

Simo Mikkonen

State Composers and the Red Courtiers

Music, Ideology, and Politics
in the Soviet 1930s



JYVÄSKYLÄ STUDIES IN HUMANITIES 78

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Esitetään Jyväskylän yliopiston humanistisen tiedekunnan suostumuksella
julkisesti tarkastettavaksi yliopiston Villa Ranan Blomstedtin salissa
marraskuun 24. päivänä 2007 kello 12.

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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URN:ISBN:9789513930158

ISBN 978-951-39-3015-8 (PDF)

ISBN 978-951-39-2990-9 (nid.)

ISSN 1459-4331

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Jyväskylä University Printing House, Jyväskylä 2007

ABSTRACT

Mikkonen, Simo

State composers and the red courtiers. Music, ideology, and politics in the Soviet 1930s.

Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä (Press), 2007, 336 p.

(Jyväskylä Studies in Humanities,

ISSN 1459-4331; 78)

ISBN 978-951-39-3015-8 (PDF), 978-951-39-2990-9 (nid.)

Diss.

In the scholarship of Soviet history, music has too often been neglected as part of musicology rather than that of history. As a consequence, our understanding of the music as part of the Soviet society has been left rather one-sided. Soviet musical life has been studied largely by musicologists interested in specific works or composers rather than the context within which music was produced.

This study discusses the relationship of art and politics in the Soviet Union during the early Stalinist phase, 1930s. It explores the ideas different groups had about the development of Soviet music, but also the development of the concept of Soviet music. In addition, the ties between composers and leading Communist Party officials are of crucial interest as it has been believed that the Party had a central role in the development of Soviet musical life in the 1930s.

Although the Party first became interested and then highly involved in Soviet musical life, during early 1930s, composers and musicologists were able to organize their work without direct involvement of neither the Party nor the state organs. The Composers' Union, the art union gathering all the composers and musicologists, was established in 1932, but unlike its sister organization, the Writers' Union, it was not submitted to the Party. Rather, the Composers' Union concentrated on furthering its members' financial position. The issues of housing, salary and copyrights were engaged by composers while the Party mostly disregarded the intensification of the control of the Soviet musical life.

Although the introduction of the Committee on Artistic Affairs, the state superstructure over the whole artistic life, intensified the political ties between music and the Party politics from 1936 onwards, composers managed still preserve their own interests. Despite the conflict between the superior Committee on Artistic Affairs and the Composers' Union, composers were not overcome. Even more surprising is the fact that the years of terror (1936–1938) almost passed the Composers' Union by without victims, whereas the Writers' Union suffered heavily as almost all state and Party organs.

During the 1930s Soviet music in general came to support aims of the Party and had to make concession. Simultaneously, however, composing as a profession became established and amount of full-time composers proliferated.

Keywords: Soviet music, Stalinism, composers, USSR, art, ideology, politics

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project came into existence in the spring of 2002. However, my work as a publicist in Helsinki forced me to put it aside until in 2003, when I began to work with this thesis full-time. Although I have had several bypaths (I have been constantly teaching and have at times kept breaks for even the length of half a year) this has been my bread-and-butter for the past four years.

My major in my Master's degree was musicology and without the warm welcome from my thesis supervisor, Seppo Zetterberg, this project would never have materialized in this form. After all, this thesis is a historical study, rather than a work of musicology. Professor Zetterberg has offered me his unending moral support as well as unhesitatingly helped me in the jungle of applications although for him, this has meant the writing of an endless stream of reports and statements. Another such source of professional as well as friendly support for me has been our long standing, and now retired lecturer Kalevi Ahonen.

The Department of History and Ethnology has in general offered a good environment to work in. Especially Professor Petri Karonen, the Head of our department, has always found the time for my petitions and suggestions, no matter how small they have been. I owe a general thanks to all the colleagues in our department, but most of all to our "Researcher Kolkhoz". Our Kolkhoz room of five, Janne Haikari, Markku Hokkanen (already PhD), Laura-Kristiina Moilanen, and Kirsi Ojala, has, despite the wide range of our research topics, offered a great deal of support, not mentioning the daily ration of coffee.

Over the course of this research I have had the opportunity to meet people in seminars, congresses and engage in conversations with several people to whom I am in gratitude. Above all, thanks to Meri Herrala, Docent Pekka Suutari and Elina Viljanen, who all share common research interests with me. I have been fortunate to get acquainted with Dr Neil Edmunds, who has commented my conference papers and warmly encouraged this work. Also, thanks to Dr Leonid Maximenkov, with whom I met during my first trip to Moscow. He kindly helped me with the archives and showed me to the best books shops of Moscow through the icy streets of the largest city in Europe. One of the foremost Finnish authorities on Russian history, Professor Timo Vihavainen, has commented on my thesis several times from its initial stages onwards, and helped me with numerous issues, no matter how big or small. Others include at least the reviewer of this thesis, Dr Pauline Fairclough, docent Arto Luukkanen, who read my licentiate thesis in 2004, and Professor Richard Stites. A great many thanks also to Elizabeth Eastcott and Katriina Lustig for their valuable help with the English text.

Although one can hardly claim to conduct scholarly research for money, this thesis would have never been completed without the support of certain fund providers. Foremost of them all has been the Emil Aaltonen's foundation. Others I would wish to thank are the Finnish Academy, the Finnish Graduate School of History, the Rector of the University of Jyväskylä and the Department

of History and Ethnology. I also would like to thank the Fulbright Center for the upcoming grant for working in the Stanford University. Without this grant, meant for a post-doctoral scholar, I most likely would have not rushed to complete my thesis, but would have concentrated on other matters.

Different institutions and their staff have also greatly contributed to the formation of this book, even if they are not aware of it. Especially the outstanding Slavic Library of the Helsinki University has offered a great amount of sources and saved me from additional trips to Moscow or Saint Petersburg. I am also indebted to my former place of work, the Jyväskylä University Library, where I learned a lot about the art of information retrieval; furthermore, its interlibrary unit has been of crucial help for this research. Thanks also to those archives of Moscow and Saint Petersburg that I have used. Special thanks to Vladimir Orlov, who was then working at the reading room of the Glinka Museum of Musical Culture; he offered me a lot of support, and eventually, became my friend. Otherwise, I kept my visits to Moscow at the minimum, worked around the clock and instead of socializing, was looking forward to getting back to my family (no offence, Moscow!).

Another important source of support for me has been my parents, Seppo and Irma Mikkonen. In addition to commenting on my work and helping with the children during some intensive working days, my mother Irma Mikkonen set an important model by defending her doctoral thesis in 2005. She has also proof-read my numerous conference papers and articles. It must also be mentioned that (although she is not aware of it) a vital person in the process of this work has been our nanny, Tuula Peltonen. Without her taking care of our energetic children during the daytime, this work would not have been completed for years, honest!

It is by no means exaggeration to say that more important than work for me has been my family. Without my wonderful wife and brilliant children this work would not have been accomplished at such a velocity, which I guess everybody with children understands. My wife, Anna Veijola, has offered me so much support and love during this thesis. We have both had a chance to work and be with children, one at a time, but, still, it has been most important for me to know that while I have been to Moscow, she has looked after our children. Although she is able to remember the time before the thesis, for the children there exists no such time. When my older child (then two-and-a-half-years) was once asked what his father does, the answer went: "father writes. He sits in the red-bricked building and writes a book for the auntie." (I have no idea who this auntie was. Yet, both our dean and rector ARE ladies). The same boy learned to crawl when I returned from Moscow and emptied the thirteen volumes of *Complete Stalin* from my backpack. He wanted so badly to have a taste of those leather-backed volumes that he started to crawl toward them!

So thank you Anna, Aaro and Hertta - this thesis is as much your accomplishment as it is mine!

Jämsä, October 20, 2007.

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

I have used the Library of Congress transliteration system for Russian, suppressing the soft signs, which make reading harder, but are not an obstacle in tracing names back in Russian. In order to maintain consistency, even well-known names are in the same form as other Russian names. The sole exception is the name of Piotr Tchaikovskii, which would be hard to recognize in its correct form of Chaikovskii. Otherwise, instead of often used Modest Moussorgsky his name is transliterated as Modest Musorgskii corresponding to the Russian form. Dozens of languages were spoken in the Soviet Union and even in this book there are names from local nationalities with several different spelling. I have tried to offer both the Russian form and the local form, especially in the case they would hardly resemble each other.

There are also certain foreign names, of which there are both Russian and foreign versions. For example, famous Russian piano pedagogue Heinrich Neuhaus is sometimes spelled as Henry Neygauz, and could be transliterated Genrikh Neigauz. As in the case of Neuhaus transliteration from Russian would make his name most unfamiliar to a reader, in his case I have chosen to use common English version (Neuhaus). Also, in cases of emigrant names like Jascha Heifetz, which also have their Russian form (which would be Iasha Kheifets) or Sergei Diaghilev (instead of Diagilev), I have decided to use the established non-Russian version. In other cases, names of persons that were born and lived in the Soviet Union, like Iuliiia Veisberg (Julia Weisberg) or Maksimilian Shteinberg (Maximilian Steinberg), have been spelled as transliterations from Russian.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Agitprop* = Agitation and propaganda (Department for Agitation and propaganda of the Central Committee of the Communist Party)
- ASM* = Assotsiatsiia sovremennoi muzyki (Association of Contemporary Music)
- GIII* = Gosudarstvannii Institut Istorii Iskusstv (State Institute of Arts History), Leningrad
- GIMN* = Gosudarstvennii Institut Muzykalnoi Nauki (State Institute for Musicology (Science of Music)), Moscow
- Glavlit* = Glavnoe upravlenie po delam literatury i izdatelstv (Main Administration for Literary and Publishing Affairs)
- Glavrepertkom* = Glavnoe upravlenie po kontroliu za zrelishchami i reperturom (Main Administration for Control of Events and Repertories)
- GOMETs* = Gosudartvennoe obiedinenie muzykalnykh, estradnykh i tsirkovykh predpriiatii (State Association of Music, Variety Stage, and Circus Enterprises)
- GORT* = Gorodskaiia obiedinenie roznichnoi torgovli (State Association of Retail Trade)
- Gosplan* = Gosudarstvennii komitet po planirovaniuu (State Committee for Planning)
- Kultprop* = Otdel kultury i propagandy leninizma TsK VKP(b) (Department of Culture and Propagation of Leninism of Central Committee of the Communist Party)
- Kultpros* = Otdel kulturno-prosvetitelnoi raboty (Department of Culture and Enlightenment Work)
- LDKhVD* = Leningradskii dom khudozhestvennaia vospitanie detei (Leningrad House of Children's Artistic Education)
- Lenfil* = Leningradskaia filarmoniiia (Leningrad Philharmonia)
- Lenoblrabis* = Leningradscoe oblastnoe komiteta Rabisa (Leningrad Regional Committee of *Rabis*)
- LGK* = Leningradskaia gosudarstvennaia konservatoriia (Leningrad State Conservatory)
- Malegot* = Malyi akademicheskii Leningradskii gosudarstvennii opernii teatr (Malyi Academic Opera of Leningrad, nowadays: Mikhailovskii Theatre)
- MGK* = Moskovskaia gosudarstvennaia konservatoriia (Moscow State Conservatory)
- MkhAT* = Moskovskii khudozhestvennyi akademicheskii teatr (Moscow Art Theatre)
- MORT* = Mezhdunarodnoe obiedinenie revoliutsionnykh teatrov (International Association of Revolutionary Theatre)
- Mosfil* = Moskovskaia filarmoniiia (Moscow Philharmonia)
- Mosoblrabis* = Moskovskoe oblastnoe komiteta Rabisa (Moscow Regional Committee of *Rabis*)

Mossoviet = Moskovskoi gorodskoi Sovet deputatov (Moscow City Soviet of Deputies)

MTS = Mashinno-traktornaia stantsiia (Machine-Tractor Station)

Muzfond = Muzykalnyi fond SSSR (Musical fund of the USSR)

Muzgiz = Gosudarstvennoe muzykalnoe izdatelstvo (State Musical Publisher)

Muzo = Muzykalnoe otdelenie Narkomprosa (Musical department of Narkompros)

Narkomfin = Narodnyi komissariat finansov (People's Commissariat of Finance)

Narkompros = Narodnyi komissariat prosveshcheniia (People's Commissariat of Enlightenment)

NEP = Novaia ekonomicheskaiia politika (New Economic Policy)

Ogiz = Obiedinennoe gosudartsvvennoe izdatelstvo (State Publishing House)

Orgbiuro = Organizatsionnoe biuro (tsestralnogo komiteta VKP(b)) (Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party)

Orgkomitet = Organizatsionnii komitet (Organizational Committee)

ORKiMD = Obiedinenie revoliusionnykh kompozitorov i muzykalnykh deiatelei (Association of Revolutionary Composers and Musical Activists)

Prokoll = Proizvodstvennii kollektiv (Production Collective of Moscow Conservatory Students)

Proletkult = Proletarskaia kultura (Proletarian culture)

Rabis = Profsoiuz rabotnikov iskusstva (Trade Union of Art Workers)

Rabkrin = (Narodnyi komissariat) Raboche-Krestianskaia inspektsiia (People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection)

RAPM = Rossiiskaia assosiatsiia proletarskikh muzykantov (Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians)

RAPP = Rossiiskaia assosiatsiia proletarskikh pisatelei (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers)

RKKA = Raboche-Krestianskaia Krasnaia Armia (Red Army of Workers and Peasants)

SNK = *Sovnarkom* = Sovet narodnykh komissarov (Council of People's Commissars)

TRAM = Teatr rabochei molodezhi (Theatre of Working Class Youth)

TsDKA = Tsestralnoi dom Krasnoi Armii (Central House of the Red Army)

TsIK = Tsestralnii ispolnitel'nii komitet Sovetov deputatov SSSR (Central Executive Committee of Soviet delegates of USSR)

TsK = Tsestralnogo komiteta (Central Committee)

VKP(b) = Vsesoiuznaia kommunisticheskaiia partiia (bolshevikov) (Communist Party of the Soviet Union)

VOKS = Vsesoiuznii obshchestvo kulturnykh sviazei s zagranitse (All-Russian Society for Cultural Ties Abroad)

Vseroskomdram = Vserossiiskoe obshchestvo kompozitorov i dramaticheskikh pisatelei (All-Russian Society of Composers and Dramatists)

ZRK = Zakrytii rabochii kooperativ (Closed Workers' Cooperative)

Abbreviations in citation of archival sources

AP RF = Arkhiv presidenta rossiiskoi federatsii (Archive of the President of the Russian Federation), Moscow

GARF = Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation), Moscow

GTsMMK = Gosudarstvennii Tsentralnii Muzei Muzykalnoi Kultury imenii M. I. Glinky (M. I. Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture), Moscow

KA = Kansallisarkisto (Finnish National Archives), Helsinki

RGALI = Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Literatury i Iskusstv (Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts), Moscow

RGASPI = Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Sotsialno-Politicheskoi Istorii (Russian State Archive of Social and Political History), Moscow

TsGALI SPb = Tsentralnii Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Literatury i Iskusstv Sankt-Peterburga (Central State Archive of Literature and Arts of Saint Petersburg), Saint Petersburg

Terms in citation of archival sources

f. = fond (holding)

op. = opis (register)

d. = delo (file)

l. = list (sheet or page)

ll. = listy (sheets or pages)

ob. = oborot (reverse side of the page)

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BETWEEN ART, IDEOLOGY, AND POLITICS

Music in the Soviet Union during the 1930s

The 1930s was a dynamic period in the history of the Soviet Union. It is also one of the most disputed Soviet decades. This decade testified to the consolidation of Stalin's power as the undisputed leader of the Soviet Union. In the 1930s, the Soviet Union also witnessed perhaps the most lugubrious era of Stalinist terror. However, there is another side to this picture: the lives of the majority of Soviet people improved, if measured by levels of education, material well-being, or access to technological advancements. Many of these improvements reached even the most backward and remote parts of the vast country. Ordinary people felt that their lives were stabilizing, especially before the reign of terror, but even at the height of the Great Purges, many shut their eyes in order to survive. Research on Soviet history of the 1930s has yielded very different images of the decade depending on focus of the research: whether a situation is viewed from the center or from the regions, far from Moscow, and whether it is seen through the eyes of an administrator or those of the common Soviet man or woman.

In the arts, including music, this decade was no less controversial. It has often been presumed that during the 1930s the arts were entirely subservient to Soviet political power and that they became mere instruments of totalitarian rule or even of Stalin himself. Yet, the arts were highly popular in the 1930s: the number of creative artists multiplied, and the number of amateur artists and clubs devoted to the arts was unprecedented anywhere in the world. The high creative standards in the Soviet Union were evident worldwide when young Soviet musicians took international competitions by storm and were, almost without exception, ranked above their foreign contemporaries in lists of international musicians. The political ties between the arts and Soviet power have too often been dismissed as simply a logical continuum of Stalin's ambitions, without a second thought being given to their meaning or to what really happened. Totalitarian rule is often said to stifle creativity and suffocate artists, but this hardly seems to have been the case for Soviet music.

Soviet Ballet, Soviet Symphonism, and Soviet Jazz were all increasingly used in the 1930s to imply the distinctive nature of Soviet music. There were attempts, through extensive discussion, to agree on the distinctive nature of Soviet music, thus differentiating it from bourgeois music in the West. These attempts are often dismissed as mere propaganda, but the search for music that could be described as distinctively Soviet was a genuine aim of the Composers' Union, and one that seems to have been supported by many Union members. A related but different question is whether socialist realism was simply another method by which the Communist Party sought to enslave artists. This view has already been challenged in several contexts but the subject has only recently been addressed in relation to music.¹

Soviet music has been studied largely by musicologists interested in specific works or composers rather than general trends or the context within which music was produced. Too often Soviet compositions and composers have been studied as though they existed outside the Soviet system; composers seem to have been viewed as individuals who were not affected by their political surroundings, and, if affected, only in a negative way. Despite a few excellent studies, there has been significantly less research into Soviet music than has been the case for Soviet literature.² It is telling that the most frequently quoted textbook on Soviet music was written by Boris Schwarz more than thirty-five years ago.³ Although this is one of the few books about music that attempt to examine the Soviet era as a whole (at least until 1970), it is largely based on Schwarz's personal experiences of the Soviet system.⁴ Schwarz provides a wealth of valuable details about Soviet musical life, but some aspects of his text require re-examination.

¹ The most authoritative recent writings on the history and essence of Socialist Realism are perhaps Groys, Boris 1988: *Gesamtkunstwerk Stalin: Die Gespaltene Kultur in der Sowjetunion*. Munich: C. Hanser; in English, see: Groys, Boris 1992: *The Total Art of Stalinism. Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*. Translated from German by Charles Rougle. Princeton: Princeton University Press; the special issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly* socialist realism without Shores 94(3), 1995; Giunter, Kh. and Dobrenko, E. (eds.) 2000: *Sotsrealisticheskii kanon*. St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt; Bek, Mikuláš and Chew, Geoffrey and Macek, Petr (eds.) 2004: *The socialist realism and Music*. Prague: Koniasch Latin Press. For more about the discussion of socialist realism see the third part of this book.

² I will provide more extensive listings of relevant previous research in each part, but some recent publications deserve to be mentioned here: Edmunds, Neil 2000: *The Soviet Proletarian Music Movement*. Bern: Peter Lang; Nelson, Amy 2004: *Music for the Revolution. Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia*. University Park: Penn State Press; Tomoff, Kiril 2006: *Creative Union: The Professional organization of Soviet Composers, 1939–1953*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. These are all books that regard music and composers as members of the Soviet system. There are a number of articles that have illuminated the relationship between music and Party politics or the administration, thus illustrating the context in which the Soviet music was born, see Fairclough, Pauline 2002: The "Perestroika" of Soviet Symphonism. In *Music and Letters* 83(2), 2002, pp. 259–274; Bullock, Philip 2006: Staging Stalinism: The search for Soviet opera in the 1930s. In *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18(1), 2007, pp. 83–108.

³ Schwarz, Boris 1983: *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia, 1917–1981*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press (revised version of the original published in 1970).

⁴ Of course, even if he would have desired to do so, Schwarz did not have access to archival sources. Yet, he did use all the journals and reports available at the time in the West.

Schwarz introduces the concept of “regimentation” as a description of Soviet musical life during the 1930s. Schwarz uses this concept to draw a line between (in his view) the relatively liberal 1920s and the more strictly controlled 1930s.⁵ With this concept, Schwarz has reinforced the myth that the arts merely suffered under Soviet rule. Yet, it should be borne in mind that Schwarz was writing at a time when Cold War politics inevitably affected interpretations and research on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Even before Schwarz wrote his text, the “agony of arts” under Soviet rule had been put forward by several well-respected émigré-writers, including Iurii Elagin,⁶ and disillusioned Westerners such as Max Eastman.⁷ A common feature of these writers’ work is that they all present the change that took place in the arts as a move from a state of relative flexibility to one of strict political control imposed by the Communist Party. From this perspective, the art unions (established after 1932) and socialist realism were all part of the same plan to harness art in service of the Party’s political ends. The truth, however, is much more complex. Especially in the field of music, composers and musicologists contributed greatly to the political changes that took place during the 1930s. They were far from being victims of a totalitarian system, although neither should they be considered loyal servants of the Party.

A closer examination of the Soviet Composers’ Union, which was founded in 1932⁸, reveals that initially it was in no way a centralized institution with a strict political agenda that was controlled “from above.” Rather, for the first years of its existence, the Composers’ Union acted according to the desires and ambitions of composers. What happened in Soviet music before and after the founding of the Union has colored some assessments of the organization, as has the general state of Soviet society during the 1930s. Of course, the Composers’ Union was not a detached island that was isolated from political turmoil, but neither was it at the center of the drama. In short, during the first half of the 1930s the Communist Party did not consider music to be a major headache: it had much more pressing concerns. This situation would only change during the latter half of the decade, when the focus of the Party and society shifted and music became a more significant issue.

The aim of this research is to identify the changes that took place in the Soviet musical world during the 1930s, as well as the conceptions that gave birth to Soviet music. In this thesis, attention is directed toward the changes that took place at the political and ideological levels, although it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between the two. The question of who defined the Soviet musical policy of the 1930s is of particular interest. I present a challenge to the previously predominant totalitarian view of Soviet art policy where

⁵ Schwarz 1983, 109–110.

⁶ Jelagin, Juri 1951: *Taming of the Arts*. New York: E.P.Dutton.

⁷ Eastman, Max 1972: *Artists in Uniform: A Study of Literature and bureaucratism*. New York: Octagon Books (originally published in 1934). Eastman’s book was preceded by his several trips to the Soviet Union.

⁸ Kiril Tomoff (2006) dates his history of the Soviet Composers’ Union from 1939 to 1953. This is a somewhat contentious decision, since the Composers’ Union came into existence in 1932 – a fact that Tomoff himself has acknowledged.

artists were seen mainly as passive victims. In fact, my main attempt is to understand the complex relationship between music and politics—how music was connected to the upper and middle levels of the Communist Party and how far composers and musicologists were able to define Soviet music independently.

I am not the first researcher who has sought to challenge the assessment of Soviet music as an art form that was subject to totalitarian control. Kirill Tomoff first published parts of his dissertation as articles and then revised it as a monograph in 2006. His dissertation sought to discuss the formation of the Composers' Union in the 1930s and 1940s as the leading musical organization. Yet, Tomoff, in selecting a research period from 1939 to 1953, effectively omitted the 1930s from his study. In light of his stated intention to evaluate the nature and development of the Composers' Union, Tomoff's choice of research period seems puzzling. Although he makes the valid point that the organizational committee, a national-level organ of the Union, was established only in 1939, the Composers' Union was certainly founded seven years earlier than this. Thus, Tomoff fails to appreciate that many approaches and features of the Composers' Union were not actually inventions of the 1940s, but they had already been very much part of the Composers' Union during the 1930s. This is extremely significant when we consider that the Composers' Union was subjected to more intensive Party surveillance after 1939 than it had been earlier. Certain features, which might seem to have been imposed by the Party, were in fact composers' own initiatives that had been introduced in the 1930s. Tomoff's approach to the Soviet musical world also differs from my own. He adopts a structural approach and views the Composers' Union rather one-sidedly; on many occasions, he disregards other musical institutions, acknowledging only the political connections of the Composers' Union.⁹

Caroline Brooke's important dissertation, in which she discusses the Soviet musical field of the 1930s, was approved in 1999, but, unfortunately, it remains unpublished. Yet, it was both the first post-Soviet historical research about the Soviet musical life in the 1930s and the first to be based on archival sources. As her starting point, she perceives the 1930s as a period of upheaval, which hardly left music untouched. However, her point is that rather than being a straightforward process of stalinization of music, the situation in music was much more complex. Brooke has subsequently published two very valuable articles that are of interest to anyone researching the Soviet history of the 1930s.

Common in our research is the objective to point out that the process of centralization was not a one-way street where politicians would have forced

⁹ Tomoff 2006. His dissertation, upon which his monograph is based, was examined in 2001. Tomoff, Kiril 2001: *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939-1953*. PhD thesis: University of Chicago. The following two articles are practically identical to chapters in Tomoff's monograph on the Composers' Union, see "Most respected comrade...": Patrons, Clients and Brokers and Unofficial Networks in the Stalinist Music World. In *Contemporary European History* 11(1), 2002, pp. 33-65; The Illegitimacy of Popularity: Soviet Composers and the Royalties Administration, 1939-1953. In *Russian History* 27(3), 2000, pp. 311-340.

composers to compose how the politicians wanted. Yet, at times, Brooke's dissertation proceeds like a record of different sides of musical life presenting the case of housing, music publishing or performances, each in a page or so without making further implications or drawing clear conclusions. However, her dissertation marches forward with an extremely valuable amount of details about the Soviet musical life of the 1930s which should not be disregarded by anyone interested in the subject. Although her dissertation comes at times very close to my own research, our work is interlocked rather than overlapping. I consulted different archival sources and so have managed to provide a complementary account of Soviet musical policy during the 1930s. There are also deviations in some of our interpretations and we seem to adopt somewhat different approaches on many points. Brooke seems to be more interested in establishing whether or not there was a coherent Party line with regard to Soviet music after 1932.¹⁰ Then-again, I attempt to take this a step further and consider the extent to which the Composers' Union was able to define Soviet musical policy and affect the current Party line towards music.

Thus, my aim is to examine the conditions and context under which Soviet composers and musicologists of the 1930s operated. In many cases, it was other musical institutions, and not the political leadership of the country, that stood in the way of composers' ambitions. The Composers' Union strived to become a leading organization, but the road was a rocky one since few organizations were willing to be voluntarily subordinated to the Composers' Union. Later in the 1930s the Union was also challenged by a governmental body called the Committee on Artistic Affairs.

Although the Composers' Union is at the center of my research, this work is not a history of this unquestionably important organization. Neither am I studying any composers, although certain names are of course repeated more regularly than others. This is partly due to the fact that research on Soviet musical personalities has concentrated on certain luminous composers, such as Dmitrii Shostakovich. Therefore, it makes sense to examine Shostakovich's relationship with both governmental organizations and the Composers' Union in order to understand how important these connections actually were for leading composers and what was their role in forming the Soviet musical policy. Yet, I try to present a more extensive picture of music in the 1930s and have chosen not to confine myself to any individual composer or organization, although they inevitably feature in my study. Most significantly, this is a study in the field of history based on archival and other primary sources that interprets the history of the Soviet music policy.

