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Title: Introduction to the Logic of East-West Artistic Interactions

Year: 2016

Version:

Please cite the original version:

Mikkonen, S., & Suutari, P. (2016). Introduction to the Logic of East-West Artistic Interactions. In S. Mikkonen, & P. Suutari (Eds.), *Music, Art and Diplomacy : East-West Cultural Interactions and the Cold War* (pp. 1-13). Ashgate.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Logic of East–West Artistic Interactions

Simo Mikkonen and Pekka Suutari

The Cold War, as the dominant narrative of the post-Second World War world order, emphasises limitations on travel, restrictions on the flow of ideas and bans on the movement of many goods between two major blocs that were dominated by mutually hostile superpowers. As a concept, ‘the Cold War’ embodies the confrontation of two rival ideologies and economic and political models, hostilities between nations and competition in fields ranging from the military to technology. It is implicitly connected to conflict and struggle.¹ Even if the current approach to the Cold War has become more complex, the persistence of the word ‘war’ together with numerous related concepts such as the Iron Curtain emphasises the division and disruption that made any form of interaction and cooperation between the blocs seem like an anomaly. ‘The Cold War’ is also used in a broader, temporal sense to refer to an era that extended from the end of the Second World War all the way up to 1989. While the Cold War era would seem to extend our focus beyond the concept of war, it nevertheless inherently embodies the notion of war rather than peace. Even if both superpowers spoke about peace and cooperation throughout the Cold War era, presenting themselves as heralds of peace and models of progress and prosperity, their actions towards each other were definitely characterised more by hostility and competition.

If we turn our attention to other countries – or, even more revealingly, to people and organisations – conflict and competition suddenly look much less important. The Cold War was not something ordinary people considered to be part of their everyday lives.² To be sure, for many people, Cold War limitations

¹ Odd Arne Westad, ‘The Cold War and the International History of the Twentieth Century’, in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1–19.

² In the United States, in particular, the late 1940s and early 1950s saw a strong wave of anti-communism that had an impact on most areas of American society. See e.g. Stephen Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University

became a normal state of affairs, with some countries simply being mostly beyond reach due to the political situation. But few people paid genuine attention to this. Still, the Cold War affected people's lives indirectly in many ways, for instance by limiting travel to some countries and preferring others. There was, however, one area in which the personal and professional lives of people frequently encountered Cold War politics, that of cultural diplomacy. Through cultural exchanges and different forms of cultural interaction across the Iron Curtain numerous people who had not previously been involved in foreign politics came to participate in activities of cultural diplomacy, although they did not necessarily always share the views and aims of their respective governments. Cold War era cultural diplomacy enabled novel types of interaction that either had not existed before or that were brought to the centre by the Cold War. In some ways, the Cold War even seemed to have been beneficial to cultural production, political competition fuelling it and pushing it to new heights. For politicians this might have been about competing with the adversary, but for artists it was more about increased appreciation for their field of art.

If we wish to understand cultural diplomacy during the Cold War era, the conceptual content of the term is of the essence in discussing the Cold War. In the field of history, choices of perspective dictate whether we see conflict and limitations or attempts to create détente and cooperation, and whether the Cold War was a defining element or mainly just a trivial issue in the lives of people.³ Geographical, temporal and structural choices tend to dictate the kind of answers we get. When the aim is to understand the role of culture in international relations during the Cold War era, attention needs to be paid not only to foreign policy and states as actors but also to the agents who participated in these activities, together with their motivations for doing so and the implications of these activities. States often understood the purpose of these

Press, 1991); Douglas Field, *American Cold War Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005). However, even if anti-communism remained an influential force, the influence of the Cold War was not a determining factor in people's lives. For a good overview of the impact of the Cold War on different areas of society and culture, see Tony Shaw, 'The Politics of Cold War Culture', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3 no.3 (2001), 59–76. It is also noteworthy that there is no literature that directly addresses the impact of the Cold War on Soviet society and culture.

