commented on the fact that while the composer's early music hall work had made uncritical use of Western techniques, he had since then successfully overcome this weakness and had become one of the main architects of Soviet jazz.\textsuperscript{40} In 1938, the head of the foreign affairs department of the Moscow Composers' Union wrote to one of his correspondents in the United States requesting him not to trouble himself with sending any American jazz scores, on the grounds that 'we are no longer so very much interested in this kind of music, as many of our composers have already learned to write themselves jazz music, and our orchestras mostly perform our native jazz productions'.\textsuperscript{41} Perhaps the most striking comment on the difference between Soviet and Western jazz was made by Mikhail Druskin in 1937, when he remarked that Soviet jazz was distinctive in that it did not attach any particular significance to improvisation.\textsuperscript{42}

Despite such attitudes, a number of prominent figures in the world of Soviet jazz nevertheless continued to advocate a more cosmopolitan approach. In a speech delivered during a discussion of jazz in the Leningrad Composers' Union in January 1937, Leonid Utesov, who counted himself as a 'Sovietizer' rather than a 'Westernizer' where jazz was concerned, argued that Soviet jazz should base itself on the best American and European models, in order to assimilate the high technical standards of Western jazz.\textsuperscript{43} Dunaevskii himself also advocated familiarization with Western models, drawing a distinction between 'cheap' imported foxtrots

\textsuperscript{39}The Varlaamov ensemble was criticized by Gorodinskii for following Western models too closely: Gorodinskii, 'Legkii zhanr v muzyke', \textit{Rabis}, no. 7 (1934), 6-8 (p. 8). For Gor'kii's article, see above, Chapter Four, p. 118.


\textsuperscript{41}Letter G. Shneerson to G. Braverman, 22 September 1938; RGALI f. 2077, op. 1, ed. khr. 19, l. 50 (Original in English).

\textsuperscript{42}RGALI f. 2062, op. 1, ed. khr. 331, l. 22.

\textsuperscript{43}RGALI f. 2062, op. 1, ed. khr. 331, l. 39 ob. st.
and tangos, and the music of George Gershwin and Duke Ellington which he regarded as worthy of study.\textsuperscript{44}

This survey of Soviet awareness of Western music in the 1930s indicates that Sheila Fitzpatrick's assertion that after 1936 'contemporary Western music was no longer performed in public in the Soviet Union...Soviet music entered a period of isolation from the West' is unfounded.\textsuperscript{45} While she is clearly correct to argue that Party and government officials would have preferred to limit the amount of modern Western music performed in Soviet concert halls, nevertheless the extent to which such officials were able to translate policy into practice was somewhat limited. However much RAPM activists, as well as those who spearheaded the anti-formalism campaign of 1936, may have wished to curtail it, contact with the West continued to take place even during the second half of the 1930s. Although there was no group in Soviet musical life of this period comparable to the ASM with its outspoken advocacy of Western musical techniques, and although Soviet composers faced many obstacles in their attempts to keep abreast of developments in Western music, it is clear that they received considerably more exposure to Western music than has previously been supposed.

\textbf{Perceptions of Western Musical Life}

Soviet perceptions of Western music were coloured to a considerable degree by their views of the Western world in general, and of the impact which a capitalist environment could have on music in particular. Frequent reference was made in articles and speeches on the subject to the plight of unemployed musicians in the West, to the lack of creative inspiration enjoyed by Western composers, and to the fact that, with the economic crisis in the West and the accompanying decay of capitalist culture, the best and most progressive representatives of the bourgeois intelligentsia were joining the struggle of the proletariat.\textsuperscript{46} This interpretation was strengthened by the testimony of left-wing Western music commentators, many of whom went

\textsuperscript{44}Dunaevskii, 'Sovetskому dzhazu'; RGALI f. 2062, op. 1, ed. khr. 331, l. 35.

\textsuperscript{45}Fitzpatrick, \textit{The Cultural Front}, p. 207.

\textsuperscript{46}Muzykal'yi front, p. 49; \textit{Mezhdunarodnaia Muzyka}, no. 1 (1933) 1. Gorodinskii also claimed that Soviet musicians were far more aware of developments in the West than their Western colleagues were of musical trends in the Soviet Union.
on the record to proclaim their support for the Soviet Union and its treatment of composers and musicians.

Articles about musical life in foreign countries became a regular feature of the Soviet musical press in the 1930s, with a substantial section of Sovetskaia Muzyka devoted to musical developments and events abroad. Reports received from left-wing composers and critics such as Henry Cowell and Elie Seigmeister in the United States tended to focus on the 'progressive' aspects of their country's music, while reports from Soviet critics elaborated in detail on the supposed crisis in bourgeois music.47 Articles compiled by Soviet critics from reports in the foreign press included coverage of Thomas Beecham's speech in which he described the British government as 'an active enemy of art and music', William Kerridge's description of the Soviet Union as a 'paradise for artists', and the comments made by a foreign musician at the Ysaye violin competition in Brussels in 1937 that David Oistrakh was fortunate to come from a state which cared about musicians, because young musicians in capitalist countries could not even dream about the conditions in which their Soviet counterparts lived and worked.48

The fact that the leaders of the Nazi regime in Germany made little attempt, for the greater part of the 1930s, to conceal their contempt for Soviet communism could not but have a bearing on Soviet views of modern German music. Mikhail Druskin, the Leningrad musicologist, wrote regular reports on German musical life for the Soviet press, in which he described the more notorious incidents of Nazi music policy.49 An example of the lengths to which anti-German attitudes in musical affairs could go is provided by the case of Vadim Borisovskii (1900-72), a professor at Moscow Conservatoire and the viola player in the Beethoven quartet. His reference book on music for the viola, written jointly with a German music librarian, Wilhelm Altman, was issued in a German edition in 1937. In January 1938 the book became the subject of a scathing attack in Pravda, in which Borisovskii's collaboration with Altman was described as 'suspicious', and he was accused of being an accomplice of

47For example, Genri KouI', 'Muzyka v soedinennykh shtatakh Ameriki', SM, no. 7 (1934), 3-19; Eli Zigmeister, 'Muzykal'nye zametki: (pis'mo iz N'Iu'-Iorka)', SM, no. 6 (1935), 80-83. Iulian Krein, 'Muzykal'naia zhizn' Parizha', SM, no. 4 (1935), 107-111.

48'Muzika v Anglii', SI, 23 October 1934, p. 3; 'Za rubezhom: V. Kerridzh o sovetskikh kompozitorakh', SI, 5 January 1935, p. 1; 'Muzykanty- komsomoltsy Moskvy', p. 43.

49Such as the campaign against Hindemith: M. D., 'V fashistskoi Germanii', SM, no. 6 (1935), 83-5.
fascism. In this case, the excessive vigilance displayed by the critic Georgii Khubov was not upheld by the Party leadership, and Borisovskii was rehabilitated following an investigation undertaken by the Sovnarkom secretariat.\textsuperscript{50} Attacks on academics who published their works abroad became quite common in 1936-7, as such 'enemies' were unmasked and accused of perpetuating the 'traditions of servility' towards the West which had originated in the prerevolutionary period.\textsuperscript{51}

Following the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in August 1939, relations between the Soviet Union and Germany became distinctly more cordial. Shortly after this, the film director Sergei Eizenshtein was commissioned to produce \textit{Die Walküre} at the Bolshoi. The first night was held on 21 November 1940, but the work was withdrawn after only six performances, when the Nazi invasion of June 1941 made the staging of works by Wagner in Soviet opera houses politically undesirable. A new production of \textit{Lohengrin}, which received its spectacularly badly-timed première on 17 June 1941, was withdrawn almost immediately.\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{Émigrés}

A differentiated approach was adopted by the Soviet authorities towards émigré Russian composers and musicians. A memorandum on musical affairs submitted to the Kul'tprop department of the Party Central Committee in 1932 drew a distinction between the so-called 'reactionary' émigrés who had taken foreign citizenship, such as Stravinskii, Rakhmaninov, Cherepnin and Kussevitskii, and those who were sympathetically inclined towards Soviet power but for various reasons had been reluctant to return to live in the Soviet Union. This last group included Prokof'ev, Krein, Metner, Mal'ko, Glazunov, Grechaninov and others.\textsuperscript{53} A VOKS

\textsuperscript{50}G. Khubov, 'Podozritel'noe sodruzhestvo', \textit{Pravda}, 4 January 1938, p. 4; Vladimir Bez'iazychnyi, 'Vadim Borisovskii - novee poeticheskoe imia', \textit{SM}, no. 1 (1990), 86. Bez'iazychnyi speculates that the outcome of this case may have been influenced by personal intervention on the part of Molotov, who had played stringed instruments in his youth.


\textsuperscript{53}RGALI f. 2743, op. 1, ed. khr. 263, ll. 15-16.
report dating from 1932 stated that the activity of Russian composers living abroad was under special investigation, as it was hoped that a way might be found of encouraging some of these figures - Metner and Prokof'ev in particular - to return to the Soviet Union.54

Soviet musicians and critics put forward various arguments regarding the position of Russian émigrés in the West: a student of the Moscow Conservatoire rabfak argued in a letter to Stalin in April 1932 that the bourgeois world, in its present period of disintegration, was using the 'trash' (specifically Rakhmaninov, Stravinski and Prokof'ev) which had been 'rejected by the October Revolution...[to]...sing of its decay'.55 Observation of the careers followed by Russian émigrés led many to the conclusion that life in the West tended to have a stultifying impact on the artistic muse. In an article written in 1937, the critic Bogdanov-Berezovskii offered a review of the 20-year development of Soviet music and commented that of the composers who had left, most had either sensed the 'absence of creative air' in the West and been 'drawn back' to the Soviet Union (such as Prokof'ev), or their output as composers had declined dramatically (as in the cases of Rakhmaninov and Glazunov).56

Prokof'ev's reasons for returning to the Soviet Union seem to have been connected mainly with economic and material considerations. He had left Russia in May 1918 and made his first return trip in 1927, when he completed a two-month concert tour of Russia and the Ukraine. From 1932 his visits became increasingly regular, and in the late spring of 1936 he managed to persuade the Moscow City Council to provide him with a luxury flat on the Garden Ring. The ease with which he had been able to organize concert engagements in the Soviet Union stood in sharp contrast with the situation which prevailed in Western Europe and the United States, where the Depression had made musicians' lives increasingly difficult.57 Prokof'ev's return constituted a significant propaganda coup for the Soviet authorities, and he enjoyed a number of privileges not shared by his colleagues. In particular, he was permitted to

54GARF f.R-5283, op. 12, d. 223, l. 25.
55RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. khr. 352, l. 25.
56V. Bogdanov-Berezovskii, 'Bor'be stilei v sovetskoi muzyke', RT, no. 9 (1937), p. 27.
57Negotiations to arrange a concert tour of the United States fell through in the spring of 1935, when his American agents, Haensel and Jones, were unable to arrange sufficient concert bookings. Prokof'ev Archive, File 39, pp. 121-3; 302-4.
travel abroad, and made lengthy concert tours of Europe, America and North Africa between 1936 and 1938.

The case of Glazunov (1865-1936) provides a particularly interesting example of the ambiguous attitude of the Soviet authorities towards émigrés. Unlike Stravinskii, who left Russia before the war, or Rakhmaninov, who left shortly after the Revolution, Glazunov remained at his teaching post in Leningrad Conservatoire until 1928. He was sent to Vienna in June 1928 as a member of the jury for an international competition of composers, and followed this with a tour of several Western European cities. Illness caused him to lengthen his stay, and although he claimed he was making plans to return to Leningrad on more than one occasion, he never carried these plans through.58 In a letter to Kerzhentsev at the Arts Committee written after Glazunov's death in March 1936, the composer Iurii Shaporin pointed out a number of inconsistencies in the official reaction to the event. While the death barely merited a mention in the Soviet press, with none of the official TASS telegrams which normally followed the death of a highly regarded artistic figure, the brief notice of his death in Izvestiia still referred to him as a 'People's Artist', which implied that he had not been wholly rejected as a representative of Soviet culture.59 Shaporin admitted that Glazunov had committed a number of 'politically tactless' errors in making speeches and writing articles criticizing aspects of Soviet life, but Shaporin insisted that these should not constitute sufficient cause to deny him a proper obituary.

The vehemence of Soviet attacks on Stravinskii is hardly surprising, given that Stravinskii himself never troubled to hide his hostility towards the Soviet regime, writing in a letter of 1933 that 'my negative attitude towards communism and Judaism... is a matter of common knowledge'. An article on the composer which appeared in Sovetskaia Muzyka in the same year described him as the 'artistic ideologue of the imperialist bourgeoisie'.60 His works did receive occasional performances in the Soviet Union during the 1930s, although such events were always liable to ruffle some feathers: a 1935 editorial in Sovetskoe Iskusstvo, for example,

58. A. N. Kriukov, Aleksandr Konstantinovich Glazunov (Moscow: Muzyka, 1984), pp. 128-134. On one occasion, according to Shaporin, he even commissioned his agent in Leningrad to put his flat in order and buy him some goats, because his French doctor had ordered him to drink goat's milk for his health. RGALI, f. 2643, op. I, ed. khr. 184, l. 3.

59. RGALI f. 2643, op. I, ed. khr. 184, II. 1-7.

60. Taruskin, p. 458; Arnol'd Alshvang, 'Ideinyi put' Stravinskogo', SM, no. 5 (1933), 90-100 (p. 90).
commented that the State Philharmonia had widened its repertoire to include works such as Stravinskiī's *Svadebka (Les Noces)*. The decision by the Leningrad Philharmonia to include works by Stravinskiī in the programme of the final concert in their festival of Russian classical music in March 1938 provoked an article in *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* entitled 'Ignorance or Political Blindness?', which condemned the decision to number music by this 'fascist emigrant' and 'leader of formalism in music' among the Russian classics, and described it as an 'insult to the patriotic feelings of the Soviet people'. It seems unlikely that the decision to include Stravinskiī's works was simply the result of an oversight by Philharmonia concert organizers, and one cannot help but wonder whether or not this move was in fact an attempt to assert Leningrad's reputation as the centre of modern art in the Soviet Union, a reputation which had been so roundly criticized by Muscovite critics in 1936. Rivalry between the two capitals, with regard to artistic matters in particular, went back a long way.

**Engagement with the West: International Competitions**

Soviet involvement in international musical life took various forms. As with Soviet sport diplomacy and Soviet foreign policy more generally, musical contacts with Western countries were pursued for a number of different reasons: to help improve relations with bourgeois states, to strengthen international proletarian solidarity and to enhance the Soviet Union's standing on the international stage. These aims were pursued through Soviet involvement in international performance competitions; foreign tours made by Soviet musicians; the propaganda of Soviet music in the West; and the activities conducted by the music section of the Comintern.