Soviet art and culture in general have interested researchers of Soviet history. Yet, most of the research conducted prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was more or less politically slanted. The Cold War atmosphere and the fact that archives were closed greatly influenced Western researchers' interpretations. Most followed the lines of Elagin and Eastman, asserting that

¹⁰ Brooke, Caroline 1999: *The Development of Soviet Music Policy, 1932–1941*. PhD Thesis: University of Cambridge.

the arts were enslaved and artists became either victims (good) or supporters (bad) of the system. The case of Shostakovich is an excellent example of how the Cold War affected interpretations. Shostakovich, from his first trip to America in 1949, gave speeches that were very supportive of the Soviet government. Although he hardly did this out of love for the Communist cause, it did affect the way in which he was received in the West, but also by the younger generation of composers in the Soviet Union. Alfred Schnittke, Edison Denisov and other brilliant composers of the next generation considered Shostakovich no longer antecedent during his older days, but rather a link to the past. Also, his legacy from the Stalinist era, political compromises and compliance alienated many composers of the younger generation.¹¹

Things changed when Solomon Volkov defected from the Soviet Union and published *Testimony*, highly contentious memoirs of Shostakovich which Volkov edited. In this work, Shostakovich was presented as a dissident, who hid anti-government messages within his compositions. This gave birth to a series of publications, such as Ian MacDonald's *New Shostakovich*, in which these (non-scholarly) authors tried to "read" dissidence in every detail of his compositions. These books marked a change in the public image of Shostakovich in the West.¹² He became more popular and concert stages all around the globe wanted to stage performances of his work.

Superficially, it might seem that such a growth of interest in Soviet culture could only be positive. However, this upsurge of interest did not further Western understanding of what really happened in the 1930s. Hardly any of the volumes written before 1991 (and even after that) referred to any archival or first-hand evidence whatsoever. In the case of Shostakovich, only Laurel L. Fay's massive monograph managed to do so extensively—Fay's work challenged many existing preconceptions about the composer and the context in which he worked.¹³ Simultaneously, a series of new studies about the history of Soviet music and culture emerged.

However, in a way, research into Soviet music has tended to lag behind other research when it comes to revision of old, firmly rooted assumptions. One of these was "the Great Retreat" described by Nicholas Timasheff in 1946.¹⁴ In short, the revolutionary ideas that still prevailed in the 1920s and the early 1930s were abandoned by the ruling elite during the 1930s. Revolutionary ideas were abandoned in order to secure the position of the ruling elite and the heritage of the former Russian Empire in the world. In the arts, according to

¹¹ See for example Fay, Laurel E. 2000, 283–284: *Shostakovich: A Life*. New York: Oxford University Press. About the reception of Shostakovich in the West (especially in Britain) see below.

¹² This change in the public perception of Shostakovich is well documented by Pauline Fairclough. Concisely in: Fairclough, Pauline 2005: Facts, Fantasies, and Fictions: Recent Shostakovich Studies. In *Music and Letters* 86(3), 2005, pp. 452–460; more in detail, see: Fairclough, Pauline 2007: The "Old Shostakovich": Reception in the British Press. In *Music and Letters* 88(2), 2007, pp. 266–296.

¹³ Fay 2000.

¹⁴ Timasheff, Nicholas 1946: *The Great Retreat. Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia*. New York: Dutton.

Timasheff, this meant that public opinion became the ruling principle.¹⁵ Yet, Timasheff seems to have believed that in the 1920s there was Bolshevik consensus about the “correct” direction, which was not the case. The “retreat” was also a partial one, since concessions were never made in the field of economics, for example.

Timasheff’s idea about popular opinion defining the development of the arts is interesting. Indeed, in the 1930s, the connection between the arts and the Soviet people and the need to bring art to the masses were stressed in contemporary writings by Soviet artists and theorists. Yet, if we consider music, the average Soviet citizen seems to have been more interested in foxtrot, jazz, or Hollywood film music than anything the proletarian music movement could produce. This was not exactly the kind of art the state wished to sponsor, although it must be admitted that certain concessions were made to these “light genres,” (as they were called in the Soviet Union). Socialist realism, the alleged guiding principle of the arts after the Writers’ Congress of 1934 (at which this concept was first introduced in public), is usually connected with more serious forms of art. Indeed, Boris Groys offers an interesting explanation of socialist realism. Rather than being a representation of people’s taste, as it claimed to be, Groys believes that socialist realism was created by those who promoted the avant-garde during the 1920s. Thus, Groys refutes the theory—prevalent in both the West and the Soviet Union until the mid-1980s—that socialist realism was the diametric opposite of the avant-garde of the 1920s. My own study examines several composers who were modernists in the 1920s and results support Groys’ view. Composers indeed did actively participate in discussions about Soviet music and socialist realism during the 1930s.

Katerina Clark has argued that the Soviet intellectual elite, far from being passive, were at least as active as the Party was in defining the nature of Stalinist culture. She suggests that intellectuals were able to use their connections even when the political framework around them became more restrictive.¹⁶ I will argue that in music, elite forms—opera, ballet, and classical concert music—became more prevalent and were offered to people as official forms of Soviet musical culture. It was a frequently repeated Soviet myth that people yearned for this kind of art. Journals included features about nomads from Central Asia, or peasants from Siberia, who were thirsty for their national operas or who wanted concerts with Soviet repertoires. In reality, demand for this kind of music was hardly driven by the people or even the Party; it seems that it must have been the musical elite, whose primary skills and interests were in these fields of music, who promoted elite forms of music.¹⁷ It seems that

¹⁵ Timasheff 1946, 267–268.

¹⁶ Clark, Katerina 1995, 27–28: *Little Heroes and Big Deeds: Literature Responds to the First Five-Year Plan*. In Fitzpatrick, Sheila (ed.), *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

¹⁷ In his volume about Russian intelligentsia’s long struggle against middle class values Timo Vihavainen considers that part of the intelligentsia continued the struggle against the middle class culture. Vihavainen sees that intelligentsia felt like possessing a civilizing task which would fit well also into the Soviet 1930s, although the forms offered by the musical elite were the ones that were the very bourgeois

Stalin and other Party leaders were more interested in film music, as Leonid Maximenkov has pointed out.¹⁸

In his thorough analysis of Russian and Soviet popular culture, Richard Stites has concluded that popular opinion may well have been instrumental in establishing the popular culture of the 1930s. In a way, Stalinist mass culture served both public taste and state goals.¹⁹ Needless to say, composers also played an important part in the creation of Stalinist mass culture, but this only formed one part of Soviet musical policy. The musical discussions that took place during the 1930s were also concerned with the traditions upon which Soviet music was based. Both in theory and practice, Soviet music was firmly rooted in the musical tradition of pre-revolutionary Russia—the traditional Russian school of music that included Nikolai Rimskii-Korsakov along with two other representatives of the *Mighty Handful*, namely Modest Musorgskii and Aleksandr Borodin, as well as Piotr Tchaikovskii and Mikhail Glinka, (who was dubbed “the Father of Russian music”). All of this can be considered a total volte-face from the position of the most salient musical circles of the 1920s, which, although at odds with each other, had agreed that pre-revolutionary music should be discarded altogether.

The evaluation of Soviet musical life in the 1930s has changed considerably over the past ten years. The starting point for this change was Leonid Maximenkov’s (1997) *Sumbur vmesto muzyki. Stalinskaia kulturnaia revoliutsiia, 1936–38*, which shed new light upon *Pravda* articles about Shostakovich that were published in early 1936. Although this incident had previously been discussed within studies of Shostakovich, Maximenkov places the *Pravda* articles as well as Shostakovich’s case in a much wider context, making Maximenkov’s study truly groundbreaking. *Pravda*’s articles were no longer seen as a vicious attack against Shostakovich; they are viewed as part of a broader campaign, in which he was not the primary target, and this in part helps to explain why Shostakovich survived. Furthermore, Maximenkov points out that a host of administrators stood between composers and Stalin, who was seldom personally involved in musical issues.²⁰ The only real problem with Maximenkov’s text is simply that it has not been translated and so has only been available to those readers who speak Russian. This means that it has not been as widely read as it deserves, and unfortunately even among researchers it has been too rarely used.

ones in the 19th Century. See: Vikhavainen 2004, 138–193: *Vnutrennii vrag. Borba s meshchanstvom kak moralnaia missiia russkoi intelligentsii*. Translated from English by Gerasimova, Ekaterina and Chuikina, Sofiia. St. Petersburg: Kolo. However, now the middle class values seemed to be poured mainly through popular culture while opera and ballet were elite forms of art when compared to those of the mass popular culture.

¹⁸ See Maximenkov, Leonid 2004: Stalin and Shostakovich: Letters to a “Friend”. In Laurel L. Fay (ed.), *Shostakovich and his world*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

¹⁹ Stites, Richard 1992: *Russian Popular Culture. Entertainment and Society Since 1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁰ Maksimenkov, Leonid 1997: *Sumbur vmesto muzyki. Stalinskaia kulturnaia revoliutsiia, 1936–1938*. Moscow: Iuridicheskaiia kniga.

Maximenkov's study was the first of a series about Soviet music that were based on archival research. In the case of Shostakovich, Fay's monograph, published some years later, further contextualized the life of the composer. Neil Edmunds' *The Soviet Proletarian Music Movement* (2000) and Amy Nelson's (2004) *Music for the Revolution* made significant contributions to our understanding of Soviet music in the 1920s and early 1930s. The former took the interesting approach of examining the proletarian music movement that was to become the "bad guy" of Soviet musical life during the 1930s. Edmunds demystifies the operations of proletarian music organizations and is thus able to shed new light on our understanding of proletarian music, which was greatly obscured by Soviet myths.²¹

There is a clear rationale behind my decision to examine the 1930s in this study. In Soviet history, the year 1932 can be perceived as crucial in many ways. Soviet society was in a chaotic situation after the First Five-Year Plan (1928–32) came to an end. Forced collectivization had wrought drastic changes upon society and traditional rural culture was particularly at risk. At the same time, famine was tormenting several areas of the Soviet Union. On April 23, 1932 the Party issued *On the Restructuring of Literary and Artistic Organizations*, a resolution that was to have wide-ranging consequences for the arts. All existing art associations were to be closed and replaced with governmental art unions. The triumphant march of socialist realism as a state-sponsored method has also been linked to this resolution.

The events of 1932, and years preceding it, offer a useful starting point for my research, since it has been argued that the April Resolution and the establishment of the art unions represented a period of "regimentation" in Soviet music.²² The implication that the resolution heralded more intense political control over the arts has too often been taken for granted. The April Resolution was written with literature in mind and the realization of its aims varied from one art form to another, a fact that is barely mentioned in most research. The resolution enabled intensified control of the arts through the art unions, but the pace and ways in which these unions developed has caused a lot of confusion. The immediate outcome of the resolution was that proletarian artistic associations were disbanded and inclusive art unions were set up in their stead. However, rather than becoming an instrument of the Party, the Composers' Union was used by composers to fulfill their own interests.²³ How was it possible that an autonomous institution like this could exist in the Stalinist Soviet Union? I argue that the answer to this interesting question lies in the relationship between composers' and the Party and its administrators.

²¹ Edmunds 2000, Nelson, Amy 2004: *Music for the Revolution. Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia*. University Park: Penn State Press. Nelson's book is based on her dissertation that was examined in 1993.

²² See for example Schwarz 1983, 109–110.

²³ Tomoff has shown that the Composers' Union was used to guard composers' interests between 1939 and 1948. Yet, Tomoff has not addressed how political control over the Composers' Union was achieved in the 1930s.

Nineteen thirty-nine is the obvious date at which to end my study. Tomoff has already described the relationship between composers and the Party after 1939; in particular, he focuses on how the Composers' Union developed after 1939, when the Union became a nation-wide organization and received official status. Up until this point, although an important organization, the Union had lacked national-level organs and so its status had not been clear. Precisely this period when the Composers' Union's status was so uncertain, is of great interest, since who was in charge of the Soviet musical life during 1930s was generally unclear. After 1939 the Composers' Union unquestionably occupied a decisive role alongside the Committee on Artistic Affairs, operating under the control of Council of People's Commissars (*SNK*). However, during the period 1932-39, although older institutions including the Commissariat of Enlightenment (*Narkompros*) and the Labor Union of Artistic Workers (*Rabis*) were faltering, the new organizations—first the Composers' Union and then the Committee on Artistic Affairs—were still struggling to establish their authority. All of these organizations would undergo notable changes during the 1930s.

The importance of looking into the relationship between music and politics in the 1930s is also derived from the fact that it was a decade which gave birth to several characteristics of society that would endure until the end of the Soviet period. Many revolutionary principles were abandoned and normalizing measures were introduced during a process that Timasheff referred to as the Great Retreat²⁴. Whether or not one accepts the notion of the Great Retreat, the differences between Western bourgeois cultures and that of the Soviet Union certainly lessened to some extent, although at the same time Stalin continued to strive for absolute power. Stalin's aim is said to have been to create an administration that would serve his needs; in other words, an administration in which he would indisputably be the highest authority as general secretary of the Communist Party.²⁵ The status of bourgeois specialists, professionals trained in the pre-revolutionary era, strengthened in the musical world. Even though their standing had been called into question and some had lost their positions during the First Five-Year Plan, the status of bourgeois specialists greatly improved after 1932. There were numerous other features in the 1930s that were typical of Soviet musical life until the 1980s. Sergei Prokofiev immigrated to the Soviet Union during the mid-1930s at the same time as the almost prodigious rise of young Soviet musicians such as David Oistrakh, Emil Gilels, Iakov Zak, and Iakov Flier. The position of pre-Revolutionary Russian music was also cemented during this very decade.

The contrast that Schwarz drew between musical life in the 1920s and 1930s is still widely accepted, as is his argument that Stalin's regime extended

²⁴ Timasheff 1946.

²⁵ The classic interpretation that the events of the 1930s were planned by Stalin, and represented "revolution from above" was written by the pioneer of Stalinist studies, Tucker, Robert C. 1977: *Stalinism as Revolution from Above*. In Tucker, Robert C. (ed.), *Essays in Historical Interpretation*. New York: Norton; see also Tucker, Robert C. 1990: *Stalin in Power. The Revolution from Above, 1928-1941*. New York: Norton.

its power into Soviet musical life.²⁶ It seems naïve to claim, however, that the Communist Party would have interfered in musical matters only in the 1930s. I have always found it rather odd that the main basis for this allegation has been the the 1936 attack by *Pravda* on Shostakovich's opera, the general terror of the following years (often wrongly associated with *Pravda's* attack), and the introduction of socialist realism during the Writers' Congress of 1934.²⁷ How these quite different phenomena reflect the overall situation in music is hardly ever explained. Although the 1930s are quite often remembered for the attack on Dmitrii Shostakovich, the overall situation for composers was in fact a great deal better than it had been during the 1920s. Composers managed to organize a creative environment in which unprecedented numbers of composers could free themselves entirely from non-creative professions and become full-time artists.

The allegations that composers—particularly Shostakovich—were persecuted during the 1930s, is partly an exaggeration. Destroying composers would have achieved very little, but through the promotion of Soviet music and composers the Soviet state could create powerful methods of propaganda that could be employed at home and abroad. Persecution was much more common in the literary world and a number of authors, including Osip Mandelshtam, Vsevolod Meierkhold, and Isaak Babel, were completely destroyed. Such cases are much harder to find in the musical world of the 1930s or even the 1940s.

In short, I try to examine “the big picture” of musical policy in the 1930s and consider whether the Party ever adopted a coherent musical policy. The Composers' Union tends to be at the center of this research, as this was the only place where all the leading representatives of music actually met. Furthermore, Soviet musical policy, at least until the 1980s, was largely implemented through the Composers' Union, but it is still not clear exactly how the Union managed to become such a powerful organization or who actually defined Soviet musical policy. In this study, I try to find answers to these rather extensive questions. Along the way, my research adds to our understanding of Soviet life, which underwent a period of major restructuring during the 1930s. The status of music and musical experts in the Soviet Union changed dramatically and explaining the context in which composers worked will help us to understand the forces that shaped the Soviet Union more fully.

²⁶ Schwarz 1983, 109-110.

²⁷ Still, apart from Maximenkov and some other examples, the Russian view of the arts in the 1930s seems to have accepted the totalitarian interpretation. For example Gromov, Evgenii S. 1998: *Stalin: Vlast i iskusstvo*. Moscow: Respublika; Iastrebova, Nataliia 2000, 7: Sovetskoe iskusstvo i ego esteticheskaia energetika. In Iastrebova, Nataliia (ed.), *Mify epohi i khudozhestvennoe sozdanie. Iskusstvo 30-kh*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennii institut iskusstvoznaniia.

Sources on Soviet music and implications

There is an enormous amount of archival material from the Composers' Union (including details of its meetings and resolutions), which shows that it was a bureaucratic organization despite its creative functions. The largest collection of this material—from central organs and from both the Moscow (1932–) and Russian (1959–) branches—is located in the RGALI (*rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva*), State Archive of Literature and Art, in Moscow. However, the material from the 1930s is far from extensive; in fact, when compared to the archives for the 1940s and 1950s, the material from the 1930s is practically negligible. While the impact of the Second World War should not be discounted, the lack of a central national-level administrative body may be one explanation why there are fewer documents from this period. This is also one reason why Tomoff begins his history of the Composers' Union in 1939. After this time, material about the Composers' Union was saved systematically.

The failure of the Composers' Union to systematically archive material from the 1930s does not imply, however, that no sources about the Composers' Union or Soviet musical life in the 1930s exist; on the contrary, it is just that sources are scattered around in different archives and files. Composers' and musicologists' personal papers, along with documents from other administrative bodies that were somehow connected with music, can provide many details about musical life and help us to assemble the big picture. The Trade Union of Art Workers, *Rabis*, provided the main source of material benefits for composers before the Composers' Union had sufficient funds to take care of its members financially. *Rabis's* files are located in GARF, the State Archive. As a well-established bureaucratic organization, it kept very accurate, yet stultifying, collections of protocols and minutes from all of its meetings at different organizational levels. Active discussion about issues connected with composers was particularly extensive in 1932 and 1933.

The founding of the Committee on Artistic Affairs in January 1936 marked the start of a new epoch in Soviet musical life. This organization quickly exerted power over culture and the arts, reducing the authority of the Commissariat of Enlightenment, *Narkompros*, to a fraction of what it had once been. The files from this Committee are remarkably exact and are located in the RGALI. This is the collection that offers perhaps the most valuable information about the development of arts in general, not only music. Its full potential as a source has not been yet realized. One of the document series (*opis*) in this file (twenty in all), number ten, (which was previously classified), includes correspondence between the Committee, the Party, and different state organs. It offers important insights about the Committee and about the relationship between the musical elite and the Party and state organs. Perhaps a bit surprisingly, personal files of Party politicians usually connected with cultural affairs like Viacheslav Molotov and Andrei Zhdanov offer very little, if nothing, in regards with musical life of the 1930s.

Although the Composers' Union lacked central organs, there was one exception: the monthly journal *Sovetskaia Muzyka* (Soviet Music), which was

founded in January 1933 and which continues to publish to this day (after 1992 under the name *Muzykalnaia Akademiia*). *Sovetskaia Muzyka* offers the single most extensive collection of material relating to Soviet musical life of the 1930s. In 1933 the journal was a bi-monthly publication 200 pages in length, but after that until the war the scholarly journal was published once a month and was on average 110 pages long. *Sovetskaia Muzyka* was intended for music specialists rather than a more general readership. Writings were mostly of a scholarly nature, although editorials were often political and the number of these political writings increased toward the end of the decade. Yet, the journal retained its status as a primarily scholarly medium. In addition to scholarly articles, it also published lists of recent and upcoming events, concerts, and reports of meetings. It even published those important decisions and resolutions that concerned music. Significantly, it also served as a forum for discussion. Many discussions that began during Union meetings were continued on the pages of this journal. Furthermore, *Sovetskaia Muzyka* was not published by the State Musical Publisher, *Muzgiz*, but rather by the State Publishing House, *Ogiz*; the significance of this becomes apparent when it is examined in some detail- in the second part of this book.

In practice, the number of important decisions, report summaries, scholarly articles, and political editorials that were published in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* make it a valuable source for anyone interested in Soviet musical life during the 1930s. Therefore, it is surprising that the journal has never been systematically consulted as a source material. Furthermore, because this journal—unlike any other organ of the Union—has an extensive editorial archive in RGALI that begins in 1932, it is easy to follow the publishing policy of this journal. Indeed, it seems that editors practiced very little censorship over contributions. Several articles were left unpublished, but these were often too long, impossible to read, or written in foreign languages. Thus, the expression of contrasting views was quite common in issues of *Sovetskaia Muzyka*. This journal offers a considerable amount of information about composers' changing views of Soviet music and political agendas.²⁸

For less than a year, from August 1933 until May 1934, the Composers' Union published its own monthly Information Bulletin. One can only guess at the reason why it was terminated so abruptly. Yet, the Bulletin suggests clearly enough that the Composers' Union undertook very active work during these months in an attempt to build up its authority, establish a financial base, and improve connections with other administrative organs. Insights into the broader context of Soviet artistic life can be found in *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* (Soviet Art), which was published by *Narkompros* until 1936 and thereafter by the

²⁸ Of course, when reading Soviet texts, especially those written during the Stalinist era, one has to be careful in one's interpretations. Ritualistic repetition of phrases from political speeches by Party leaders was a common way of surviving in a society that was moving towards totalitarian rule. Yet not everyone just repeated the political arguments made by Party leaders, some also offered their own solutions to different problems. There were individuals who took the initiative instead of just reacting to the demands of political awareness.

Committee on Artistic Affairs. The magazine also included articles about music, but its articles were largely only loosely connected to music and often concerned the other arts or artistic life in general. After the Committee came into existence, *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* was at times used as a base for pressure against the Composers' Union, as the fourth part of this book suggests. Musical life was also discussed in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, especially after 1936. These publications can be seen as a barometer not only of the overall attention paid to music by the Party, but also of the publicity that the Party was ready to give to music. *Pravda*, as the Party organ, issued articles on music only when they had political value. It seems that- initially, the Composers' Union and even music in general were seen as politically uninteresting.

By consulting different archival and printed sources from the 1930s, I have been able to create a picture of early Soviet musical policy, which was so important for the future of Soviet music. Through close and careful reading of composers' writings, letters, and articles along with previously classified official documents, I have tried to produce a sound interpretation of the political and ideological connections of composers and their music. Thus, it has become clear that one of the overall themes of my work is an evaluation of how music and politics can be mixed. Music has often been considered an apolitical art, which somehow exists outside political connections. Yet, my understanding of Soviet musical life in the 1930s seems to indicate the opposite—music could easily be affected by, and react to, political disputes.

The interpretation of Soviet sources that refer to discussions, political speeches, and bureaucratic protocols requires some care. Official Soviet texts are often full of empty phrases and ritualistic reiteration of hollow concepts. Sometimes these texts need to be read almost like a code language. The real intention of the writer has to be carefully considered: Does the author seek to influence a decision that is being made? Is any idea being expressed within the document or is it plainly an attempt not to stand out? At times, staying silent could be more dangerous than iteration of empty phrases. Thus, it is important to understand the core concepts used in political language of the time. Liquidation, development, growth, retardation, and propagation were all concepts with specific political meanings, which were not necessarily equivalent to today's usage. Liquidation, for instance did not have the gloomy connotations that we attach to it today. These words would often find their way into musical discussions.

One much-used concept calls for a more detailed explanation. The Composers' Union was one of the art unions established after the Central Committee's resolution of 1932. Writers', Architects', Artists' and Sculptors' unions were also set up—however, the Sculptors' Union later merged with the Artists' Union. Additionally, a Cinematographers' Union was established in the 1960s. Sometimes the concept of a "Creative Union" is used as a corollary to a Soviet art union, as Kirill Tomoff does in his book, *Creative Union*. This concept comes from the Soviet use of *tvorcheskii soiuz*, which was meant to signify the nature of these organizations as creative unions rather than trade unions. Trade

unions were not professional coalitions but rather were bound to the workplace, whereas membership of art unions was based entirely upon profession.²⁹ Yet, I refrain from calling them “creative unions” and instead choose the more neutral “art union.” Accepting the concept of a creative union would signify acceptance of the idea that these unions existed in order to improve the creative work of their members. This indeed was part of what art unions did, but they were also interest groups and provided material support to their members. Therefore, referring to them as creative unions would be approving the Soviet myth.

I have divided this study into four main parts, which deal with major issues encountered by Soviet music and composers during the 1930s. Although the division into thematic parts might seem to imply an anachronistic approach, they do follow a certain chronology. As the Composers’ Union began to take shape, some topics became more important than others. The first part is concerned with composers’ relationship with their past—not only their relationship with pre-revolutionary music, but also more recent events in the Soviet musical field. The second part discusses how the Composers’ Union was organized and what priorities composers pursued when they engaged in administrative work. These issues were especially acute in 1933 and 1934. Many plans for initiatives that would only be fully realized much later were drawn up during these early years.

The overall theme of the third part of this study is ideology. In this part, I examine both the way in which composers took ideology into account and how certain ideological features of Party politics affected Soviet music. This part also illustrates how musicology was given the task of ideological guardianship of Soviet music. I examine the question of socialist realism (or lack of it) in Soviet music. All these issues were of immediate concern and were discussed extensively in 1935. Ideological discussions had begun to gain impetus when yet another major change took place in 1936. This was to have far-reaching effects upon music politics. The final part will discuss these changes, which ultimately led to some kind of resolution of major problems in 1939, at least from the composers’ point of view.

²⁹ Shchiglik, A. I. 1970, 13–14: *Tvorcheskie soiuzy v sisteme sovetskoi demokratii*. In Iampolskaia, Ts. A. (ed.), *Tvorcheskie soiuzy v sssr (organizatsionno-pravovye voprosy)*. Moscow: Iuridicheskaiia literature. The structure and position of art unions seems to have been unclear even in the 1960s, since a textbook on juridical issues concerning their status was published. Professionalism, ideology and special tasks were named as the three main features that separated art unions from trade unions.

EVALUATING THE PAST AND PLANNING THE FUTURE

1932: Turning point

Policies for music in the 1920s

The early 1930s were crucial for the Soviet arts in many respects. The year 1932 has been seen as a turning point due to the Communist Party Resolution of April 23 entitled "On restructuring literary and artistic organizations." The importance of this resolution stems from the fact that it gave a birth to the system of art unions. After 1932 the Party started to systematically develop a consistent cultural policy. Before this time, the Communist Party's approach had been to issue more or less a collection of decisions and decrees, which together hardly formed a coherent policy. Although one can question whether Soviet cultural policy was actually consistent even after 1932, there are several indications that some changes really took place at this time. Prior to 1932 there were several musical organizations with quite different opinions about how to organize the musical world, but after 1932 the Composers' Union alone represented composers and musicians. Yet, when examined in some detail, Soviet policy toward the arts seems to have been less consistent than it might appear at first glance. Looking at the whole of the 1930s, the idea that the Communist Party had a coherent musical policy at this time seems to be debatable. In order to understand the changes that took place in the 1930s, it is crucial to look at the organization and conception of the arts both before and after 1932.