³ For a useful historiography of the development of Cold War studies, see Richard Saull, *Rethinking Theory and History in the Cold War: The State, Military Power and Social Revolution* (London: Frank Cass, 2011), 1–5. Also, for a collection in which leading historians of the Cold War consider the development of Cold War studies, see Odd Arne Westad (ed.), *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

activities very differently from those who were involved in them. *Music, Art and Diplomacy* deals with East–West cultural interactions and cultural diplomacy, particularly with regard to the arts but not simply from the point of view of state diplomacy. By concentrating on the relationship between the arts, artists and state actors, our aim is to gain a better insight into this particular area of cultural diplomacy and related processes during the Cold War era. Our focus is on activities that cross the systemic borderline between the two blocs, with the main focus being either on the Soviet Union or on activities involving it. The emphasis is on the early part of the Cold War, when the post-WWII situation was still taking shape – from the late 1940s to the 1960s.

Even though Cold War studies have tended to emphasise politics, military matters and inter-state diplomacy, the last two decades have seen a growing body of works falling into the category of ‘the cultural Cold War’, a concept that is as elusive as ‘the Cold War’ itself. It can be seen as a term to describe the activities used by governments in their foreign policy to further their own aims. These activities were either directed at the supposed enemy or, sometimes, intended to appeal to countries and populations in their own blocs. The studies dealing with these activities have presented culture as an area of conflict and competition between the two blocs.⁴

This body of literature introduces some important insights that *Music, Art and Diplomacy* aims at further elucidating and substantiating. The first broad point we wish to make is that cultural diplomacy was an even more complex area than traditional diplomacy. The relationship between states and the persons who participated in cultural diplomacy activities was often rather complicated. Sometimes the results of these

⁴ For a good overview of the relationship between culture and the Cold War, see Jessica Gienow-Hecht, ‘Culture and the Cold War in Europe’, in *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 1, 398–419. The majority of studies about the cultural Cold War have emphasised the US point of view: see e.g. Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Walter Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997); Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 2000); Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War. Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003); Laura Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008). David Caute was among the first scholars to offer a balanced approach, considering both Soviet and US activities in the context of the cultural Cold War in his *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

activities were even contrary to those intended by the administration that was supposed to be in control of cultural diplomacy. While such cases have been previously dealt with in the growing literature on the arts and the Cold War,⁵ *Music, Art and Diplomacy* pays more attention to this phenomenon by offering several case studies of the relationship between the state and individuals.

Our second point is related to the first, but it goes even further by examining the role of individuals in cultural diplomacy activities. In many cases, the choices made by individuals involved in cultural exchanges were not limited to merely accepting or rejecting the state's objectives. Rather, individuals without an immediate role in the government were in many cases able to directly influence and even change the outcome of the activities.⁶ The third point is related to images and imagination. While traditional diplomacy is often based on realistic calculations and rationality, cultural diplomacy in the Cold War era was about appealing to emotions and creating images, and in many cases indeed it was driven by images and assumptions that were based more on emotions and prejudices than on realism. Therefore, we address the

⁵ On the stage arts see e.g. Naima Prevots, *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1998); Bruce MacConachie, *American Theater in the Culture of the Cold War: Producing and Contesting Containment* (Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 2003). On film, see e.g. Tony Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); James Schwoch, *Global TV: New Media and the Cold War, 1946–69* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009). On music, see e.g. Mark Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Penny von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). For the fine arts, see e.g. Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom and the Cold War* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1985); Michael L. Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit: American Art and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Patricia Hills, "'Truth, Freedom, Perfection": Alfred Barr's *What Is Modern Painting?* As Cold War Rhetoric', in Greg Barnhisel and Catherine Turner (eds), *Pressing the Fight: Print, Propaganda and the Cold War* (Cambridge: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010). On design and architecture, see e.g. David Crowley and Jane Pavitt (eds), *Cold War Modern: Design 1945–1970* (London: V&A, 2008); Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). There are also a number of studies that do not address the Cold War per se but, nevertheless, can be very valuable to anyone interested in the arts during the Cold War: e.g. Rosalind P. Blakesley and Susan E. Reid (eds), *Russian Art and the West: A Century of Dialogue in Painting, Architecture, and the Decorative Arts* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006).