The decision by the Soviet authorities to permit their musicians to participate in international performance competitions paid huge dividends in terms of enhancing the Soviet Union's image abroad. The Russian conservatoire tradition of providing rigorous training of performing musicians to a very high standard went back several decades before the revolution,

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62 'Nevezhestvo ili politicheskaia slepota?', *SI*, 2 March 1938, p. 4.

and émigré musicians such as Milstein, Horowitz and Piatigorski won high regard in the West and helped to promote a very favourable image of Russian standards of music training. Soviet involvement in international competitions began in 1927, with a delegation sent to the first Chopin piano competition in Warsaw. Of the four Soviet pianists - including the 21-year-old Dmitrii Shostakovich - who were sent to Warsaw, Lev Oborin took the first prize and Grigorii Ginzburg (1904-61) the fourth.

It is clear that the authorities were well aware of the political significance which Soviet victories in international competitions could have. In choosing which pianists to send as participants to the 1932 Warsaw piano competition there was much debate over whether extra-musical considerations should play a part in the selection criteria. Great pride was expressed in the fact that the delegation finally chosen included one komsomolets and two candidate members of the Party, one of whom (Abram Lufer (1905-48), who emerged as the highest-placed Soviet contestant, taking fourth prize in the competition overall) was the son of a construction worker. The jury involved in the selection procedure also debated whether or not to include the Armenian pianist Andriasian in the delegation as a token non-Russian, in order to demonstrate the flowering of national artistic cultures in the Soviet Union, although this idea was eventually rejected. The failure of the Soviet pianists to gain any of the top three prizes in Warsaw in 1932 was perceived by Soviet participants as the result of bias on the part of the Polish jury and press. When in the end, the first prize was won by a Russian émigré, Aleksandr Uninskii, Soviet sensibilities were particularly offended by what they described as a 'White-guardist demonstration' during the prize-giving, when a basket of white flowers decorated with a three-coloured ribbon - a tsarist symbol - was presented to the victor.

In the second half of the decade, Soviet fortunes at international music competitions soared. David Oistrak and the thirteen-year-old Busia Gol'dshtein (1921-87) took second and fourth prizes at the Warsaw violin competition in March 1935 and Iakov Flier (1912-73) and Emil Gilel's came first and second at the Vienna piano competition in June 1936. 1937 saw victories both for Soviet pianists, when Iakov Zak (1913-76) and Roza Tamarkina (1920-50)

\[64\text{GARF f. R-5283, op. 12, d. 219, ll. 19-24.}
\[65\text{GARF f. R-5283, op. 12, d. 222, ll. 21-22.}
\[66\text{GARF f. R-5283, op. 12, d. 219, ll. 13-15.}
won first and second places at the third Chopin piano competition in Warsaw, and for violinists, when five out of the top six prizes were carried off by Soviet players at the Ysaye violin competition held in Brussels in March of that year. In an article on the competition which appeared in the Manchester Guardian, it was remarked that 'this musical success did more than years of Communist propaganda to win sympathies for Soviet Russia, in whom many Belgians and others have now discovered for the first time, and somewhat to their surprise, a civilized country'! The Soviet victories in 1937 received a great deal of coverage in Pravda, and a large picture of David Oistrakh appeared on the front page on the 2 April. The Soviet ambassador to Belgium commented that the success 'represents not only a victory for individual artistes. It represents a grandiose international victory for our country. The jury's decision is a recognition of the huge cultural achievements of our great motherland'.

Correspondence between the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and Molotov in 1937 indicated the considerable importance which the Soviet authorities attached to such victories. Lists of members of the proposed delegations to be sent to Vienna in 1936 and Brussels in 1937 were submitted by Kerzhentsev to Stalin and Molotov for authorization. Proposals to send a group of Soviet pianists to the 1938 Ysaye competition in Brussels were supported in a statement from an official at the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, which asserted that not only would victory give rise to further international recognition of Soviet achievements, but also that Soviet participation could assist in the development of cultural relations with Belgium. In fact, the 1938 Ysaye competition gave rise to a renewal of the concern which had been expressed in 1932 about anti-Soviet bias against competitors. It was claimed by a Soviet diplomat in Brussels that the Belgian press had been lukewarm in its comments on the Soviet performances, and rumours abounded of a conspiracy by the competition organizers to avoid a

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67 Ysaye Prize: World Competition at Brussels: Russians' Success', Manchester Guardian, 5 April 1937, p. 12. In an interesting juxtaposition, a letter from Trotsky condemning the Soviet regime and providing details of the Piatakov-Radek trial appeared on a later page of the same issue of the paper.

68 'Blestiaschii uspekh'.

69 RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khr. 14, l. 106.

70 RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khr. 23, II. 68-75. The Queen of Belgium, in conversation with a representative of the Soviet government, had expressed the hope that Soviet pianists would participate in the 1938 competition (I. 60).
repetition of the events of the previous year, when the whole Soviet delegation had reached the final. The fact that Gilel's and Flier managed to win first and third prizes at this competition was therefore given even more prominence back home, and a report from a Soviet diplomat in Belgium to the Arts Committee stated that 'it is impossible to overestimate the political significance of our latest success', coming as it did at a time 'when other countries are actively conducting anti-Soviet propaganda'.  

Although proposals were put forward at various times during the 1930s for the Soviet Union to host an international competition of its own, none of these plans ever came to fruition. In 1932, in the wake of the second Warsaw piano competition, a plan was drawn up recommending that a Beethoven competition be held in Moscow in the following year. It was intended that this competition should serve as a demonstration of Soviet standards of fairness, and should be the antithesis of the Warsaw competition, during which political considerations were said to have entered the musical arena. The proposal was approved by VOKS, but plans never got off the drawing board.  

In 1935, Gelnrikh Neigauz drew an unfavourable comparison between the methods employed by Soviet and foreign jury members at performance competitions, commenting that whereas in Soviet competitions the jury would conduct a careful discussion of each performance, in Warsaw this had not been the case, and discussion only took place in cases where there was disagreement over the marks to be awarded.

**Foreign Tours**

As with participation in international competitions, Soviet musicians were sent abroad on tour partly as a means by which to cement political alliances with individual countries. In 1926 a Narkompros official had described foreign concert tours as serving 'not only as a means for strengthening cultural ties with foreign states, but also as a notable part of our external trade'. For this reason it was felt necessary to regulate such ventures through a central institution.

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71 RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khr. 30, ll. 22-3.

72 GARF f. R-5283, op. 12, d. 222, l. 9-10 ob. st. The sincerity of Soviet claims that they would maintain unimpeachable standards of fairness is somewhat open to doubt.


74 GARF f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 733, ll. 26-7.
According to a ruling made in 1934, negotiations for tours had to be conducted through VOKS and visits tended to be conducted on an exchange basis, with musicians sent to and from countries with which the Soviet Union was on friendly terms.\(^{75}\) The trip to Turkey mentioned above, which took place in May 1935 and included Oistrakh and Shostakovich in the Soviet delegation, was a return visit following the tour made by a group of Turkish musicians to the Soviet Union in April 1934.\(^{76}\) Cordial relations had developed between the two countries in the aftermath of the First World War, when both countries had felt weak and isolated, and the special relationship had been sealed by a treaty signed in 1925.\(^{77}\)

The conclusion of non-aggression pacts with France and Czechoslovakia in May 1935, which formed part of Litvinov's collective security policy, brought cultural contacts in their wake. In the summer of 1936, the Soviet Radio Committee choir made a tour of Czechoslovakia, and a Czech choir made an exchange visit to the Soviet Union at the same time. The Soviet choir tour was reported to have been a great success, and the enthusiastic response of Czech and Slovak audiences was described by the deputy chair of the Radio Committee as an illustration of 'the great sympathy and interest which the Czech masses hold towards the Soviet Union'. He expressed the hope that the interest generated in the local press would help to popularize Soviet repertoire abroad. He further claimed that the Soviet performances of Russian folk songs would help demonstrate to the Czechs and Slovaks the 'correct' method of arranging such songs for choirs: preserving the true essence of the folk melodies without any of the 'formalist elaborations' allegedly introduced by foreign singers.\(^{78}\) A tour by the Red Army ensemble to France in the following year was hailed as a major triumph, and it was reported that the bourgeois audiences had been so impressed by the high standards displayed by the choir that they were even moved to applaud a performance of the Internationale.\(^{79}\)

\(^{75}\)RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 5, ll. 8-10 ob. st.

\(^{76}\)Турецкие музыканты в Москве', SI, 23 April 1934, p. 4; SI, 23 May 1935. VOKS claimed that such cultural contacts were a significant factor in the strengthening of world peace.


\(^{78}\)RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khr. 15, ll. 71-4.

\(^{79}\)RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khr. 23, ll. 28-33.
'Exporting' Soviet Music

A Sovnarkom resolution of February 1934 emphasized the importance of popularizing Soviet music in foreign countries, and proposed various measures intended to help the promotion of Soviet works abroad. Among the main proposals were included recommendations that VOKS should put out brochures on Soviet composers in foreign languages, submit articles on Soviet music for publication in the foreign press, and set up a system for supplying scores of Soviet works to foreign orchestras and opera companies. Inturist was expected to include Soviet works in their music festivals; Muzgiz was called upon to issue special editions of Soviet music (on higher-than-usual quality paper) for export; and further proposals were aimed at increasing the export of recordings of Soviet music and the number of radio concerts including Soviet works to be broadcast on international wave-bands. The degree to which these proposals were implemented successfully is open to doubt. A letter from an Agitprop official to the head of the foreign radio broadcasting service in 1940 complained that insufficient airtime was assigned for the performance of Soviet works, or to recitals by Soviet performers, and that the radio was generally failing in its duty to advertise the achievements of the Soviet Union in music. The importance of demonstrating the talents of young Soviet musicians to foreign visitors had also been stressed in an Inturist memorandum of 1936, which had emphasized the importance of providing high-quality concerts of Soviet music for tourists. Since foreign journalists and critics frequently numbered among the tourists visiting Moscow, programme compilers were urged to use these occasions as an opportunity to promote Soviet artistic culture. They were encouraged to arrange performances by young virtuoso musicians who had received their training entirely during the Soviet period, as well as by groups of folk musicians from the non-Russian republics.

The exchange of scores with foreign music associations was another means by which new Soviet music could be promoted in the West. Concern was expressed by some Soviet officials, however, at the choice of music to be sent, especially once it became clear that Western musicians viewed some of the more avant-garde works composed in the 1920s as

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80 GARF f. R-5283, op. 12, ed. khr. 239, ll. 1-3.
81 RTsKhIDNI f. 17, op. 125, d. 11, ll. 46-50.
82 RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 25, l. 55.
somehow representative of Soviet music.\textsuperscript{83} A letter sent by Norman Demuth from the Royal Academy of Music in London to the Composers' Union Foreign Department in May 1937 provides an indication of the way in which some foreigners perceived that Soviet music was developing. He commented that the music which had been sent to him at the Royal Academy was 'far less advanced in idiom than we had expected', and expressed surprise that Miaskovskii's music seemed to be popular in the Soviet Union, 'it being from our point of view rather old-fashioned'. He was also surprised that no works by Mosolov had been sent, since in Britain, he remarked, Shostakovich and Mosolov were generally believed to be the two figures most representative of Soviet Russia.\textsuperscript{84}

The question of whether Western tastes should be taken into account when selecting the works of Soviet music which should be promoted abroad became a contentious issue in April 1937, when Prokof'ev declared, in a speech delivered in the Moscow Composers' Union, that foreign audiences were generally unimpressed by the works of Soviet music that they heard. Prokof'ev was in fact making a general point about how, in rejecting contemporary Western musical influences, Soviet composers risked getting stuck in a time-warp and never producing anything new, and he also indicated the discrepancy between the rapid pace of Soviet development generally, and the relative conservatism of its musical production. Kerzhentsev, however, interpreted his speech in a slightly different way. 'Of course', he replied,

when we export crabs or bacon abroad, then certainly we must take account of the tastes of the consumer. But when we are displaying our country's art, then such criteria are inadmissible. We must display not the works which foreigners will like, but those which are characteristic of our socialist country... We must have a very critical attitude towards the criterion of Western taste.\textsuperscript{85}

Not only was the choice of music to be sent abroad a contentious issue for Soviet bureaucrats, but the question of which countries should be used as show-cases for Soviet music could also be problematic. Soviet decision-makers were faced with a dilemma in 1938 when an

\textsuperscript{83}Particularly music by Mosolov: RGALI f. 645, op. 1, ed. khr. 193, l. 2.

\textsuperscript{84}RGALI f. 2077, op. 1, ed. khr. 9, ll. 40-41.

\textsuperscript{85}Vy' stuplenie na sobranii aktiva soiuza kompozitorov (Konspekt), Prokof'ev o Prokof'ev: stat'i i inter'iu (Moscow: Sovetskii Kompozitor, 1991), pp. 154-7.
application was received in the Arts Committee from the Royal Opera Theatre in Rome, requesting permission to produce Shostakovich's opera *Katerina Izmailova* in Italy. The Soviet Embassy in Italy was placed in an awkward position, because Ferrero, the conductor who had made the initial request, was one of the few representatives of the Italian artistic world to maintain relations with the Soviet Embassy, and he had even visited Moscow in 1936. With the exception of the crisis over Abyssinia in 1935, Soviet relations with Italy had been relatively amicable since the signing of a non-aggression treaty in September 1933, and ideological differences had not been seen as an insuperable obstacle to peaceful coexistence. Nevertheless, the proposal to produce this opera in a fascist country, a work, moreover, which had - under its alternative title of *Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo Uezda* - been condemned as formalist in *Pravda* only two years previously, proved too much for the Arts Committee leadership to stomach. The matter was eventually resolved in the autumn of 1938, nine months after the original application had been made, following consultation with Shostakovich. No doubt mindful of the criticism to which his opera had been subject two years earlier, and anxious to avoid any possible future attacks, Shostakovich replied with a categorical refusal to sanction the proposed production. This negative stance was backed up by Khrapchenko, the acting head of the Arts Committee, and the score was never sent to Italy.  

Another interesting example of the diplomatic complications which could ensue from proposals to send Soviet musical works for performance abroad is provided in the case of Miaskovskii's 21st symphony. This work was completed in 1940 and was dedicated to the Chicago symphony orchestra, which was celebrating its 50th anniversary that year. Miaskovskii had a long history of collaboration with this orchestra, and its chief conductor Frederick Stock had visited the Soviet Union in the previous year at the invitation of the Composers' Union. Although Miaskovskii's decision to dedicate the symphony to this orchestra was not felt to detract in any way from the merits of the work, VOKS officials nevertheless expressed concern in a memorandum to the Central Committee that this circumstance could give rise to diplomatic complications, should the work - as had been proposed - be awarded one of the recently-established Stalin prizes. It was pointed out that such an award 'could be considered a demonstrative gesture by the Soviet government towards America', something

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86 RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khr. 30, ll. 10-11 and 44-47.
which was regarded as deeply undesirable at that particular time. In the event, VOKS' concerns seem to have been unfounded. The symphony received its première on 26 December 1940 in Chicago, and was awarded a Stalin prize in 1941 without causing a diplomatic incident of any kind.