Fundamentally, the Bolshevik Party had no pre-prepared program for artistic affairs. The leadership of the Party had very different opinions about how to deal with artists, but, for most Bolsheviks, art was certainly of secondary importance to economic development. Ideologically the arts were valued mainly as a device by which the cultural transformation of the proletariat could

be achieved. The problem was, that in Marxist theory, culture was a class phenomenon; each class was the creator of its own culture. Therefore the proletariat should have developed its own culture to supersede that of the bourgeoisie. Bolshevik intellectuals' attitudes toward proletarian culture were problematic largely because they were patronizing. In practice, few intellectuals encouraged spontaneous activity amongst proletarians. Instead, organizations such as *Proletkult*, which aimed to create a proletarian culture of its own, emerged. Such organizations and culture could not, however, outlive War Communism and slowly faded away during the 1920s.³⁰ The idea of real proletarian culture was a mere fantasy in Lenin's eyes; he believed that it was much more important to raise the educational level of the workers.³¹

Most of early musical policy was agreed in the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment (*Narkompros*) and its musical division (*Muzo*). Anatolii Lunacharskii headed *Narkompros* from its inception (on October 26, 1917³²) until 1929. He can be regarded as the highest authority in matters concerning the arts during this period. Lunacharskii is said to have managed to defend the arts from serious funding cuts at a time when Lenin wanted to make education the main priority. According to Schwarz, Lunacharskii also managed to reconcile the demands of artists and politicians and to dispel many artists' fears about the Bolsheviks and their policies.³³ *Muzo* was run by the young modernist composer Arthur Lourié (Lurie in Russian). In music, as in the other arts, the years after the October Revolution were described as being full of enthusiasm and new challenges.³⁴ With the help of *Narkompros* and its music division, much of Russia's pre-revolution musical heritage managed to survive the introduction of the new regime, although a number of leading composers did leave the country.

The relationship between music and early Bolshevik power was at first a distant one. Conservatories, the backbone of Russian musical tradition, were even exempted from certain decisions, such as the abolition of higher education entrance examinations (announced on August 2, 1918). The conservatories managed to convince Commissar of Enlightenment Anatolii Lunacharskii that only talented individuals should be admitted.³⁵ Conservatories managed to preserve their institutional autonomy in this matter, although they did become governmental organizations in the spring of 1918. Previously, conservatories had been governed by the Russian Musical Society. The first major changes

³⁰ Lynn Mally has extensively studied the *Proletkult* movement, see: Mally, Lynn 1990: *Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia*. Berkeley: University of California Press. See also Fitzpatrick 1992, 19-20; Fitzpatrick, Sheila 1988: Bolsheviks' dilemma: The Class Issue in Party Politics and Culture. In *Slavic Review* 47(4), 1988, pp. 599-613..

³¹ Fitzpatrick 1992, 22, also Fitzpatrick 1988.

³² All dates used in this dissertation follow contemporary forms. Thus, October 26 corresponds to Western European November 8, 1917.

³³ Lunacharskii's politics are perhaps best depicted in Fitzpatrick, Sheila 1970: *The Commissariat of Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. See also Schwarz 1983, 11-13.

³⁴ Schwarz 1983, 13-15.

³⁵ Edmunds 2000, 86-87; Nelson 2004, 18.

took place in 1922 when the conservatories were obliged to admit a very small quota of *Komsomol* and Communist students. Only in 1931 were Workers' Faculties (*rabfaky*), designed specifically for students with worker backgrounds, established in the Leningrad and Moscow conservatories.³⁶

Like conservatories, most other cultural institutions were also quickly nationalized. Between 1918 and 1920, private music schools, music publishing houses, concert institutions and libraries all came under state control, and, in this way, the government seized all the physical means of artistic work. *Muzo*, as part of *Narkompros*, also started to supervise musical activities, such as performers' concert trips, and a censor-organ, the Main Repertory Committee, *Glavnaia repertuarnaia komissiiia (Glavrepertkom)*, was set up to regulate the musical repertory. All of this indicates that the means for controlling the musical world were established soon after the October Revolution. Yet, *Muzo* was abolished in 1921, after Lourié emigrated, and its responsibilities were transferred to other, more bureaucratic departments of *Narkompros*. However, nothing close to totalitarian rule emerged in the musical world of the 1920s. On the contrary, Lunacharskii, as head of *Narkompros*, even protected some prominent, non-communist composers, who were, in 1926, denounced as bourgeois by radicals in the Moscow Conservatory. Lunacharskii's statement that musical masters should be valued rather than attacked³⁷ is illustrative of the cultural policies of the *NEP* era (1922–27).³⁸

Mainstream musical activity seems to have been in line with the general trend of *NEP*, meaning that musical life at this time remained largely unchanged from that of pre-revolutionary times. However, beyond the mainstream, there was a very important group of organizations with political aims close to those of the Party. Taken together, these organizations can be thought of as a proletarian music movement, although they were far from forming one monolithic group. The most notable of these organizations were the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (*RAPM*), the Production Collective (*Prokoll*) of Moscow Conservatory students and the Association of Revolutionary Composers and Musical Activists (*ORKiMD*), all of which were active during the 1920s.³⁹ These organizations are of particular interest because they believed they represented a Marxist approach to music. These groups adopted Lenin's statement about the arts as a guideline:

“Art belongs to the people. It must have its deepest roots in the broad mass of workers. It must be rooted in and grow with their feelings, thoughts, and desires. It must arouse and develop the artist within them.”⁴⁰

³⁶ Schwarz 1983, 22–24; Edmunds 2000, 88–89.

³⁷ Brooke 1999.

³⁸ Although Lunacharskii felt that the new intelligentsia was necessary for the construction of socialism, this did not imply the liquidation of the old intelligentsia, but that old intelligentsia would be replaced by a new one through natural development in the Soviet society. See: Vikhavainen 2004, 179–181.

³⁹ The most thorough examinations of the proletarian music movement are to be found in Edmunds 2000 and Nelson 2004, respectively.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Zetkin 1929, 14: Zetkin, Klara, *Reminiscences of Lenin*. London: Modern Books.

RAPM, *Prokoll* and *ORKiMD*, although in other respects quite different organizations, all regarded themselves as the vanguard of Marxism in the musical world. The field had been left open for new organizations after *Muzo* had ceased to exist in 1921.

The ultimate goal for proletarian artistic movements of the 1920s was to create a dictatorship of the proletariat in artistic life, just as the Communist Party stated it had done in political life. Proletarian movements aimed to create a broad educational program to develop the amateur arts and reflect the new society. After 1932, whenever proletarian music was discussed, it was only *RAPM* that was mentioned, even though other proletarian music organizations had been active during the 1920s. Between 1929 and 1931 *RAPM* was the most important musical organization and perhaps it was because of this that after 1932 the Association was viewed as the embodiment of the proletarian music movement. Before other musical proletarian organizations closed down, *RAPM* was distinctively not an organization of composers. In 1928, thirty-six of its fifty members were teachers, club workers and performers.⁴¹ More composers joined *RAPM* between 1929 and 1930, but even so most of its members were still non-composers.⁴² This is all the more important because in post-1932 discourse, unfair comparisons were often drawn between the Composers' Union and *RAPM*.

Post-1932 discourse also saw the rise of a musical counterpoint to *RAPM* which, too, deserves attention. Indeed, the Association of Contemporary Music, *ASM*, was, from its formation, at odds with the proletarian musical associations over many issues.⁴³ The idea of *ASM* was originally the brainchild of Lourié, who envisaged that the Association would become part of *Muzo* and consequently a governmental organization, but his plans were not realized. *ASM* was finally formed in 1923, after *Muzo* had already been abolished. Many composers who had been associated with *Narkompros* and *Proletkult* eventually joined the organization. *ASM* members included such names as Boris Asafiev, Nikolai Roslavets, Leonid Sabaneev, and Nikolai Miaskovskii. In general, *ASM* was in favor of new music, both Russian and foreign. Indeed, members of *ASM* were deeply influenced by contemporary European music.⁴⁴

ASM was saliently a coalition of composers unlike organizations of proletarian musicians', but it lacked the clear political credo of the proletarian organizations. Nelson has considered that Roslavets was building a political agenda in linking his ideas of new music and harmonic language to Lev Trotskii's theories of cultural transformation and proletarian culture. Yet, most of those associated with *ASM* were fellow-travelers, those not against the

⁴¹ Edmunds 2000, 12.

⁴² Edmunds 2000, 212; also 2004, 215. There is some disagreement between Nelson and Edmunds over whether some *Prokoll* members actually joined *RAPM* or not. According to Edmunds (p. 213) Kabalevskii never joined, but Nelson states (p. 215) that he (Kabalevsky) was a member of both *RAPM* and *ASM*.

⁴³ Krebs, Stanley D. 1970, 49: *Soviet Composers and the Development of Soviet Music*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

⁴⁴ See for example Edmunds 2000, 79–82.

revolution, but were neither in its vanguard.⁴⁵ The most important feature and offering in *ASM* was that it nurtured close ties to the Western musical world and propagated it in the Soviet Union. It was not in the fringe and so-called avant gardist organization, but quite well integrated into the Soviet musical establishment of the time. Its main activity was in arranging concerts of new music and distributing knowledge of new music, both Russian and Western European.⁴⁶

Music in the First Five-Year Plan

The revolutionary agendas and utopianism that are usually associated with the October Revolution had, by the 1930s, either faded away or been suffocated.⁴⁷ As Richard Stites has argued, this utopianism was not only Marxist. A large number of different views and utopias that were present before the Revolutions of 1917 contributed to Soviet life after the October Revolution. Stites claims that, in many ways, the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan (1928–32) was more destructive to diversity of views than the Bolshevik seizure of power had been in 1917. Stalin started a war against utopianism that swept away these revolutionary fantasies.⁴⁸ In a sense, proletarian organizations represented a proletarian utopia whereas *ASM* members tried to live their modernist dream. Yet, the First Five-Year Plan has also been seen as an upsurge of revolutionary activity, which had been suppressed by the *NEP*. Indeed, the First Five-Year Plan fulfilled many of *RAPM*'s dreams.

The proletarian upsurge experienced by Soviet society during the First Five-Year Plan is sometimes referred to as a cultural revolution,⁴⁹ embracing the view that it was not controlled by the Communist Party. The term also highlights the class-war-like features of the period.⁵⁰ A competing view, however, suggests that the Party was in control, and this argument is supported by the fact that the Party's overall policies remained unchanged after 1932.⁵¹ In

⁴⁵ Nelson 2004, 42–43.

⁴⁶ Nelson 2004, 49–50.

⁴⁷ A monograph about revolutionary plans and projects in early Soviet Russia has been written by Stites, Richard 1989: *Revolutionary Dreams. Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press.

⁴⁸ Stites 1989, 3–10.

⁴⁹ Cultural revolution is a concept introduced by Sheila Fitzpatrick in the 1970s, although it is not fully accepted. She defined the cultural revolution as the period from 1928 to 1931, during which considerable changes in cultural and educational policy were embraced. She borrowed the term from the events of the late 1960s in China, because of the similarities between these two processes, especially in the attitude towards the old, pre-Revolutionary intelligentsia. Fitzpatrick, Sheila 1978: Editor's Introduction. In Fitzpatrick, Sheila (ed.), *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931*. Bloomington: Columbia University Press. Fitzpatrick and her supporters' basic views of the cultural revolution are best depicted in this anthology. See for example reactions of literature: Clark, Katerina 1978: Little Heroes and Big Deeds: Literature Responds to the First Five-Year Plan. In Fitzpatrick, Sheila (ed.), *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931*. Bloomington: Columbia University Press.

⁵⁰ Elements of class war are examined in Fitzpatrick 1992, 115–148.

⁵¹ Michael David-Fox challenged Fitzpatrick's views about the cultural revolution in 1999. David-Fox, Michael 1999a: What Is Cultural Revolution? In *The Russian Review*

general, the inauguration of the First Five-Year Plan has been considered by many to be the most important single turning point in the formation of the Stalinist regime; many of the characteristic features of Stalinism emerged in this Plan. During this period, the central organs were strengthened, collectivization enforced and heavy industry forcefully developed.⁵² As we shall see, 1932 was actually quite an important watershed in music. Yet, the aims of the Party with regard to the arts remained unchanged.

The drive for conformity in musical policy began at the end of the 1920s. Many influential personalities hoped for some kind of stabilization of the musical sphere, but eventually only *RAPM*, a narrow group, managed to set new policies. This, in part, followed the emergence of similar, although not equivalent, organizations in the other arts. The most influential of these was *RAPP*, the Association of Proletarian Writers. During the First Five-Year Plan (1929–32) these organizations gained a partial hegemony over the arts.

One of the aims of proletarian musicians was to build up a network of amateur music groups that would eventually mature and fulfill the prophecy of proletarian hegemony in music. *RAPM* put most of its effort into organizing musical activity rather than composing.⁵³ Yet, it is alleged that in the period from 1929 until 1931 *RAPM* would have urged composers to compile mostly march-type mass songs that used agit-prop texts⁵⁴ or verses of revolutionary poetry for lyrics. It is also argued that *RAPM* strove to establish hegemony over other organizations and displaced several bourgeois specialists from the conservatories and other institutions.⁵⁵ Most of the composers linked with the proletarian music movement were students involved with *Prokoll*, which was a more informal group. *RAPM* remained separate from *Prokoll* until 1929 when some *Prokoll* members joined the Association after graduating.⁵⁶ *Prokoll* members wrote revolutionary operas and oratorios both as a collective and individually.⁵⁷ *RAPM* was too weak as an organization to control compositional activity, and therefore some of the later accusations that *RAPM* forced composers to make drastic changes to their style are without foundation.

58(2), 1999, pp. 181-201. Fitzpatrick issued her response in the same magazine: Fitzpatrick, Sheila 1999a: Cultural Revolution Revisited. In *The Russian Review* 58(2), 1999, pp. 202-209. Fitzpatrick believed that the concept of cultural revolution was still useful and valid with certain reservations. David-Fox's counter-reply (in the same magazine) points out, that the difference between these two views is more conceptual than fundamental. David-Fox, Michael 1999b: Mentalité or Cultural System: A Reply to Sheila Fitzpatrick. In *The Russian Review* 58(2), 1999, 210-211.

⁵² Kenez, Peter 1999, 80: *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

⁵³ Edmunds 2000, 39–46.

⁵⁴ Agit-prop is an abbreviation of agitational propaganda. It refers to the activation and direction of people's attention to certain political matters.

⁵⁵ Schwarz 1983, 102; Clark 1995, 256; Taruskin 1997, 93. Amy Nelson (2000, 130) pointed out in her article that *RAPM* had very limited opportunities to solely promote mass musical work alone. In practice *RAPM* concentrated largely on theoretical discussions rather than their practical manifestation. *RAPM* was too weak an organization to act effectively.

⁵⁶ Edmunds 2000, 212.

⁵⁷ Edmunds 2000, 213. See also, Taruskin 1997, 512.

During this period, however, bourgeois specialists from all walks of life did fall into general disfavor, and this was also the case in the musical world.

Practically all composers were non-communists and most of these had been members of the old bourgeois intelligentsia. Generally, composers had either been trained during the pre-revolutionary years or using pre-revolutionary methods. The Bolshevik Revolution had changed very little when it came to music; few works with a revolutionary subject had emerged, despite the attempts of proletarian musicians. Most of the Soviet musicians' repertory was little different from that of their counterparts in the bourgeois West. Premières of operas, such as Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, Igor Stravinskii's *Pulcinella* or Franz Schreker's *Der Ferne Klang*, were staged in Leningrad during the mid-1920s. Yet, the libretti of some of the classic operas were transformed: *Tosca* became *The Battle for the Commune*; *Les Huguenots* re-emerged as *The Decembrists* and *A Life for the Tsar* was reborn as *Hammer and Sickle*. In the case of *Les Huguenots* the libretto was simply re-written to describe the struggle of the Decembrists against Nikolai I. The musical score in most cases was left untouched,⁵⁸ and these "proletarian" reworkings of operas were also relatively short-lived. Classical musical life in Soviet Russia remained largely very similar to that in the bourgeois West.

The general differences between musical life during the *NEP*-era and that under the First Five-Year Plan are much more striking. First of all, active foreign contacts ceased to function and only became active again after 1932.⁵⁹ *RAPM* also waged fiery campaigns against popular music, which was in Soviet terminology light musical genres, *legkovyye zhenry*—especially jazz, tango and gypsy romances—, but also against liturgical music.⁶⁰ Some problems were caused by the fact that working class seemed to be very keen on this "petit bourgeois culture"; Hollywood classics and jazz seemed much more tempting to the majority of people than the "proletarian culture" offered by the proletarian musician.⁶¹ First sound film hits made it very clear what the masses wanted and it was not actually proletarian hymns.⁶² Two books by Viktor Vinogradov that were published in 1931 serve as examples of anti-bourgeois demagoguery in music. *Against churchism in music* and *Trial for bungling in music* were both extremely polemical works. The latter was even partly written in the form of a trial, during which bourgeois musical forms, such as jazz and gypsy music, were being sentenced.⁶³ Another significant change that affected musical

⁵⁸ Prieberg, Fred K. 1965, 56–64: *Musik in der Sowjetunion*. Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik; Schwarz 1983, 64; Tarakanov, M. E. (ed.) 1995, 42: *Istoriia sovremennoi otechestvennoi muzyki*. Part 1 (1917–1941). Moscow: Muzyka.

⁵⁹ Brooke, Caroline 2001, 236–239: Soviet Music in the International Arena, 1932–1941. In *European History Quarterly* 31(2), 2001.

⁶⁰ Edmunds 2000, 22–24; Starr, S. Frederick 1983, 93: *Red and Hot, The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union 1917–1980*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁶¹ Starr 1983, 79, 84.

⁶² Stites, Richard 2004, 24: The ways of Russian popular music to 1953. In Edmunds, Neil (ed.), *Soviet Music and Society under Lenin and Stalin. The Baton and Sickle*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.

⁶³ Composers and musicians of "Gypsy music" (tсыgantsikov) and jazz (fokstrotnikov) had been the primary target for the attacks of proletarian musicians alongside the

policies was the resignation of Lunacharskii in 1929 from his post as the Commissar of Enlightenment and the appointment of Andrei Bubnov as his replacement.

Fitzpatrick has noted that Western historians have usually regarded the period of the First Five-Year Plan as a transition from pluralism of culture during the *NEP* era to regimentation of culture under Stalinism. According to this scheme, the class-war terminology used by the Communist Party at the time was merely a camouflage for Stalin's real plans to restore discipline among the intelligentsia. But, as Fitzpatrick has suggested, the reality was far more complex than this. Towards the end of the *NEP*-era, social tensions reached a climax and eventually lead to an onslaught against the privileged and established authorities. More significantly, this phenomenon was only partly controlled by the leadership of the Party. Stalin and the Party leadership wanted to create a new intelligentsia and so they promoted social mobility. Simultaneously, however, it was a genuine workers' movement, with aspects beyond the range of the vision of Party leadership.⁶⁴ Even if the notion of cultural revolution introduced by Fitzpatrick is not fully accepted, there are still many aspects of the musical world that seem to have been outside the Party's control. The signal of a revival of the class struggle for proletarian hegemony affected proletarian musicians strongly; they had long resented the old specialists who still retained influence within the musical institutions.⁶⁵

If we consider the class war and the concept of cultural revolution (both of which are connected with what happened between 1929 and 1931), they seem to spring from Marxist-Leninist terminology. In his later years, Lenin tried to solve the problem of Russian backwardness: how to modernize Russia and raise it to the level of Western industrial powers. As only a civilized proletariat could take responsibility for Soviet Russia, Lenin gave priority to the task of raising levels of education among proletarians.⁶⁶ One of the most important attributes of Lenin's "civilized person" was his or her wholehearted support for Soviet power. Therefore, it is no wonder that *Narkompros* was given responsibility not only for culture, education, and the arts, but also for political education.⁶⁷

church. Lebedinskii, L. 1931, 3-4: *Novii etap borby na muzykalnom fronte*. Moscow: Muzgiz. Viktor Vinogradov went further, pointing out that even the words of this gypsy music presented a corrupted conception of love and drunkenness. Vinogradov thought it was unfortunate that Brahms, Liszt, Tchaikovskii, Bizet and other nineteenth-century composers had drawn a lot of harmful influences from this music. He called jazz music "the gypsy music of America", not the real music of negroes, but a terrible distortion of folk music, just like gypsy music was. *Vinogradov 1931a*, 5-9: *Sud nad muzykalnoi khalturoi*. Moscow: Muzgiz; Vinogradov went into detail by pointing how syncopations in music like jazz represented eroticism, which was, at the very least, inappropriate. In his next work, Vinogradov attacked church and liturgical music, see: Vinogradov, Viktor 1931b: *Protiv tserkovshchiny v Muzyke*. Moscow: Muzgiz.

⁶⁴ Fitzpatrick 1992, 118.

⁶⁵ Nelson 2004, 207-208.

⁶⁶ Fitzpatrick, Sheila 1994, 116: *The Russian Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; McCauley, Martin 1981, 87: *The Soviet Union since 1917*. London: Longman.

⁶⁷ Kenez, Peter 1989, 359-363: Lenin's concept of culture. In *History of European Ideas* 11, 1989, pp. 359-363. Special Issue: First International Conference of International Society for the Study of European Ideas.

Lenin's concept of culture explains some of the Party's aims that underpinned the First Five-Year Plan. The cultural and educational level of selected workers and Party members was raised strikingly. The concept of class war was also significant. According to Fitzpatrick, this class war reflected true social tensions between different social classes and was not one of the Party's aims. The enthusiasm of young Communists for dismantling bureaucracies is particularly illustrative of this. Not all Party members supported demands for proletarian leadership in the universities.⁶⁸ A similar situation occurred in the artistic institutions, whose leaders generally had bourgeois origins. According to Brandon Taylor, while this period of the First Five-Year Plan created possibilities for some artists, renowned artists were largely marginalized.⁶⁹ This was also very much the case for musical institutions and musicians.

Katerina Clark, who has written about this period in depth, considers that during the First Five-Year Plan uneducated proletarians were promoted to leading positions and given tasks for which they were ill-equipped. This policy consequently brought into question, and eventually tried to dismantle, the whole bourgeois culture.⁷⁰ A number of theories have emerged that try to explain the ensuing chaos: some see the Party as a savior, calming the situation, while others emphasize that the Party was opportunist and merely used events for its own ends. In any case, a number of Communists were appointed to leading positions in the Leningrad and Moscow conservatories, which underwent the changes that other higher educational institutions had experienced some years earlier. A Workers' Faculty was established in Moscow Conservatory and was used by *RAPM* to enlist a group of worker students as well as to identify a group of major professors as "reactionary". *RAPM* also managed to introduce mass musical work onto the curricula of the conservatories.⁷¹ Party members Boleslav Pshibyshevskii and A. I. Mashirov were appointed as the leaders of the Moscow and Leningrad conservatories respectively. Pshibyshevskii and Mashirov are said to have allowed "extreme leftists" to turn their conservatories upside down.⁷² After the April Resolution, both lost their positions—Pshibyshevskii in 1932 and Mashirov eventually in 1935. In contrast, traditionalists, representatives of the old bourgeois intelligentsia including Reingold Glier and Nikolai Miaskovskii, were reinstated to their former positions.⁷³

⁶⁸ Fitzpatrick 1992, 125, 136, 161; Fitzpatrick, Sheila 1979: Stalin and the Making of the New Elite, 1928-1939. In *Slavic Review* 38(3), 1979, pp. 377-402; see also Vikhavainen 2004, 198. In 1928 there were 40,000 university students of worker origins, in 1931 there were already more than 120,000.

⁶⁹ Taylor, Brandon 1991, 160: *Art and Literature Under the Bolsheviks*. Volume 2: Authority and Revolution 1924-1932. London: Pluto. Edmunds 2000, 99-109. Edmunds has presented evidence that conservatories were for a long time relatively immune to the drastic changes wider society was experiencing and that it was only from summer 1929 onwards that conservatories were subjected to greater changes of policy.

⁷⁰ Clark 1995, 261; Fitzpatrick 1992, 143.

⁷¹ Edmunds 2000, 98-101; Nelson 2004, 212-213.

⁷² Schwarz 1983, 102-103; Edmunds 2000, 99; Nelson 2004, 213.

⁷³ Edmunds 2000, 107.

The change of 1932: new mentalité or return to tradition?

The proletarian music movement had many aims that were not realized between 1929 and 1931 but which were met after the proletarian organizations had been closed down. In this sense, events in the musical world would seem to support both the conception that the First Five-Year Plan marked a break or a change of policy and that it was also part of a continuum in which 1932 was not a turning point. Although, for example, many representatives of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia were reinstated after 1932, many other more ideologically orientated individuals were appointed to leading positions. One of the most prominent personalities on the musical front, Nikolai Cheliapov, was indeed a non-composer, Communist Party member, and bureaucrat.

Although the Composers' Union seemingly united the musical front, the reality was somewhat more divided at first. There were several enterprises which were composed of both proletarian musicians and members of the old bourgeois intelligentsia, but proletarian musicians still retained their own magazine. *RAPM's* former ideologues, Lev Lebedinskii and Viktor Vinogradov, edited *Muzykalnaia samodeiatel'nost'*, a magazine that replaced the organ of *RAPM*, *za Proletaskuiu muzyku*. Both were devoted to the cause of the proletarian music movement.⁷⁴ The official relationship to the proletarian music movement after April 1932 was somewhat ambiguous: the movement was criticized, but largely verbally rather than through official action. Members of the proletarian music movement were allowed to present their own views, but they no longer occupied a position of hegemony.

After the First Five-Year Plan, old values were restored across society. Authority figures were reinstated once again in schools and the army, national history writing was re-established, and the breaking down of traditional values was considered by the Party to be leftist deviation from Marxism. In the arts the ideal of portraying the common man was now changed to that of portraying leaders and specialists, and generally praising the Communist Party. Petit bourgeois values made a large-scale return during the Second Five-Year Plan. The very values that had been attacked in and after the Revolution were now all of a sudden supported by the Party.⁷⁵

During the *NEP*-years, many artists could enjoy a certain amount of freedom in their creative work. Likewise, the Communist Party did not intervene seriously in musical matters. Boris Schwarz, among others, has regarded the pre-1932 years as being ones of freedom and those after 1932 as a period of regimentation.⁷⁶ However, there are certain problems with this kind

⁷⁴ See for example Edmunds 2000, 297.

⁷⁵ McCauley 1981, 88; Vihavainen, Timo 2000, 230–232: Stalinistinen klassismi. In Härmänmaa, Marja (eds.), Vihavainen, Timo, *Kivettyneet ihanteet? Klassismin nousu maailmansotien välisessä Euroopassa*. Jyväskylä: Atena.; Vihavainen 2004, 235.

⁷⁶ Schwarz 1983, 109–110. Additionally, Richard Taruskin has claimed that totalitarian control over music was achieved in 1936. He refers to the first anti-formalist campaign, which was launched against certain works by Dmitrii Shostakovich. Taruskin seems to think that totalitarian means, for example, that the Composers' Union was already fully established by 1936, which it surely was not. Taruskin,

of approach. First of all, for music the immediate years after 1932 seemed relatively liberal when compared to those of the First Five-Year Plan. It has been assumed that the measures that were implemented in the literary world were also introduced in the other arts, but the musical world experienced practically no major interventions by the Party prior to 1936. Thus, there were almost four years during which the Composers' Union, established in 1932, could act without strict Party guidance.

Narkompros itself saw the end of the proletarian associations as an improvement for the musical profession, because conservatories were back in the hands of musical experts. Conservatories became true higher educational establishments once again, and special musical polytechnics were established for workers willing to study music. From the viewpoint of *Narkompros*, as a government organization, this change was for the better: proletarian associations had been working outside its sphere of influence but now music was under governmental authority. *Narkompros* also stated that its new primary task was to develop a musical culture that was "national in form, socialist in content." Changes were also reported in musical education: a new curriculum was drawn up to replace the old one.⁷⁷ As we shall later see, changes were actually taking place, but at first everything pointed to a return of older values rather than to anything else.