⁶ Giles Scott-Smith, 'Private Diplomacy: Making the Citizen Visible', *New Global Studies* 8, no. 1 (2014), 1–7.

subject of images and imagination as an important part of the trade and practice of cultural diplomacy during the early Cold War era.

Cold War studies have tended to emphasise the viewpoint of the United States, the country that supposedly won the Cold War.⁷ While the Cold War illustrates several key features of the era – the threat of nuclear war, fierce competition and tension between the two blocs as well as both real and imagined differences between them – it became a closed subject after 1989. Subsequently, Cold War studies in general have seen a move towards a multi-faceted approach to the Cold War as a phenomenon. The perspective of the United States government, which used to dominate Cold War studies, has been complemented not only with the Soviet point of view but also with that of the Third World and countries within the spheres of influence of the superpowers.⁸ Furthermore, the traditional emphasis on politics and military affairs is no longer the sole way of perceiving the Cold War, even though it is still dominant in Cold War studies. One factor that explains the diversification of Cold War studies following the end of that era is the access to fresh source materials, especially in the former Soviet Union and former Soviet satellites. Despite the many existing limitations to access, especially in former Soviet archives, scholars have repeatedly been able to tap new materials that yield new perspectives or corroborate previous insights. This applies to the chapters of this volume, which all present previously untapped or even disregarded source materials. Although new approaches have been fewer in number than might have been expected, there are several volumes that have brought fresh viewpoints to the study of the Cold War, for example by examining the role of economics and culture in its development.⁹ Perhaps the most profound impact of the end of the Cold War has been on Soviet studies, and this also carries important implications for the Cold War itself.¹⁰

⁷ For a good discussion about the question of *victory* in the Cold War, see Raffaele D'Agata and Lawrence Gray (eds), *One More 'Lost Peace'? Rethinking the Cold War after Twenty Years* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2011), vii–ix.

⁸ The relationship between the Third World and the Cold War has recently been examined from different angles, e.g. in Robert McMahon (ed.), *The Cold War in the Third World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For an overview of intra-European connections during the Cold War era outside the Soviet Union and the United States, see Simo Mikkonen and Pia Koivunen (eds), *Beyond the Divide: Entangled Histories of Cold War Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2015).

⁹ Giles Scott-Smith and Hans Krabbendam (eds), *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe 1945–1960* (London: Frank Cass, 2003); Patrick Major and Rana Mitter, *Across the Blocs: Cold War Cultural and Social History* (London: Routledge, 2004); Sari Autio-Sarasma and Brendan Humphries (eds), *Winter Kept Us Warm: Cold War Interactions Reconsidered* (Helsinki: Kikimora, 2010);

Any research aiming at examining East–West cultural interaction encounters an important question of perspective. After all, the outcomes and implications of official cultural diplomacy look very different when they are examined using state-generated sources than they do when cultural diplomacy is approached from the viewpoint of the individual involved by using source materials ranging from memoirs and interviews to letters and personal files. So far, the viewpoint of governments has been at the centre of Cold War studies, which is one reason for the emphasis on restrictions and conflict. *Music, Art and Diplomacy* seeks to enrich our understanding of cultural diplomacy in the Cold War era by investigating the interplay between the different layers involved, ranging from individuals to state policies. Furthermore, by affording chapters on cultural relations seen from the Eastern as well as the Western bloc, *Music, Art and Diplomacy* aims to supplement the picture that has been largely, albeit not completely, dominated by the viewpoint of the United States. And finally, by placing our emphasis on the first two decades after the Second World War, we attempt to dig deeper than would have been possible if we had selected the whole Cold War era. The mid-1960s are a logical closing point in many respects, and they are considered to have constituted a watershed in both the East and the West. Soviet periodisation sees Khrushchev’s ousting and the beginning of Brezhnev’s period as General Secretary (1964/65) as a point of change. In the West, Europe was becoming free from the postwar restrictions imposed by the United States, with Germany and France in particular becoming more independent and European unification gaining momentum. Furthermore, with decolonisation and the rise of leftist movements in both Europe and the United States from the mid-1960s