The Internationale

Appeals for revolutionary composers of the world to unite did not play a particularly prominent role in the musical world of the 1920s. While one might have expected that groups such as RAPM would have promoted international links with fellow 'proletarian composers' in other countries, they had tended in fact to concentrate more on creating socialist music 'in one country', rather than seeking to further the cause of world revolution through their art. The Music Section of the International Association of Revolutionary Theatres (MORT) was set up in February 1932, and a Music Bureau was formed in November of that year, which was to become the main coordinating centre for the various associations of left-wing composers worldwide. Formal sections were set up in the USA, Japan, France and England, and links were created with socialist music organizations in Czechoslovakia, Austria and Holland. The board of this organization was composed mainly of Russians, although left-wing émigrés, mainly from Nazi-occupied countries, came to play a leading role as the movement developed. Hanns Eisler, who took over the leadership of the Music Bureau in July 1935, and the Hungarian Ferenc Szabó (1902-69), who played an active role in MORT activities right from the start, were the most conspicuous non-Russians to involve themselves in its work. Proceedings were similarly dominated by Soviet affairs, with particular emphasis given to the need to propagandize Soviet music around the world.

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87RTsKhDNI, f. 17, op. 125, d. 11, l. 101.
89RTsKhDNI f. 540, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 54-7.
90The Section claimed to have informal links with countries as far apart as Australia, Chile, Canada, Trinidad and China: G. Shneerson, 'International'naia sviaz', MS, no. 4 (1934), 14-15.
The main tasks of the movement were described as being to create a revolutionary united front in international music, to develop mass organizations at the grass-roots level and to attract talented 'fellow-traveller' musicians to work with these groups. The Bureau aimed to unmask fascist ideology in music, and to encourage composers to write works, particularly vocal pieces, which could serve to strengthen the class consciousness of the labouring masses and unite them for revolutionary struggle. The Music Bureau conducted various activities in pursuit of these objectives. These included publishing collections of revolutionary songs with translated texts; commissioning articles on different aspects of the international revolutionary music movement for publication in Soviet and foreign music journals; organizing amateur workers' choirs and orchestras in different countries, and sending out materials for their use; monitoring the musical activities conducted in fascist countries; and planning international music festivals and olympiads.  

The period 1932-6 in many ways saw a significant shift away from Bolshevik fundamentalism in Soviet policy, both at home and abroad. The end of the Cultural Revolution had seen the rehabilitation of bourgeois specialists and fellow travellers, and Litvinov's collective security policy, launched in response to Hitler's rise to power in Germany, went against the traditional Soviet strategy of exploiting antagonisms within the capitalist camp. The policy of the Popular Front, formally adopted by the Comintern in 1935, promoted cooperation between the Soviet Union and Western Social Democratic parties against the threat of fascism. The MORT Music Section was intimately connected with these policies, and it worked to forge links with fellow-traveller musical organizations and non-revolutionary workers' music groups, as well as adopting the rhetoric of the Popular Front. With the shift away from collective security and towards isolationism in Soviet foreign policy in 1936, it is hardly surprising that MORT came to be regarded as surplus to requirements.

1936 saw the liquidation of MORT as an independent association. It was claimed by Shcherbakov in a Kul'tpros memorandum to Molotov, Kaganovich and Ezhov dated February 1936, that the institution, under the leadership of the German theatre director Erwin Piscator, had become a refuge for all kinds of suspicious elements. Eisler, who at this time held the post

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91 Mezhdunarodnaja Muzika, no. 1 (1933), 1-3; RTsKhIDNI f. 540, op. 1, d. 47. MORT officials were enthusiastic advocates of Soviet participation in international music festivals, although their recommendations were often ignored.
of head of the Music Section, was attacked as a 'Western formalist', who had allegedly denied the value of classical music and believed that Soviet music had lost its class content. The Music Section itself came in for particular criticism on the grounds that its leaders had contravened the express instructions that the MORT delegation to the ISCM Festival held in Prague in September 1935 should not claim to constitute a 'Soviet delegation'. The two German émigrés who made up the delegation, Eisler and Raikhenbakh, had gone one step further than this and took it upon themselves to invite the ISCM, in the name of the Soviet government, to hold its next festival in Moscow. This display of excessive independence on the part of the MORT Music Section proved its undoing, and it was formally disbanded, with its functions transferred to the Foreign Affairs Department of the Moscow Composers' Union.\textsuperscript{92}

Even after the liquidation of the Music Bureau in 1936, musicians continued to maintain a presence on the international political stage. The Spanish Civil War was seized upon as a perfect opportunity for Soviet composers and musicians to demonstrate solidarity with their embattled Spanish comrades, and great efforts were put into writing inspiring marching songs to send to the front. Such aid seems to have been appreciated in some quarters, as the director of the Valencia Conservatoire and the chief conductor of the Valencia chamber orchestra sent an appeal to Soviet composers in the summer of 1937, requesting that they write symphonic works dedicated to the Spanish Communist Party and the Popular Front.\textsuperscript{93} Soviet musicians were also active, giving benefit concerts in aid of the widows and children of Spanish partisans.\textsuperscript{94}

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The overall level of contact with the Western musical world during the 1930s was rather greater than many historians have previously assumed. This was due mainly to the fact that where the politics of musical diplomacy were concerned, pragmatic considerations tended to

\textsuperscript{92}RGALI f. 962, op. 10s, ed. khr. 14, II. 87-90; Alan Bush, 'The ISCM Festival at Prague', \textit{The Musical Times}, October 1935, pp. 940-2. The proposal to hold the 1936 festival in Moscow was rejected in any case, as it had already been arranged that it should take place in Barcelona. Szabo took over as the head of the Moscow Composers' Union Department for Foreign Affairs.

\textsuperscript{93}'Prizyv k sovetskim kompozitoram', \textit{Muzyka}, 6 August 1937, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{94}'Bol'shoi teatr - ispanskomu narodu', \textit{Sl}, 23 September 1936, p. 1; RGALI f. 672, op. 1, ed. khr. 6, l. 28.
take precedence over purely ideological concerns. Although Soviet decision-makers generally regarded the outside world with disfavour, it proved impossible to stifle all contacts, and political pragmatism often made the forging of links with Western musical life seem not simply inevitable, but even desirable. Richard Kraus's analysis of the Chinese ambivalence towards the piano is interesting in this regard: the Chinese authorities have long disliked the instrument on principle, as they regard it as a symbol of Western musical culture, but they have nevertheless enjoyed the prestige which Chinese victories in international piano competitions can bring. Similar ambivalence can be detected on the part of Soviet officials towards Western musical life.

Despite such ambivalence, however, the international profile of music as a largely non-verbal art form made some sort of engagement with Western musical life almost inevitable. Participation in the international musical arena could serve both to raise the prestige of the Soviet Union and to assist those Soviet composers who wished to keep in touch with Western musical developments. Changes in the direction of Soviet foreign policy as a whole tended to have an impact on musical diplomacy, and thus the changing patterns of Soviet avoidance of and engagement with Western musical life fluctuated in a manner which seemed at times to be inconsistent. The shift towards isolationism in foreign policy from late 1935 found reflection in the anti-formalism campaign of early 1936.

\[95\text{Kraus,} \text{Pianos and Politics.}\]
CHAPTER SIX
ANTI-FORMALISM AND TERROR IN THE MUSICAL WORLD

The years 1936-8 were a turbulent time in musical life, as in Soviet society more generally. The musical world became the initial target of the anti-formalism campaign in the early part of 1936, and the discussions held in the wake of the Pravda attack on Shostakovich were to dominate musical society over subsequent months. The anti-formalism campaign had a dramatic impact on Soviet composers and musicians, and was a particularly traumatic period for Shostakovich personally. Nevertheless, it is important not to confuse this episode with the later period of the Ezhovshchina, or Great Terror. Many writers on this subject have tended to assume that an atmosphere of all-pervasive terror and suspicion had already descended on Soviet society at the time of the anti-formalism affair, but this view is mistaken. Although it would be naive to suppose that all of the speeches delivered during the anti-formalism debates of 1936 constituted the expression of views freely held, the transcripts of these meetings nevertheless indicate that the opportunity for open exchange of opinion was far greater at this stage than it was to become in the following year. This chapter will focus both on the anti-formalism campaign of the first quarter of 1936, and on the impact of the Terror on Soviet musical life. Given that the detailed history of these episodes is not widely known, the approach taken will combine narrative with analysis in order to provide a clear picture of how and why events unfolded as they did.

The Lady Macbeth Affair

Opera came onto the political agenda in a big way in January 1936. A number of new Soviet operas, many of which were based on contemporary themes, were being produced at this time and attracting the attention of critics, both at home and abroad. The Leningrad Maly Opera Theatre (commonly known by its acronym MALEGOT), which had already acquired renown for its work in promoting new works by young Soviet composers, started a high-profile tour of Moscow at the beginning of January. It brought with it productions of Dzerzhinskii's Tikhii Don, Shostakovich's Ledi Makbet Mzenskogo Uezda and his ballet Svetlyi Ruchei, Zhelobinskii's Komarinskii Muzhik (Komarinskii Peasant) and Imeniny (Name-day) and one classical work, Chaikovskii's Pikovaia Dama, in a new production directed by Vsevolod
Meierkhol'd. Prior to the tour, the director and music director of the theatre had been invited to a meeting with government and Party officials, including Bubnov and Arkad'ev from Narkompros, and Akulov, Enukidze's successor as secretary of the Central Executive Committee. Bubnov and Akulov remarked favourably on the theatre's work in initiating productions of new operas and praised its role in the 'struggle' to create a Soviet operatic repertoire.1

Bubnov and Akulov were not alone in their positive assessment of MALEGOT's work. An article which appeared in Literaturnaia Gazeta on 5 January 1936 saluted the theatre's activity as a 'laboratory of Soviet opera', supporting young composers and working with them on the creation of a new repertoire.2 On 11 January, the head of the Central Committee Kul'tpros department, Shcherbakov, wrote a memorandum addressed to Stalin, Andreev and Zhdanov in the Central Committee Secretariat in which he commended the theatre's work in supporting the development of contemporary Soviet opera. He proposed that the theatre be renamed the New State Academic Opera Theatre; that official titles be awarded to the musical director Samosud and to other deserving artistes; and that a general pay rise be awarded to the staff of the theatre in order to equalize their salaries with those of employees at the Mariinskii Theatre.3 On 17 January, Bubnov and Akulov, together with two officials from the Leningrad Party organization, wrote a letter to Stalin in which they repeated the sentiments expressed by Shcherbakov, praising the theatre and requesting that its work be given official recognition by the Soviet government. Kerzhentsev reiterated the petition once again in a letter to Stalin written on 25 January.4

MALEGOT's standing in the world of Soviet opera was heightened still further when a group of Soviet leaders including Stalin, Molotov, Akulov and Bubnov went to see the touring production of Dzerzhinskii's Tikhii Don on 17 January at the Bolshoi Theatre. In conversation after the third act with the directors of the work, as well as with Dzerzhinskii, Stalin was

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1'Leningradskii malyi opernyi teatr na gastroliakh v Moskve', Sl, 5 December 1935, p. 3.
2A. Fevral'skii, 'Eksperimental'nyi opernyi teatr', LG, 5 January 1936, p. 5.
3RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 13, ll. 12-13.
4RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 14, ll. 11-14.
decidedly complimentary. He praised the work as a whole, pointed out some of what he believed to be the flaws in the production, particularly with regard to the staging of the opera, and exhorted the theatre's directors to future efforts in the creation of 'classic' works of Soviet opera. It is interesting to note Stalin's evident lack of familiarity with recent developments on the 'musical front', as demonstrated in his conversation with Samosud. Samosud, writing in Pravda, described the conversation as follows:

I raised the question of whether the theatre was taking the correct path, since our path had not been particularly smooth and we had had a considerable struggle for Soviet opera. There was a time when we were attacked quite a lot for our position on this question. Comrade Stalin asked, "Who attacked you?", and replied to his own question, jokily, "The old folk, probably".

As Sheila Fitzpatrick has rightly pointed out, Stalin evidently did not realise that Samosud had been referring to RAPM and the 'proletarian' critics who had led the attack against Shostakovich's Nos, produced by the theatre in 1930, and believed that it must have been the conservative musical establishment who were principally responsible for obstructing the development of Soviet opera.

The Leningrad opera establishment interpreted this incident as an indication that their city had been officially designated as the centre of contemporary Soviet opera. In a discussion on the 'paths of Soviet opera', organized by Gorodinskii in Moscow on or around 25 January, the Malyi Opera theatre was praised to the skies, while the directors of Moscow opera theatres were reproached for their 'insufficient courage and persistence in the struggle for Soviet opera' which had caused them to lag behind Leningrad in this sphere. Shostakovich - another young composer from Leningrad - was also enjoying a period of success at this time. His opera Ledi Makbet, which was playing in 3 different productions in Moscow in January 1936, had received extremely favourable reviews in the press. In early January he was approached by Gorodinskii,
who evidently proposed that Shostakovich together with his friend, the musicologist Ivan Sollertinskii, should begin to take a more prominent role in the musical life of Leningrad. In a letter to Sollertinskii written on 9 January, Shostakovich pleaded with his friend not to go ahead with his contemplated change of profession, writing that 'I will return, and we will work together on the restructuring of the musical front in Leningrad, if only on the basis of my conversations with Gorodinskii, Dinamov and certain other comrades'. Shostakovich's favoured status in the eyes of Kul'tpros officials must also have been clear to Party leaders, because the inclusion of his name in the list of young opera composers who had enjoyed the patronage of Samosud and MALEGOT in Shcherbakov's letter of 11 January to the Central Committee Secretariat was a significant indication of official approval.

It was against this background that the editorial entitled 'Chaos instead of Music' appeared in Pravda on 28 January. Stalin, Molotov, Mikoian and Zhdanov had been to see the production of the work by the Bolshoi Theatre's second company two days previously, and Shostakovich had been summoned to the theatre at the last minute so that he would be on hand should Stalin wish to meet the composer. Writing to Sollertinskii on 28 January from Arkhangelsk, he described his mood as 'not too good', explaining that 'as you will have guessed, I have been thinking about what happened to your namesake and did not happen to me'. His apprehensions were more than confirmed by the article in Pravda, which attacked virtually every aspect of the opera and its production, describing Ledi Makbet as an example of 'leftist art' which left its listeners 'stunned by the deliberately dissonant, confused stream of sounds'. The assault came as a terrible blow to Shostakovich, although in the words of his friend Isaak Glikman, 'he continued to believe unhesitatingly in his own creative powers' and did not stop working.

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8 L. Mikheeva, 'Istoriia odnoi druzhby', SM, no. 9, 1987, p. 79. Sollertinskii had been thinking of abandoning musicology in favour of linguistics. For an early positive review of Ledi Makbet, see E. Braudo, 'Pobeda sovetskoi muzyki', LG, 30 January 1934, p. 4.