The years preceding the April Resolution can be examined from yet another perspective. It is with regard to the role of the Communist Party that the concept of "cultural revolution" is most strongly disputed: was the Party in control, or did proletarian associations act autonomously?⁷⁸ Robert Lewis has formulated an assumption that in those fields of science and the arts that had more than a single paradigm—in other words, a single prevailing tendency—revolution from below was possible. In the natural sciences, where prevailing tendencies were a commonplace, revolution from above was much more likely, because the Party could easily intervene.⁷⁹ If we apply this rule to music, it seems that revolution from below was much more likely than revolution from above. The arts in general have rarely had one prevailing tendency. The April Resolution can therefore be perceived as an attempt to impose the authority of the Party upon the arts. The Party was of course praised by artists for ending the proletarian hegemony in music,⁸⁰ but these statements can be considered more as the usual canonized statements than genuine personal opinions.

Proletarian associations cannot be considered inventions of the Communist Party. Peter Kenez and David Shepherd have argued that proletarian associations were initially independent of the Party but that at the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan the Party was willing to accept them as

Richard 1997, 514: *Defining Russia Musically. Historical and Hermeneutical Essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁷⁷ Muzseksiia Sektora iskusstv Narkomprosa. In *SM* 1/1933, 140.

⁷⁸ Lewis, Robert 1986, 286–287: Nonscience and the cultural revolution. In *Slavic Review* 45(2), 1986, pp. 286–292.

⁷⁹ Lewis 1986, 292.

⁸⁰ See for example: Kushnarev, Khr 1933, 132–133: Tesnee splotimsia vokrug nashego soiuza! In *SM* 3/1933; also Fitzpatrick 1992, 137–138.

part of its own policy. Soon, however, proletarian associations started to become more of a deadweight than of any use and were thus closed down and replaced with arts unions that brought together a much wider selection of artists.⁸¹ The wording of the April Resolution seems to support this view, as Brandon Taylor has noted. Taylor refers to a sentence that states the need “to expand the functional basis of artistic and literary organizations.” Thus, the question of whether the aim of the April Resolution was to weaken the proletarian art movement, or even to strengthen it, is left open.⁸² What Taylor identifies as being of greater significance is the Party’s attempt to become more explicitly involved in the arts. He also emphasizes that, although its leaders were at first criticized, criticism of the proletarian movement soon faded away.⁸³

Kenez and Shepherd have also suggested that through the April Resolution the Party attempted to end the persecution of various non-Party artists, a strategy that had started to hinder its aims. The Party required the artistic effort of several artists who were being harassed by proletarian groups. Moreover, the art unions had a diverse membership, ranging from proletarian artists to members of the bourgeois intelligentsia.⁸⁴ If we accept the view that proletarian art associations acted independently, as was the case in music, it seems possible that the Communist Party wanted to restore its power over the artistic front through the April Resolution.⁸⁵ In this way, what happened in the arts during the First Five-Year Plan could be called a cultural revolution, since it was a phenomenon that was outside the reach of the Party. Yet, it makes sense to combine both views in this case: inside the Party there were forces willing to support proletarian associations; however, by 1931 and 1932 the momentum of the opposing view had increased, effectively leading to the April Resolution of 1932.

This period of the First Five-Year Plan is sometimes referred to as the proletarian phase in the arts in order to signify that it was a deviation from the relatively liberal *NEP*-years and to underline that there was a return to a more liberal state of affairs after 1932. Indeed, many contemporaries believed that this was the case. Moderate Party members stepped in to replace extremists and radical *RAPMists*. What is perhaps more significant is that criticism of the

⁸¹ Kenez, Peter and Shepherd, David 1998, 43, 45: “Revolutionary” Models for High Literature: Resisting Poetics. In Kelly, Catriona and Shepherd, David (eds.), *Russian Cultural Studies. An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press; Fitzpatrick has also emphasized that the Party initiated cultural revolution Fitzpatrick 1978; Fitzpatrick 1994, 141–142.

⁸² In fact, Edmunds has already suggested that quite many ideological initiatives of *RAPM* were repeated in the Composers’ Union by Party representatives, but without any reference to *RAPM*. For example, Edmunds, Neil 2004a, 118: The Ambiguous Origins of socialist realism and Musical Life in the Soviet Union. In Bek, Mikuláš and Chew, Geoffrey and Macek, Petr (eds.) 2004: *The socialist realism and Music*. Prague: Koniasch Latin Press.

⁸³ Taylor 1991, 183.

⁸⁴ Kenez and Shepherd 1998, 43,45; Clark, Katerina 1978, 204: Little Heroes and Big Deeds: Literature Responds to the First Five-Year Plan. In Fitzpatrick, Sheila (ed.), *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931*. Bloomington: Columbia University Press.

⁸⁵ Fitzpatrick 1992, 137–138.

proletarian music movement was in effect officially sanctioned when the proletarian associations were abolished. Several articles critical of the activities of the proletarian music movement were published in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* (the official organ of the Composers' Union). An example of this type of criticism is article by P. Veis: "About the Journal Proletarian Musician", in which Veis "clarifies how this journal carried out Communist Party resolutions and how the failures of the Association of Proletarian Musicians, *RAPM*, were reflected in [the journal]."⁸⁶

Veis's article presented all the central arguments against *RAPM* policies. He mentioned *RAPM*'s policy of classifying fellow-travelers (*poputchiki*) either as allies or enemies. He also reminded readers that *RAPM* had attacked several composers without specifying their actual faults and without pointing out exactly how these composers could improve themselves. Veis quoted a remark made by Lev Lebedinskii (the leader of *RAPM*) that the musical front ought to struggle "against humanists, representatives of the old ideology, pre-revolutionary liberal intelligentsia and ideologists of these reactionary groups of musicians." Veis noted that even after Stalin had stated that most of the old intelligentsia had already turned to Soviet power, Lebedinskii had still called for aggressive measures to be taken against them and thereby had managed to drive most composers away from *RAPM*.⁸⁷

Veis also raised the issue of canonization. He argued that *RAPM* practically denounced the whole classical musical tradition and approved only Beethoven and Musorgskii as ideologically satisfying composers.⁸⁸ Veis mentioned, in particular, the resigned head of the Moscow Conservatory, Pshibyshevskii, who, according to Veis, had distorted Leninist concepts and vulgarized the ideas of Leninism when he canonized Beethoven's principles. Veis summarized the failures of proletarian musicians as being due to their inability to be self-critical, and it was this, he argued, that eventually made it necessary to close down the whole Association.⁸⁹ These general arguments were repeated in several articles over the course of the following years and were eventually presented as the "official truth" about the proletarian music movement. This version of events was one-sided, however, and did not tell the whole story of the movement.⁹⁰ Although they were accused of many failings, proletarian musicians were not denounced as individuals, as we shall later see.

On the initiative of Professor Gnesin, a number of composers (many of whom, like Gnesin himself, were from conservatories) sent a letter to Stalin, a short time before the April Resolution was issued. In their letter, the composers protested against proletarian musicians' actions and demanded changes in musical policy. This letter cannot be found, but another letter written soon after

⁸⁶ Veis, P. 1933, 126: O zhurnale "proletarskii muzykant". In *SM* 1/1933., 126.

⁸⁷ Veis, P. 1933, 126-130: O zhurnale "proletarskii muzykant". In *SM* 1/1933.

⁸⁸ Edmunds 2000, 31-32; Nelson 2004, 87-89.

⁸⁹ Veis, P. 1933, 135-138: O zhurnale "proletarskii muzykant". In *SM* 1/1933.

⁹⁰ Edmunds (2000, 289-301) has pointed out that *RAPM* and its heritage were somewhat distorted after its downfall. This can also be found to some extent in Nelson 2004, 237-240.

and also addressed to Stalin has survived. In it, M. Alekseev, a *Komsomol* member and student of the Workers' Faculty at the Conservatory, referred to Gnesin's letter. Alekseev expressed his belief that the Conservatory was a highly reactionary institution, which was merely continuing with its pre-revolutionary traditions and entirely ignoring the class-war. Alekseev went on to praise proletarian musicians and *Prokoll* for leading the successful fight against modernism. Alekseev's letter was written only two weeks before the April Resolution.⁹¹

Professor Gnesin had been accused of being reactionary by *RAPM* several times during the spring of 1932. Another prominent musical administrator, Levon Atovmian, was accused of dilettantism and opportunism, and Ledogorov, who was actually excluded from the Party, was named as a Trotskiite.⁹² All of these accusations were connected to *RAPM*'s bitter fight against *Vseroskomdram*, the All-Russian Society of Composers and Dramatists, and its musical leader, the "most reactionary force of the time," Gnesin. A *Narkompros* official, Mikhail Arkadiev, wrote to Stalin on February 2, 1932, about Gnesin and argued that he (Gnesin) had been justified in his criticism of the mistakes made by *RAPM*. Arkadiev also mentioned that the next day a closed meeting was to be held, during which leftist elements were to be deleted.⁹³ *RAPM*'s end was nigh, and perhaps it was against this background that Gnesin and others dared to send a letter to Stalin demanding changes to musical policy.

Proletarian musicians were themselves also surprisingly self-confident, for example when they leveled accusations at Atovmian, a Party member with good connections. Criticism of *RAPM* had started to build in summer 1931, after Stalin delivered a speech in which he called for better relations with the old intelligentsia and denounced the proletarian organizations' radical theorizing.⁹⁴ One might assume that Proletarian musicians would have been more cautious following what has been interpreted as an end of official support for proletarian artists. Nelson has argued that the biggest problem facing proletarian musicians was their contradictory task: they had to lead the mass movement of musical propaganda and at the same time "win over" the fellow travelers.⁹⁵ While the mass musical movement had developed forcefully, traditional musical genres had proved to be incompatible with proletarian aims. The result was that most composers found themselves at odds with proletarian musicians. A real challenge to *RAPM* came from the growth of the composers' section of *Vseroskomdram*. This organization was an authors' association that offered collective support, especially with regard to negotiating and collecting

⁹¹ RGALI f. 645, op. 1, d. 352, l. 22-33.

⁹² RGALI f. 645, op. 1, d. 352, l. 42-46.

⁹³ RGALI f. 645, op. 1, d. 352, l. 51-52ob.

⁹⁴ Stalin, Iosif 1951, 69-73. Novaia obstanovka-novye zadachi khoziaistvennogo stroitelstva. Rech na soveshchaniï khoziaistvennikov, 23 iunia 1931 g. In *I. V. Stalin. Sochineniia*. Part 13. Moscow: Gospolitizdat, pp. 51-80.

⁹⁵ Nelson 2004, 238-239.

royalties.⁹⁶ Thus, *Vseroskomdram* became a powerful organization, the majority of whose members were fellow travelers. Therefore, it is no wonder that its composers' section became a serious threat and counter-power to *RAPM* in 1931, when *RAPM* started to lose its official support.

Months before *RAPM* was closed for good, internal discussions were held about the need for "reconstruction" (*perestroika*) of its structure and its actions. The need for this reconstruction arose from practical problems that the Association had faced in mass musical work—they had a hard time encouraging workers to compose. The Association only functioned properly in Moscow and there was a need to establish closer ties with writers as well as improve the organization's international links.⁹⁷ *RAPM* was ready, under certain conditions, to approach fellow travelers.⁹⁸ However, time ran out for *RAPM*, as the April Resolution was announced before any measures were taken by the Association. Yet, it must be noted that the April Resolution was directed first of all to ending the prevailing situation in literature. The resolution merely mentioned that the changes relating to literature were to be applied to the other arts as well.⁹⁹ This is important to bear in mind when considering the events that were to follow.

Viktor Gorodinskii, a Party activist and music critic, signaled the end of the proletarian music movement in an article he wrote two weeks before the announcement of the April Resolution. He wrote at length about the failures of *RAPM* and was particularly critical of the Association's ideological leadership, namely, Georgii Keldysh, Lev Lebedinskii and Nadezhda Briusova. Gorodinskii wrote about the need for self-criticism inside *RAPM* and called for help from the whole of Soviet society to correct the proletarian musicians' mistakes.¹⁰⁰ In practice, the criticism expressed by a known Party activist marked the beginning of more general criticism of proletarian musicians.

Just days before the April Resolution was issued, a meeting about Soviet ballet was held that was illustrative of the prevailing atmosphere. The meeting opened with a speech by Novitskii, who proclaimed that ballet was still in its pre-revolutionary form. He lamented that discussions about ballet always concentrated on technique, rather than on Marxism or ideological conditions.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Nelson 2004, 226. While *Vseroskomdram* existed for some time after the establishment of the art unions, a few months after the April Resolution dramaturgs from *Vseroskomdram* expressed their desire to move into the Writers' Union. A.K. 1932, 3: Nuzhen li vseroskomdram? Dramaturgi dolzhny vkhodit v Soj. Sov. Pis.-ej. In *SI* June 15, 1932.

⁹⁷ Edmunds 2000, 289–290.

⁹⁸ Edmunds 2000, 291–292.

⁹⁹ O perestroike literaturno-khudozhestvennykh organizatsii. Postanovlenie TsK VKP(b) 23.4.1932. In Iakovlev, A. N. (eds.), Artizov, A., Naumov, op. 2002: *Vlast' i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia. Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kulturnoi politike, 1917-1953 gg.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond "demokratiia", pp. 172–173. A version of the text without valuable notations can also be found in In Viktorov, V. S. (eds.), Konkova, A. S., Parfenov, D. A. 1963: *KPSS o kulture, prosveshchenii i nauke. Sbornik dokumentov.* Moscow: Politizdat, pp. 213–214.

¹⁰⁰ Gorodinskii, V. 1932, 2–3: Za Bolshevistskuiu neprimirnost na muzykalnom fronte. O nekotorykh oshibkah *RAPM*. In *SI*, 9th April 1932

¹⁰¹ RGALI f. 962, op. 3, d. 5, l. 1–4.

Modernism in ballet—especially the styles of Isadora Duncan and Sergei Diaghilev—was one of the main themes of the meeting. The discussants included the choreographer Silvia Chen and teachers and administrators from ballet theaters. Chemberdzhi was critical of Chen’s school, for example, because it failed to provide a political education: it was “mere” dance.¹⁰² Proletarian musicians had emphasized from the outset that music and dance were not just art forms, but were political matters. This was something upon which the Party agreed and that it would continue to emphasize after 1932. The ballet-meeting ended with the presentation of plans to transform the *Bolshoi* theater into a base for the mass movement of ballet, as well as a guardian of party-mindedness in Soviet ballet.¹⁰³ Indeed, the *Bolshoi* theater and its ballet company would become the vanguard of Soviet ballet and its foremost representative both within and outside the Soviet Union.

Advent of the new environment

Proletarian music movement scorned

Criticism of the proletarian musical movement began in earnest after the publication of the Party resolution of April 23. Speeches given by the People’s Commissar Andrei Bubnov to the musical community on April 23 and 25 ensured that this was made very clear to composers. Bubnov stated that the leadership of *RAPM* had been given a chance to correct their policy but had failed to do so. Although everybody willing to support Soviet power should be given the chance, *RAPM* had tried to prevent this, Bubnov maintained.¹⁰⁴ The magazine *Soviet Art* had adopted a critical stance towards *RAPM* by April 27, when a letter from the musical administrators of Leningrad, in which they poured scorn on proletarian musicians, was published. Its title “Against political distortion” gives the impression that the political tide had turned.¹⁰⁵

The year 1932 has been seen as the most crucial year for the Soviet arts. The reason for this is the consolidation of the artistic professions through special art unions. Music composers, leading performing artists, and musicologists became members of local branches of the Soviet Composers’ Union. Seemingly, this was part of the regimentation that Schwarz refers to; administrative restructuring enabled increased political control over Soviet musical life. However, just because political control was enabled does not mean that it necessarily increased, although it has been supposed that this happened. Soviet musical policy during the 1930s was contradictory in many ways and tolerated several competing views about the actual course of musical

¹⁰² RGALI f. 962, op. 3, d. 5, l. 35.

¹⁰³ RGALI f. 962, op. 3, d. 5, l. 44–45, 58.

¹⁰⁴ Kut, A. 1932, 4: Kompozitory u tov. A. S. Bubnova. Zadachi muzykalnogo fronta. In *SI* April 27, 1932.

¹⁰⁵ Protiv politicheskikh iskrivlenii. In *SI* April 27, 1932, p. 3.

development. Ideological demands and political pragmatism did not always meet. This is strongly illustrated by the events of the years that followed the April Resolution of 1932.

The most obvious change of 1932 was the dissolution of the proletarian music movement. The replacement of all previous musical associations with a single “umbrella” union was seen by many not as a step towards totalitarianism but as a step towards professionalizing music. Material well-being was one of the results that was expected from the new union. According to musicologist Richard Taruskin, the musical community welcomed this resolution with enthusiasm because it seemed to offer protection from the arbitrariness and short-sightedness of the previous policy. *RAPM*'s actions were now labeled as leftist misinterpretation of Leninism. The April Resolution is an emblematic official document about which much has been written, but actual studies of it are quite rare, as Taruskin notes.¹⁰⁶ A number of conclusions that have been drawn about this resolution are not based on any primary sources or even actual knowledge. One of the most popular sources of misunderstanding was written by British music journalist, Ian MacDonald, who argued in his best-seller, without reference to any sources, that Stalin had first inaugurated the cultural revolution and then established art unions in order to submit the arts to totalitarian control.¹⁰⁷ This kind of interpretation, which lacks an understanding of the sources, only manages to confuse the picture. Furthermore, to judge Soviet musical policy of the 1930s on the basis of this resolution, which was primarily concerned with literature, would be lunacy. The musical policy that emerged over the course of the 1930s, and the Composers' Union's part in this, was hardly the result of precise and careful planning.

Thus, the establishment of the art unions can be seen either as a process carried out from above (by the Party) or as a process initiated as a result of demands from below (by artists themselves). It is noteworthy that the top-down hypothesis is supported by the fact that the search for the official method of Soviet literature and art started almost immediately after the publication of the April Resolution. Equally, the way in which socialist realism was introduced during the First Congress of Soviet Writers' in 1934 supports the idea of a centrally guided process.¹⁰⁸ One can question, however, whether there was a direct connection between the April Resolution and the consolidation of socialist realism. It took more than two years to find a relatively satisfactory definition of socialist realism in literature. In music this process only began to get under way during this period.

¹⁰⁶ Taruskin, Richard 1995, 20, 23: Public lies and unspeakable truth interpreting Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony. In Fanning, David (ed.), *Shostakovich Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Taruskin 1997, 513, 516. Miheeva, along with many other biographers of the time, has noted that most artists saw this change as a positive one. Miheeva, Liudmila 1997, 168: *Zhizn' Dmitriia Shostakovicha*. Moscow: Terra.

¹⁰⁷ MacDonald, Ian 1991, 79–80: *The New Shostakovich*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. This work is controversial at the very least. It should in no condition be considered a scholarly writing.

¹⁰⁸ Kenez and Shepherd 1998, 45.

Thus, at this point, it is already clear that when art unions were established and the process of defining the official method for creative work began, there were groups with very different ambitions. For the majority of artists it must have been unclear whether the Party was willing to control the arts. Allegations of regimentation and oppression in music prior to 1936 must be closely evaluated, since there are sources that point out that artists were themselves strongly involved in the establishment of the unions. If the April Resolution is evaluated solely through its effects upon the literary world then the totalitarian model seems appropriate, but we would fail to understand the Soviet musical scene throughout almost the whole of the 1930s. Stalin's general interest in artistic affairs has been noted, but whether he personally had time for music has yet to be determined.¹⁰⁹ There is also the significant point that if music had already been under Party control in 1936, what, then, can explain the events of 1936—the major restructuring of the musical front and the campaign against certain compositions? As one possible solution to the problem, Anna Ferenc has suggested that the campaign against formalism in 1936 was launched in order to bring the arts under greater Party control.¹¹⁰

There were differences in restructuring across the arts, not only between literature and music. Paul Sjelocha and Igor Mead have described how the visual arts already had widely accepted principles that were acceptable to the Party, most notably that “Content determines the form.” Therefore, there was little need to proceed hastily into the centrally administrated Artists' Union, which was only inaugurated in 1939.¹¹¹ Sjelocha and Mead, however, are a little inaccurate: in 1939 the Artists' Union received only its *orgkomitet* and fund. In fact, the Artists' Union's inaugural congress took place only in 1957.¹¹² (This confusion illustrates the ways in which there have been misunderstandings about the establishment of different art unions.) Although Sjelocha and Mead explain the Party's immediate support for only certain art unions, they do not consider the extent to which artists themselves played a part in this process.

The establishment of an art union for architecture, one of the first four art unions, was also postponed but not for as long as was the case for art and music. The Congress of the Architects' Union was held in 1937, a delay of only three years if compared to literature. Architecture before this congress seems to have had a lot of similarities with music. Apparently, many architects who had been inclined towards modernism and who had been persecuted during the First Five-Year Plan seemed to find opportunities to work after 1932. Thus,

¹⁰⁹ Kenez and Shepherd 1998, 43,45.

¹¹⁰ Ferenc, Anna 1998, 114–116: Music in the Socialist State. In Kelly, Catriona and Shepherd, David (eds.), *Russian Cultural Studies. An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹¹¹ Sjelocha, Paul and Mead, Igor 1967, 43: *Unofficial Art in the Soviet Union*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

¹¹² Shchiglik 1970, 45. See also another article in the same publication Lvovich, Iu. Ia. 1970, 134: *Imushchestvennoe polozhenie tvorcheskikh soiuzov*. In Iampolskaia, Ts. A. (ed.), *Tvorcheskie soiuzy v sssr (organizatsionno-pravovye voprosy)*. Moscow: Iuridicheskaja literatura.. This article points out that a funding organization for visual artists was only established between 1940 and 1944.

architects who were Party members complained that 90 percent of architects were actually modernists. Soon after the Architects' Congress of 1937, modernist architecture was roundly rejected.¹¹³ If in architecture a congress was needed in order to correct architecture's "line" this would support the theory by Sjelocha and Mead about why the Artists' Congress was delayed (in reality, postponed for twenty-five years).¹¹⁴ However, the situation in regard to the fine arts was generally quite confusing. During the 1930s, there was also a separate Sculptors' Union, which was later absorbed by the Artists' Union. As such, this was enough to suggest that there were notable differences in administration between the various arts and that they were anything but a monolithic whole.

A closer look at architecture reveals yet more issues that are of relevance to music. The suppression of modernists is said to have eventually led to the collapse of Soviet architecture as an art form. Due to this, architecture in the Soviet Union became engineer-led planning. The change from the 1920s, when architecture was an innovative and progressive art form, was striking. During the 1930s, questions of style and needs were submitted to Lazar Kaganovich, Nikita Khrushchev, and even to Stalin.¹¹⁵ In architecture, technology superseded art. Important changes are said to have taken place between 1932 and 1934, during the same years that were crucial for literature. Milka Bliznakov has described how the three leading architects in Baku abandoned their search for a national Azerbaijani style and adopted Russian neo-classicism and neo-renaissance approaches, following the principles of socialist realism.¹¹⁶ Bliznakov dates the watershed at 1934, which she regards as marking the end of the experimental period in Soviet architecture. For Bliznakov, the introduction of socialist realism did not mean the complete destruction of architecture. However, it did mean reducing national variation between the Republics, as Moscow tightened its control over regional architects.¹¹⁷ It appears that official Soviet historiography has concealed the significant variations between the development of different art unions. The reason for this concealment was perhaps to present Soviet cultural policy as being more consistent than was actually the case.

The reason why the process from the April Resolution to the first Writers' Congress has been seen as pre-planned is perhaps partly due to the tone of official speeches, which served as extremely important source material before archival sources could be accessed. According to A. I. Stetskii, the leader of the Department of the Culture and Propaganda (*kultprop*) of the Party's Central Committee

¹¹³ Hudson, Hugh D. Jr. 1992, 452-453: Terror in Soviet Architecture: The Murder of Mikhail Okhitovich. In *Slavic Review* 51(3), 1992, pp. pp. 448-467.

¹¹⁴ Sjelocha and Mead 1967, 43.

¹¹⁵ Hudson 1992, 448-467.

¹¹⁶ Bliznakov, Milka 1994, 120: International Modernism or socialist realism: Soviet Architecture in the Eastern Republics. In Norman, John O. (ed.), *New Perspectives on Russian and Soviet Artistic Culture*. Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, Harrogate. New York: St. Martin's press.

¹¹⁷ Bliznakov 1994, 127-128.

“the decision of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. on April 23, 1932 [. . .] put an end to the *RAPP*, which had become an obstacle to the further development of Soviet literature.” He continued “[the Congress] is not passing any resolutions on literary questions that are binding on all writers” and maintained that speeches and resolutions were not some kind of canon fixed by the Party, because “this would mean cramping creative initiative.”¹¹⁸

Party officials were keen to offer assurances that the period of the First Five-Year Plan was a carefully planned phenomenon and that state policy was systematic and consistent. In reality, policies were much more unsystematic and disarranged. Therefore, we must not take it for granted that socialist realism and regimentation were embodiments of the same plan that gave birth to the April Resolution, especially in the case of music.

The April Resolution is hailed in different studies as one of the tenets of Stalinist cultural policy.¹¹⁹ The resolution was eventually followed by a slow change towards totalitarian control over art, but emphasis must be placed on the word “slow”. The change of policy seems to have been anything but straightforward. The Party’s ambition, from its Leninist days, to control art must be considered obvious. The actual consistency of its arts policy, however, can be challenged even in Stalinist times. The extent to which the Party itself wanted to control arts or wanted artists themselves to control the arts in accordance with the Party direction is debatable. Art was eventually nationalized and art unions formed part of this system of state control over the arts.¹²⁰

The resolution gave the Party the opportunity to control the arts in a more overt way, but in music this possibility was only realized over a longer period of time; the April Resolution was merely a part of this process, perhaps not even a fully planned part. The resolution was a new beginning but not in all the ways that were later ascribed to it. That the Party was willing to bring as many skilled artists as possible into these art unions seems clearer. After the April Resolution there were repeated official assurances that there would be no more persecution in the new art unions and that pressure would no longer be the primary method of settling professional matters. Music was no exception to this.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Stetskii, A. I. 1934, 614: Rech zaveduiushchego otdelom kultury i propagandy leninizma TsK VKP(b) A. I. Stetskogo. In *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi siezd sovetskikh pisatel'ei 1934. Stenograficheskii otchet*. Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel. Speech can also be found in English, see: Stetsky, Aleksandr 1977, 263: Under the Flag of the Soviets, Under the Flag of Socialism. In Scott, H. G. (ed.), *Soviet Writers' Congress 1934. The Debate on socialist realism and Modernism in the Soviet Union*. London: Lawrence & Wishart (originally published in 1935).

¹¹⁹ It has already been mentioned that contemporaries officially hailed the resolution as of extreme importance and that in music Boris Schwarz and Richard Taruskin (among others) have accepted this. An example of more recent Russian art research is Gromov 1998, 146.

¹²⁰ Mazaev, A. I. 2000, 28-29: “God velikogo pereloma” v istorii otechestvennoi khudozhestvennoi kultury. In Iastrebova, Nataliia (ed.), *Mify epohi i khudozhestvennoe sozdanie. Iskusstvo 30-kh*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennii institut iskusstvoznaniia.