Sari Autio-Sarasmö and Katalin Miklóssy (eds), *Reassessing Cold War Europe* (London: Routledge, 2011); Peter Romijn, Giles Scott-Smith and Joes Segal (eds), *Divided Dreamworlds: The Cultural Cold War in East and West* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012); Annette Vowinckel, Marcus M. Payk and Thomas Lindenberger (eds), *Cold War Cultures: Perspectives in Eastern and Western European Societies* (New York: Berghahn, 2012).

¹⁰ Several recent works have influenced and changed our perception of the Soviet Union in the international arena after the Second World War through the use of previously unexploited archival materials: see e.g. Anne Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire that Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd (eds), *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

on, the balance of international relations changed, and this also had an impact on the focus and objectives of cultural diplomacy.

The Cold War is the dominant tool, albeit not the only one, used for explaining post-WWII contacts between the East and the West (referring to the blocs dominated by the Soviet Union and the US, respectively). The problem, however, is that the intention behind foreign political activities even in the East–West context was not always to challenge the other side. This problem becomes particularly difficult when the focus is outside the United States or the Soviet Union. Moreover, the superpowers, too, changed their policies and regarded each other, as well as other countries, differently as the Cold War evolved. For example, contrary to its rhetoric, the Soviet Union did not consider the West to be a monolithic entity: while the Soviet rhetoric publicly placed all Western market economies in the same basket of hostile countries, this was far from the real Soviet view. For example, France and Italy, both with notable communist parties, were considered special cases. Furthermore, Finland and other democratic countries with market economies that claimed to be neutral were not considered to be all the same by the Soviet policymakers. Particularly after Stalin’s death, there were major differences in the Soviet attitude towards the countries of the West. US–Soviet relations also experienced notable changes during the first two decades after WWII. While these geographical and chronological differences are important, there were also several other areas of East–West interaction, some of which saw much more intense activity than others. Music and dance were among the more active fields, and there was a lively exchange of films; but the fine arts, for example, faced many obstacles despite several attempts to engage in exchange.¹¹

Because the Cold War has often been interpreted as an ideological conflict, East–West interactions have sometimes been dismissed as taking place between ideologically like-minded parties, for example between the Soviet Union and communists and extreme leftists in the West. A closer look at East–West interaction does reveal a lot of ideologically motivated activities, but not necessarily along the ideological

¹¹ The fine arts could boast few successful projects up to the late 1950s, while in music numerous projects had already been carried out; see Simo Mikkonen, ‘Soviet–American Art Exchanges during the Thaw: From Bold Openings to Hasty Retreats’, in Merike Kurisoo (ed.), *Art and Political Reality* (Tallinn: Art Museum of Estonia, 2013); Simo Mikkonen, ‘Winning Hearts and Minds? The Soviet Musical Intelligentsia in the Struggle against the United States during the early Cold War’, in Pauline Fairclough (ed.), *Twentieth Century Music and Politics* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

borderlines of the superpowers. The complexities involved in East–West interactions during the Cold War call for careful and detailed analysis if we are to understand not only the development of cultural diplomacy during the Cold War era but also the post-Cold War world.