9 He was summoned by the theatre's deputy director, Leont'ev. Mikheeva, p. 79.

10 Sollertinskii's 'namesake' was Ivan Ivanovich Dzerzhinskii, who had been invited to meet the Politbiuro leaders after their viewing of Tikhii Don. After his fruitless visit to the theatre, Shostakovich had gone to Arkhangelsk on a concert tour with the cellist Viktor Kubatskii (1891-1970).

11 Glikman, p. 9.
The article, and the subsequent attack on Shostakovich's ballet *Svetlyi Ruchei*, had a dramatic impact on the whole of Soviet musical life. Attacks of this nature on art works in the central Soviet press were almost unprecedented, and a number of debates were organized by and for members of the musical profession in order to discuss the significance of these articles and the question of what lessons composers and critics should derive from the whole episode. The attack on Shostakovich in *Pravda* proved to be only the opening salvo in a more generalized campaign against formalism and 'naturalism' in other spheres of the arts, and similar debates were organized in other branches of the artistic community. The debates which were organized within the Composers' Unions and other music institutions in the aftermath of the *Pravda* attacks on Shostakovich have been portrayed as well-orchestrated 'demonstrations of "solidarity"', in which Union members 'were marched to the rostrum one by one... to deliver denunciations of their fallen colleague and fulsome praise of the historic documents'. Nevertheless, scrutiny of the transcripts of these meetings indicates that a variety of different opinions were expressed by participants, and a fair degree of genuine debate took place.\(^\text{12}\)

The significance of the attack on Shostakovich was not immediately apparent to all concerned, and a number of participants at the various meetings spoke of their surprise on reading the *Pravda* editorials. During a meeting of Bolshoi Theatre employees on 3 February, the Georgian conductor Aleksandr Melik-Pashaev (1905-64) expressed his bemusement at the fact that the original article on *Ledi Makbet* had been unsigned, and had not been followed by a counter-review of any kind.\(^\text{13}\) The young composer Pustylnik admitted during the Leningrad Composers' Union discussions in late February that he had originally 'read the article simply as a review of Shostakovich's opera and considered it categorically false', since a genuine review, in his opinion, should have drawn attention to the positive as well as the negative aspects of the work. He admitted that it was only after it had been explained to him that the article represented the views of the Party Central Committee that he had come to recognize its 'wider significance'. Likewise Gnesin, speaking at the same meeting, pointed out that it was unclear whether the

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\(^{12}\)Taruskin, pp. 22-3.

\(^{13}\)RGALI f. 648, op. 2, ed. khr. 1033, l. 9. The director of the Bolshoi, Mutnykh, had to inform him that unsigned articles usually represented the views of the editor.
article had been intended as a general directive from on high or as a critical opinion on the work in question, and that this had been the cause of some confusion among composers and critics.\textsuperscript{14}

Defenders of Shostakovich, some of whom were deeply sceptical of the value of the attack on formalism, were particularly outspoken in the discussions held in Leningrad. In the report which appeared in \textit{Pravda} of a debate which took place in the Leningrad Composers' Union Section of Criticism and Theory on 5 and 7 February, the musicologists Sollertinski and Aleksandr Rabinovich (1900-43) were roundly attacked as open 'defenders of chaos in music' for having spoken up at this meeting in support of Shostakovich's opera.\textsuperscript{15} Their allegedly pro-formalist stance came in for further criticism during the four-day Leningrad Composers' Union discussion held later in the month. The vehemence of these attacks came as a shock to the two men and they both took the opportunity provided by this meeting to retract some of their earlier statements, adopting the language of self-criticism so prevalent in Soviet public life at the time.\textsuperscript{16} Both men declared that they accepted the fundamental accuracy of the \textit{Pravda} articles and argued that the way forward for Soviet composers lay in making folk themes central to their music, and in encouraging composers to develop more contact with their audiences.

The debates held in Moscow were dominated to a considerable extent by composers who were young, marginalized in some way, or simply mediocre. More senior figures in the musical world, such as Shebalin and Genrikh Litinskii (1901-85), chose to bide their time and refrained from making any comments at the meetings held by the Moscow Composers' Union in mid-February. Miaskovskii did not even put in an appearance, and was criticized for this at a later date by Kerzhentsev.\textsuperscript{17} Litinskii and Shebalin both waited until a meeting of the Moscow Conservatoire Faculty of Composition - of which both men were members - held in early March before making their first public pronouncements on the affair.\textsuperscript{18} The degree of caution exercised by more established composers was almost certainly a product of their experiences

\textsuperscript{14}GTsMMK f. 296, d. 478, l. 2; d. 481, l. 5.

\textsuperscript{15}Sobranie Leningradskikh kompozitorov i muzykal'nykh kritikov, \textit{Pravda}, 10 February 1936, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{16}GTsMMK, f. 296, d. 478, ll. 14-30, 35-6, 49-56. Rabinovich nevertheless continued to assert that it would be entirely wrong to dismiss all music which sounded unusual as 'cacophonous': l. 54.

\textsuperscript{17}RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 71, l. 11.

\textsuperscript{18}Na temu dnia: samokritika ogliadkoi, SI, 11 March 1936, p. 1.
during the Cultural Revolution, when the political climate in which they had worked had been subject to such rapid and comprehensive change. The lesson which they had extracted from this experience was that it was safer, in such circumstances, to wait and see which way the wind was blowing before venturing an opinion in public. Both men nevertheless came under attack during the Faculty meeting for their tardiness in coming forward to make public statements, for displaying inadequate self-criticism when they did, and for allegedly fostering the canker of formalism within the Faculty.19

Young composers certainly made their mark on the Moscow discussions. Tikhon Khrennikov - still a student at the time - was one speaker who complained of the pernicious influence which the 'formalists' who worked as professors at Moscow Conservatoire had exerted over their pupils. He claimed that Conservatoire students were being encouraged to emulate contemporary Western European composers of the modernist school such as Hindemith, Schoenberg and Berg, on the spurious (in his view) grounds that their new and complex musical forms constituted a commendable model of revolutionism in music.20 Vano Muradeli (1908-70), who was later to gain notoriety as the composer of Velikaia Druzhba (The Great Friendship), the opera attacked in the Central Committee Resolution of February 1948, was even more forthright in his criticism of the prevailing situation in the Conservatoire. Quoting from a letter written by a fellow student, Muradeli described the head of the Faculty of Composition, Professor Litinskii, as someone who played a 'reactionary role', propagating a 'harmful formalist tendency in his teaching and in creative questions', and called for him to be unmasked.21 Envy of Shostakovich's international standing may have been another factor prompting his younger colleagues to seize this opportunity to go onto the offensive.

The Moscow debates also gave rise to a resurgence of the controversy surrounding RAPM. A number of former RAPM composers perceived the attacks on Shostakovich as an indication that Politbiuro members had finally seen the light and were coming round to a

19Shebalin's Lenin symphony had already been attacked in Pravda for its 'elements of formalist oversimplification and the substitution of strong musical feelings and clear ideas for the play of sounds without content': 'Na sobranii Moskovskikh kompozitorov', Pravda, 17 February 1936, p. 5.

20'Na sobranii'.

21'Protiv formalizma i fal'shi: tvorcheskaia diskussiia v Moskovskom soiuze sovetskikh kompozitorov', SM, no. 3 (1936), 16-60 (pp. 52-3).
RAPM-oriented way of thinking. In his speech delivered during the Moscow Composers' Union debate on 10 February, Lebedinskii - the former head of RAPM - welcomed the intervention by the Party leadership and claimed that the whole of Soviet musical life was in urgent need of restructuring in the light of the Pravda editorials. He argued that those who believed they could simply reject Shostakovich, declare their opposition to formalism in music, and then carry on as before were fundamentally mistaken. He also advocated conducting a purge of critics from the Composers' Union and called for more attention to be paid to the musical legacy of the late Prokoll leader Davidenko. The report of the Moscow meetings which appeared in Pravda on 17 February was particularly critical of this latter aspect of Lebedinskii's speech, and claimed that he 'perceived the unmasking of formalist cunning and falseness in Shostakovich's music as a convenient opportunity to institute, in place of the uncritical approbation of one composer, the uncritical approbation of another'. Despite being firmly slapped down by his colleagues, and having his speech labelled 'incorrect' in Pravda, Lebedinskii went on to make a further intervention during a meeting convened by the Arts Committee on 14 March. He took a less controversial stance on this occasion, and argued that the most positive outcome of the whole anti-formalism affair had been the focusing of composers' minds on folklore as the most fruitful source of musical material.

The alleged isolation of composers from their audiences was one theme touched on by a number of speakers at the various discussions. As the original article on Ledi Makbet had pointed out, 'the composer evidently failed to set himself the task of paying attention to what the Soviet audience is waiting and searching for in music' and had written in a musical language which was so complex that his music only got through to formalist aesthetes who have lost their healthy taste. Such music, the article went on, appealed to the 'unnatural tastes of bourgeois audiences', but not to Soviet listeners. Several participants in the debates remarked on the importance of forging links between composers' organizations and factories and kolkhozy. By making closer contact with the mass of Soviet listeners and familiarizing themselves with the day-to-day lives of ordinary workers and peasants, composers would be

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22RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 38, ll. 10-16.

23RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 71, ll. 59-62.

24Sumbur'.
able to adjust to the musical tastes of their audiences. They could also gather folk materials and 
thus become better, to compose 'realistic' works of music based on themes taken from 
contemporary Soviet life.

The standard argument of all composers - throughout history - who have written in a 
musical style perceived as overly complex for their particular day and age has been that their 
music would come to be understood and appreciated by future generations of listeners. Such 
reasoning was roundly rejected in the Soviet press as irrelevant in Soviet conditions. In an 
editorial in Sovetskoe Iskusstvo, published in early February 1936, it was argued that Soviet 
composers had been in danger of forgetting the requirement that their music should serve 
millions of listeners. Composers who contended that the rejection of their music by 
contemporaries served only to prove that they - like Beethoven - were writing the music of the 
future, were denounced for their 'ignorant impudence'. 'How can we compare', the author of this 
piece demanded, 'the handful of Viennese music lovers who rejected Beethoven.... with the 
gigantic Soviet audience?'. Gavriil Popov, whose 'formalist' symphony had come under attack 
in the previous year, faced renewed criticism from colleagues during the Leningrad debates. 
The Leningrad Composers' Union official Kessel'man, who chaired the meetings, condemned 
Popov's claims that his symphony would be appreciated by the masses in 30 years time as a 
vivid illustration of his 'isolation' from the Soviet mass audience. Mikhail Chulaki, the head 
of the Leningrad Philharmonia, went much further than most in his self-criticism. Declaring - 
somewhat foolhardily? - at the meeting in Leningrad that 'I personally liked Ledi Macket, and I 
still like it now', he nevertheless acknowledged that 'the articles in Pravda showed our deep 
delusion, and demonstrated that our tastes (including my own) had totally lost touch with the 
healthy tastes of the broad mass of Soviet listeners.'

Soviet music critics came in for particular censure during the anti-formalism 
discussions. A number of speakers, including Cheliapov and Kabalevskii, argued that critics 
had been failing in their duty to make value judgements about the music they reviewed, 
preferring to stick to formal analysis of the work in question rather than telling their readers

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26 GTsMMK f. 296, d. 479, l. 5. See Chapter Two.
27 GTsMMK f. 296, d. 481, l. 47.
whether or not it was worth going to hear. Dzerzhinskii was vehement in his condemnation of Soviet critics, and claimed that the main reason why the attack on Shostakovich's opera had been so harsh was because it had been over-praised by critics. In Dzerzhinskii's view, the Party leaders who went to see *Ledi Makbet* had felt that they had been misled by the glowing reviews of the work which had appeared in the Soviet press over the previous two years. They had therefore decided to put the critics firmly in their place. Dzerzhinskii was also scathing about those critics - such as Grinberg and Druskin - who had rushed to change their assessments of *Tikhii Don* after Stalin had declared his admiration of the work. Sollertinskii's consistency in his opinions gained him Dzerzhinskii's respect, albeit in purely relative terms. In a remark intended as a joke, but one which did not go down too well with some later speakers, he declared that in this regard he respected 'Sollertinskii more than Druskin, and Hitler more than Trotsky'.

It was alleged by several speakers that one of the reasons why Soviet music critics had failed so comprehensively in their obligation to provide honest and principled assessments of musical works was because of the unhealthy atmosphere which had been created within the Composers' Unions. Kushnarev, a member of the Leningrad Union, declared that the Union had become too absorbed with material questions such as the improvement of composers' living conditions, and had failed to generate the sort of creative environment in which critics and composers could feel able to express opinions about particular musical works which conflicted with the 'general line' within the Union. Nevertheless the musicologist Iosif Ryzhkin pointed out that although the Union was responsible to some extent for the unsatisfactory situation which had developed, members themselves were also partly to blame for having failed to display much interest in Union initiatives and having paid insufficient attention to the work of their colleagues.

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28RGALI f. 962, op. 5, ed. khr. 38, ll. 3 and 21 ob. st.

29GTsMMK f. 296, d. 479, l. 22.

30GTsMMK f. 296, d. 479, l. 23. This joke was omitted from the published transcript, which appeared in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, no. 5 (1936), 28-73.

31Such had been the case, he asserted, with *Ledi Makbet* over the course of the two years since its première. GTsMMK f. 296, d. 479, l. 30-31.

32"Diskussiia v soiuze kompozitorov", *Sv*, 17 February 1936, p. 3.
The impact of the anti-formalism campaign on Shostakovich's subsequent career will be considered in detail below. Shostakovich was not the only victim of this campaign, however, and the case of another prominent musician whose career was damaged by the episode - the conductor Nikolai Golovanov (1891-1958) - merits a brief discussion here. The anti-formalism debates brought to light an unsatisfactory state of affairs in the world of Soviet opera. Following a number of meetings with employees of the Bolshoi theatre and a lengthy correspondence with its director, Mutnykh, Kerzhentsev decided to act. In a memorandum submitted to Stalin and Molotov, he criticized the atmosphere of nepotism and toadyism which had been cultivated within the theatre, as well as its conservative repertoire plan in which Soviet works were allegedly all but ignored and classical Russian operas had a virtual monopoly. Targetting the music director, Golovanov, as chiefly responsible for creating this situation, Kerzhentsev recommended that he be sacked, and that Samosud - the music director of MALEGOT - be appointed in his place. Despite Golovanov's threats to Boiarskii, Kerzhentsev's deputy, that he would publicize their treatment of him either by committing suicide or by leaking information of his dismissal to the Western press, the decision was approved and Samosud was appointed music director of the most prestigious opera house in the Soviet Union.

Analysis

The attacks on Shostakovich and the whole campaign which followed have generated a great deal of controversy among later commentators over the question of what motivated the campaign in the first place, and who or what prompted the initial decision to attack Ledi Makbet. Various arguments have been put forward which give the 'leading role' in the affair to different figures, and the question of the authorship of the two Pravda editorials has also come under intense scrutiny. Leonid Maksimenkov, who has done more research into this episode than anyone else, has advanced an interpretation which suggests that factional infighting...