¹²¹ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7-10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934, 5. The author of this leading article was never mentioned. From issue 5/1933 onwards, the author of the leader

Reactions from the field

The April Resolution has been given too much significance. The resolution has more often been viewed as an indicator of cultural policy than have the actual actions that followed it, the study of which would in fact yield more valuable information about policy. If Party resolutions were read as facts of what happened, our image of the Soviet Union would be somewhat distorted. Although the resolution was seemingly explicit, there were points that were hardly realized in the short term. Contemporaries, then again, hailed the resolution as an epoch-making event, thus adding to its supposed significance. The resolution was often mentioned in official writings. Chief Editor Cheliapov, for example, wrote the following a year after the resolution was issued:

[T]he publication of the second issue of our magazine falls upon a very important anniversary for the artistic front, the resolution of the Party's central committee of April 23, 1932. A great deal has already been written in our magazines, and also in the pages of our musical organs, about the meaning and effect of this historical resolution upon the future of creative soviet work and art studies. The question is no longer how to interpret this resolution but to check that in the creative and theoretical area all is done for the practical realization [of this resolution].¹²²

The resolution was glorified throughout the 1930s, especially on its anniversary every April.

Many artists genuinely hailed the April Resolution as a positive change, perhaps because it seemed to end the attacks on modernist and light genres, and a more peaceful era seemed to be at hand because of it.¹²³ The April Resolution was directed primarily at literature, as its wording suggests. For the Party, literature was the most important form of art and therefore it regarded ending the struggles between different literary modernist and revolutionary groups as essential.¹²⁴ Contradictions in the musical world were also quite deep-seated, as is evident in the discussions in the years following the resolution, but these were largely theoretical differences. Although the activities of *RAPM* were the subject of discussion long after the association had been abolished and certain personal grudges and resentment persisted even longer, in practice a great deal of common ground would quietly be found between previously warring parties.¹²⁵

was not named, unless it was somebody else than editorial staff. It can be therefore assumed that the writer was Cheliapov as it had been thus far, or at least the leader had the approval of the chief editor.

¹²² Cheliapov, N. 1933, 1: *Istoricheskaia godovshchina*. In *SM* 2/1933.

¹²³ Miheeva 1997, 168; see also Taruskin 1997, 513.

¹²⁴ Although in the 1930s movies and radio were of growing importance, the most important mass media was still literature, Barber, John 1990, 6: *Working-Class and Political Culture in the 1930s*. In Günther, Hans (ed.), *The Culture of the Stalin Period*. London: Macmillan. Also, Schwarz 1983, 109.

¹²⁵ It should be underlined once more that the Association of Proletarian Musicians, *RAPM*, was not an official organization of the Communist Party. Although they thought they carried out Party's policy, some of its members were also Party members and most of the rest were applying for Party membership. *RAPM* tried to achieve the same standards as its much more powerful sister association in literature,

Initially, however, resentment was on the surface. Most composers and musicologists did not belong to the Party. Some had been labeled as “bourgeois” and consequently experienced difficulties during the First Five-Year Plan and, for these individuals, the April Resolution seemed to bring relief. According to a bourgeois specialist, musicologist Andrei Rimskii-Korsakov (son of renowned composer Nikolai Rimskii-Korsakov), *RAPM* had made scholarly work considerably more difficult. Rimskii-Korsakov described how he had been denied access to archives and continued, “at the moment it is of course impossible to describe . . . all the consequences of the resolution of April 23, 1932. This resolution is still the most important pre-condition for the healthy growth of creativity . . .”¹²⁶ These kinds of comments were often published in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, as well as expressed during meetings of the Composers’ Union.¹²⁷ Stabilization of the musical front and the professionalization of compositional work were important common goals for all musical activists.

Proletarian musicians were accused of preventing research outside their interests; their principles had been strict and uncompromising.¹²⁸ The atmosphere after the April Resolution was completely different, since composers and musicologists who had been harassed could once again operate more freely. Andrei Rimskii-Korsakov commented that under the control of proletarian musicians the research of music history was driven to a situation in which a handful of people had hegemonic control over history. He insisted that this caused distortions, such as the falsification of Musorgskii’s role. Now, he asserted, the situation was improving.¹²⁹ Rimskii-Korsakov, who did not hold any notable administrative position in the Conservatory or universities, undertook politically harmless basic research on music and literature.¹³⁰ It only benefited authorities to allow the relative of such a famous composer to continue his work.

RAPP. *RAPM* became prominent during the years of the First Five-Year Plan, in the wake of RAPP, and fell in the same way between 1931 and 1932. The Association of Proletarian Musicians was an aggressive organization which tried to pursue its aims of bringing Leninist principles into the field of music and promoting the autonomic musical expression of the proletariat. Although afterwards in the Soviet Union this proletarian music movement was discussed only as *RAPM*, it was not the only musical organization. *ORKiMD* and *Prokoll* were also quite active, although between 1928 and 1931 *RAPM* was the most notable musical association. Nelson 2000, 106; Edmunds 2000, 47–48; Nelson 2004, 69.

¹²⁶ Rimskii-Korsakov, A. 1933, 126: *Muzykalno-istoricheskaia perspektiva proiasniaetsia*. In *SM* 3/1933.

¹²⁷ From its first issue, *Sovetskaia Muzyka* often published a section called *Tribuna kompozitora*, where members of the Composers’ Union could write and publish their short writings. Composers and musicologists used this possibility diligently. In the issues 3/1933 and 5/1933 this section grew to be over twenty-pages long. Several writings hailed the April Resolution for improving the atmosphere.

¹²⁸ Fitzpatrick 1992, 137.

¹²⁹ Rimskii-Korsakov, A. 1933, 126: *Muzykalno-istoricheskaia perspektiva proiasniaetsia*. In *SM* 3/1933.

¹³⁰ Rimskii, L. B. 1978: Rimskii-Korsakov Andrei Nikolaevich. In Keldysh, Iu. V. (ed.), *Muzykalnaia Entsiklopediia*. Part 4. Moscow: *Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*.

Several members of the Composers' Union either frankly praised the April Resolution for ending the repression practiced by proletarian musicians or more indirectly acknowledged that it had improved the general atmosphere.¹³¹ The April Resolution was soon given meaning as a crucial point that marked the beginning of a new era. Indeed, Western research has accepted this reading of the April Resolution, but as a negative phenomenon. However, the positive interpretation presented by the members of the Composers' Union also had a certain artificiality about it: the Composers' Union and State Musical Publisher (*Muzgiz*) had in 1932 requested written contributions from composers and musical figures. These writings were intended to solemnize the October Revolution, as its fifteenth anniversary was at hand. What is noteworthy is that the following themes for the contributions were specified:

1. Evaluation of the creative trends in Soviet music over the last fifteen years and perspectives for the next Five-Year Plan
2. Evaluation of one's own creative style
3. Relationship to musical heritage and the most effective means of adopting and critically working with musical heritage.¹³²

Although their contributions were voluntary, writers were strongly encouraged to focus their writing in certain directions. The process of writing was not regulated, but it can be said to have been guided. Thus, at least occasionally, composers were encouraged to write on certain themes, although most writings published in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* were indeed contributed on a voluntary basis.

These calls for contributions on certain themes were not always particularly successful. Following the call for fifteenth anniversary texts, there were only thirteen submissions, all of which were published. Only three notable bourgeois composers submitted contributions: Reingold Glier, Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov, and Sergei Prokofiev (who still lived in Paris and was therefore not fully familiar with the situation). Most contributors were former proletarian musicians, illustrating that very little time had passed since the April Resolution and that *Muzgiz* was still controlled by former proletarian musicians. Although *RAPM* had been abolished, governmental organizations controlled by proletarian musicians were unaffected by this change. Immediately after the April Resolution, the leader of *Muzgiz*, A. Verkhoturskii, presented *Muzgiz's* plans for the fifteenth anniversary celebrations, in which the music of former proletarian musicians Aleksandr Davidenko, Viktor Belyi, Boris Shekhter, and Marian Koval were notably prominent.¹³³

¹³¹ In the particular issue 3/1933 of *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, the views of different composers brought to light. On pages 129 to 132, the writings of Deshevov, Voloshinov, Zaranek and Skimmel serve as examples of this, since they emphasize improvement in the atmosphere as the main feature of the April Resolution. Hope for a fresh start in the form of the Composers' Union was also expressed.

¹³² *Tribuna Kompozitora* [editorial]. In Cheliapov, N. I. (ed.) 1932: *Muzykalnii almanakh. Sbornik statei*. Moscow: *Muzgiz*, p. 70.

¹³³ Verkhoturskii, A. 1932, 2: *Muzyka k XV godovshchine oktiabria. Chto gotovit Muzgiz?* In *SI* May 9, 1932.

The abovementioned call for writings is interesting from yet another viewpoint: the choice of themes, especially the last one. Relationship to musical heritage was one of the first things to change along with the Composers' Union. The growing interest in tradition and heritage in part stemmed from composers' own interests, but this was not the sole explanation. In music, the past is especially interesting because, after the nineteenth century, audiences have always preferred the classics to contemporary works. Even today, the majority of concert music is from the nineteenth rather than the twentieth century. In light or jazz genres the situation is different, but the Composers' Union's primary interest was in traditional concert music. Pre-revolutionary classical music—musical heritage or *nasledstvo* (as it was called in Russian)—raised two basic questions: Firstly, should musical research be directed towards new music or the musical past? Secondly, should the past be interpreted in a revolutionary context, through the selection of suitable research subjects?

The evaluation of the musical past by members of the Composers' Union began almost immediately, as the excerpt from summer 1932 seems to suggest.¹³⁴ The question of heritage had become acute because most of the musical past had been discarded by the proletarian musicians, causing major problems for opera houses' and concert halls' repertoires. The restoration of traditional Russian music began after the April Resolution and continued apace. Eventually the traditional Russian school of composition and bourgeois specialists were restored as the cornerstones of Soviet music. Their role would continue to grow throughout the 1930s.

Mainstream musical research also experienced changes that were connected to the heritage question. Two major directions can be discerned: one emphasized the musical past in the search for a new style and the other rushed forward to find a new style from recent compositions. For the latter, research into music history was merely seen as a means of escaping current problems. Others, like Iosif Ryzhkin, believed that music history was still being undermined by too many musicologists, as he stated at the musicological meeting of the Composers' Union in autumn 1934.¹³⁵ It was hard to arrive at a compromise between modern and traditional research, and eventually even the Party had its say in the dispute during the campaign against formalism in 1936.

The changed relationship towards musical heritage legitimized the acceptance of representatives of the bourgeois cultural elite into the Composers' Union, because they were seen as useful for socialist construction. Representatives of the old, pre-revolutionary Russian genre and traditions had been discarded by proletarian musicians, for whom only the "revolutionary" Ludvig van Beethoven or "the radical democrat" and "critic of the Emperor" Modest Musorgskii were acceptable composers.¹³⁶ After the April Resolution, Nikolai Cheliapov in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* poured scorn on RAPM for its

¹³⁴ Tribuna Kompozitora [editorial]. In Cheliapov, N. I. (ed.) 1932: *Muzykalnii almanakh. Sbornik statei*. Moscow: Muzgiz, p. 70.

¹³⁵ Skoblionok, A. 1934, 72: V Moskovskom Soiuzе sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 8/1934.

¹³⁶ Taruskin 1997, 512.

inconsistencies. He argued that by *RAPM's* own criteria Frédéric Chopin, Richard Wagner, and Ferenc Liszt should all have been acceptable, as should Rimskii-Korsakov.¹³⁷ Here Cheliapov named some composers who, indeed, would become ever more important in the Soviet Union. Some former proletarian musicians, including Lev Kaltat and David Rabinovich (a rare Party member among musicologists), were willing to alter their views on this point. They now stated that, according to Lenin, the best of bourgeois cultural heritage was the rightful property of the proletariat. Therefore, the bourgeois cultural elite could both contribute their knowledge and be of benefit to the building of socialism.¹³⁸ This, however, meant that the bourgeois cultural elite had the same elite status as other artists and in many cases enjoyed significant advantages.

However, not all aspects of musical heritage were deemed to be of equal value. It was argued that heritage should be approached from a contemporary perspective and that research should focus on aspects that benefited the present. Cheliapov summarized this new stance:

Even twentieth-century Russian music lacks recent research. Do we have any studies of Skriabin, Rakhmaninov or Taneev etc? Not a single monograph or even an article on these subjects! [. . .] Because of this abnormal situation the development of Marxist-Leninist musicology and [. . .] correct directions of art lag behind.¹³⁹

The study of music history was valuable, but not for its own sake. Rather, its purpose was to answer to current needs. More than a year later, in the forum of *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, contributors lamented the relatively small number of music history experts. Emphasis was given to teaching rather than research and therefore teaching was based on the old, pre-revolutionary methods and knowledge, since there were too few experts to make new interpretations.¹⁴⁰ Changes were, of course, slow because members of the old intelligentsia were allowed to retain their positions.

The call for more research into music history was soon answered. In summer 1935 *Sovetskaia Muzyka* published a long article about early 20th century composer Aleksandr Skriabin (1871–1915), in which he was portrayed as a revolutionary composer. This scholarly article utilized a Marxist point of view as well as terminology that underlined the revolutionary features of Skriabin.¹⁴¹ Music history began to be rewritten on a large scale during the 1930s. Wide-ranging projects were set up, in which realism and similar tendencies were

¹³⁷ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 4: O zadachakh zhurnala "Sovetskaia muzyka". In *SM* 1/1933.

¹³⁸ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 8: V boiakh za nasledstvo. In *SM* 3/1933. There is very little information available about Lev Kaltat. He was related with *RAPM* before 1932, most likely through *Muzgiz* and music publishing. After 1932 he seems to have participated in the musicological section of the Moscow Composers' Union.

¹³⁹ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 5: Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen! In *SM* 4/1933.

¹⁴⁰ Dovzhenko, V. 1934, 53–54: O kadrah istorikov muzyki. In *SM* 8/1934.

¹⁴¹ Alshvang, A. 1935, 16: Filosofskie motivy v tvorchestve Skriabina. In *SM* 7–8/1935. Yet, rather than presented as a political revolutionarist (which he apparently was not) his revolutionary ideas in music were hazily paralleled with political revolutionaries of his era.

uncovered in Russian music history and that of other Soviet nations.¹⁴² What the West has seen here as manipulation of history was from the Soviet point of view an attempt to rebalance history. Although today it may sound even hilarious to call Mozart's singspiel or Wagner's musical drama "leftist forms of their times," these were truly revolutionary musical innovations¹⁴³. Yet, the label of "leftist art" is perhaps too political, as these forms were indeed apolitical. This was, however, the mechanism through which the performance of pre-revolutionary music on Soviet concert stages was justified.¹⁴⁴

The needs of the present in connection with music history were often emphasized by Party members, like Viktor Gorodinskii (also the secretary of the Composers' Union in Moscow). He stated that composers and musicologists ought to seek realistic music from the past and simultaneously evaluate their relationship with such music—a process that would help them to become part of the realistic tradition.¹⁴⁵ Gorodinskii did not refer to contemporary discussions about literature, although it is obvious where he drew his influences from. When it came to musical realism, its most important representative in Russia, Musorgskii, had already been approved by proletarian musicians.¹⁴⁶ Yet, it was above all the music of composers, hardly conceivable as realists, such as Tchaikovskii, Glinka, and Rimskii-Korsakov that gained prestige and was placed on a pedestal in the 1930s.¹⁴⁷ This proponent of musical realism, however, was to be reckoned with.

Viktor Markovich Gorodinskii (1902–1959) was a crucial figure for music. He is especially interesting as he was a long-standing Party member (joined 1918) and held many high-level administrative posts despite his young age. Gorodinskii had connections to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and during the 1930s he occasionally attended its sessions when explanations of musical matters were required. His good connections with the Party derive most likely from the fact that he actively participated in the Civil War and served in the Red Army for eight years, for example in its agit-prop sections. He was a pianist educated in the Leningrad Conservatory in the 1920s.

He was a member of the Central Committee of the Labor Union of Art Workers (*Rabis*) from 1929 and, from at least 1932, sat on its presidium. He also

¹⁴² Schwarz 1983, 256–258.

¹⁴³ It perhaps serves to mention that Wagner did join a revolutionary society named "Fatherland-Union" in 1848. Yet, even his revolutionary ideas in music later became perceived as less revolutionary. This was especially the case when the Nazi-regime adopted Wagner as its figurehead composer.

¹⁴⁴ Ob opernom teatre. In *SI* October 21, 1932: 1.

¹⁴⁵ Gorodinskii, V. 1933, 2: Problema soderzhaniia i obraznosti v muzike. In *SM* 5/1933.

¹⁴⁶ Edmunds has emphasized that *RAPM* revered Musorgskii in terms that reminded of the socialist realism invented in the 1930s, see Edmunds 20004b, 118. See also Tarakanov 1995, 300–301.

¹⁴⁷ Kim, M.P. (ed.) 1988, 168: *Sovetskaia kultura v rekonstruktionii period 1928-1941*. Moscow: Nauka; Taruskin 1997, 96. This feature in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, see for example Zhitomirskii, D. 1933, 50–65: O simfonizme Chaikovskogo. In *SM* 6/1933; Groman-Solovtsov, A. 1934 24–34: Neskolko myslei o Chaikovskom. In *SM* 2/1934. These are good examples of how the class nature of traditional composers was actively discussed and how attempts were made to evaluate their music according to its relationship with the society of their own time.

became the Chairman of the international music bureau of *MORT* (International Association of Revolutionary Theatre) from 1932 when this first attempt to organize an international musical front was held. Perhaps this was partly due to fact that despite being in close terms with the Party, Gorodinskii spoke German and Italian and was of educated Jewish origin.¹⁴⁸ In different stages of his career, he was also an active participant on many editorial boards. Moreover, he was also a practicing musicologist. Thus, Gorodinskii was very valuable to the Party and this helps to explain why he always seems to have been present when something important was happening. The Party needed specialists like him and this may have been why he was appointed to the important post of secretary of the Composers' Union's most important branch. It is also noteworthy that Gorodinskii at one point edited the journal *Muzyka i Revoliutsiia* (published 1926–29) with Nikolai Cheliapov, the chairman of the Composers' Union in Moscow (1933–37). Thus, Gorodinskii and Cheliapov knew each other before they took up leading posts in the Moscow Composers' Union.

Gorodinskii's articles were in many cases political by nature and he always emphasized the current line taken by the Party. In autumn 1932, he wrote that the April Resolution did not signify the common liberation from political tasks that "the rightist democrats" seemed to assume was the case. "Reactionary forces tried to gather but there should not be given an inch to them," Gorodinskii emphasized.¹⁴⁹

The rise of Russian nationalism

Russian nationalism increased rapidly after the April Resolution. Because it went against the very nature of Marxism, nationalism was referred to as "rodina," motherland, or patriotism in Soviet vocabulary. Originally, however, patriotism was also despised by the old Bolsheviks. Patriotism—which naturally was to reach its pinnacle during the Great Patriotic War (1941–45)—began to re-emerge early in the 1930s. In music, the re-emergence of patriotism can also be seen in the rehabilitation of Russian national composers, such as Nikolai Rimskii-Korsakov. He and his successors had represented the very essence of Russian bourgeois nationalism for the *RAPM* only a few years earlier. Thus, the question of heritage was closely linked to the rise of nationalism. It no longer signified "bourgeois" in the Soviet Union. It was now unacceptable to discard national elements in favor of modernism in music.¹⁵⁰ The despised trait became cosmopolitanism, which both modernism and Avant garde represented. With egalitarianism, cosmopolitanism now became "anti-Marxian petit-bourgeois."¹⁵¹

The explanation for this rise in Russian musical nationalism can be found in the need to underline the special nature of Soviet music. It was ideologically

¹⁴⁸ See also Maksimenkov 1997, 72–74.

¹⁴⁹ Gorodinskii, V. M, 1932, 6–7: Sovetskuiu muzyku na vyshuii stupen. In Cheliapov, N. I. (ed.), *Muzykalnii almanakh, Sbornik statei*. Moscow: Muzgiz.

¹⁵⁰ Taruskin 1997, 95.

¹⁵¹ Vihavainen 2000, 236–237.

necessary to point out differences between the Soviet and Western worlds. Gorodinskii quoted Stalin's antithesis "we and they" (referring to the Soviet Union and bourgeois West) and declared that this also applied to Soviet and Western music. Western music was going in a different direction.¹⁵² In order to show that the Soviet music was different and distinct, there was a need to find links between music of the past and that of the present. Many needs were fulfilled through this practical reasoning: concert stages and theaters gave people the classics that they wanted. Simultaneously, the Russian school of composition supported Soviet patriotism and could serve as the basis of Soviet music.

Although this process sounds very simple, in practice, it took several years to accomplish. It began early in the 1930s with the re-establishment of the reputations of some traditional Russian composers. Kaltat and Rabinovich were at the forefront of trying to shed new light on the works of Mikhail Glinka, father of the Russian school of composition, and thereby they denounced the policy of *RAPM*. They hailed Glinka as the most important composer from the Russian musical heritage and emphasized that his works were popular both among musicians and audiences. Not very surprisingly, they connected Glinka with his bourgeois revolutionary contemporaries. Glinka lived and saw the rise of the Decembrists in 1825. (This rise of the Decembrists was a reflection of the French Revolution in Russia.)¹⁵³

Kaltat and Rabinovich suggested not only that pre-revolutionary music should be studied but that above all attention should be paid to the conditions under which such music was composed. This was how "reality" in music could be found.¹⁵⁴ Kaltat and Rabinovich tried to present Glinka as a progressive representative of Russian bourgeois culture. They projected Lenin's view of Aleksandr Herzen upon Glinka and presented the assumption that Glinka's art had been of a progressive nature. As a founder of the Russian-national school of composition he was an important figure for Soviet music, they maintained.¹⁵⁵ The growing interest in Russian bourgeois classics is illustrated by several articles of this kind. In some, the critical interpretation called for by Cheliapov was evident and these past composers were presented as progressive personalities of their times and, thus, were made more acceptable for the Soviet stage.

Statistics from 1928–41 provide some evidence that Soviet concert audiences preferred tradition. During this period, 78 percent of operas and 55 percent of ballets staged by the *Bolshoi* theater in Moscow were old, pre-revolutionary classics. New music was scarce even while the staging of some old classics was prevented from 1929 to 1931.¹⁵⁶ People shunned some of the

¹⁵² Gorodinskii, V. 1932, 1: Muzykalnii front SSSR (iz plenuma MORTa). In *SI* November 27, 1932.

¹⁵³ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1934, 27–28: U istokov russkoi natsionalnoi muzykalnoi shkoly. In *SM* 3/1934.

¹⁵⁴ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 39–40: V boiakh za nasledstvo. In *SM* 3/1933.

¹⁵⁵ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1934, 47: U istokov russkoi natsionalnoi muzykalnoi shkoly. In *SM* 3/1934.

¹⁵⁶ Kim 1988, 167–168.

new music that had been offered to them by proletarian musicians. In 1932 some pieces by Boris Shekhter and Aleksandr Davidenko were played on the radio three or four times a day, which caused a surge of protest letters from the audience to *Sovetskaia Muzyka*.¹⁵⁷ But if the great audience shunned proletarian music, the same also applied to modern classical music. Avant gardism and the proletarian experiments of the 1920s and early 1930s were all swept away by the general tide of classicism that emerged during the 1930s in all areas of Soviet art.¹⁵⁸

Researchers have held contrasting views about whether the art of the Stalinist period was a result of natural development or a distortion produced by the socio-political atmosphere. Soviet historians have been major proponents of the natural development hypothesis.¹⁵⁹ In the search for suitable predecessors of Soviet music, proletarian musicians became the “bad guys” who had tried to deny the people access to their Russian nationalist tradition. Many composers willingly emphasized the traditional Russian school of composition rather than Western modernism.¹⁶⁰ Reingold Glier, a pupil of Sergei Taneev (another great Russian composer), was satisfied that his pre-revolutionary symphony *Ilia Muromets* was back on the repertory of orchestras.¹⁶¹ Like Asafiev, Glier would become one of the most important administrators in the early Composers’ Union. Others, however, were afraid of what the emphasis on Russian music would bring. Composer Aleksandr Vepruk, for example, in 1932 voiced his fear of Great Russian chauvinism, because limitations had already been set on the amount of European music that could be broadcast on the radio.¹⁶²

Naturally, musicology followed the same trend as music. Among the first to evaluate the history of musicology was a young musicologist Iosif Ryzhkin, who became a professor at the Moscow Conservatory in 1939. His article is a fine example of the scholarly valuable research that was published in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*. The article was primarily an apolitical handling of the musicology of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and its legacy for the twentieth century. However, Ryzhkin chose to preface the main text with a justification of his study from a Marxist point of view.¹⁶³ His research had very little to do with Marxism but in this way he managed to make it seem more valuable in the eyes

¹⁵⁷ Groman-Solovcov, A., Ryzhkin, I. 1933, 69: Muzykalnoe radioveshchanie za god. In *SM* 4/1933.

¹⁵⁸ Vihavainen 2000, 216–252.

¹⁵⁹ Golomstock 1990, 110–111: Golomstock, Igor, Problems in the Study of Stalinist Culture. In Günther, Hans (ed.), *The Culture of the Stalin Period*. London: Macmillan.

¹⁶⁰ Archive collections of Gosuderstvennii Tsentralnii Muzei Muzykalnoi Kulturi imenni Glinki (GTsMMK), fond (f.) 285, delo (d.) 663, listy (ll.) 1–2. Professor of Leningrad Conservatory Roman Gruber, in a letter to his colleague Boris Asafiev, discussed the meaning of music history for the present stage of Soviet music, in February 1936. Both accepted the view that Soviet music had its own distinct way that was in contrast to that of the bourgeois West. Thus, Asafiev, who had in *ASM* just five years earlier supported new music and its import from the West, had by 1936 changed his opinion.

¹⁶¹ Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Literatury i Iskusstva (RGALI), f. 2085, opis (op.) 1, d. 878, l. 1. Glier expresses this in a letter to Prokofiev on February 10, 1934.

¹⁶² RGALI, f. 645, op. 1, d. 352, ll. 10–13. Vepruk to Cherniak on 4th September 1932.

¹⁶³ Ryzhkin, I. 1933, 74: Traditsionnaia shkola teorii muzyki. In *SM* 3/1933.

of authorities. This method was successfully used in several other articles and studies later published in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*.

Although they denounced some aspects of *RAPM* policy, Kaltat and Rabinovich also tried to build bridges between *RAPM* and current policy. They claimed that the building of socialist proletarian culture was not “academic” in any way. They emphasized that Bolsheviks had always linked the question of proletarian culture with its general political functions, whereas Mensheviks had tried to detach culture from politics. According to Kaltat and Rabinovich, the Mensheviks believed that proletarians were suited to political arenas but not to culture, and thus they kept the “working class in cultural slavery.”¹⁶⁴ Kaltat and Rabinovich tried to transform a musical question into a political one. Their reference to the Mensheviks was perhaps an attempt to emphasize the political meaning of the article. The exiled Trotskii, a former Menshevik, was becoming a national scapegoat. The practice of linking undesirable theories to purged political leaders, as Kaltat and Rabinovich did here, would soon become commonplace.¹⁶⁵

More often, however, musical heritage was used to avoid political questions. At least, Cheliapov puts this forward very clearly in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*:

[. . .] let us mention here one abnormal feature. Our musicologists [. . .] research especially little [about] our Soviet musical productions. They are much more concerned with questions of the past. The study and criticism of the past is, of course, important for science and politics, but what would we say of our economists, historians, jurists, and agricultural experts etc. if they studied only the economy or agriculture of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries etc. instead of finding facts about the political life of present-day capitalist countries?¹⁶⁶

Cheliapov’s notion about the need to study western life is interesting, since in the near future this would become a very dangerous idea. Cheliapov’s point was that many researchers tried to avoid political questions. This statement further underlines the fact that the study of the past for its own sake was deemed to be worthless. Only the present mattered.