Music, Art and Diplomacy concentrates on investigating East–West interaction through contacts in the artistic world. Of all the areas of East–West interaction, artistic contacts illustrate the temporal and the geographical complexities related to Cold War cultural diplomacy. Political, ideological, commercial, personal and professional motivations are all involved when we examine the logic of East–West interactions in the arts. During the Cold War era, works of art were circulated, tours were made by professional artists, practices and styles were exchanged and trends in the arts were adopted from the other bloc. The so-called Iron Curtain only seems an appropriate term if we limit our attention to evaluating restrictions, such as what art was allowed to circulate, which artists were allowed to travel, and what kind of attempts were made to prevent the adoption and movement of certain practices and trends from the other bloc. Such restrictions existed in both the East and the West, where official Socialist Realist art from the Soviet Union was very rarely exhibited during the Cold War era.

The main focus of this volume is not on Cold War politics as such, but rather on the interplay and impact of superpower politics and the arts on each other. The key concept that we use to describe the relationship between superpower politics and East–West artistic interaction is ‘cultural diplomacy’. Cultural diplomacy is typically understood as the means used by states to interact with one another employing various forms of culture, such as educational and scientific exchanges and the visits of exhibitions, works of arts and sometimes artists themselves. In the Cold War setting, however, there was a very thin line between cultural diplomacy and propaganda.¹² Cultural diplomacy, and here particularly the use of the arts as part of the cultural diplomacy of different countries, is a curious area of foreign political activity.¹³ *Music, Art and*

¹² Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas 2006), 224–9; Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945–1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹³ For general conceptualisations of cultural diplomacy, see e.g. Jessica Gienow-Hecht and Frank Schumacher (eds), *Culture and International History* (New York: Berghahn, 2003); Jessica Gienow-Hecht, ‘What Are We Searching For? Culture, Diplomacy,

Diplomacy explicates the insight that, unlike the traditional approach to diplomacy, cultural diplomacy in particular is not only about state aims but can also take on features of informal and even private motivations that may be linked to state aims but are not always fully compatible with them. On the basis of our studies, we claim that those who were supposed to be the agents of cultural diplomacy sometimes managed to influence the diplomacy and the diplomatic aims themselves.

The relationship between the arts and artists with the governments was never clear-cut. Thus when artists were called to do the foreign political bidding of their governments during the Cold War, the results were at best mixed, no matter which perspective we choose to view them from. Instead of results, then, we have chosen to assess the strange relationship between the arts and artists on one hand and governments on the other in the setting of East–West interactions during the Cold War era. *Music, Art and Diplomacy* argues that in examining Cold War era cultural diplomacy there is a need to put more emphasis on extra-governmental forces. The personal motivations of those engaged in foreign connections sometimes ran contrary to those of the government. In many cases organisations and groups had their own professional aims and sought something other than straightforward foreign political advantages. We argue that the multi-levelled nature of cultural diplomacy and artistic connections in East–West interaction needs to be fully admitted if we are to get a better understanding of the role that the arts played during the Cold War era. Simultaneously, we will obtain a better understanding of the challenges, possibilities and limitations related to cultural diplomacy generally.

Apart from the immediate realm of cultural diplomacy, where the interaction of the arts and politics is most evident, we aim to offer a glimpse of the role that the arts played in the development of international relations during the Cold War. Although the arts and artists have always flirted with politics, the Cold War era was perhaps exceptional because of the scale on which they became involved in international politics. While art has always shunned political borders, wavering between the control of individual and governmental patrons and unrestricted expression, artists, although loath to take part in everyday politics, have often lent their hand to grand causes and narratives, something that the Cold War certainly offered.

Agent, and the State', in Jessica Gienow-Hecht and Mark Donfried (eds), *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy* (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 3–11; Christina Luke and Morgan Kersel, *US Cultural Diplomacy and Archaeology: Soft Power, Hard Heritage* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 2–5.