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33RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 14, ll. 100-102. Golovanov had been the target of attack once before, in 1928, because of his alleged arrogance and tendency to display favouritism: Fitzpatrick, 'Glaviskustvo', pp. 244-5.

34Boiarskii's description of his conversation with Golovanov after the sacking, is to be found in RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 14, ll. 103-4. Golovanov did not commit suicide, and in fact achieved a second rehabilitation in 1948, when he was re-appointed to his old position at the Bolshoi.
between Soviet bureaucracies was the fundamental cause of the whole anti-formalism campaign. He portrays Kerzhentsev as the supreme manipulator of events, arguing that he was able to wrest the initiative in cultural policy from the Party's Kul'tpros department, almost immediately after his appointment as head of the newly-created state Arts Committee, by delivering a 'preventative strike' against opera and ballet. He has even argued that Kerzhentsev was probably responsible for persuading Stalin to go and see Ledi Makbet on the night of 26 January.\(^{35}\)

This interpretation certainly has some appeal, but is nevertheless essentially unpersuasive. The portrayal of Kerzhentsev as the grand inquisitor of the artistic front does not ring true. Kerzhentsev was undoubtedly more than happy to take advantage of the official attack on Shostakovich's work, and to exploit developments in such a way as to derive the maximum possible benefit for his Committee, at the expense of Kul'tpros. However, the idea that someone who was essentially a middle-ranking bureaucrat, and who had rather dubious past connections with discredited organizations such as the Proletkul't, should have been in a position to initiate and direct policy in the artistic sphere is implausible.

In any case, Stalin's decision to visit the opera twice in the space of ten days does not, on the face of it, require special explanation. He was known to be an opera-enthusiast, and a high profile tour such as that undertaken by the Leningrad Maly Opera Theatre was almost guaranteed to attract representatives of the Party and government leadership to at least one of its productions. Shcherbakov's letter to the Central Committee Secretariat in praise of the theatre's work in the field of Soviet opera also served to draw the attention of the Soviet leadership to the tour. Having been to see the Maly Theatre's production of Tikhii Don, an event which prompted him to make a pronouncement on the need to create a new repertoire of Soviet operatic classics, it is not surprising that Stalin should have wanted to view another opera by a young Soviet composer, particularly given that this was a work which had been attracting international acclaim as well as praise from Soviet critics. There seems no pressing need, therefore, to account for Stalin's decision to go and see Ledi Makbet as if it were in some way unusual.

The question of who actually wrote the article in Pravda is one which has attracted more attention than it in fact, perhaps, deserves. It seems extremely unlikely that Stalin himself

\(^{35}\)Maksimenkov, p. 81.
would have written the article: he would have been much more likely to hand over the task to one of his subordinates, and the most obvious person for him to have chosen for this assignment would have been Kerzhentsev. Maksimenkov's close textual analysis of the various editorials and other articles which appeared in the Soviet press during the anti-formalism campaign indicate Kerzhentsev as the most likely author on stylistic grounds alone. The fact that Kerzhentsev probably wrote the articles does not, however, constitute evidence of a 'leading role' in the genesis of the anti-formalism campaign. It seems highly unlikely that he was doing anything other than acting on the orders of the Politbiuro leadership.

Kerzhentsev is far from being the only candidate to have been put forward as the possible puppet-master of the anti-formalism campaign. A number of memoir sources, and many later historians, have suggested that Zhdanov was primarily responsible for initiating the attacks on Shostakovich.36 However, the fact that no pre-1948 account of the episode identifies Zhdanov in this role gives rise to the suspicion that this must have been a retrospective interpretation. Zhdanov's role in Soviet musical life came in for reassessment in the aftermath of his 1948 speech on formalism in music. He certainly figured in the Ledi Makket affair: he was one of the recipients of Shcherbakov's letter of 11 January, and he was a member of the Politbiuro party that went to see Shostakovich's opera on 26 January. Neither of these incidents is in the least remarkable, however, when one remembers that Zhdanov was the head of the Leningrad Party organization at the time and therefore quite naturally took a close interest in the artistic affairs of that city. The issue is not yet closed, however, and it is not impossible that further evidence may emerge at some future date which may indicate Zhdanov's - or indeed Kerzhentsev's - closer involvement in the initial manoeuvrings behind the anti-formalism campaign.37 As the evidence stands at present, however, Stalin's role in the whole affair seems to have been the crucial one.

Although it is certainly the case that composers from Leningrad, as well as the Leningrad Maly Opera Theatre, figured prominently in the Ledi Makket affair, evidence is insufficient to construct a plausible conspiracy theory centred around the Leningrad connection.

36 For example Elagin, p. 200.

37 Zhdanov did have an interest in literature, and made a speech at the first Congress of the Soviet Writers' Union in 1934.
Many Muscovite composers had a long-standing grudge against their Leningrad counterparts. Leningrad had long been seen as the centre of truly innovative and progressive artistic work both before the revolution and after it, and Muscovite resentment can be detected in some of the speeches made in the anti-formalism debates. It would nevertheless be a mistake to attach too much significance to the decision to praise one Leningrad composer and damn another in almost the same breath. It may or may not have been all thanks to Samosud's efforts, but Leningrad composers proved rather more prolific in the field of opera-writing than their colleagues in Moscow.

One of the few things which one can state with complete confidence about the whole episode is that the Kul'tpros department of the Central Committee had no role whatsoever in any advance plan to attack Shostakovich. Gorodinskii's proposal to Shostakovich and Sollertinskii, that they should participate in the 'restructuring' of the musical front in Leningrad, indicates that he was entirely unaware that Shostakovich might be regarded in official circles as anything other than a Soviet prodigy. His negative comments about the opera Tikhii Don, made in conversation with Shostakovich in early January 1936, and repeated in a review of the work in Pravda on 9 January, also indicate that he had no advance knowledge that Dzerzhinskii might be in line for official commendation. Finally, Shcherbakov's letter of 11 January - in all probability drafted by Gorodinskii - with its implied approval of Shostakovich's operatic works provides further evidence (if any were needed) of the Kul'tpros department's total lack of awareness that any decision to target Shostakovich had been taken by the Party leadership. Given that the Kul'tpros department was the central Party organ with responsibility for the arts, it is inconceivable that a campaign of the scale which the anti-formalism crusade eventually took could have been planned in advance without the knowledge of the Kul'tpros leadership. This would therefore seem to provide additional evidence for the unplanned nature of the original attack.

If the specific attack on Shostakovich's work was unplanned, the decision to launch a major campaign in the cultural sphere, which was to result in a drastic narrowing of the parameters within which Soviet artists could work, was not. The genesis of the campaign can

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38 Shostakovich letter to Sollertinskii, 6 January 1936. Mikheeva, p. 78. Gorodinskii reportedly used words like 'ignoramus' and 'imitator' in describing Dzerzhinskii.
be traced back at least to August 1935 and the beginnings of the Stakhanovite movement in industry. The rhetoric of Stakhanovism came to dominate the Soviet press and official pronouncements during the autumn and winter of 1935. One of the more ubiquitous platitudes of the time was the assertion that with the rise of the Stakhanovite movement had come an increase in the demands made by the general population on Soviet artists, and an atmosphere of populism and anti-élitism came to dominate Soviet life. The resolution establishing the Arts Committee, while it did not mention the Stakhanovite movement by name, nevertheless drew attention to the 'growth in the cultural level of workers' which had brought about an increase in the demand for art and had therefore necessitated the restructuring of the system of arts administration across the whole country.\(^{39}\) An editorial published in Pravda on the following day likewise focused on the 'growing demands of the country and of its population' for art, which could not be satisfied by the existing Narkompros leadership.\(^{40}\)

The establishment of the Arts Committee was accompanied by a general drive to shake up the Soviet artistic intelligentsia as a whole, and the anti-formalism campaign can be seen in this light as part of the Party's move to exert its authority in the cultural sphere. Zhdanov's comments on the restructuring of the Soviet arts administration, made in April 1936, are significant in this regard. He declared that the regime's decision to turn its attention to the arts had come at a time when it had successfully resolved 'the main practical questions of socialist construction' and was therefore in a position to concentrate on less pressing concerns.\(^{41}\) Rather than limiting itself to administrative restructuring, however, the Party leadership also took the decision to begin the process of establishing a Soviet artistic canon at the same time. The anti-formalism campaign therefore not only served to raise the profile of the state Arts Committee and give it a significant degree of authority in the arts world, but it also helped to promote the new aesthetic standard.

Stalin's canonization of Maiakovskii as 'the best, most talented poet of our Soviet epoch' in December 1935 can be interpreted not only as a further move to discredit Bukharin, but also

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\(^{39}\)Ob obrazovanii VKI.


\(^{41}\)RTsKhIDNI f. 77, op. 1, d. 569, l. 12.
as an initial step towards the creation of a Soviet literary and artistic canon. Maiakovskii's poetry was interpreted within a socialist realist framework, with particular emphasis placed on the simplicity and mass appeal of his work, rather than on its innovatory and avant-garde qualities. Stalin's praise of Tikhii Don can be regarded as the second stage in the process of instituting a positive canon of Soviet artistic works. Likewise, the attacks on Shostakovich can be seen as a further elaboration of this canon, in that they clarified some of the creative paths which Soviet artists would be ill-advised to follow. This new Soviet canon was obviously influenced by the tastes of the Soviet leadership, but to assert that Stalin's immediate reaction to an opera he disliked was the catalyst which precipitated the anti-formalism campaign is not at all the same thing as arguing that the entire campaign came about solely as a result of the Leader's whim.

As both Sheila Fitzpatrick and Katerina Clark have pointed out, the Soviet leadership did not create their policies toward the arts out of thin air: they fashioned them from prejudices which were held more widely within Soviet society. The hostility to contemporary Western European modernist influences in music which was clearly in evidence in the attack on Ledi Makbet reflected not only an ideological antipathy to the cultural products of the bourgeois West, but also a fundamental dislike - widely shared, both within the Soviet Union and outside - of music which set out to be elitist and inaccessible. Support for simplicity, accessibility and realism in music was widespread among members of the musical profession as well as among Soviet audiences.

An intriguing post-script to the anti-formalism affair is provided in a letter which Maksim Gor'kii wrote to Stalin, almost certainly in early March 1936, in which he criticized the decision to attack Shostakovich. Recalling Stalin's speech of the previous year in which he had called for a more careful and attentive attitude towards people on the grounds that 'cadres decide everything', Gor'kii pointed out that Shostakovich had been treated in a far from considerate manner. Likening the tone of the criticism in the Pravda article to a brick dropped on the composer's head, Gor'kii remarked that 'the young man was completely crushed'. The

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42Vladimir Maiakovskii, Pravda, 5 December 1935, p. 4. See also Maksimenkov, pp. 17-22.

43See in particular Fitzpatrick, The Cultural Front, pp. 213-4; Clark, Petersburg, pp. 292-3.

article itself had been flawed in that it failed to analyze what precisely was 'muddled' in Shostakovich's music. 'The article in Pravda' he wrote,

allowed a whole flock of untalented people, hack-workers, to persecute Shostakovich in every possible way... and they are still doing this.... The attitude expressed in Pravda... cannot be called a 'careful' one, and...[Shostakovich]... fully deserves just such a careful attitude, as he is the most talented of all contemporary Soviet musicians.

Gor'kii had maintained a silence about the anti-formalism campaign up until this point, and his only public contribution to the affair was an article which appeared in Pravda on 9 April, in which he lamented the lack of knowledge of the history of literary trends displayed by the Soviet literary elite during the discussions held in March in the Writers' Union.\footnote{M. Gor'kii, 'O formalizme', Pravda, 9 April 1936, pp. 2-3. This article had apparently been written the previous year, although it was evidently updated for publication: Fitzpatrick, p. 199, note 61.} Gor'kii's lack of sympathy with the re-politicization of artistic and literary life in 1936 has long been suspected by historians, and this letter to Stalin offers clear confirmation of this. However, his death in June of that year foreclosed any potential role for Gor'kii as a champion of the intelligentsia.

**Shostakovich**

Shostakovich himself went through a difficult period over the two years following the attack on his work. Immediately after the appearance of the two articles in Pravda, and on arrival back in Moscow from Arkhangel'sk, Shostakovich went separately to see Kerzhentsev and his long-standing patron, Marshal Tukhachevskii, in order to discuss his situation with them. In his report of this meeting to Stalin and Molotov, dated 7 February, Kerzhentsev described how Shostakovich had come to see him 'on his own initiative'. Shostakovich asked whether it would be advisable for him to write a letter of some kind, in public recognition of his 'formalist errors' of the past, and was informed that such a letter would only be of political significance if it was accompanied by a change in the direction of his creative work. 'I indicated to him', wrote Kerzhentsev,
that he should free himself from the influence of certain obliging critics like Sollertinskii, who encourage the worst aspects of his work, created under the influence of Western expressionists. I advised him to follow the example of Rimskii-Korsakov and go around the villages of the Soviet Union recording the folk songs of Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia and Georgia, and then select from them the hundred best songs and harmonize them.

Kerzhentsev also suggested that it would be wise for Shostakovich to send any future opera or ballet libretti to the Committee in advance of starting work on the music, and to experiment by showing individual movements of his works to audiences of workers and kolkhozniki during the process of composition.46

The only evidence we have for the meeting with Tukhachevskii comes from the memoirs of Shostakovich's friend Isaak Glikman, and from Shostakovich's own 'memoirs', as related to Solomon Volkov. There seems little reason, however, to doubt the veracity of these two sources on this question. Shostakovich was certainly acquainted with Tukhachevskii and it was entirely natural for him to have sought advice from friends in high places at this time of personal crisis. According to Glikman - who also mentions the meeting with Kerzhentsev-Tukhachevskii wrote a letter to Stalin on Shostakovich's behalf.47 Shostakovich's friendship with Tukhachevskii was to cause him problems in the following year, as the Marshal was arrested in May and executed in June 1937 on charges of spying for Nazi Germany. At some point in the spring of 1937, it appears that Shostakovich was called in for questioning by the NKVD about his relationship with Tukhachevskii. The evidence for this incident is somewhat limited: the composer Veniamin Basner (1925- ) recalled in an interview how Shostakovich had described it to him several years after the event, and Solomon Volkov also claims to have been told about the incident by Shostakovich, although he did not include the story in Testimony.48 In Basner's account, Shostakovich described how he had emphasized to the investigator that he and Tukhachevskii had never discussed politics together, only music.

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46RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 14, l. 16.

47Glikman, p. 317.

The dangers of having connections with Tukhachevskii could be seen all too clearly in the fate of the director of the Moscow Philharmonia, Nikolai Kuliabko, who was 'unmasked' himself in the summer of 1937. Appointed to his post in the Philharmonia early in 1936, he became the subject of an Arts Committee investigation after only a year in the position. In a letter to Andreev in the Party Central Committee dated 17 April 1937, Kerzhentsev wrote that Kuliabko's work in the Philharmonia had proved totally unsatisfactory, that he had failed to fulfil his concert plan, antagonized performers and alienated audiences. In June 1937, in immediate response to the Tukhachevskii affair, he was dismissed from his post. At a discussion organized later in the month by the Philharmonia Party cell it was revealed that Kuliabko's Party card had been returned to him during the exchange of Party documents conducted in the previous year, after his trustworthiness as a Party member had been guaranteed by Tukhachevskii. His name appeared on a list issued later in the year of enemies of the people who had been operating in Soviet music institutions, and one must assume that he, like the others on that list, was subsequently arrested and most probably shot.