Discussions about the musical past are important since they illustrate the major change in musical practices after 1932. They reveal something of the nature of the Composers’ Union as well as contemporary musical taste. Moreover, they are indicative of a general shift in values within society towards conservatism. Discussions about musical heritage, however, were not the only discussions that concerned previous decades. Perhaps even more important were the debates about the recent past and the criticism directed towards the Association of Proletarian Musicians, *RAPM*.

¹⁶⁴ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 7: V boiakh za nasledstvo. In *SM* 3/1933.

¹⁶⁵ Volkogonov 1999, 205–206; Radzinski, Edvard 2002, 303–305: *Stalin*. Translated from Russian by Kari Klemelä. Helsinki: WSOY (originally published in 1995).

¹⁶⁶ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 5: Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen! In *SM* 4/1933.

Disputes and self-criticism

The relationship between proletarian musicians and bourgeois composers evolved throughout the First Five-Year Plan but changed direction dramatically on the evening of April 23, 1932. The resolution to liquidate all former artistic organizations had already been agreed, but had not been published. A meeting held in quarters of *Narkompros* was attended by the most influential representatives of music from Leningrad and Moscow, “from [Mikhail] Ippolitov-Ivanov to the leadership of *RAPM*”. According to an eye-witness, the nature of the meeting was unclear until the Commissar of Enlightenment, Andrei Bubnov, initiated a discussion about the problems involved in constructing Soviet music. This led to heavy criticism of *RAPM*.¹⁶⁷ The fate of the proletarian music movement and its falling out of favor must have been made clear to representatives by Bubnov. The resolution was published the next day and within a few weeks proletarian music organizations had been closed down. Open criticism of proletarian musicians was now not merely possible but even encouraged.

It has already been noted that most of the proletarian musicians’ theoretical and practical work was not compositional. Composers had been a minority in *RAPM*, but it had still strived to exert influence over the whole musical field.¹⁶⁸ When it became possible to criticize the flaws, abuses, and mistakes of *RAPM*, the Composers’ Union became the forum for this criticism. Some tried to defend their former organization, including Kaltat and Rabinovich (both members of its executive committee), who urged that closer attention should be paid to *RAPM*’s relationship to musical heritage. They argued that *RAPM*’s efforts should not be discarded and maintained that *RAPM* was part of the development of Soviet music. For them, heritage was a concern shared by the Composers’ Union and *RAPM*.¹⁶⁹ They were not alone in their defense of *RAPM* and its policy. These attempts to gain recognition for the proletarian music movement’s achievements soon raised the question of self-criticism. Not everybody was willing to accept that *RAPM* had contributed to development of Soviet music, and this was particularly true after the association had been closed down.

Kaltat and Rabinovich tried to evade the question of self-criticism by pointing out that *RAPM* was the natural predecessor of the Composers’ Union. They exploited Marxist developmental thought, pointing out that proletarian musical culture had lived its youth in *RAPM*. Through the new Union, they

¹⁶⁷ Kushnarev, Khr. 1933, 132–133: *Tesnee splotimsia vokrug nashego soiuz!* In *SM* 3/1933.

¹⁶⁸ Taruskin 1997, 92; Nelson 2000, 105–117. The most thorough account of the compositional activity of *RAPM* can be found in Edmunds 2000. See also Edmunds, Neil 2004b: “Lenin is always with us.” Soviet musical propaganda in the 1920s. In Edmunds, Neil (ed.), *Soviet Music and Society under Lenin and Stalin. The Baton and Sickle*. London: RoutledgeCurzon. Here Edmunds further points out that proletarian musical associations’ common goal was to exploit music’s capabilities in the socialist education of the masses.

¹⁶⁹ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 39–40: *V boiakh za nasledstvo*. In *SM* 3/1933.

argued, it was possible to overcome the “ill leftism of its childhood” and “to successfully fulfill the struggle in two fronts.” Kaltat and Rabinovich reasoned that therefore both positive and negative features of *RAPM* ought to be evaluated. By doing this, it was possible to find in *RAPM* the basis of the continuing work to secure proletarian culture.¹⁷⁰ It is easy to believe that for many proletarian musicians it was hard to accept that nothing good could be said about their former organization and that they, therefore, tried to emphasize *RAPM*'s achievements.

Kaltat and Rabinovich interpreted the April Resolution as being favorable toward the aims of the proletarian music movement. They emphasized that the resolution mentioned the relationship between “socialist construction” and the “remarkable growth of art” and linked this to *RAPM*'s achievements. In Kaltat and Rabinovich's view, *RAPM* was succeeded by the Composers' Union as the musical representative of socialist construction. They maintained that the Party merely corrected the course that the proletarian movement had erroneously chosen.¹⁷¹ Kaltat and Rabinovich revealed their hopes that certain features of *RAPM*'s policy would endure, especially the struggle “in two fronts” against formalism and light music. However, in the immediate years after the April Resolution, both modern and light music experienced something of a renaissance.¹⁷² The fight against formalism, usually associated with the campaign against formalism of 1936, was mentioned by Kaltat and Rabinovich as the basis of the art unions. The first chairman of the Composers' Union, Mikhail Arkadiev from *Narkompros* and *Rabis*, also declared in an editorial published in *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* that the art unions were to help in the fight against lifeless naturalism and formalism.¹⁷³ Yet, statements like Arkadiev's were official ones, which often did not find support in reality. In this case, it was four years before any kind of concrete actions were taken in the name of the struggle against formalism.

Still, certain individuals, such as Gorodinskii, tried to speak on behalf of more concrete actions. He suggested that the Composers' Union should “criticize the critics” and look into the state of music criticism. In his view, music critics should have been using their criticism to keep the musical front on the correct path. Gorodinskii had some other interesting suggestions, including, for example, that the Union should organize brigades for trips to factories that were still being constructed. According to his reasoning, the wrong kind of individualism should be liquidated in order to make way for a new kind of socialist musician. The Composers' Union was to be the true vanguard of socialism in music.¹⁷⁴ Gorodinskii did not refer to *RAPM*, even though his proposed factory tours for composers had been among the methods favored by

¹⁷⁰ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 40: V boiakh za nasledstvo. In *SM* 3/1933.

¹⁷¹ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 5–6: Na dva fronta! Deiatelnost b. *RAPM* i voprosy sovetskogo muzykalnogo tvorchestva. In *SM* 2/1933.

¹⁷² Starr, S. Frederick 1983, 107–111: *Red and Hot. The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union 1917–1980*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Nelson 2000, 129.

¹⁷³ Arkadiev, M. 1932, 1: Osnovnye zadachi raboty soiuzov. In *SI* June 27, 1932.

¹⁷⁴ Gorodinskii, V. 1932, 2: Vykovat muzykalnoe oruzhie. Blizhaishie zadachi soiuzov sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SI* September 3, 1932.

proletarian musicians. Thus, although aspects of *RAPM*'s policies were useful and positive in Gorodinskii's view, proletarian musicians and their organizations were not to be mentioned.

Many others had less constructive views of *RAPM*, and this was perhaps the reason why the organization was so rarely mentioned, even in cases when something had been a direct achievement of *RAPM*. Veis forcefully criticized *RAPM*'s "ultra-leftist" and "anti-party" policies towards fellow-travelers. He was especially critical of Georgii Keldysh and Lev Lebedinskii, whom he regarded as representatives of "pseudo-Marxist vulgarity."¹⁷⁵ In addition to accusations that they suppressed other composers' work, Veis also criticized Keldysh's and Lebedinskii's simplistic views about society, their concentration on mass songs at the expense of other musical forms, and their intolerance of classical heritage, as mentioned above.¹⁷⁶ Kaltat and Rabinovich's defense is all the more interesting in light of the vigorous accusations against proletarian musicians made by most composers. They highlighted the fact that the campaign against modern music had been very positive for the proletarian cause and was a topical issue for the Composers' Union, as well.¹⁷⁷

Kaltat and Rabinovich maintained that *RAPM* had been a progressive organization and that the Party did not want revoke the successes of proletarian art. They made the point that *RAPM* would not have been allowed to be the leading organization in musical life for so long if it had been wrong in every aspect of its policy. They emphasized *RAPM*'s role in mass musical work. Kaltat and Rabinovich feared that undermining *RAPM*'s achievements would be a severe blow for Soviet music and strengthen counter-revolutionary elements. Thus, in their view, the content of the April Resolution should not be falsified, as others had tried to do.¹⁷⁸

Still, *RAPM*'s time as an organization was permanently and unquestionably over. Any attempts to revive its program under the Association's own name were quickly rebutted. The campaign against formalism is especially interesting in this context and will be discussed in some detail in the fourth part of this book. However, it should be mentioned that the campaign had similarities to *RAPM*'s policy; this was particularly true of its struggle against Western and modernist elements, although former proletarian musicians had very little to do with the campaign in 1936.¹⁷⁹ Yet, some former *RAPMists* obviously felt that their moment had come again. *Pravda*'s would then accuse former proletarian musicians of attempts to obscure the clear meaning of the struggle against formalism with their theories of struggle in on two fronts. *Pravda* assured that the struggle in question was simply against alien elements in the Soviet arts.¹⁸⁰ Thus, public attempts to rehabilitate *RAPM*'s

¹⁷⁵ Veis, P. 1933, 126: O zhurnale "proletarskii muzykant". In *SM* 1/1933.

¹⁷⁶ Schwarz 1983, 58; Edmunds 2000, 296.

¹⁷⁷ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 11: Na dva fronta! Deiatelnost b. *RAPM* i voprosy sovetskogo muzykalnogo tvorchestva. In *SM* 2/1933.

¹⁷⁸ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 6-7. Na dva fronta! Deiatelnost b. *RAPM* i voprosy sovetskogo muzykalnogo tvorchestva. In *SM* 2/1933.

¹⁷⁹ This has been remarked upon by, for example, Nelson 2000, 130.

¹⁸⁰ Iasnii i prostoi iazyk v iskusstve. Obzor pechati. In *Pravda* February 13, 1936: 4.

policy were repelled, despite the fact that the Association's policy was revived by other individuals under a different banner.

RAPM was harshly accused in official connections throughout the 1930s, most persistently about *gruppovshchina*, cliquishness. Most composers agreed that the atmosphere between 1929 and 1931 had damaged creative work. Andrei Pashchenko, a composer of several operas, expressed these views rather descriptively; however, he also remarked that cliquishness had not been eliminated and that in several institutions and departments decisions about musical questions were still made according to personal preferences.¹⁸¹ Pashchenko suggested that the April Resolution did not eradicate the frontiers that had emerged during the First Five-Year Plan.

Accusations about cliquishness found corollaries in the Writers' Union, where similar accusations were leveled against the Association of Proletarian Writers, *RAPP*.¹⁸² In both unions the negative atmosphere of preceding years was attributed to proletarian associations. Cheliapov thus emphasized that the liquidation of *RAPM* had calmed the situation markedly and that only the remnants of cliquishness now remained. Cheliapov stated that *Sovetskaia Muzyka* served as an open forum for self-criticism. He maintained that individuals who had been part of the leadership of the proletarian music movement or modern music organizations were free to submit self-criticism.¹⁸³ It may be that at least in part *RAPM* was accused of all kinds of mistakes because it was easy to blame everything on them. Was it not officially sanctioned by the Party to blame proletarian associations?

Self-criticism as such was nothing new for Bolsheviks, but the arts only became acquainted with the process during the 1930s. It is usually associated with the rise of socialist realism in the arts.¹⁸⁴ In short, self-criticism was a way of rehabilitating a person in times of political trouble. Lev Kamenev and Grigorii Zinoviev, for example, seemed to re-establish their political status through self-criticism in 1933, following accusations of "Trotskyite connections."¹⁸⁵ However, at first self-criticism was largely just rhetoric, at least in connection with music. Only during the anti-formalist campaign of 1936 were artists successfully encouraged to admit their mistakes publicly.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Pashchenko, A. 1933, 122: Protiv gruppovshchiny. In *SM* 3/1933.

¹⁸² Kemp-Welch, Anthony 1975, 42: *The Origins and Formative Years of the Writers' Union of the U.S.S.R., 1932-1936*. PhD Thesis: University of London: See also Kemp-Welch, Anthony 1990, 132-133: *Stalin and the Literary Intelligentsia, 1928-1939*. London: Macmillan.

¹⁸³ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 3: Istoricheskaia godovshchina. In *SM* 2/1933.

¹⁸⁴ Kenez and Shepherd 1998, 48; Beyrau, Dietrich 1998, 67-68: Geiseln und Gefangene eines visionären Projekts: Die Russischen Bildungsschichten im Sowjetstaat. In Hildermeier, Manfred von (ed.) and Müller-Luckner, Elisabeth, *Stalinismus vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Neue Wege der Forschung*. Schriften des Historischen Kollegs. Kolloquien 43. R. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag.

¹⁸⁵ Self-criticism (*samokritika*) was primarily a slogan used in threatening leading officials about criticism from below (*kritika*), see: Getty 1985, 135. Self-criticism was also demanded from Party leaders in order to rehabilitate themselves, so as to admit their previous mistakes, see: Radzinski 2002, 332-333.

¹⁸⁶ Even then, *Pravda*, which was the main forum of this campaign, demanded self-criticism openly rather from writers than from composers. See for example: Pobolshe

Theatrical producer, director, and actor Vsevolod Meierkhold was one of the victims of the anti-formalist campaign; he failed to participate in sufficient self-criticism and thus fell victim to the terror. Composer Dmitrii Shostakovich, on the other hand, admitted his mistakes and was rehabilitated.¹⁸⁷

Kaltat and Rabinovich came close to presenting self-criticism when they evaluated the mistakes of their former organization. However, they spoke only of *RAPM*, not of their personal roles in the Association. In fact, they spoke about *RAPM* as if they personally had played no part in it. In their view, the “leftist tendencies” of the leadership of proletarian associations had resulted in a situation where these associations had ceased to be of benefit to the development of Soviet music.¹⁸⁸ Kaltat and Rabinovich never mentioned themselves and, thus, real self-criticism did not take place.

Many other former members of *RAPM* resorted to similar tactics: they admitted that *RAPM* had made mistakes but largely blamed an impersonal leadership. Viktor Voloshinov described how members of *RAPM* were in a state of disbelief about their organization really being closed down in spring 1932. Many of them believed that they had done nothing wrong and that they were the true representatives of socialist construction in music. Voloshinov’s contributions to the “forum” reveal that immediately after the April Resolution he had verbally attacked some of his colleagues who had been critical of *RAPM*; however, he subsequently repented and “understood the mistakes *RAPM* had made and the true content of the April Resolution.”¹⁸⁹ Yet, he also directed his criticism towards *RAPM*’s leadership. He maintained that his own creative work had been hampered by the strict regulations imposed by the Association. He had been forced to compose vocal music, in line with *RAPM* policies. Voloshinov argued that *RAPM*’s control over the work of composers had resulted in poor compositions.¹⁹⁰ The extent to which *RAPM* really forced any composer to compose a certain kind of music is debatable. Dmitrii

konkretnoi samokritiki! S obshchemoskovskogo sobraniia sovetskikh pisatelei. In *Pravda* March 11, 1936: 4.

¹⁸⁷ Gromov 1998, 248–250. Vsevolod Meyerhold was one of the most acknowledged names of experimental theater. He died in the terror following the anti-formalist campaign. Shostakovich never lost his life or his position as a leading young composer. On the contrary, he grew in status after allegedly presenting self-criticism. However, Shostakovich did not submit himself to self-criticism right away. He tried to get his 4th symphony performed in autumn 1936, even though it represented the very criticism that had been raised against him during the anti-formalist campaign of spring 1936. The premiere of this symphony was prevented, eventually. His 5th symphony, finished in summer 1937, was very different from the 4th. This 5th symphony was accepted as practical self-criticism, the best form of self-criticism. In his 5th symphony Shostakovich developed classical expression to its pinnacle in both structure and music. In the 4th symphony the structure was extremely complex and it lacked melodic development. The 4th symphony was not easily approachable. See especially Fairclough 2006. I have also studied this subject in my pro gradu thesis: Mikkonen, Simo 2002: *Neuvostosäveltäjän muutoksen tie. Shostakovitshin sävellystyylä ja sen muutos neljännestä viidenteen sinfoniaan*. Unpublished pro gradu thesis: University of Jyväskylä.

¹⁸⁸ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 6: Na dva fronta! Deiatel’nost’ b. RAPM i voprosy sovetskogo muzykal’nogo tvorchestva. In *SM* 2/1933.

¹⁸⁹ Voloshinov, V. 1933, 129: Tvorcheskaia atmosfera i kompozitor. In *SM* 3/1933.

¹⁹⁰ Voloshinov, V. 1933, 129: Tvorcheskaia atmosfera i kompozitor. In *SM* 3/1933.

Shostakovich, although not a member, maintained a close relationship with *RAPM*. He also co-operated with the theater for working youth, *TRAM*, during the years of First Five-Year Plan.¹⁹¹ This type of co-operation was voluntary. In many cases it was only in retrospect that these connections came to be labeled as forced.

Voloshinov argued that *RAPM* was especially “mean” with regard to instrumental music. He maintained that his quartet and concerto for violin and organ were censored because of *RAPM*, although he did admit that these works had not been of the highest quality.¹⁹² Composer Iurii Shaporin also regarded *RAPM*’s stance toward instrumental music and its overall dogmatism as fatal errors. Concentration on mass music and attempts to force other composers to abandon instrumental music were unbearable. In Shaporin’s view, good intentions to build proletarian culture turned out to be destructive, after all.¹⁹³ The reconciliatory nature of Shaporin’s article is slightly surprising. After all, Shaporin had belonged to the leadership of Leningrad Association of Contemporary Music and he represented the pre-revolutionary bourgeois elite that *RAPM* had so heavily criticized. Perhaps it was his position as vice-chairman of the Leningrad Composers’ Union from 1932 onwards that made him more inclined to offer constructive criticism. After all, he had to work alongside former proletarian musicians.¹⁹⁴

Rather than revealing anything about *RAPM*’s real nature, these statements illustrate the extent to which composers, even in the early 1930s, were capable of adapting themselves in line with the political situation. They were able to accept changes in policy and speak out against things, as was expected of them. This is not to say that composers were necessarily willing to do what was expected, but they did not fight against official expectations. This would later serve them well during times when survival was dependant on one’s ability to adapt.

Georgii Khubov’s experience illustrates both how successful elements of work by proletarian music movement persisted beyond 1932 and how certain individuals were truly capable of adapting to changing situations. Khubov was an advocate of mass musical works associated with *RAPM* and he continued his work successfully in the Composers’ Union.¹⁹⁵ His 1931 report about mass musical works in Moscow’s Central Park (later, *Gorky Park*) boasted that

¹⁹¹ Taruskin 1997, 94; the fate of *TRAM* is the subject of a valuable article by Lynn Mally. She points out how the April Resolution also ended the radical phase of *TRAM*. Mally, Lynn 1992: *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Youth Theater TRAM*. In *Slavic Review* 51(3), 1992, pp. 411–430.

¹⁹² Voloshinov, V. 1933, 128. *Tvorcheskaia atmosfera i kompozitor*. In *SM* 3/1933.

¹⁹³ Shaporin, Iu. 1933, 128. *Moi mysli o godovshchine 23 apreliia*. In *SM* 3/1933; later on, comments about the problematic stance of *RAPM* towards symphonic music was made by Bogdanov-Berezovskii, among others, (1934, 29: *K probleme sovetskogo simfonizma*. In *SM* 6/1934). He regarded that symphony had become the most important creative form of music after the April Resolution. This was, however, not only due to *RAPM*’s stance towards symphony but also because overall changes caused the symphony to experience a revival.

¹⁹⁴ Shaporin, Iu. 1933, 128: *Moi mysli o godovshchine 23 apreliia*. In *SM* 3/1933.

¹⁹⁵ For example, Edmunds 2000, 136.

brigades of up to 400 members performed to around 1,500 visitors every day. An important part of these performances were the pre-concert lectures given in order to enlighten people about music. Khubov reported that the work in Central Park was characterized by the campaign for healthy mass song and against gypsy music and light-genre vulgarity.¹⁹⁶ His report from 1934 was very similar to that from 1931, although he did not mention a word about light genre vulgarity or harmful gypsy music. However, Khubov did argue that mass musical work was an important part of the work of the Composers' Union and should thus be extended.¹⁹⁷ With the correct attitude, the work of proletarian musicians could easily fit into the new musical policy.

Criticism of *RAPM* and its leadership was partly unfounded, as Kaltat and Rabinovich argued. Several random quotations taken out of context were used to criticize *RAPM* and to present a more negative picture of the organization.¹⁹⁸ After the April Resolution, those who had personal grudges attacked the proletarian music movement, which few were willing to defend since it had been officially condemned. Even in the theoretical field, where *RAPM* had largely operated, its contribution and achievements were denied. Semion Ginzburg, who went on to become a professor of Leningrad Conservatory in 1935, summarized the historical development of music criticism. He stated that *RAPM's* attempt to renew music analysis was completely useless for Soviet musicology and had been unscholarly in nature. *RAPM's* schematic views were more of a hindrance for Soviet musicology than of any help, he concluded.¹⁹⁹ It seems that those most critical of proletarian musicians were involved in musical education at the conservatories. *RAPM* had been especially harsh in his criticism of the conservatories, where some of their many young supporters had occasionally denounced teachers and professors, thus giving reason for grudges.

Although no serious consequences followed the criticism of proletarian musicians during the early years of the Composers' Union, many former members of *RAPM* felt that the situation was intolerable. Composer, critic, and former *RAPMist* Viktor Belyi referred to the concept of "April repentance." An editorial in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* mentioned that Belyi had felt that demands for self-criticism, even repentance, were unfair, especially since they were expected from former proletarian musicians every April. The response Belyi received was that "instead of words and repentance, relevant self-criticism was actions in everyday organizational life." Aleksandr Belokopytov, previous leader of Ukrainian Association of Proletarian Musicians, alleged that within the Composers' Union there was ongoing persecution of proletarian musicians. Article of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* considered the accusations of Belyi and

¹⁹⁶ Khubov, G. 1931, 30: Muzykalnaia rabota v tsentralnom parke kultury i otdykha. In *Proletarskii muzykant* 8/1931; Edmunds 2000, 104, 136.

¹⁹⁷ Khubov, G. 1934, 3: *Za massovuiu pesniu, za massovuiu simfoniiu!* In *SM* 2/1934.

¹⁹⁸ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 7: Na dva fronta! Deiatel'nost' b. *RAPM* i voprosy sovetskogo muzykal'nogo tvorchestva. In *SM* 2/1933.

¹⁹⁹ Ginzburg, S. 1934, 4: Na putiakh konkretnoi muzykal'noi kritiki. In *SM* 6/1934.

Belokopytov “terrible” and unfounded.²⁰⁰ In any event, sources indicate no traces of any kind of systematic persecution or discrimination of proletarian musicians in the Composers’ Union. It was only five years later that all proletarian musicians would finally distance themselves from *RAPM*, Belyi among them.²⁰¹ But by then, the political situation was also very different. Before that time, even the leadership of *RAPM* escaped any severe consequences and these individuals were allowed to take an active part in the Composers’ Union.

The organization and policies of *RAPM*, rather than individual members, were generally denounced. In Cheliapov’s summary, the “one-way policy” and uncompromising nature of the Association were its main flaws.²⁰² It was also argued that the practices of *RAPM* could by no means serve as a basis for the work of the Composers’ Union. The Union had to be built on a completely new basis, without the deadweight of *RAPM*.²⁰³ The denial and rejection of the proletarian music movement appeared quite strong on paper, but in practice many of its methods continued to be used outside the organization and *RAPM* members were allowed to work in the new Composers’ Union.

Criticism of other musical organizations

RAPM was not the only organization criticized after the April Resolution. The Association of Contemporary Music (*ASM*) was also referred to several times. The schematic view that, soon after the April Resolution, had been attached to *RAPM*’s actions was also imposed on *ASM*. In practice, *ASM* was presented as a counterpoint and the main adversary of *RAPM* in several official speeches: *ASM* was kind of a rightist musical organization, whereas *RAPM* represented the left. This comparison, however, was highly untenable. Although *RAPM* had certain political ambitions with relatively small creative force, *ASM* was a highly apolitical organization that concentrated on the promotion and composition of new music. The comparison of these two organizations seems to make little sense. Afterwards, however, when there was a need to explain the liquidation of all art associations, this comparison served its purpose.²⁰⁴ This is supported by Cheliapov’s statement that *Sovetskaia Muzyka*’s task was “to fight both against rightist and leftist distortions.” (Cheliapov used language adapted from Stalin’s political speeches.) *ASM* was referred to as a defender of “Western-style music and its rotten ideology since it expressed itself in all kinds

²⁰⁰ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7-10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 5.

²⁰¹ RGALI f. 962, o.3, d. 272, l. 26.

²⁰² Cheliapov, N. 1933, 4: O zadachakh zhurnala “Sovetskaia muzyka”. In *SM* 1/1933.

²⁰³ Atovmian, L. 1933, 131: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuza sovetsoikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

²⁰⁴ This comparison is also evident in Western research. For example, Boris Schwarz has presented *ASM* and *RAPM* as warring and opposite factions. Schwarz 1983, 49. However, Schwarz is right in saying that both groups were used as scapegoats with regard to earlier problems.

of atonalities, in foxtrot and jazz style enhancements of harmony, orchestration, and such."²⁰⁵

Cheliapov, like Gorodinskii, failed to mention it was *RAPM* that had campaigned against these "atonalities" and "jazz style." Although he implied that light music was not fully acceptable, it was not until 1948 that light music experienced serious setbacks, when, for example, use of the saxophone was prohibited.²⁰⁶ *RAPM* had, indeed, campaigned for prohibition of the saxophone from 1929 and also against modernist Western music.²⁰⁷ Instead, modern Western music (which had been part of *ASM*'s agenda) for a time flourished, albeit briefly, in the Composers' Union.²⁰⁸

While *RAPM* was criticized by its former members, the leadership of *ASM* remained silent in this respect. Calls for criticism of *ASM* soon withered away. The reason for this may be that *ASM* had disbanded a few years earlier. Moreover, many *ASM*ists, including Boris Asafiev (a musicologist and one of *ASM*'s guiding spirits) praised the April Resolution and described how creativity was in full bloom once again. Asafiev continued that the first year after the resolution had been creative, fruitful, and filled with concrete activity: a "year of struggle, joy and enthusiasm." He also noted that the struggle was no longer "demagogic trampling" but was true and serious organization of work.²⁰⁹ Asafiev was to become one of the most visible supporters of the new cultural policy.

Kenez and Shepherd have suggested that demands for self-criticism in the arts only surfaced at times when the Party was trying to bring socialist realism under control. In their view, socialist realism was not a Party invention, but was rather used by the Party against artists. As it became more actively involved in defining socialist realism, the Party also started to use it as a vehicle by which to force artists into self-criticism and thus make changes in their art. This practice only began during the latter half of the 1930s, although the Party had also played a significant role in defining socialist realism during the first half of the 1930s.²¹⁰ Although Kenez and Shepherd are concerned with literature, their argument also seems to apply to music and explains why calls for self-criticism generally waned. The Party was temporarily uninterested in music and so socialist realism became a matter primarily for musicologists and composers.