Hence the need to address several levels of interaction in discussing the relationship between the Cold War and the arts. Some scholars have focused on the phenomenon of conflict, which was most often the concern of politicians and governments, but, if we are honest, of many artists as well. However, on both sides there were others – some politicians and numerous artists – who resisted attempts to harness the arts to serve foreign political purposes and who engaged in cultural diplomacy in the hope of reaching beyond the conflicts. Many artists also strove to ignore the political framework altogether, pursuing instead their own individual and professional objectives. *Music, Art and Diplomacy* aims to give more attention to the Soviet perspective on the cultural Cold War; to the role played by levels below the governmental; to the interplay between the government and the arts, and various organisations and individuals in cultural diplomacy during the Cold War by introducing previously unused research material and novel approaches.

Art Diplomacy and Private–Public Interplay during the Cold War

The eight chapters of *Music, Art and Diplomacy* have been organised into three parts. They all deal with the Soviet Union, either as a target country or as the active party in cultural diplomacy during the Cold War era. Other countries that are of major importance in this volume include the United States, Great Britain, France, Sweden, Finland and Poland. In the first part, we underline the problems and restrictions that existed during the early Cold War, and also the role of images and imagination as key elements influencing cultural diplomacy.

The emphasis on restriction during the first decade after the Cold War had roots that went back to the interwar period. Well before WWII, all cultural links with foreign countries became subject to the control of VOKS, the Soviet organ for foreign cultural relations, established when Stalin had already secured his position at the helm of the Soviet Union. While it is not true that the Soviet Union isolated itself from the world completely,¹⁴ it was not until a few years after the death of Stalin that it made a full-scale return to the world scene. The majority of Soviet artists had lost direct contact with the trends in contemporary Western art for almost quarter of a century, mainly as a result of the fact that Soviet policies condemned Western influences as harmful to Soviet art. Exchanges of artists or even works of art were extremely rare, with only

¹⁴ Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to Soviet Russia, 1921–1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Katerina Clark, *Moscow, The Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

the war years forming an exception. In this respect, the change after Stalin's death constitutes a remarkable watershed in Soviet art exchanges with the West.¹⁵ The change after Stalin's death did not take place overnight, but little by little it became possible for Soviet artists to follow trends in Western art through magazines, recordings, radio and in occasional discussions with foreigners when tourism with the West began in 1955.

Music, Art and Diplomacy presents cases described by Oliver Johnson in the fine arts and Pauline Fairclough and Louise Wiggins in music suggesting that before the mid-1950s the Soviet Union was very loath to engage in reciprocal exchanges that would entail the entry of foreign citizens with dubious ideological backgrounds into the Soviet Union. Johnson's chapter in particular shows that the Soviet approach to ideological differences in the arts was quite different under Stalin than it became by the late 1950s.

The third chapter in this section discusses a later period and points out the persistence of many negative images and perceptions of the other bloc during the Cold War. By examining the cases of film-making, the authors of this chapter, Eva Närripea, Ewa Mazierska and Lars Kristensen, point out that there were national and geopolitical interests as well as deep-rooted ideological and mental differences that complicated cooperation between the blocs. The chapter examines points of contact between Eastern and Western film-making around the Baltic Sea. The three cases provided by the authors draw an intriguing picture of the interaction of different traditions, aspirations and objectives set for film-making during the Cold War era. Two of the cases illustrate from different angles how the Baltic Sea was depicted as a kind of imagined West in the socialist East. The third case presents an example of Swedish–Soviet film collaboration and illustrates the problems related to such projects. Furthermore, by looking at film production rather than distribution, the authors have chosen a perspective that has rarely been applied in studies on the cultural Cold War. A more typical approach has been to examine the reception and distribution of Western films in Eastern Europe. The study of attempts to bypass the Iron Curtain in the process of making art is, however, a much more novel endeavour.

¹⁵ An anthology by Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd discusses this change from fresh perspectives: see *The Thaw*.