The musicologist Nikolai Zhilaev (1881-1938) was another associate of Tukhachevskii who suffered as a direct consequence of this connection. Zhilaev had been on close terms with the Tukhachevskii family since before the revolution, and kept a portrait of his friend in his room, which he refused to take down, even after the Marshal's arrest. He himself was arrested in November 1937, charged with working with Tukhachevskii as a German spy, and shot in January 1938.

Although Shostakovich was not called in for any further interrogations by the NKVD, his standing in the musical world of Leningrad was adversely affected in the summer of 1937 by his perceived links with enemies of the people. In a letter to Kerzhentsev dated 11 July 1937, Shostakovich complained that his candidature for the elections to the new governing board of the Leningrad Composers' Union had been struck off by Iokhel'son, on the grounds that he had

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49 RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 21, ll. 1-3. Kerzhentsev wrote that his decision to sack Kuliabko had been based in part on the 'information we have about his closeness to Tukhachevskii'.


51 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 190, ll. 47-50. See below, p. 199.

too many dubious connections among his family and friends. Several members of his family had been arrested, including his brother-in-law, Vsevolod Frederiks and his mother-in-law, Sofia Varzar. His sister Mariia had been exiled to Frunze. His acquaintance with Tukhachevskii had also been raised by Iokhel'son as a problematic factor, and Shostakovich responded, in his letter to Kerzhentsev, by describing their relationship in the following terms:

I have known Tukhachevskii for about eight years. During all the time of our acquaintance he has been to my place four or five times, and I have visited him about ten times. It could not be considered a close comradely acquaintance. All the more so, because we always visited one another in the company of other guests, for lunch or dinner and so on. He was a great music lover, and all of our conversations touched exclusively on this subject.

In his reply to this letter, Kerzhentsev wrote that in his view Shostakovich should seek to rehabilitate himself by redirecting his energies towards his creative work.*

The withdrawal of Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony from performance in the autumn of 1936 on the orders of the Leningrad Party organization has already been discussed above.53 Contemporaries have offered different explanations for the decision to withdraw the symphony, citing the conductor (Stiedry)'s inability to understand the music, or a strike on the part of the orchestra, but these were clearly attempts to explain why Shostakovich himself might have wished to prevent the performance of the work.54 Although the decision was presented to the public as if it had been taken voluntarily by Shostakovich - a short announcement appeared to that effect in Sovetskoe Iskusstvo on 11 December - in fact it appears that Shostakovich only withdrew the work under pressure from local Party officials.55 The Leningrad Party organization had clearly come to the understandable decision that it would be too risky for them

* RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 331, ll. 82-4

53 See Chapter Two.

54 See for example Gauk, p. 223; D. A. Tol'stoi, Dlia chego vse eto bylo: vospominaniia, (St Petersburg, 1995), pp. 107-8.

55 Khronika', SI, 11 December 1936, p. 4 stated that 'Shostakovich has requested the Leningrad Philharmonia that his Fourth Symphony be removed from performance, since it no way corresponds to his present creative convictions and represents for him a stage which he has left far behind'. The fact that the symphony was withdrawn under pressure does not, of course, disprove the proposition that members of the Philharmonia orchestra had disliked or even opposed the work.
to allow a high-profile première of a new large-scale work by a discredited composer to go ahead at this time.

Shostakovich's Fifth symphony was composed between April and July 1937 and received its première in Leningrad on 21 November, under the baton of the conductor Evgenii Mravinskii (1903-88). It was received with enthusiasm by the Leningrad audience: Liubov Shaporina, wife of the composer Iurii Shaporin, noted in her diary that 'the whole audience leapt to its feet and erupted into wild applause - a demonstration of their outrage at all the hounding poor Mitya has been through'. Suspicions that this might indeed have been the reason for the symphony's astonishing success were aroused within the Arts Committee. According to Aleksandr Gauk, Shatilov, the head of the Arts Committee Music Department, tried to turn Kerzhentsev against the work and presented it as 'a minor success, contrived by friends of Shostakovich who had gone to Leningrad especially for this purpose'. The head of the Leningrad Philharmonia at the time, Chulaki, recalled in a later article the attempts made by Arts Committee bureaucrats to present the symphony's success as somehow pre-arranged. They were convinced that the audience must have been hand-picked in advance.

Chulaki also relates another intriguing incident connected with the history of this particular work in Leningrad. The symphony unsurprisingly generated considerable interest within the Leningrad Party organization, and it was decided to arrange a special performance for Party workers. Chulaki provides an entertaining description of his altercations with the Party official responsible for organizing this concert: she refused to permit a programme made up entirely of symphonic works, and demanded that the second half include 'something for the people', such as a popular folk ensemble. The final programme included a Chaikovskii overture and Shostakovich's symphony in the first half, followed by the Moiseev folk dance ensemble

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57 Gauk, p. 129. Gauk, who was one of the party of Muscovite musicians who had travelled to Leningrad to hear the work, recalled how he was able to convince Kerzhentsev that Shatilov's information was unreliable.

58 M. I. Chulaki, 'Segodnia rasskazhu o Shostakovich', *Zvezda*, no. 7 (1987), 189-194 (p. 190). Chulaki tried and failed to assure them that tickets had been sold through the box-office in the normal way.

59 This matter was, of course, very far from entertaining at the time, and Chulaki relates how Dunaevskii, the then chairman of the Leningrad Composers' Union, was later questioned about whether or not he considered Chulaki to be a 'saboteur'. 
after the interval.\textsuperscript{60} It was apparently following this performance that the description of the work as an 'optimistic tragedy' was first used.\textsuperscript{61}

The 'subtitle' later applied to the work: 'A Soviet artist's creative response to just criticism', which may or may not have been coined by the composer himself, chimed in very neatly with two of Kerzhentsev's previous remarks to Shostakovich.\textsuperscript{62} In February 1936, as mentioned above, the Arts Committee chairman had informed Shostakovich that a change in the direction of his creative work would be more significant than any public statement of repentance could ever be; and in July 1937, in response to the letter cited above, he wrote that 'your political reputation will be determined, to a significant extent, by your creative work: its character, direction and quality. It is to this, above all, that you should turn your attention'.\textsuperscript{63} The subtitle may well, therefore, have been devised in direct response to Kerzhentsev's recommendations. Despite the symphony's success with the public and several favourable reviews in the press - many critics wrote in tones of approval about the 'new path' which Shostakovich had chosen for himself - some of his colleagues were less enthusiastic. Both Georgii Khubov and Isaak Dunaevskii were critical of the flood of praise which the work received and called for a more measured approach: Dunaevskii described it as a 'hullabaloo, even... a psychosis' which could serve no constructive purpose either for the author or the work itself.\textsuperscript{64}

The Great Terror

Leonid Maksimenkov has stressed the need to be careful about dates in discussions of the anti-formalism campaign and the Stalinist Terror which followed, and he is quite correct to

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\textsuperscript{60}Chulaki also relates how one of Shostakovich's friends (he implies, rather than states, that it was the writer Mikhail Zoshchenko) came rushing up to Shostakovich in the foyer after the performance of Chaikovskii's \textit{Francesca da Rimini} overture crying 'Mitia, I always believed that you could write beautiful and melodious music!'. Chulaki, p. 192. The whole article is re-printed in Wilson, pp. 132-8.


\textsuperscript{62}On this subtitle, see Taruskin, p. 524. It received its first public airing in an article by Shostakovich which appeared in \textit{Vecherniaia Moskva} on 25 January 1938.

\textsuperscript{63}RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 14, l. 16; RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 331, l. 82.

\textsuperscript{64}Khentova, p. 459.
do so. Although in retrospect, many historians have sought to date the beginnings of the Terror to the Kirov assassination of December 1934 or even earlier, nevertheless it seems clear that the atmosphere in Soviet life did not really begin to darken until the aftermath of the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial in August 1936. January 1937 saw the trial of Piatakov and Radek, and a plenum of the Central Committee was held in February-March, during which Stalin and Molotov exhorted workers to be vigilant in looking out for signs that enemies might be at work, and Zhdanov called for greater criticism and 'democracy' in local level organizations. This call had repercussion in the musical world, and conferences were convened in order to discuss the shortcomings of various music institutions and, in particular, the malingering influence of RAPM in Soviet musical life. The mass arrests of civilians did not begin until the summer of 1937. Those historians who have assumed that the anti-formalism campaign took place in an all-encompassing atmosphere of fear and terror should be more circumspect in their judgements: criticism by one's colleagues in February 1936 did not automatically entail one's investigation by the NKVD. Nevertheless it is understandable why the two episodes - so close together in their timing - have often been elided, and it is certainly true to say that the language of anti-formalism was to be a significant element of many of the denunciations made in 1937-8.

The Rapmovshchina

The arrest of the literary critic and former leader of RAPP, Leopold Averbakh, in April 1937 coincided with the fifth anniversary of the Central Committee Resolution of 23 April 1932 and brought further debates on the whole subject of the proletarian artistic organizations, together with condemnation of their former leaders. An editorial in Sovetskaia Muzyka in May 1937 drew attention to the need to maintain the struggle against the 'remnants' of RAPM, while taking care to distinguish between those former activists who had reoriented their work and recognized their previous errors, and those - like Lebedinskii - who had failed to do so and were allegedly acting as agents of the Trotskyist Averbakhovshchina in music.65

An open meeting of the Moscow Composers' Union began on 14 May 1937 with a report by Viktor Gorodinskii in which he attacked those former RAPMovtsy who had taken five years to realise their mistakes and were only now coming forward with self-criticism. He

lauded the achievements of Soviet music over the previous five years, but drew attention to the need for further struggle against former RAPM elements who had, he claimed, failed to restructure their activity and were hindering the work of the Composers' Unions. He focused his criticism in particular on Lebedinskii, attacking the former RAPM leader's speech in the Moscow Composers' Union in the previous year as 'openly revanchist'.

Lebedinskii himself - evidently thrown into a panic by the sudden turn of events - made a two hour speech at this meeting, in which he offered fulsome self-criticism and declared his wholehearted agreement with the sentiments expressed by Gorodinskii. Such a belated recognition of past mistakes did little, however, to placate his critics. Lebedinskii was roundly attacked, both during the meeting and in later press reports, for his conduct over the preceding five years and his previous failure decisively to reject the policies which had been pursued by RAPM. His claim that he had only recently come to understand the full significance of the 1932 resolution was received with little sympathy by the other participants at the meeting, with one report stating that they reacted 'with indignation' to his assertion that it was only after the unmasking of Averbakh that he had finally realised the erroneous nature of the political line which had been pursued by RAPM. His self-criticism was described in Sovetskoe Iskusstvo as a purely 'formal penitance', and several other former RAPMovtsy were also criticized at this time for their failure to dissociate themselves publicly from their earlier views.

Nadezhda Briusova, who had been a member of the Moscow Conservatoire Red Professors' cell and an activist in RAPM, spoke up in defence of Lebedinskii at this meeting. She described how it had been her wish to give her musical activity a political foundation which had led to her involvement with RAPM, and while she had now come to recognize and regret the errors made by that organization, she still maintained that some of its initiatives had been positive. Speaking about Lebedinskii, she stressed his youth at the time of the Cultural Revolution, and blamed herself and other senior colleagues for their 'uncritical acceptance of the harmful policies of RAPM'. She described how even after the liquidation of RAPM, Lebedinskii had failed fully to understand the 'political destructiveness' of the path which had

66 Gorodinskii, 'O RAPM i rapmovshchine', S/1, 17 May 1937, p. 5. See above, p. 175.

been followed by that organization and consequently had failed to restructure his work along the 'correct' lines. It was only now, she said, that the Averbakh group in literature had been unmasked, that he had finally come to understand - with horror - how what he had regarded as merely 'innocent mistakes' had in fact been contaminated with the 'poison' of Averbakh and Trotsky. 68

The final resolution passed by this meeting was published in the July edition of Sovetskaia Muzyka. It was scathing in its criticism of Lebedinskii, declaring that his failure over five years to offer public criticism of RAPM's activity during the Cultural Revolution had 'supported factional moods among former RAPMovtsy, which obstructed the implementation of the historical resolution of the Central Committee of the Party (of 23 April 1932)'. Lebedinskii's belated recognition of his errors had failed to satisfy the meeting, and it was resolved to hold him responsible before the Party for his political errors. The composer Belyi was also criticized for his failure to condemn Lebedinskii's speech of February 1936, although his activities within the Moscow Composers' Union and his creative work since 1932 were praised. As far as Briusova was concerned, the Conservatoire Party cell was instructed to investigate her activity, in the light of her previous failure to criticize RAPM's policy in musical education. 69

Attacks on Institutions and Individuals

The fact that a great many of the former RAPMovtsy had become leading activists in the Composers' Union Party cell became a cause for concern at this time, and served to focus the attention of the musical world on the prevailing state of affairs within the Moscow branch. The Composers' Unions had been under fire for over a year by this point. Almost simultaneously with the attack on Shostakovich in Pravda, the composer Vissarion Shebalin had published an article in Sovetskoe Iskusstvo in which he argued that the Moscow Union was failing its members. Obsession with organizational questions, he declared, was distracting attention away from the real needs of Soviet composers, and the Union was doing little to support young

68RGALI f. 2009, op. 1, ed. khr. 48.

69'Protiv rapmovshchiny i formalizma', SM, no. 7 (1937), 5-8. Lebedinskii was lucky to escape so lightly: his colleagues in the literary world were not so fortunate. He died in 1993.
composers or to promote new Soviet works. He argued that an urgent review was needed into the affairs of the Union, and that the Moscow Union could learn from studying the work of its counterpart in Leningrad.\footnote{V. Shebalin, 'O soiuze kompozitorov', \textit{SI}, 29 January 1936, p. 3.} Shebalin himself was criticized for his decision to voice his concerns in print, rather than raising them within the Union, as well as for some alleged distortion of the facts. Nevertheless, the main points of his argument were broadly accepted by his colleagues. Kabalevskii - in no sense a friend of Shebalin - agreed that the lack of a genuinely 'creative atmosphere' within the Union was hindering its work, and other composers complained of the absence of honest 'Bolshevik criticism' at review meetings and of defects in the contracts system.\footnote{Za podlinnuiu samokritiku' and 'O soiuze kompozitorov', \textit{SI}, 5 February 1936, p. 3.}

The discussions which were held during the anti-formalism campaign in the spring of 1936 gave rise to further criticism of the Composers' Unions, which were blamed for fostering an environment inimical to the development of healthy and constructive criticism of work between colleagues. A plenum of the Moscow Union held in April 1936 accepted that the Union had 'lost its role as a leading ideological centre' in the musical world, and acknowledged the need for serious restructuring.\footnote{Plenum soiuza kompozitorov', \textit{SI}, 30 April 1936, p. 4.}

Such restructuring was not forthcoming in the short term, however, and a meeting of Moscow composers was convened by the Arts Committee in December 1936 in order to discuss Union affairs. Cheliapov made the opening speech in which he gave a reasonably positive assessment of the work conducted by the Union in the months since the anti-formalism campaign. He noted that the Union had been hindered in its work by the lack of suitable premises in which to meet, and the lack of funding. Nevertheless, he maintained that composers had extracted positive lessons from the anti-formalism debates, and that the Union was playing a constructive role by issuing them with contracts and holding discussions of their work. He accepted that the Union should bear some of the blame for backwardness in certain spheres of

\footnote{Plenum soiuza kompozitorov', \textit{SI}, 30 April 1936, p. 4.}
Soviet musical life and that it had failed to motivate critics to reorient their work in the light of the anti-formalism campaign. The overall tone of his speech, however, was definitely up-beat.  