The Party's lack of interest or confusion also explains how individuals such as Kaltat and Rabinovich could so openly present their views, despite the official condemnation of *RAPM*. Kaltat and Rabinovich quoted Lenin in order

²⁰⁵ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 3: O zadachakh zhurnala "Sovetskaia muzyka". In *SM* 1/1933.

²⁰⁶ Fitzpatrick 1992, 212; Starr 1983, 213–217.

²⁰⁷ Starr 1983, 85.

²⁰⁸ See especially, Brooke 2001, 233–235

²⁰⁹ Asafiev, B. 1933, 106: Istoricheskii god. In *SM* 3/1933; the word struggle was interestingly used in different contexts. The Communist Party used the word often and in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* it was used in similar way for the first time by Aleksandr Krein, who emphasized his development as composer with the words struggle and growth: *borba* and *rost*. Krein, Aleksander 1933, 120. Kompozitor i kritika. In *SM* 1/1933.

²¹⁰ Kenez and Shepherd 1998, 48.

to point out that the proletariat would compile its own intelligentsia and culture and that the struggle for proletarian culture was part of the overall politics of society, not separate from it. They emphasized the hostility of proletarian culture toward anything bourgeois and, thus, were at odds with the prevailing political principles.²¹¹ In itself, this is enough to suggest that self-criticism was hardly ever actively practiced in the early Composers' Union.

There was one other organization linked with proletarian musicians that was neither closed down nor restructured in 1932, but which was subsequently heavily criticized. In the early 1930s, the State Musical Publisher (*Muzgiz*) became a headache for the Composers' Union. At a joint meeting held in Moscow on December 13, 1932, (attended by representatives from the Composers' Union, *Rabis* and *Muzgiz*), representatives of *Muzgiz* were forced onto the defensive. Former proletarian musician and *Muzgiz* chairman, Viktor Vinogradov alone defended his organization, although other former proletarian musicians (Shekhter, Boleslav Pshibyshevskii, and Georgii Khubov) were also present. The work of *Muzgiz* was entirely condemned on the basis that it still operated on *RAPMist* lines and had not changed its publishing plans, although the spirit of the April Resolution would have required such action. *Muzgiz* was accused of hindering the development of Soviet composers.²¹²

The meeting advised *Muzgiz* to consider composers' demands and urged it to appoint composers as consultants at every level of its organization. *Muzgiz* was also encouraged to contribute to the material well-being of composers. *Muzgiz* was given clear targets that it was expected to meet. Of all the material published, it was stated that between 38 and 40 percent should have been written by Soviet composers. It was also alleged that even *Muzgiz's* current production plans could not meet composers' needs. The circulation figures were to be raised over the course of the Second Five-Year Plan: in 1933 by 23.26%, in 1934 by 33.58%, in 1935 by 55.64%, in 1936 by 99.5% and in 1937 by 169%.²¹³ More than anything else, this illustrates that, although they had finally been brought together into a single union, composers were dependant on other organizations. *Muzgiz* was especially important because it was solely responsible for the publication of musical scores. Composers could merely urge *Muzgiz* to act—they were not in a position to give orders, even when united.

²¹¹ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 8: V boiakh za nasledstvo. In *SM* 3/1933.

²¹² Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1718, l. 240–241.

²¹³ GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1718, l. 241; see also Rezoliutsiia soveshchaniia prezidiuma TsK *Rabis* i Pravleniia MO Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov o rabote *Muzgiza*. In *SM* 1/1933: 146–148.

Music and the Party: an open marriage?

The Unfinished Composers' Union

An important question about the organization of the Composers' Union is how tightly and when its structure and nomenclature were defined. Had the Composers' Union been fully established, as the Writers' Union had been in 1934, it should, for example, have embraced charters. Charters had a rather symbolic meaning, but they still indicated the existence of an organization. The Writers' Union was the model that was followed when other art unions were established and literature has perhaps thus remained the single most studied art form of the Soviet Union. Leonid Maksimenkov, in researching the relationship between artists and Soviet power, has noted that 60 percent of those artists approached by Stalin were writers.²¹⁴ Literature commanded most of the Party's attention during the Stalinist era; this is well illustrated in collections of sources, in which literature is dominant among the arts.²¹⁵ Research has not been unaffected by this. Especially when things have been interpreted from the viewpoint of the Party, as a top-down process, other art unions have often been seen as copies of the Writers' Union. Thus things that happened in the Writers' Union would have taken place in other unions.²¹⁶ It is, therefore, important to compare the Composers' Union with the Writers' Union in order to establish the extent to which this was the case.

The Soviet Union was generally in a distorted situation during the early 1930s. The first years of the Second Five-Year Plan (1933–37) were ones of consolidation, sometimes called the "three good years." Perhaps it was because of this that the April Resolution was received so positively, even though later research regards the resolution as marking the beginning of overall political control of the arts. Moreover, this overall control reached its pinnacle in music only when the first Congress of Soviet Composers was held in 1948. An important question therefore is: to what extent did the Composers' Union exist before its inaugural congress? Previous research has largely accepted that the Composers' Union was established according to the model of the Writers'

²¹⁴ Maksimenkov, Leonid 2003, 241–252: Ocherki nomenklaturnoi istorii sovetskoi literatury (1932–1946). Stalin, Buharin, Zhdanov, Shcherbakov i drugie. In *Voprosy literatury* 5/2003.

²¹⁵ See especially Iakovlev, A. N. (eds.), Artizov, A. and Naumov, O. 2002, 167–281: *Vlast i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia. Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kulturnoi politike. 1917–1953 gg.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnii fond "demokratiia". Same trend can be seen in Viktorov, V. S. (eds.), Konkova, A. S. and Parfenov, D. A. 1963, 204–217: *KPSS o kulture, prosoveshchenii i nauke. Sbornik dokumentov.* Moscow: Politizdat.

²¹⁶ For example, although Levon Hakobian does mention that first the Composers' Union was welcomed with a feeling of relief, it implied ideological and political restrictions. Hakobian 1998, 93–95. Yet, Hakobian, as well as most of those making these implications are not aiming at explaining the Composers' Union in detail. However, too often the Composers' Union is passed by in research on a similar basis, that it was merely an instrument of political centralization.

Union soon after the first Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. Yet, Leonid Maximenkov has alleged that there was no real, Stalinist Composers' Union prior to 1948.²¹⁷ Moreover, Kirill Tomoff chose 1939 as the starting date for his book that discusses the history of the Soviet Composers' Union. Tomoff's assumption seems to be that prior to 1939 there was no real Composers' Union.²¹⁸

In the Soviet Union it was not acknowledged that there was any kind of delay in the establishment of the art unions. The April Resolution was usually taken as the starting point for any discussion of these unions. A rare exception to this rule can be found in the 1981 edition of the Soviet Encyclopaedia: "The Composers' Union of USSR was formed during the years 1932-48."²¹⁹ Moreover, Leonid Maximenkov has pointed out that the Soviet Encyclopaedia from 1947 calls the Writers' Union a political-artistic organization, whereas the adjective "political" is missing from the entry about the Composers' Union.²²⁰ The totalitarian nature of the Writers' Union was sealed when the Party took charge of the first Writers' Congress in 1934. But, as an equivalent congress for composers was not held until 1948, what was the Composers' Union for the first sixteen years of its existence—if not a Stalinist political organization?

The wording of the April Resolution suggests that other arts would follow literature and this has perhaps been the source of some misunderstanding. The form used was "to unite all writers . . . into a single Union [And to] [p]romote similar changes in the sphere of other forms of art. . . ."²²¹ After the establishment of the Writers' Union, the Communist Party used the Union as an instrument by which to extend its power into the field of literature.²²² Because the Writers' Union was used in this way and because the April Resolution called for the establishment of similar unions in the other arts, it has been assumed that the Party acted in the same way in all other art unions. Maximenkov suggests that Western historians have been particularly guilty of making this assumption.²²³

Stalin's ambition to gain totalitarian control over the arts was naturally an important factor in the relationship between the arts and politics, but the

²¹⁷ Maksimenkov 1997, 29.

²¹⁸ Tomoff 2006, also Tomoff 2001.

²¹⁹ Iakovlev, M. M. 1981: *Soiuz Kompozitorov SSSR*. In Keldysh, Iu. V. (ed.), *Muzykalnaia Enciklopediia*. Part 5. Moscow: Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia. This finding was first mentioned by Maksimenkov 1997.

²²⁰ Maksimenkov 1997, 30.

²²¹ O perestroike literaturno-khudozhestvennykh organizatsii. Postanovlenie TsK VKP(b) 23.4.1932. In Iakovlev, A. N. (eds.), Artizov, A., Naumov, op. 2002: *Vlast i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia. Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kulturnoi politike, 1917-1953 gg.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond "demokratiia", pp. 172-173.

²²² Yet, in Kemp-Welch's view the Writers' Union was not an extension of the Party, but rather both the Union's officials imitated the Party instructure and administration and the Party imposed certain features to the Union, see: Kemp-Welch 1990, 243-245. Garrard's monograph's, which is not based on archival sources, main theme is that the Writer's Union was primarily an instrument of the Party, see: Garrard and Garrard 1990.

²²³ Maksimenkov 1997, 29-30.

development to full-fledged Stalinism took time. The totalitarianism of the final model has also been questioned. Researchers of Soviet history Arch J. Getty and William Chase questioned the strictly totalitarian model of the Soviet administration of the 1930s by alleging that the group that carried out the central administration of the Party, bureaucrats, had a notable amount of influence. They argue that the central administration was weaker and based more on consensus of the ruling elite than has been previously believed.²²⁴ In other words, while the central apparatus of the Party could not see its resolutions fulfilled, bureaucrats had executive powers. Therefore, in music, if higher Party officials had little time, the decision-makers and those involved in the administration of the musical front must have been either lower level bureaucrats or composers themselves.

Boris Schwarz has stated that, because of the political climate, no artist could afford not to join an art union, even though membership seemed to be voluntary and open to all artists.²²⁵ This remark seems a little anachronistic since the political climate after the First Five-Year Plan seemed more relaxed and no coercive methods were used inside the Composers' Union. I would think that composers joined because they believed it to be useful or at least not harmful. Unions seemed to offer benefits and were obviously different from associations of proletarian artists.

When the early years of the Composers' Union are examined, the first major finding is the lack of central organization for practically the whole of the 1930s. In the Writers' Union an organizational committee (*orgkomitet*), which was to draw up the charters and prepare the Writers' Congress, on May 7, 1932, was appointed by the Party *orgbiuro*. Simultaneously, the establishment of the composers' *orgkomitet* was delayed and instead a commission was nominated to work on the question.²²⁶ This commission decided not to establish the

²²⁴ Chase, William and Getty, J. Arch 1990, 192–193: The Soviet Bureaucracy in 1935. In Strong, John W. (ed.), *Essays on Revolutionary Culture and Stalinism*. Selected Papers from the Third World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies. Columbus: Slavica Publishers. In literature the totalitarian model has been questioned by, for example, Babitschenko, Denis 2000, 219–243: Aspekte einer Koexistenz: Literatur, Schriftsteller und das Zentralkomitee der Kommunistischen Partei. Translated from Russian by Lindner, Rainer. In Beyrau, Dietrich (ed.), *Im Dschungel der Macht. Intellektuelle Professionen unter Stalin und Hitler*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen. Also, Getty, Arch J. 1998, 169–171: Afraid of Their Shadows: The Bolshevik Recourse on Terror. In Hildermeier, Manfred von (ed.) and Müller-Luckner, Elisabeth, *Stalinismus vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg Neue Wege der Forschung*. Schriften des Historischen Kollegs. Kolloquien 43. R. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag. Although art unions were misused with regard to artists they also had great positive effects on artists and art work as a whole, see Korzhikhina, T. P. 1990, 164: Obshchestvennye organizatsii v politicheskoi sisteme strany. Iz istorii dobrovolnykh obshchestv v pervoe desiatiletie Sovetskoi vlasti. In *Istoriia SSSR* 5/1990.

²²⁵ Schwarz 1983, 110.

²²⁶ Postanovlenie orgbiuro TsK VKP(b) o meropriiatiakh po vypolneniiu postanovleniia politbiuro TsK VKP(b) "O perestroike literaturno-khudozhestvennykh organizatsii", 7.5.1932. In Iakovlev, A. N. (ed.), Artizov, A., Naumov, op. 2002: *Vlast i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia. Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kulturnoi politike, 1917-1953 gg.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond "demokratiia", pp. 175-176.

composers' *orgkomitet*, dismissing it as pointless.²²⁷ Thus, the *orgkomitet*, whose job was to establish the first congress, was only appointed on May 3, 1939, after it was nominated by the *politbiuro* of the Party.²²⁸ Other groups of Soviet artists (painters, sculptors etc.) received their *orgkomitet* only a few weeks later, on June 21, 1939.²²⁹ The actual congress of the Composers' Union was delayed for several reasons until 1948, when the charters of the Union were finally approved and its administrative organs nominated. This has been regarded by Maksimenkov as the birth of the totalitarian Composers' Union.²³⁰

The delay in the establishment of the Composers' Union poses a curious dilemma. In retrospect, this delay could be perceived as a victory for the musical front: for a long time the Composers' Union managed to avoid the fate of the Writers' Union and was not closely attached to Party politics. However, for contemporaries the delay was a hindrance that denied them access to the many benefits the Writers' Union offered to its members. Materially, writers seemed to be better off than composers, who lacked their own funding organ for practically the whole of the 1930s.²³¹ Yet, the fact that the Composers' Union had no central organs did not mean that it did not exist in some form.

In the 1930s the Composers' Union existed only as local branches in major urban centers. This is a fact that still sometimes causes surprise, since contemporaries referred to the Composers' Union as an existing national organization. However, unlike the Writer's Union, which was a national organization with central organs, the Composer's Union lacked national-level organization. In 1932 the branches in Moscow and Leningrad formed the core of the Composers' Union, as most of the leading composers lived and worked in these cities. Additionally, most of the higher educational musical institutes were located in these cities. Local branches were expected to convene the basis for the organization of an all-Union level association.²³² Thus, when sources from the 1930s mention the Composers' Union they are in fact referring not to a centrally governed national organization but rather to several smaller union branches.

²²⁷ Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Sotsialno-Politicheskoi Istorii (RGASPI), f. 17, op. 114, d. 300, l. 5.

²²⁸ Postanovlenie politbyro TsK VKP(b) o meropriiatiakh po sozdaniiu soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov, 3.5.1939. In Iakovlev, A. N. (eds.), Artizov, A., Naumov, op. 2002: *Vlast i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia. Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kulturnoi politike, 1917-1953 gg.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond "demokratia", p. 429. See also RGALI f. 2077, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 1-3. Composers from Shostakovich to Miaskovskii were nominated for the composers' *orgkomitet*. In light of preceding events, it is surprising that there were no notable musicologists apart from Asafiev present. Instead, leading light-genre composers Dmitrii Pokrass and Isaak Dunaevskii were included.

²²⁹ Postanovlenie politbyro TsK VKP(b) o meropriiatiakh po sozdaniiu soiuz sovetskikh khudozhnikov, 21.6.1939. In Iakovlev, A. N. (eds.), Artizov, A., Naumov, op. 2002: *Vlast i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kulturnoi politike. 1917-1953 gg.* Mezhdunarodnyi fond "demokratia", Moskva, pp. 429-430.

²³⁰ Maksimenkov 1997, 30.

²³¹ Only on 9th September 1939 did the vice-chairman of the Soviet of National Commissariats (SNK) A. Vyshinskii ratify the charters of Musical Fond. RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 21, l. 3.

²³² Kut, A. 1932, 1: Sozdan soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SI* July 3, 1932.

The key branches were those in Moscow and Leningrad, and it is these that I refer to as the Composers' Union, although Composers' Union branches in Ukraine, Georgia and in certain bigger Russian cities emerged quite early in the 1930s. These other union branches were, however, only a fraction of the size of the Leningrad and Moscow unions.

An important parameter that defines the early Composers' Union is its membership base. In September 1933, the Moscow branch, the largest and single most important division, had exactly 150 members. Only 10 of these were Party members (including candidates). Moreover, musicologists numbered 45 and composers 105.²³³ Leadership in all branches was in the hands of Party members, but, as I will argue, the lack of a coherent music policy meant that these branches initially worked largely independently. The first chairman of the Moscow branch was *Narkompros* official Mikhail Arkadiev, who was succeeded within a year by Nikolai Cheliapov.²³⁴ In Leningrad, the first chairman was Boris Fingert, who was so ill that the leadership fell completely to the branch secretary Vladimir Iokhelson. The secretary in Moscow, Viktor Gorodinskii, was also prominent in administrative affairs. All of these Union officials were Party members. Iokhelson and Gorodinskii were associated with creative activity themselves, whereas the other two were purely bureaucrats. The branch secretaries, Iokhelson and Gorodinskii, were both music professionals who also held important positions in *Rabis*: Gorodinskii headed the *Mosoblrbis* and Iokhelson was a member of *Lenoblrbis*, both of which were important regional art administrations in the early 1930s.²³⁵ The early Composers' Union was thus tightly woven also to *Rabis*.

The leaders of the local branches themselves increased the confusion about the nature of the early Composers' Union. Cheliapov, officially in no higher position than his counterpart in Leningrad, referred to himself in an interesting way in late 1935. In a covering letter, sent with the balance of accounts to the Commissariat of Finances, Cheliapov calls himself the "Chairman of the Composers' Union," which he definitely was not. The balance sent was only for the Moscow branch of the Composers' Union.²³⁶ Similarly, the secretary of the

²³³ Osnovnye materialy o rabote SSK. In *BSSK* 2/1933, 14–16. Although the Party had passed an amendment that the Composers' Union's membership was also to include the most noteworthy soloists and conductors, they were not counted separately here. It is most likely that they have been counted as musicologists; see *Postanovlenie orgbiuro TsK VKP(b) o meropriiatiiakh po vypolneniiu postanovleniia politbiuro TsK VKP(b) "O perestroike literaturno-khudozhestvennykh organizatsii"*, 7.5.1932. In Iakovlev, A. N. (ed.), Artizov, A., Naumov, op. 2002: *Vlast i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia. Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kulturnoi politike, 1917-1953 gg.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond "demokratiia", pp. 175-176.

²³⁴ In Moscow, the board included nineteen members, including Aleksandr Goldenveizer, Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov, Nikolai Miaskovskii, Reingold Glier, but also proletarian musicians, Boris Shekhter, Viktor Belyi and Boleslav Pshibyshevskii. All of these were associated with music. Kut, A. 1932, 1: *Sozdan soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov*. In *SI* July 3, 1932.

²³⁵ See for example GARF f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1726, l. 210. This protocol indicates that Gorodinskii was the acting chairman in Moscow regional branch of *Rabis*, *Mosoblrbis*, on September 28, 1932. Iokhelson then again was the representative of *Lenoblrbis* in Leningrad as indicated by d. 1718, l. 61ob.

²³⁶ RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 4, l. 1.

Leningrad branch was referred to in many letters as “Secretary of the Composers’ Union.” These titles were perhaps used in an honorary way rather than to refer to actual administrative status. Composers did not bother to mention the branch in their letters, since everybody knew them anyway.²³⁷ Perhaps this is why Cheliapov is often referred to as the leader of the Composers’ Union in many studies of 1930s Soviet music.²³⁸ Cheliapov was the single most important person in the Union, but he was not the official leader of the whole Composers’ Union.

Nikolai Cheliapov played a prominent role in the initial years of the Composers’ Union, but he has largely been dismissed in previous research.²³⁹ Yet, he held two of the Union’s most influential positions for almost four years. He was a lawyer and a pianist, but he was not active in the musical scene. He graduated in 1912 from Moscow University and became a Doctor of Law and Politics in 1934. From 1922 he was a professor at, and for a time the rector of, the Karl Marx Institute of Economics. He was appointed head of the Institute of Soviet Justice of the Academy of Sciences in 1928 and, from 1929, was a member of the Communist Academy and Red Professors’ Institute. Furthermore, between 1930 and 1931 he headed the musical sector of the State Academy of Art History. He was also a member of the Red Professors’ Institute and one of the editors of the proletarian musicians’ magazine, *Muzyka i revoliutsiia*.²⁴⁰ However, he was not directly associated with proletarian musicians nor was he part of the pre-1932 grudges but was, rather, a typical apparatchik.

In 1932 he became the first editor-in-chief of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* – the organ of the Composers’ Union – and also chairman in Moscow until he resigned in the summer of 1937. He was close to fifty, had been educated before the Revolution, was a qualified lawyer, and served in various administrative posts after the Revolution. His career was typical of a Party bureaucrat and he fits Chase and Getty’s description of Soviet bureaucrats during the 1930s.²⁴¹

Cheliapov’s role was all the more important because *Sovetskaia Muzyka* was the Union’s only national organ. The magazine was a source of information and served as a forum in the absence of other national forums. Cheliapov thus suggested that “[*Sovetskaia Muzyka*] ought to be one of the most important means by which to ideologically educate and lead the musical front.”²⁴² He

²³⁷ See for example Letter of Dmitrii Shostakovich to Isaak Glikman 8th December 1943, In *Story of a Friendship. The Letters of Dmitry Shostakovich to Isaak Glikman 1941-1975*. Translated from Russian by Phillips, Anthony. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 21-22.

²³⁸ See for example Prieberg 1965, 120, Fitzpatrick 1992, 196, 204.

²³⁹ An extensive Russian textbook on music history refers to Cheliapov only as a critic. Nothing is mentioned of his career as the chairman of the Moscow branch or as Editor-in-Chief of *Sovetskaia Muzyka*. Tarakanov 1995, 341.

²⁴⁰ Prieberg 1965, 120; Rimskii 1982, 203: Cheliapov Nikolai Ivanovich. In Keldysh, Iu. V. (ed.), *Muzykalnaia Entsiklopediia*. Part 6. Moscow: Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia; Edmunds 2000, 163; Nelson 2004, 288.

²⁴¹ Chase and Getty 1990, 195–202. According to Fitzpatrick (1992, 196), he was a Party-member, which is almost certain concerning his career as a all-purpose bureaucrat. However, I have not managed to find the actual date on which he was entered onto the Party lists.

²⁴² Cheliapov, N. 1933, 2: O zadachakh zhurnala “Sovetskaia Muzyka”. In *SM* 1/1933.

seems to have understood his incompetence in musical matters, since he rarely presented his own ideas but rather compiled ideas from others' speeches. At first, he typically quoted Party resolutions and Marxist views and discussed their implications for music. Later on, he referred to different meetings of the Composers' Union and tried to find a coherent "line" from their proceedings. Cheliapov's first editorial is very enlightening. As an objective for the Composers' Union, he proposed that the tasks set out in the April Resolution for all arts should be fulfilled. This was despite the fact that the resolution hardly set out any clear tasks and that Cheliapov was himself unable to elaborate on the nature of these tasks. Cheliapov usually used quite colorful language regardless of whether he was speaking of leftist distortions in Party politics or bourgeois influences. In this style Cheliapov assured his readers that the magazine would struggle against rightist and leftist vulgarization.²⁴³

The first issue of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* opened with a rather typical example of how to write "bolshevik":

Our magazine starts publishing in an exceptional moment of historical grandiose. The Soviet state, with the leadership of the Party guided by the Leninist Central Committee and with leader of the world proletarian comrade Stalin, has achieved the First Five-Year Plan in four years and started the work of fulfilling the next one.²⁴⁴

Long editorial articles were often dedicated to achievements of socialist construction. Praising the Soviet Union, the Party, and Stalin also soon became commonplace. *Sovetskaia Muzyka* was published jointly with *Narkompros*, but it was still rather loosely tied to governmental structures. Although these articles were usually written in "Bolshevik", the rest of the magazine was reserved largely for musical questions of an apolitical nature.

In Cheliapov's view, the role of the Composers' Union was to lead the creative enthusiasm born out of the April Resolution. He maintained that the resolution had removed all obsolete organizational forms that slowed down the development of the Soviet arts. Cheliapov stated that the great need to ideologically restructure the artistic outlook on life had been answered, thus enabling the commencement of the great task of socialist construction. He also praised the Seventeenth Party Congress, a year before it was even held, as an important stage in the development of the arts.²⁴⁵ These initial remarks about the role of the Composers' Union seem to suggest that in the first place it was merely an extension of the Party in the musical world. However, one should not accept uncritically the Bolshevik rhetoric used in Cheliapov's editorials. The day-to-day connections between the Composers' Union with the Party politics turned out to be much more obscure, although Cheliapov's writings do provide some important information about what he regarded to be important for the Union.

²⁴³ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 3: O zadachakh zhurnala "Sovetskaia Muzyka". In *SM* 1/1933.

²⁴⁴ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 1: O zadachakh zhurnala "Sovetskaia Muzyka". In *SM* 1/1933.

²⁴⁵ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 2: O zadachakh zhurnala "Sovetskaia Muzyka". In *SM* 1/1933.

It is interesting that, while some composers hoped for closer connections with the Party, it remained somewhat distant from the Union. Even if the Party had wished to exert control over the Union, its connections within the Union were not extensive. Members of the Party who were important in the musical field, such as Gorodinskii and Cheliapov, had many other responsibilities. Among active composers, the most the ideologically orientated individuals were proletarian musicians. Had it given administrative power mainly to this group, the Party would have probably alienated most of the old bourgeois composers. This latter category included the most luminous professional composers, who were vital to maintaining high standards in Soviet music.

The fact that the leadership of the Composers' Union was made up of Party members was not enough to make it a highly political organization. When the political status of the Composers' Union increased, non-Party composers took over the leadership of both branches. Consequently, composers, rather than Party bureaucrats, were in charge of administration in a more politically active Composers' Union. This will be examined more thoroughly later, but it is important to bear in mind that a Party member being the leader of an organization did not make it a political organization.

As part of the attempt to enforce the new agreement between composers, former proletarian musicians managed not only to gain membership in the Composers' Union but also to receive important positions within the Union. Despite criticism of their movement and work they were not denounced as individuals. Iokhelson and Cheliapov had both worked for proletarian associations as administrators, but had not been closely associated with the movement. Cheliapov's temporary successor to lead the Moscow branch in 1937 was Nikolai Chemberdzhi, a member of both *RAPM* and *Prokoll* as well as the musical director of *TRAM* (theater of working class youth). As Neil Edmunds has remarked, many former proletarian musicians had notable careers in the Soviet Union: Iurii Keldysh became one of the most noteworthy Soviet musicologists; Viktor Vinogradov, a leading specialist of Central Asian folk music; Dmitrii Kabalevskii, a leading Soviet piano composer; and Lev Lebedinskii participated in many musical activities.²⁴⁶ Background, whether proletarian or bourgeois, was no longer an obstacle to a musical career.

The nature of the early Composers' Union

It is still unclear what kind of Composers' Union emerged after the April Resolution. Maximenkov notes that both Fitzpatrick and Taruskin have misinterpreted some aspects of the establishment of the Composers' Union. Fitzpatrick has noted that it was established in 1933 and led by Cheliapov,²⁴⁷ while Taruskin has confused a number of concepts. First, Taruskin states that after the April Resolution the Composers' Union received an *Orgbiuro* (an

²⁴⁶ Edmunds 2000, 300.