During the first postwar decade, the opportunities for genuine cultural exchanges were firmly repelled by the Soviet government, as Fairclough and Wiggins point out. Britain, which had developed working relations and in some respects even warm ties with its wartime ally, saw its overtures rejected and eventually its cultural diplomats ejected from Moscow in 1947. Other Western countries faced similar problems both with the Soviet Union and generally in Soviet-occupied Eastern Europe.¹⁶ Even Finland, which had to turn down the offer of Marshall Aid and was forced to sign a pact of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union, was considered ideologically too alien for the USSR. The overtures even of Finnish communists, not to mention other Finns, aiming at those who sought cultural exchange with the Soviet Union were systematically turned down by Soviet officials until the mid-1950s.¹⁷

In the second part of this volume, we present examples from the fields of music and dance, two art forms that were at the forefront of cultural exchange and purportedly experienced the greatest number of cultural exchange projects between the blocs. Whereas Stalin-era reluctance towards cultural exchanges was primarily about reciprocity, the arts and culture could still be used for foreign political purposes, albeit on a very limited scale. As Meri Herrala's chapter points out, the Soviet Union had already been willing to use its top musicians to advertise the superiority of the Soviet system under Stalin. In some ways, rather than being a volte-face, Soviet cultural policy after Stalin's death was a continuation of previous developments. The new approach to foreign contacts opened up fresh opportunities for exerting cultural influence. Reciprocity was not desirable, but was considered a necessary evil that enabled the Soviet Union to increase its presence in the West. The importance of culture and the arts in the Soviet Union was based on the assumption of the Stalin era that they have the ability to reach masses of people and convey ideological and political messages. The same potential was believed to apply outside the Soviet Union as well. When the death of Stalin started a strong international orientation in Soviet politics, it was only natural that the arts and artists played an important part in this endeavour. Reciprocity made it possible to expand the Soviet cultural presence, and consequently numerous cultural agreements were signed with Western countries. The Soviet authorities

¹⁶ See e.g. Mikkonen and Koivunen, *Beyond the Divide*.

¹⁷ Finnish National Archives, Papers of the Finnish–Soviet Friendship Society: outgoing letters for 1944–52.

strove to keep the opportunities for counterpropaganda by the Western governments to the minimum by using private producers and patrons to handle the exchanges in the West.¹⁸

Scholl and Koppes describe the direct outcomes of the US–Soviet agreement in 1958, while Herrala focuses on the use of leading individual Soviet musicians as a tool of Soviet foreign policy. All the authors in this section, although they deal with state-level diplomacy, discuss art diplomacy and the consequences of this diplomacy from the individual participants' perspective. Although the United States was initially loath to enter into an agreement on cultural exchange with the Soviet Union, such an agreement was made and was followed on both sides by a number of high-profile visits, involving not only individuals but also choirs, dance companies and orchestras of over 100 members. Some of these visits have been discussed in other works.¹⁹ Clayton Koppes examines the tour of the Cleveland Orchestra to the Soviet Union in 1965. As Koppes notes, the main focus in the cultural Cold War so far on the Western side had been on the consumerist side and on popular genres rather than on Western classical music. Classical music, on the other hand, was an area which the Soviet Union considered that it dominated almost single-handedly, at least by comparison with the United States, the culture of which it considered vulgar at best. The Soviet Union was ready to accept only a few of the top American orchestras into the Soviet Union, regarding the others as being of inferior quality.²⁰ The Cleveland Orchestra, conducted by the legendary George Szell, was considered by many to be one of the best orchestras in the world at the time. Consequently, the tour was a highly publicised cultural event, to which many interesting political links were also attached. But the public aspect and state diplomacy constitute just one side of the picture. Koppes has interviewed several former members of the orchestra who participated in the tour, and uses them to introduce the individual viewpoint on the exchanges.