His colleagues at the meeting did not agree. Grinberg complained about the conduct of Union affairs: the Union apparatus was too big, Cheliapov was too busy to devote sufficient time to Union matters, meetings held with composers were few and far between, and some composers - such as Shebalin, who was nominally a member of the Presidium - refused to attend Union events. Elections to the Union Presidium were two years overdue, and the Union as a whole had failed to address many of the most crucial questions of music policy and musical life in the Soviet Union since its establishment in 1932. Later speakers touched on the contemptuous attitude which the Union allegedly held towards the work of female composers and the lack of any real sense of community or comradely atmosphere within the Union. Some participants offered constructive suggestions, with several speakers advocating a reduction in the size of the Union apparatus, the appointment of an organizational secretary who could help the Chairman with day-to-day matters, and the restructuring of the various Union departments. Other speakers pointed out that composers themselves should be held partly responsible for the prevailing state of affairs: apathy, inertia and a lack of public-spiritedness were blamed for the demoralization of the Union.

In his summation of the meeting, Kerzhentsev described the Moscow Composers' Union as 'inert' and in serious need of reform. In a resolution published on 13 January 1937, the Arts Committee ordered a perestroika of the Union: its apparatus was to be restructured and reduced in size. It was also ordered to establish links with other Composers' Unions without delay and to reorganize its system of ordering and promoting new Soviet works. The Committee recognized the pressing need for a suitable building to be made available as a meeting-place for composers, and suggested that the Rabis club be offered to the Union for one

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73 Stenogramma soveshchaniia v komitete s Moskovskimi kompozitorami o rabote Moskovskogo otdeleniia soiuza kompozitorov', RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 107, ll. 1-11.

74 Ill. 11-22.

75 Chemberdzhi suggested that the number of sections be reduced from twelve to five. ll. 25 ob.st., 27 and 55 ob.st.

76 See, in particular, speeches by Chemberdzhi, Gol'denveizer and Gorodinskii. ll. 23-25; 27-39.
day in every ten. It also directed that the question of whether composers of light music should be admitted to membership of the Union should be reconsidered.  

Despite official recognition of the imperative for change, little was actually achieved, and many of these issues were raised once more in April 1937, during a meeting of the Moscow Composers' Union Party activists. This meeting was addressed by Kerzhentsev, who denounced organizational weaknesses within the Union, arguing that the work of both the Union Board and the Party cell left much to be desired, and that the Union as a whole was failing in its duty to help composers in their creative work. He criticized the Union's treatment of Shostakovich, who had been met with a wall of silence from critics in the aftermath of the anti-formalism campaign. The articles in Pravda had not, he pointed out, argued that Shostakovich should be given up as a bad job. On the contrary, they had drawn attention to his talents as a composer, and it was irresponsible of critics not to distinguish between what had been good and what bad in his earlier work.

Other composers who spoke at this meeting also criticized the Union leadership. They argued that although the Union had been established as a creative association, it had become obsessed with material and organizational affairs, and had effectively turned into an administrative office. Speakers alleged that the Union was saturated by narrow-minded philistines, that it took no real interest in the creative work of individual members and that genuine association between composers on creative matters took place only outside the Union. Prokofiev pointed out that the obsession with organizational as opposed to creative issues had reached such a pass that the meeting itself had been almost entirely dominated by discussion of internal disorders within the Composers' Union, with virtually no attention paid to musical questions.

77"O rabote Moskovskogo soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov', Biiilet'en' VKL, no. 1 (1937), 16-17. This last recommendation was prompted by the recent discussion of light music and jazz which had taken place on the pages of Pravda and Izvestiia during November to December 1936. See Chapter Four, pp. 119-20.

78Rech' predsedatelia komiteta na aktive soiuza kompozitorov o rabote soiuza', RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 268.

79"Obyvatel'shchina vmesto tvorcheskogo rukovodstva', Muzyka, 16 April 1937, p. 2.

80He attempted to reverse this tendency by devoting his own speech to creative issues. Prokof'ev o Prokof'ev, pp. 154-7. See Chapter Five, pp. 148-9.
The resolution passed by this meeting noted that together with the unquestionable successes achieved by Soviet composers and musicians in recent years, the work of the Moscow Composers' Union had been unsatisfactory. A large share of the blame for this situation was laid at Cheliapov's door, because of his alleged failure to offer ideological and organizational leadership, and attention was drawn to the fact that the Union Presidium had long since out-run its period in office, which constituted in itself a 'violation of the principles of Soviet democracy'.

The Union Party cell was said to be 'cut off from composers' and lacking in authority among Union members. Inertia among composers themselves was also blamed for contributing to the prevailing state of affairs. The meeting resolved that new elections to the Presidium should be conducted without delay, and that the leadership of the Union should be strengthened with the introduction of the post of organizational secretary. Elections were eventually held in April 1938, and Glier was elected as the new chairman of the Union Board.

Similar meetings of the Leningrad Composers' Union were held on a number of occasions over the course of 1937. As in Moscow, composers complained that the atmosphere within the Union was unfriendly and that the review evenings were of little positive assistance to them in their work. Organizational matters also came under scrutiny: the chairman of the Union, Boris Fingert, had been incapacitated by illness for the previous four years, the two secretaries, Iokhel'son and Kessel'man, were overworked while other members of the Union board never attended meetings. The Union board had got into the habit of taking important decisions without a quorum, and some speakers noted the survival of elements of LAPM policy in the work of the Union. Members criticized the Union for its delay in reacting to the Pravda articles on Shostakovich and for its failure to celebrate Dunaevskii's work. In July 1937 a new board was elected to the Leningrad Union, and Dunaevskii, Mikhail Glukh (1907-73), Gnesin, Khristofer Kushnarev (1890-1960) and Shcherbachev were elected by this board to form the new Presidium.

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81 Rezoliutsia aktiva soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov', SM, no. 5 (1937) 106.

82 See Chapter Two, p. 56.

83 Dunaevskii - a composer of light music - had recently been awarded with the Order of the Red Flag.

84 For the discussions in Leningrad, see 'Dela i dni'; B. Valer'ianov, 'V soiuze Leningradskikh kompozitorov', RT, no. 8 (1937), 47-49; S. Fainshtein, 'Sobranie kompozitorov Leningrada', Muzyka, 6 July 1937, p. 3 and 16 July 1937 p. 2.
Back in Moscow, the scapegoating of Cheliapov was taken a step further in June 1937, when an article appeared in Izvestiia giving an account of the meeting which had taken place in the Moscow Union the previous month at which the former RAPM leadership had been 'unmasked' as having promoted factionalism within the Union. This article laid a 'huge share of the blame' for the disintegration in Union affairs on Cheliapov, who had - it was claimed - been so detached from the Union that he only dropped in to visit it two or three times per year. Deprived of adequate leadership, the article went on, the Union had come to be dominated by former RAPM leaders, who had instituted a regime of favouritism, promoting works by and offering support to their friends and supporters, while denying such assistance to other members. Later in the month, a meeting of the Moscow Composers' Union Board 'relieved Cheliapov of his duties' and appointed Chemberdzhi as an interim chairman until fresh elections could be held.

In October 1937 an anonymous letter was sent to Molotov by a group of composers that expanded on the points made in the Izvestiia article. It pointed out that 'around four months have passed' since the article appeared, 'but no radical changes have taken place in music institutions'. On the subject of the alleged Rapmovshchina, the authors wrote that

the discussion about RAPM was conducted (in May) UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ENEMY CHELIAPOV, who adroitly helped the RAPMovtsy... evade full exposure and destruction, using his post as chairman of the Composers' Union... After the article in Izvestiia, Cheliapov rejected all of the accusations made... at a special session of the Presidium of the Composers' Union... however he decided to remove himself, insistently recommending as his successor N. CHEMBERDZHI.

Chemberdzhi himself was accused of seeking to infringe Soviet democracy by appointing a commission to conduct a purge of the Composers' Union without first calling a general meeting.

Cheliapov was named as an 'enemy of the people' in a list circulated by the Arts Committee in the autumn of 1937, and he disappeared at around the same time. He was very

85 A. Volozhenin, 'V Moskovskom soiuze kompozitorov', Izvestiia, 27 June 1937, p. 3.
87 Chemberdzhi had been a founding member of RAPM. RGALI f. 962, op. 1, ed. khr. 885, l. 16.
88 RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 190, l. 47.
far from being the only leader of a Soviet musical organization to be repressed during this period. The anonymous letter to Molotov also drew attention to the enemies it alleged were at work in the state music publishing house Muzgiz. Former RAPMovtsy were said to have been operating within Muzgiz for more than 10 years, and to have ensured that their own work was published, while music by other composers was rejected. 'All possible abuses thrive within Muzgiz', the writers asserted, 'including those founded on MUTUAL FAVOURS', and 'as a result, it is impossible to get hold of the necessary musical literature for the 20th anniversary of the October Revolution'. Enemies were also said to have infiltrated the specialist musical press and the music sector of the radio. The authors called on Molotov to intervene to conduct a 'radical purge of the whole of the musical front of RAPMovtsy, hangers-on and formalists...WHO CONSTITUTE TO THIS DAY THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PARTY ACTIVISTS', and to organize a commission which should occupy itself with the elimination of the harmful consequences of the activities conducted by these enemy groups in Soviet musical life.\(^89\)

Denunciations of this nature became a widespread phenomenon, particularly during the second half of 1937. People would denounce their neighbours and colleagues for a number of reasons: out of fear for their own safety, from a sense of duty, and sometimes out of envy or malice. One Hungarian conductor, A. Szenkar, who had moved to the Soviet Union after the Nazi rise to power, worked in the Kharkov Philharmonia and later in Mineral'nye Vody in the Caucasus. In a denunciation sent to the Arts Committee by a group of 'arts workers', Szenkar was reported to have made inflammatory statements against Soviet power and against Stalin himself, and to have held openly anti-semitic attitudes. It was alleged that he had refused to perform the *Internationale* in Kharkov, calling it an 'unmusical work', and had insulted his audiences: he was quoted as having said 'these Russian pigs don't understand classical music' in the interval of one of his concerts.\(^90\) Another musician who faced denunciation by his colleagues was the artistic director of the opera house in Odessa, Iakov Grechnev, who was accused of slandering the Party leadership, obstructing the careers of musicians from working-class backgrounds, and trying to 'emasculate... the political essence and class content' of

\(^89\)RGALI f. 2954, op. 1, ed. khr. 885, l. 16.

\(^90\)RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 24, ll. 10-11.
Dzerzhinskii's Tikhii Don when it was produced in Odessa. A general meeting of employees of the opera house held in June 1937 resolved that he should be removed from his post and banned from working in other theatres. They forwarded their proposals to the Ukrainian Arts Administration for further action.\(^\text{91}\)

An Arts Committee list, issued in the autumn of 1937, named a number of leaders or former leaders of central musical institutions as having been responsible for conducting 'harmful and subversive work'. As well as Cheliapov, the list included Arkad'ev, the former head of the Narkompros Art Department and the first chairman of the Moscow Composers' Union; Pshibyshevskii, the former head of the Narkompros Music Sector, who had been appointed director of Moscow Conservatoire during the Cultural Revolution period; Gisin, the former head of the Philharmonia department in the Arts Committee Music Board; Kuliabko, the former director of the Moscow Philharmonia, together with his deputy Mel'nikov; the directors of the philharmonias in Stalingrad, Sverdlovsk and Georgia; the directors of the Minsk and Saratov Conservatoires, and a number of others.\(^\text{92}\)

These enemies were accused of putting their own people into jobs within their institutions; of obstructing the implementation of the Party's music policy; of failing to promote Soviet music and support talented young performers; of striving to keep their cadres in 'formalist positions'; and of disrupting measures designed to strengthen the work of their institutions by the diversion of state funds and other methods of sabotage. In order to counteract some of the effects of the harmful policies pursued by these saboteurs, the Arts Committee resolved to increase the amount of Soviet music performed in concerts and to encourage the participation of young musicians in Soviet concert life. It was in pursuit of this aim that a dekada of Soviet music was organized in the winter of 1937, which was intended to provide a decisive rebuff to the theory that Soviet music was not popular with Soviet audiences.\(^\text{93}\) Investigations were conducted into the financial mismanagement of various local

\(^{91}\)RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 24, ll. 39-41. Grenchev was later reported to be working in a theatre in Perm. His eventual fate is unknown.  l. 151.

\(^{92}\)Spravka: o priiatykh meropriatiakh po likvidatsii posledstvii vreditel' stva v muzykal'nykh uchrezhdeniakh soiuza', RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 190, ll. 47-50.

\(^{93}\)See also Kerzhentsev's letter to Stalin and Molotov concerning this dekada, RGALI f. 962, op. 10s., ed. khr. 21, ll. 176-8.
arts administrations, philharmonias and Composers' Unions, and foreign conductors were expelled from the country.\footnote{With the exception of Oskar Fried.}

Judging by the Arts Committee reports on the subject, regional and republican Arts administrations and music institutions were almost totally saturated by enemies of the people. During the period 1937-8, regular reports of counter-revolutionary sabotage and Trotskyist activities in these organizations appeared in the Arts Committee bulletins. The 'enemies' working in these institutions were said to be 'distorting the Leninist-Stalinist national policy' by ignoring works by Russian and Soviet composers in their concert plans; propagating factionalism among young musicians; not offering sufficient encouragement and support to young composers in their regions or republics; and hindering the development of national music in their republics by obstructing the introduction of European and Russian instruments and techniques. Spies and assassins were said to have infiltrated various ensembles and conservatoires, with the choir of Don Cossacks from Azovo-Chernomor'e reportedly having included a whole terrorist group that had plotted to assassinate the Soviet leadership during the choir's trip to Moscow.\footnote{RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 410, ll. 13-24. See also Chapter Four, pp. 134-6.}

A purge of the Ukrainian Party organization was launched in March 1937 and charges of bourgeois nationalism were levelled at a great many leading Party officials. Bourgeois nationalism was also said to be rife in the world of Ukrainian opera, where theatres were failing to produce any Russian-language operas.\footnote{RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 410, l. 16.} A report into the Kiev opera house, conducted in 1937, revealed that unsatisfactory leadership, indifference to the creative interests of performers, lack of serious work on political education, toadying and petty intrigues had all served to 'create favourable soil for...[the development of]... reactionary bourgeois nationalist tendencies'.\footnote{RGALI f. 962, op. 10, ed. khr. 21, ll. 133-6, l. 134.} The production of the Ukrainian composer N. Lysenko (1842-1912)'s opera \textit{Taras Bulba} in the Kiev opera house was said to have distorted the work in such a way as to promote Polish nationalism. The fact that the Polish-born First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, S.V. Kosior,
praised the work at a plenum of the Kiev Party obkom in September, was reported back to the leadership in Moscow and was doubtless noted down in evidence against him. The Ukrainian Radio Committee also became the subject of an official inquiry at this time, after reports were published in Pravda alleging that, among other misdeeds, the Kiev radio station had broadcast a programme of funeral marches on the day on which Zinoviev and Kamanev had been sentenced.