In his chapter, Tim Scholl discusses another high-profile tour that took place around the same time as that of the Cleveland Orchestra but which has received little attention so far. Oberlin College Choir was

¹⁸ Mikkonen, 'Winning Hearts and Minds'.

¹⁹ See e.g. Lisa Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009); von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*; Prevots, *Dance for Export*.

²⁰ Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGAL) f. 2329, op. 35, d. 2, l. 59–67. Otchet o poezdke G. Vladimirova iz Goskontserty, 4 May 1958.

not a professional group, but thanks to its high artistic level it was nevertheless included in the exchange scheme. The professional nature of the Cleveland Orchestra is an important factor in considering musicians' experiences of the exchanges. The orchestra consisted of professional musicians who mostly confined themselves to doing what they were trained to do. By contrast, Oberlin College Choir consisted of students for whom the choir was a voluntary activity, and for them all the hard work involved in preparing for the tour took time away from something else. Thus, while the choir was of high artistic quality and had a potential to have an impact in the Soviet Union, it also consisted of people with varying professional and personal aims. Furthermore, an interesting feature that Scholl addresses in his chapter is that during the tour the Oberlin students were given several occasions to meet Soviet students. Since Oberlin College Choir consisted of 80 students with additional staff, the occasions to meet students were no small events. Like Koppes, Scholl has extensively used interviews with former choir members who participated in the tour of the Soviet Union.

The final part of the volume moves on to discuss theatre and dance and their role in Cold War era art diplomacy. Susan Costanzo examines how Soviet theatre professionals and amateurs drew their influences from Eastern Europe, where they were regularly able to familiarise themselves with contemporary Western plays that were not considered acceptable in the Soviet Union. The Soviet authorities restricted the inflow of Western cultural products throughout the Soviet era, although the restrictions became somewhat laxer after Stalin's death. As a result of the thaw, the foremost art professionals had direct access to Western trends; but for professionals with less influential connections, let alone amateurs, theatre festivals in Eastern Europe, and Poland in particular, offered a chance to break away from the relatively insular Soviet art world. In her discussion of the dynamics of the visits and the encounters in Eastern European festivals, Costanzo is also able to point out some important chronological changes. While the flow of influences was strong in the 1960s and the 1970s, the importance of Eastern European festivals for Soviet theatre professionals and amateurs seems to have diminished by 1980. According to Costanzo, this was partly due to political developments, but also to changes in the intellectual climate.

In her chapter about the foremost ballet troupes in the world, Stéphanie Gonçalves examines the tours of the Kirov and Bolshoi ballet companies to Western Europe. The Kirov and the Bolshoi were both considered by the Soviet Union to be major cultural assets that demonstrated Soviet prowess and supremacy in the high arts. Both ballet groups were highly desired visitors by Western ballet audiences. Consequently,

the Soviet Union aimed to use them to attain important foreign political objectives. Gonçalves focuses on discussing the extent to which this was possible at all by examining the role of ballet in Soviet cultural diplomacy. From 1954 onwards, the Bolshoi and the Kirov were constantly abroad, often on extensive tours that included several countries in Western Europe, and they visited North America a number of times as well. Quite often these tours were part of official cultural exchange, meaning that the goals of the visits to the West were non-commercial. Unlike the tours of many other artists or exhibits, the tours of the Bolshoi and the Kirov companies quite often entailed reciprocal visits to the Soviet Union.²¹

While the merits of these individual contributions speak for themselves, we are confident that they constitute a whole whose sum is greater than its parts. We believe that the novel approaches and perspectives that these chapters present are in numerous respects ground-breaking and will together make a valuable contribution to the study of cultural relations and particularly art diplomacy between the East and the West during the Cold War.

²¹ RGALI f. 3162, op. 1, d. 303. Zapisi besed s impressariiu kapitalisticheskikh stran Evropy ob organizatsii artisticheskogo obmena za 1966. These documents present discussions European and US producers had with the Soviet concert organisation, Goskontsert.