An Arts Committee ruling was published at the end of July 1937, which drew attention to a number of 'deficiencies' in the work of Moscow Conservatoire. It argued that the Conservatoire did not 'occupy a leading role in the struggle for a Bolshevik line of development in music', nor did it lead the struggle against 'RAPMist, formalist and other hostile tendencies' in music. The curriculum offered insufficient opportunities for the study of Russian and Soviet music, including folk music, and performance work and pedagogical training had yet to be made an integral part of the academic plan. The directorate was attacked for failing to pay sufficient attention to basic methodological and organizational questions, and a general lack of discipline among students was highlighted as a significant problem. Although only one individual professor was picked out for specific criticism, the resolution made it very clear that all was not well within the Conservatoire. This gave a spur to those members of the staff and student body who were already inclined to turn their attention towards seeking out and unmasking enemies within the institution.

The composer Genrikh Litinskii became the target of political denunciation during 1937. A former activist in the Prokoll movement, he had never joined RAPM and in 1932 he became the head of the Department of Composition at Moscow Conservatoire. Despite his previous connections with the 'proletarian' music movement, however, Litinskii's work in the 1930s was considered to belong to the experimental and modernist school current at the time in Western Europe. Litinskii did write a number of works in the 1930s which were based on


99 'This was felt to be quite inappropriate to the occasion. G. Pevzner, 'Kto rukovodit radioveshchaniem na Ukrainie', Pravda, 9 July 1937, p. 6.

100 'O rabote Moskovskoi gosudarstvenoi konservatorii', Biulleten' VKI, no. 7-8 (1937), 24-7.
themes taken from the folk music of various Soviet national groups - a Dagestan Suite for orchestra, and a quartet on Turkmen themes - but these cut no ice with his enemies. In 1934 the journal Sovetskaia Muzyka devoted a lengthy article to Litinskii's work, entitled 'Against Formalism in Music', in which it was argued that his music was incomprehensible in its modernist complexity and that he had come under the spell of bourgeois formalist trends in Western European music.  

Litinskii failed to speak at the initial meetings of the anti-formalism campaign, and was criticized because of this. Indeed, the resolution passed by the Moscow Composers' Union after its discussion of the Ledi Makbet affair even mentioned Litinskii as one of the composers who, along with Shostakovich, had been responsible for propagating formalist music in the Soviet Union. His speech at the meeting held by the Conservatoire Composition Faculty in March 1936 was reported in the press in decidedly ominous tones: he was said to have offered no genuine self-criticism, and to have displayed a distinct lack of understanding of the significance of the Pravda editorials. The bombshell was dropped in September 1937, when an Arts Committee ruling ordered that he be dismissed from the Faculty. He was attacked in the press as an 'unrepentant and persistent formalist', an 'untalented composer', and someone to whom the education of young composers could not safely be entrusted. He was said to have created an unhealthy atmosphere within the Faculty, to have cultivated 'favourites', and to have adopted a hostile attitude towards students from the rabfak. One of Litinskii's students, Mikhail Dushskii (1913-42), the author of a 'politically harmful' and 'counter-revolutionary' symphony about Makhno's bandits in the Ukraine, Veter s Ukrainy (Wind from Ukraine), was also expelled.

Further Conservatoire scandals were to follow in the wake of the Litinskii affair. In December 1937 a meeting of professors and students was convened in order to discuss the conduct of professor Turovskaia, who had been a teacher of singing for many years. She was accused of having encouraged an atmosphere of toadying and obsequiousness among the

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102 Rezoliutsiia obshchego sobraniia kompozitorov i muzykovedov', SM, no. 2 (1936), insert between pp. 8-9. The other composers mentioned were Popov and Mosolov.

103 A. Solodukho, 'Na kompozitorskom fakultete MGK', Muzyka, 26 September 1937, p. 2; 'Chuzhaki v konservtorii', Sl, 23 September 1937, p. 3.
students, and to have damaged their voices and their health through her incorrect and harmful teaching methods. On this occasion, and at a subsequent meeting held on 9 January 1938 to discuss the Borisovskii affair, participants noted that the lack of communist vigilance within the Conservatoire and deficiencies in the teaching of political education to Conservatoire students had led to a situation where enemies could carry on their work unchecked. Attention was also drawn to the political illiteracy and inertia of many Conservatoire professors, and the alleged 'wrecking' and 'sabotage' being conducted by some students and staff. Examples of this included students who disrupted their lessons, professors who ignored works by Soviet composers in their teaching plans, and young prize-winners who arrogantly refused to take part in the general concert activity of the Conservatoire. The vocal faculty of the Conservatoire also lost its dean, Kseniia Dorliak (1882-1945), at this time, as it was drawn to the attention of the Arts Committee that she came from a family of hereditary aristocrats and had a number of connections with enemies of the people.

The majority of Soviet musicians played no part in the denunciations, or participated only to the extent of mouthing platitudes at Union meetings or in the press. Most did their best to keep their heads below the parapet, and immersed themselves in their work. However, there were some prominent figures in the musical world who were prepared to speak out in support of their arrested colleagues. In March 1938, Glier and Miaskovskii, both of whom were well-respected professors at Moscow Conservatoire and held offices within the Composers' Union, wrote a joint letter to Kalinin, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, in which they requested that a review be made into the case of Mosolov, who had recently been sentenced to eight years in the Gulag under Article 58 of the Soviet criminal code, for counter-revolutionary activities. Even though Mosolov had been expelled from the Composers' Union and had gained further notoriety for his 'Bohemian' activities in Turkmenia, his former teachers were prepared to plead his case to the authorities, emphasizing his 'outstanding creative abilities', noting his recent turn towards realism in his work, and affirming that they had never observed in him anti-Soviet

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106 She lost her post as dean, although she remained a professor in the faculty. Shatilov letter to Kerzhentsev, January 1938, RGALI f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 190, l. 19-20.
tendencies of any kind. Mosolov was released in August 1938, following a review of his case, and his sentence was altered to a five-year ban on living in Moscow, Leningrad or Kiev.\textsuperscript{107} Glier was also responsible for initiating a joint letter, signed by a number of Conservatoire professors, which was sent to the authorities in 1940 in an effort to discover the outcome of Zhilaev's trial and sentencing. They described their former colleague as 'one of the greatest authorities' in the field of composition theory, and said that his absence was a grievous loss'. Zhilaev had been executed two years previously.\textsuperscript{108}

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By and large, members of the musical profession sought to carry on their normal working lives in the abnormal conditions of 1936-8. Different strategies were adopted: some composers studiously avoided all involvement in any of the meetings held during this period, even to the extent of drawing criticism onto themselves; others participated to the extent of repeating the standard clichés of the period at meetings or in the Soviet press. Some musicians no doubt accepted the rhetoric of enemies and were keen to take the opportunity to rectify what they saw as the abuses perpetrated by the saboteurs who had - they believed - infiltrated many of the most influential music institutions. Others clearly took advantage of the situation and used the various meetings held in the Composers' Unions or the conservatoires to denounce their colleagues, hoping thereby to further their own careers.

It is important to bear in mind the fact that the musical profession as a whole was not affected by the Terror to anything like the same extent as many other groups in Soviet society. Although writers clearly became the target of special attack and members of the non-Russian creative intelligentsia certainly suffered disproportionately at this time, the conclusions of Getty and Chase, from their analysis of patterns of repression among the Soviet élite, demonstrate that 'the risk for the creative intelligentsia [ie of arrest] was even lower than that for all other miscellaneous groups'.\textsuperscript{109} It is perhaps worth recalling, in this regard, Stalin's reported

\textsuperscript{107}Barsova, pp. 70-2. See Chapter Three, p. 73.

\textsuperscript{108}Vinokurova, pp. 83-4. See above, p. 186

comments to Shaporin in 1935. Shaporin, who met with a group of Party leaders after a preliminary hearing of his opera Dekabristy, raised the case of his friend, the operetta composer Nikolai Strel'nikov (1888-1939), who had recently been arrested. With hindsight, it looks as though Stalin's response could almost have been a statement of policy. Having ascertained the arrested composer's surname he remarked: 'Well, we'll put aside this case. Don't let us trouble the musicians'.

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110 M. Rutman, 'Melodiia dlia dvoikh', Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti, 7 November 1998, p. 10. I am grateful to John Barber for passing on this reference.
CONCLUSION

How far had Soviet music policy 'developed' by 1941? Musical life in the Soviet Union had certainly become more institutionalized, and the Soviet arts bureaucracy had undergone considerable expansion. Soviet composers were subjected to a far greater degree of supervision than they had ever been in the past, although the administrative institutions of the musical world were poorly coordinated and decision-making hierarchies were often ill-defined. Branches of the Party and state bureaucracy tended to overlap, and individual, sometimes relatively low-ranking, apparatchiki were often responsible for deciding official policy.

Although the Composers' Unions came in for a considerable degree of criticism in 1936-7, they nevertheless played an important role in furthering the professionalization of musical life following their establishment in 1932. State support for composers was administered by the Unions, and although their members continued to complain about inadequate housing and low levels of earnings, the material benefits available to composers and musicians were superior to those which had existed at any previous time in Russian history, and certainly superior to those available to many of their colleagues in the West.

In return for these benefits, composers and musicians were expected to contribute to the cause of socialist construction. The state was effectively paying composers' wages, and it expected a return on its investment. This could involve participating in social activities: bringing 'music to the masses' through amateur music projects, teaching music to children in provincial music schools and touring remote parts of the Soviet Union with musical ensembles. It also extended to their creative work. The 1930s witnessed a process of 'sovietization' in music: the distinctive genres of Soviet symphony, Soviet opera, Soviet jazz and Soviet folk music were formulated for the first time during these years.

Works of Soviet music were expected to serve certain ends: to instil pride in Soviet achievements and inspire listeners to increase their efforts in working towards the construction of socialism, or to provide the new proletarian concert-goers with the sorts of 'cultured' leisure pursuits that they would appreciate. The criterion of 'accessibility' was the key to judgements about the value of works of Soviet music at this time. Although it was Party and government bureaucrats who were responsible for defining the degree of accessibility of an individual work, these policy-makers placed a higher premium on pragmatic considerations than on ideological
ones, and they tended to give preference to works which enjoyed genuine popularity among listeners. In this regard they differed markedly from the 'proletarian' musicians of RAPM who had sought to impose their own agenda on Soviet music during the Cultural Revolution period. In any case, many Soviet composers - like some of their counterparts in Western countries - were genuinely concerned with reaching out to audiences by writing music that would be accessible to a mass audience. One should be wary, therefore, of assuming that the aesthetic standards which came to dominate Soviet music during the 1930s were imposed from above onto a reluctant profession.

A significant degree of convergence can be traced between Soviet policy in other spheres and the treatment meted out to the musical profession. The shift towards isolationism in Soviet foreign policy in 1935-6 was accompanied by an increasingly anti-Western stance on the part of the Soviet arts bureaucracy. This was reflected in the anti-formalism campaign of 1936, when fears that Soviet music was in danger of being contaminated by Western musical influences - in particular by contemporary modernist trends and by Western jazz - came to the surface in the attacks on Shostakovich in Pravda. The Stakhanovite campaign in industry also fed into the anti-formalism crusade, as composers were berated for their failure to take account of the growth in the 'cultural level' of ordinary workers, who - it was argued - were demanding music that combined simplicity, accessibility, and high artistic standards.

The desire to increase Soviet prestige abroad shone through several of the initiatives undertaken in music policy during this period. The Soviet authorities were particularly keen to maintain the high standards achieved before the revolution in Soviet musical education, and victories in international performance competitions were highly valued. Soviet music was promoted abroad as part of a campaign to display the achievements of Soviet culture to the benighted Western bourgeoisie, and this campaign met with significant success in some quarters, prompting admiration for the Soviet system among a number of Western composers and musicians.

In contrast with other areas of Soviet artistic life, composers enjoyed considerable opportunities to diverge from the Party line in music (such as it was), and the controls on their activities were nothing like as great as those which existed in other spheres, most notably in literature. Soviet composers were not repressed during the years of the Terror to anything like the same extent that Soviet writers were. The political authorities certainly took music
seriously, and they displayed a keen interest in directing the efforts of composers and musicians. Nevertheless, Soviet composers - even those whose work was attacked and criticized - were not believed to pose a serious threat to the interests of the state.

Soviet musical life in the 1930s was characterized by a much greater degree of diversity than has often been supposed, and a great many influences - Party policy, public opinion, individual artistic preferences on the part of composers and musicians, rivalry between Leningrad and Moscow, external influences and previous artistic trends - went together to generate this diversity. Interpretations of the history of Soviet music in this period which focus exclusively on the Party resolution of 1932 and the anti-formalism campaign of 1936 tend to overlook the extent of this variety and the degree to which composers were able to pursue their own projects with - to a considerable extent - minimal Party interference. Although with hindsight, the zhdanovshchina of the late 1940s can be seen to have drawn on many of the concepts and much of the vocabulary used by music policy-makers in the 1930s, it is nevertheless misleading to construct a model of steadily increasing control in Soviet musical life between 1932 and 1948. It would be more accurate to regard the period as one of generally peaceful creative activity, punctuated sporadically by dramatic interventions on the part of the Soviet leadership.

The development of Soviet music policy during the 1930s was not a smooth and even process. Perhaps the most striking feature to have emerged from this study has been the extent to which there was no coherent Party line on a great many musical issues. Those who were responsible for policy in the arts were often forced to make decisions on an ad hoc basis, whenever problems or controversies arose. Composers and musicians themselves played a significant role in defining the boundaries within which they lived and worked: through their public activities in the Composers’ Unions and other institutions, through their contributions to debates within the musical profession, and - most of all - through their creative work. Soviet music did not emerge as the direct product of Party decrees: it was written and performed by individual Soviet composers and musicians. Their intentions, motivations and inspirations could hardly have been more varied.
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