²⁴⁷ Fitzpatrick 1992, 196. This notion is incorrect as has been already noted. Cheliapov led only the Moscow branch from 1933 onwards.

abbreviation of organizational bureau).²⁴⁸ Instead of an *orgbiuro* (which, indeed, was organized for the Composers' Union of the Ukrainian Republic), an *orgkomitet* (organizational committee) was established but not until 1939. Maximenkov notes that Taruskin also erroneously alleged that totalitarian control over the musical sphere would have been secured by 1936. Taruskin sees the establishment of the Committee on Artistic Affairs as securing totalitarian control over the Composers' Union, solely because the Union was obliged to report to the Committee.²⁴⁹ The establishment of the Committee did mean notably tighter control over music, as I discuss in later, but this hardly amounted to totalitarian control.

The Committee on Artistic Affairs, which was established on December 16, 1935, following a *politbiuro* decision, effectively changed musical administration, as it did the administration of the other arts. Although it was not formally a commissariat, it still worked under authority of the Council of People's Commissars (SNK or *Sovnarkom*) just like a commissariat and later like a ministry. In practice, the Committee inherited all the powers over the arts previously controlled by *Narkompros*, *Kultpros*, and several other organizations²⁵⁰. Thus, the Committee on Artistic Affairs became a more powerful cultural administrative organization than any of its predecessors. Music, film, theatrical productions, sculpture, and painting were all submitted to the Committee on Artistic Affairs for scrutiny.²⁵¹ The change was of such scope that it makes sense to think of the Composers' Union before and after the establishment of the Committee. The extent to which the Composers' Union was controlled by the Committee on Artistic Affairs is, however, questionable. The Committee received balances of accounts from the Moscow and Leningrad unions along with some reports of the branches' activity. However, the Committee's files on the Composers' Union are quite scattered and random.²⁵²

Maximenkov does not deny that, from the viewpoint of the Party, the change in cultural affairs was intended to strengthen control over the arts. Moreover, he argues that this period is under-documented and calls for further research. The importance of not drawing a parallel between the Writers' and

²⁴⁸ Compare Taruskin 1995, 21 and Taruskin 1997, 514 with Maksimenkov 1997, 26. Maximenkov notes, that Orgbiuro was an organ of the Party central apparatus that existed from the times of Lenin as an executive organ of the Party.

²⁴⁹ Taruskin 1997, 514-515.

²⁵⁰ See for example: Iz prikaza narkomprosa RSFSR No 53 o peredache vessoiznomu komitetu po delam iskusstva pri SNK SSSR riada upravlenii narkomprosa RSFSR, 2 fevralia 1936 g. In Goriaieva, T. M. (ed.) 1997 306: *Istoriia sovetskoi politicheskoi tsenzury. Dokumenty i kommentarii*. Moscow: Rosspen: p. 306.

²⁵¹ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 973, l. 3.

²⁵² RGALI, f. 962, op. 19, d. 19, ll. 1-25. In February 1936 the balance of accounts of the Leningrad branch of the Composers' Union was redirected to the Committee on Artistic Affairs. As such this not enough to prove that there was any meddling with the affairs of the Composers' Union. Furthermore, files showed no balance of accounts from the Leningrad branch for 1937. However, in December 1936 the Committee's chairman Kerzhentsev acted as a chairman at a meeting of the Moscow branch, handling the situation on the musical front. The protocol of this meeting was found in the personal papers of the chairman Kerzhentsev as was a draft resolution in which he stated that the situation called for the Composers' Union to be restructured. RGALI, f. 962, op. 5, d. 25, l. 1-20.

Composers' unions must be emphasized. Maximenkov implies that the legal and administrative structures of the Composers' Union were deficient and that it even acted against the will of the Committee on Artistic Affairs²⁵³ – not to mention its activities during the years before the Committee was established. Maximenkov's statement seems to be in accordance with the views of Arch Getty about the totalitarian surface of the Stalinist administration.²⁵⁴ Maximenkov emphasizes that the *orgbiuro* and the department of culture and propaganda of the Party had time only for literature between 1932 and 1934.

In musical affairs I have found no archival evidence of oppression or interventions by the Party organs that would have seriously undermined the authority of the Composers' Union's in the 1930s, although there were certain occasions when the Party decided to intervene. When it decided that the Composers' Union should accept notable musicians and conductors as members, the Party *orgbiuro* also nominated a commission to execute the affairs of the Composers' Union. The commission was headed by Stetskii, then the leading cultural official of the Party, and its members included Commissar Andrei Bubnov and the secretary of the *TsIK*, Avel Ienukidze.²⁵⁵ This commission should have nominated members of the *orgkomitet* and drawn up a timetable for the inaugural congress. It should also have drafted plans for the magazine of the Composers' Union and controlled the texts used in mass songs.²⁵⁶ As a result, only the official organ of the Union, *Sovetskaia Muzyka* was founded – its first issue being published in January 1933. Consequently, the allegation that the Party had abandoned music for the time being seems to have merit.

The Party cell is a crucial feature when one examines the totalitarian nature of the Composers' Union. The Union's Party cell should have been able to ensure that the right decisions were taken and oversee the proper ideological education of Union members. The role of the Party cell was specifically mentioned in the April Resolution. However, a substantial number of former proletarian musicians among few Party members caused a dilemma.²⁵⁷ Proletarian musicians were vulnerable to accusations of cliquishness and perhaps this was one reason why the Party cell proved to be so ineffectual for such a long time. Yet, even if the Party cell was passive, former proletarian musicians remained as the most active participants in the Union's meetings and sectors. Yet, only one proletarian musician was appointed to the *orgkomitet* in 1939, Viktor Belyi, who had been admitted to the Party the same year.²⁵⁸ Dmitrii

²⁵³ Maksimenkov 1997, 29–30.

²⁵⁴ Getty 1998, 169–171.

²⁵⁵ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 114, d. 295, l. 2.

²⁵⁶ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 114, d. 300, l. 5. Bureau members now included Naum Rabichev and Aleksandr Kosarev as well as Aleksei Stetskii and Andrei Bubnov. Avel Yenukidze was no longer in the ranks of this group.

²⁵⁷ Maksimenkov 1997, 31.

²⁵⁸ Postanovlenie politbyro TsK VKP(b) o meropriiatiiakh po sozdaniiu soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. 3.5.1939. In Iakovlev, A. N. (eds.), Artizov, A., Naumov, op. 2002: *Vlast i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia. Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kulturnoi politike, 1917-1953 gg.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond "demokratia", p. 429.

Kabalevskii, who was also in the original *orgkomitet*, had been in *Prokoll* but was not otherwise a very active proletarian musician.

In support of his allegation that the Composers' Union was not fully under Party control, Maximenkov discusses a declassified Party resolution entitled "On the Committee on Artistic Affairs and *orgkomitet* of the Composers' Union." It was issued on January 24, 1948, two weeks before the Congress of the Composers' Union. The resolution stated that the *orgkomitet* was about to "fall into formalism and the anti-national tendency in Soviet music." The *orgkomitet* and presidium were dismissed. Boris Asafiev (as the head of the *orgkomitet*), Tikhon Khrennikov, and the former proletarian musician, Marian Koval were named as secretaries. They were to work out the composition of the new *orgkomitet*.²⁵⁹ If the Composers' Union had been a loyal organization, there would have been no need to dismiss its leading organ on the eve of its inaugural congress. The Party at least feared that the outcome of the congress would not be to its liking.

This third *orgkomitet*—the second was established after the War—was the one that drafted the resolutions for the congress, finalized the Union's charters, and chose its leadership. From this point on, the Composers' Union closely resembled the totalitarian Writers' Union. Yet, sixteen years had passed since the April Resolution, which is usually identified as the beginning of the totalitarian phase in Soviet music. Rather than following any plan, this relative autonomy seems to have developed largely because the Party neglected musical affairs.

Evgeni Gromov, in his research into the relationship between Soviet power and the arts, argued that Stalin submitted art unions to governmental administration, although they were given independent status from the government and the Party was named a mere ideological leader. However, in the case of the literature this ideological leadership quite quickly subsumed everything else. Significantly, Gromov remarks that the system of artistic control was not straightforward as was the case in Hitler's Germany, where the arts were submitted to Joseph Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda. Rather, the Soviet system was much more complex, making it hard to define who was actually in charge.²⁶⁰ Although Gromov does not refer to this fact, the system was different for each of the arts, as well.

The Party also had the problem of who could be allowed to lead the Composers' Union. If the Party cell had been given more power, composers would have probably viewed the Union in a negative light. Art unions were meant to be inclusive, not exclusive. The Composers' Union would have been useless if it had not embraced all prominent composers. Therefore, if the

²⁵⁹ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 163, d. 1509, l. 4–5. See also Maksimenkov 1997, 32.

²⁶⁰ Gromov 1998, 149; about the cultural politics of the Third Reich, see Dahm, Volker 2000, 244–259: Systemische Grundlagen und Lenkungsinstrumente der Kulturpolitik des Dritten Reiches. In Beyrau, Dietrich (ed.), *Im Dschungel der Macht. Intellektuelle Professionen unter Stalin und Hitler*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Also, Russian researcher A. I. Mazaev has emphasized that in spite of similarities between the totalitarian systems of the Hitler and Stalin, Stalin acted earlier in nationalizing art administration and creativity; see Mazaev, A. I. 2000, 29.

establishment process had been brought forward, the lack of Communists and Party-minded figures could have caused problems in the leadership. The fact that differences between proletarian musicians and proponents of Western music occasionally surfaced during the 1930s supports the theory that the Party needed to delay the establishment process. There was no musical figure around whom all composers could rally. In literature, Maksim Gorkii acted as a figure-head and could command broad support among writers. Music lacked this kind of individual. Aleksandr Glazunov had been prominent during the years after the Revolution, but he moved to Paris permanently in 1928 and died in 1936. Prokofiev had lived outside Russia for fifteen years and returned only gradually during the 1930s.

Although composer and musicologist Boris Asafiev eventually became the prominent figure the Party needed, in the early 1930s he was still known as a modernist from Leningrad. Yet, he went on to lead the *orgkomitet* in 1948²⁶¹ (and died shortly afterwards). However, even in the early 1930s a jubilee article about him was published in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, an honor rarely bestowed upon a living composer.²⁶² The Party's lack of musical expertise was another reason behind the search for a prominent composer who would support the Party line. Commissar Anatolii Lunacharskii, who had been favorably disposed to music, had resigned in 1929 and died in 1933. He was replaced by Andrei Bubnov, who it seems had no special interest in music.²⁶³ Bubnov was more inclined toward agitation and propaganda than art, unlike Lunacharskii, who had supported more a permissive approach to the arts.²⁶⁴

Consequently, for the sixteen years between the April Resolution and the final establishment of the Composers' Union the organization operated actively, but for the most of the 1930s it did so as a system of local branches. There is no question that the Composers' Union existed after the April Resolution, but it was neither a nation-wide organization nor the Stalinist organization the Writers' Union soon became. In January of 1934, the secretary of the Leningrad branch, Iokhelson, could already boast that the Leningrad Composers' Union (established on August 1, 1932)²⁶⁵ was "expressing itself strongly, had prestige, was creative, and was a social factor with a notable role in the building of Soviet artistic culture in Leningrad."²⁶⁶ The Leningrad and Moscow branches had become centers of musical activity,²⁶⁷ but they had achieved this autonomously, without central administration to keep them in line.

²⁶¹ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 163, d. 1509, ll. 4-5.

²⁶² Asafiev, B. (Glebov, Igor) 1934, 47-50: *Moi put*. In *SM* 8/1934. Boris Asafiev used the pseudonym Igor Glebov when he wrote as a critic.

²⁶³ Schwarz 1983, 111.

²⁶⁴ Blium, A. V. 2000, 27: *Sovetskaia tsenzura v epokhu totalnogo terrora 1929-1953*. St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt.

²⁶⁵ At least by 25th July 1932 the names of the leading personalities and members of the board were clear, as the letter from one V. I. Tobolkevich to Roman Gruber illustrates. GTsMMK f. 285, d. 1051, l. 1.

²⁶⁶ Iokhelson, V. 1934, 14: *Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov k XVII sezdu partii*. In *SM* 1/1934.

²⁶⁷ *Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7-10 apreliia 1934 g.))*. In *SM* 5/1934: 5.

The Party as art muse

The Communist Party was, without doubt, involved in the establishment of the art unions, as it was the resolution of the Central Committee on April 23, 1932, that initiated the process. From the Party's viewpoint, the intervention was necessary in order to establish a united front of artists. It appeared that the Party could not achieve this through proletarian art associations, if this had ever been its intention. Furthermore, with the establishment of art unions it was potentially easier for the Party to exert control over art and artists, simply because the number of organizations drastically reduced.

The Party gave literature a leading role among the arts and paid most attention to it, resulting in literature becoming an extension of the Party line. Other arts did not follow literature, as the Party lacked either the time or the will to intervene. Writers became part of the new Soviet elite and enjoyed access to advantages and benefits that the average Soviet citizen could hardly imagine. Although it appears that political control over music hardly resembled that over literature, composers were accepted into the new elite.²⁶⁸ During the war years (1941–45) when resources were scarce, Shostakovich described an incident to his friend that illustrates that he was indeed a member of the Soviet elite. In January 1945, a number of notable composers had put forward a request to the Commissariat of Heavy Industry for kerosene, lamps, and pressure stoves. They justified their request by arguing that “failures in the distribution of electricity could seriously hamper creative production.” As a result of the letter, Shostakovich received coupons for six liters of kerosene. Still, he moaned that he had no driver or petrol for his car and so his car had to wait in the garage of *muzfond* (Musical Fund).²⁶⁹ Although his comment may have been sarcastic, it still illustrates the elite standing of artists. During war-time a normal citizen was unable to order extra fuel, as it was an army-commodity. However, the elite had their own ways of obtaining what they were looking for.

The fact that the Party apparatus denied the Composers' Union its organizational committee has been mentioned earlier. It seems that the Party either lacked the time or, was for some unknown reason, unwilling to complete the establishment of the Composers' Union. This fact did not paralyze the municipal branches of the Composers' Union, and they autonomously continued to prepare for the inaugural congress from 1933 onwards. The Union's charters, which were to be approved by the congress, were drafted by the presidium of the Moscow branch by the end of 1933 and published in the *Bulletin of the Composers' Union*. The process did not end here: they were ratified by Vice Commissar of Enlightenment, K. A. Maltsev, and approved by the

²⁶⁸ Tomoff 2006, 89–94 has described how composers became members of the war-time elite. However, he appeared to suggest that composers would not have had elite status before World War II, which is actually not quite correct.

²⁶⁹ Letter of Dmitrii Shostakovich to Isaak Glikman, 2nd January 1945. In *Story of a Friendship. The Letters of Dmitry Shostakovich to Isaak Glikman 1941-1975*. Translated from Russian by Phillips, Anthony. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 26–28.

Council of People's Commissars (*SNK*).²⁷⁰ The version preserved in the archives reveals that ratification of charters took place on February 24, 1934,²⁷¹ almost a year after *orgbiuro's* decision not to finalize the Composers' Union. This only underlines the fact that music policy was in a confused state in the 1930s. No one really knew in what direction the musical front was heading before the Committee on Artistic Affairs took control and, in a way, united the musical front.

An interesting feature of these charters is that the Union's area of operations was restricted to the Russian federation (§7). This would have meant that the Ukrainian Composers' Union would have been formally equal to the Composers' Union of these charters. Thus, the nation-wide level of organization would have still been missing and this Composers' Union would have been the equivalent of the Russian Composers' Union that was established in 1958.²⁷² Perhaps it was the Writers' Congress and affairs of literature that once again prevented the furthering of the aims of the Composers' Union. These plans were never realized as such and the actual status of the Composers' Union was left open. The Moscow branch would hereafter act as though it was the central organization of the Composers' Union, but in practice it would face considerable problems. The charters, however, were quite similar to those accepted in 1948, except for granting it all-union status.

Although literature was constrained as a result of the Party intervention, this process took some years to implement. At first, some composers felt that they were missing out on something when the Party left them unnoticed. Writers seemed to benefit from the situation and in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* dissatisfaction was expressed over the slow development of musical policy. Composers believed that music was not receiving the attention it deserved. Literature and the theater attracted the most attention from the "the Soviet people."²⁷³ This situation only intensified a year and a half later with the Writers' Congress, which marked the pinnacle of publicity for Soviet literature.

Especially older research has viewed art policy of the 1930s as a mere extension of Party policy. From this perspective, art unions existed only to fulfill Party resolutions. Kemp-Welch, for example, argued – in 1975 (within his dissertation) and again in 1991 – that the Writers' Union was the logical continuum of *RAPP*, the Association of Proletarian Writers; *RAPP* had been a mere pawn and Stalin simply removed it when it became an obstacle. Kemp-Welch argues that the Writers' Union was the Party's instrument and thus the Party alone could define cultural policy.²⁷⁴ If this conception is followed in other arts, as it often is, the art unions would have been the pillars of Stalinist art policy during the 1930s. Composers' comments indicate that they closely

²⁷⁰ Ustav SSK. In *BSSK* 1-2/1934: 10-15.

²⁷¹ RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 1-13.

²⁷² See for example RGALI, f. 2490, *Soiuz kompozitorov RSFSR* 1958-. The Composers' Union of the Russian Federation still exists today, unlike the Composers' Union of the USSR, which was suppressed along with the Soviet Union.

²⁷³ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 1: *Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen!* In *SM* 4/1933.

²⁷⁴ Kemp-Welch 1975, 143; Kemp-Welch 1991, 114-118.

followed what was happening in the Writers' Union. When writing about problems in music criticism, composer Aleksandr Krein referred to a plenum of the Writers' Union's organizational committee. According to Krein, the Chairman of the Writers' Union Ivan Gronsii (also the Chief Editor of *Izvestiia*) had spoken about individual taste hindering literary criticism. Krein agreed with this and pointed out that personal taste was a dominant feature of music criticism.²⁷⁵ Although composers followed developments in literature, this does not mean that there was any kind of co-operation between the two unions.

Yet, Kemp-Welch's detailed description about the Writers' Union helps us to understand why composers were at first keen to follow the example of the Writers' Union. The Party's tactic was to rule the Writers' Union from within. The Union was kept apparently independent, but close connections tied it to the Party. Although initially small in number, Party members held all the key positions in the Writers' Union. The board, *pravlenie* – the largest organ, which should have been the core of power – played a largely ceremonial role. The presidium and the secretariat, filled with Party members, possessed executive powers, and exercised authority within the Writers' Union.²⁷⁶

During the 1930s, due to the small number of Party cardholders in the Composers' Union, non-Party members were present in all of its organs.²⁷⁷ Although the composer Aleksandr Vepruk implied that the lack of Party members in the Union's administration was due to some scandalous feature of the election process,²⁷⁸ the truth is that there were simply not many Party members in the Union as a whole.

There was, however, one musical venue in which the Party was active all along: a great deal of musical activity was connected to theaters, especially those that staged ballet and opera: the *Bolshoi*, *Malyi* and *MKhAT* in Moscow; the *Mariinskii* Theater (subsequently named after Kirov) and the *Malyi* Theater (*Malegot*) in Leningrad.²⁷⁹ Leonid Maximenkov has pointed out that supreme authority over the repertory of these theaters passed from the censor organ *Glavlit* to direct supervision by the *politbiuro* in early 1930s. The *politbiuro* could thereafter even approve works banned by *Glavlit*. The original idea behind

²⁷⁵ Krein, A. 1933, 120–121: Kompozitor i kritika. In *SM* 1/1933.

²⁷⁶ Kemp-Welch 1975, 98–99; Kemp-Welch 1991, 120–121. Writers' Union's *orgkomitet* had its own presidium of seven members whereas *orgkomitet* had 24 members.

²⁷⁷ The chairman of the Committee on Artistic Affairs, Platon Kerzhentsev, wrote a memo from one meeting held in 1936 attended by leading figures from the [Moscow] Composers' Union. Most were acknowledged composers and professors. There were also some uninvited musicologists present, who were also former proletarian musicians. RGALI, f. 962, op. 5, d. 25, l. 21. Kerzhentsev stated that of the 19 members of the presidium, only Cheliapov and Gorodinskii were Party-members, Belyi was still a candidate member. Kerzhentsev regarded that this lack of Party members was one of the reasons for the ill-development of the union in its operations. *Ibid*, l. 19.

²⁷⁸ RGALI f. 645, op. 1, d. 352, l. 11.

²⁷⁹ The status of academic theaters had already been questioned and interfered with in the 1920s. Party officials from different organs were appointed to leading positions in these theaters. This caused a great deal of confusion. In some theaters the repertory was tried to "proletarianize" and to remove works from the tsarist times. This often caused a rapid fall in ticket sales. Thorpe, Richard G. 1992, 389–410: The Academic Theaters and the Fate of Soviet Artistic Pluralism, 1919–1928. In *Slavic Review* 51(3), 1992, pp. 398–410.

these measures was, according to Maximenkov, to break the monopoly of theaters over certain works and enable the rapid dissemination of works that represented the “golden” age of socialist realism.²⁸⁰ Music was not specifically mentioned in the resolution; nevertheless, theaters were under the same administration and so music was inevitably involved. This resolution would later enable performances of Shostakovich’s opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*, for instance, to be performed across the Soviet Union. Otherwise, it could have had a longer season at the *Malyi* Theater in Leningrad.

While theater was regarded as ideologically important, the Composers’ Union repeatedly hailed opera as one of the foremost genres of music. It was emphasized that theatrical music, including opera, should receive more attention from composers.²⁸¹ Opera would receive the most attention from the Party in following years. Indeed, the shift in musical policy after 1932 appears to have been from mass musical genre to high cultural events. The Party was largely interested in matters other than music, but the theater was one point of contact between the Party and the musical world. Later on, in the mid-1930s, the mass musical genre would rise again in connection with nation-building and other large-scale activities.

The disc affair

The Party’s initial main interest coming across with music was connected to theatres, but there were some other documents suggesting that music was not completely ignored even in the early 1930s. The resolution entitled “About the status and amount of musical instruments and improving their production,” was announced in August 1933 and was signed by Lazar Kaganovich, Kliment Voroshilov, N. I. Ilin, A. I. Stetskii, Andrei Bubnov, K. I. Nikolaeva, and I. E. Liubimov. The resolution aimed to increase the number of gramophones and discs produced in the Soviet Union. New production targets were set: three million discs were to be produced in 1933 but this figure was to increase to forty million in 1937.²⁸²

As this was one of the very few Party resolutions from the 1930s with a direct connection to music, it gives the impression of a very technocratic attitude towards music. Furthermore, this resolution bears a fingerprint of Viktor Gorodinskii. In 1932 he had called for improvements in the status of musical instruments, as part of the re-structuring of the musical world.²⁸³ It seems that Gorodinskii managed to drive the disc issue onto the agenda of the

²⁸⁰ Maksimenkov 1997, 38–41; about for example Stalin, see Kondakov 1997, 568: *Vvedenie v istoriiu russkoi kultury*. Moscow: Aspekt Press.

²⁸¹ Iordanskii, M., Kozlov, P., Taranushchenko, V., 1933, 19: K probleme sovetskoi opery (opernoie tvorchestvo sovetskikh kompozitorov za 17 let). In *SM* 1/1933; Atovmian, L. 1933, 132: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzsokkoma sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933; compare to Schwarz 1983, 111. Schwarz regards that in 1932 opera was in crisis because the required Soviet thematic could not be found.

²⁸² This resolution is first mentioned in Maksimenkov 1997. The resolution, see: RGASPI, f.17, op. 163, d. 987, ll. 11–12.

²⁸³ Kut, A. 1932, 3: Kompozitory u tov. A. S. Bubnova. Zadachi muzykalnogo fronta. In *SI* April 27, 1932.

Party's Central Committee. The "disc affair" was important because it concerned new and rapidly developing technology as an important mean of mass propaganda and would thus have been settled within the Party anyway. However, Gorodinskii perhaps managed to settle things in a way that may have proved beneficial to composers. At the very least, he managed to bring the issue before *Rabis* in October 1932. A representative from the Commissariat of Light Industry attended the meeting in order to hear about deficits in production. For example, only 27 percent of the production plan for gramophones was fulfilled. Production of gramophone discs also remained under 50 percent below its target. The situation, according to Gorodinskii, was worrying because the production targets for 1933 were more than three times those for 1932. In fact, the only musical instruments that nearly met their production target were pianos.²⁸⁴

Perhaps the key word that excited interest from the Party's Central Committee in this question was "industry," as gramophone discs brought music closer to industry than ever before. Technical development in music was generally supported. Thus, in 1932, the "Scientific research institute of musical industry" was established in Leningrad. It was to become a center of musical industry that would research and develop acoustics, gramophone and record technology, and musical instruments.²⁸⁵ Apparently, the music industry was something that the Party leadership was more willing to comment upon than other musical issues. At least, it offered hard figures for bureaucrats to deal with.

Even if the figures I have found in the archives are incorrect and products of typical exaggerations of the time, they still indicate how important the gramophone industry was ideologically. The objective for 1937 was to produce forty million discs and this target was eventually exceeded by a million. Yet, in 1935 only half of the production target was met.²⁸⁶ These figures correspond to those mentioned by Gorodinskii already in 1932. Gorodinskii had stated that the target for 1933 was seven million discs, but even in 1934 actual production was only a third of this figure. The drastic turnaround came between 1935 and 1937, during which time production multiplied several times.²⁸⁷ Recordings became so ideologically significant because they were an important vehicle for mass propaganda; recorded music could reach the public more effectively than orchestras ever could. For the same reason, recording technology also developed quickly in Hitler's Germany.

The resolution on gramophones also included a paragraph that appointed an artistic council to "raise the political and artistic level of recordings." The objective was to improve the quality and versatility of recorded music. In effect,

²⁸⁴ GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1848, l. 13–15. As a detail about the technical development work it was mentioned that engineer Kalashnikov was trying to develop a larger and better disk, measuring 40 to 50 millimeters (see l. 15).

²⁸⁵ Mikhailov, N. 1935, 143–144: Nauchno-issledovatel'skii institut muzykalnoi promyshlennosti. In SM 7–8/1935.

²⁸⁶ RGALI, f. 962, op. 5, d. 6, l. 70.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. compared with Gorodinskii's statement about the plans for 1933, see GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1848, l. 14.

this council could very much direct what was recorded. Commissar Bubnov was appointed as chairman and council members included composers, technical and political experts, and musicians. Prominent composers in the council were included Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov, Reingold Gliere, Aleksandr Goldenveizer, Dmitrii Shostakovich, and Vissarion Shebalin, all of whose music was increasingly being recorded. This means that, once again, the Party trusted the practical realization of musical policy to composers themselves. According to the Party's instructions, the Council ought to have selected humorous, dance, and youth music alongside symphonic, vocal and folk music. The stated aim was to record a broad spectrum of music produced by the Soviet peoples.²⁸⁸ After some years of operation, the artistic council had failed to satisfy the Party. The slow development of the recording industry was noted in *Pravda* in spring 1936: too little Soviet music had been published and objectives were not being met.²⁸⁹

In conclusion, the Party was indifferent towards the Composers' Union during the early 1930s. This took its toll in many ways. The Union's organizational status remained unclear until 1939. The lack of a central organ and stable funding crippled the Composers' Union. Additionally, because the Party did not pay attention to musical affairs, the press was not that interested in music. This was brought home to composers, who tried through their Union to give more weight to musical issues. A report that followed the first major meeting of composers in 1933 lamented that during the first year of its existence the Composers' Union had been practically ignored by the press. The author of the report, Levon Atovmian, emphasized that composers and musicologists ought to be more active and write to different magazines and newspapers.²⁹⁰ *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, in which most musical discussions took place, was a forum for musical activists. At this time, no popular musical magazine existed. While music was barely mentioned in leading newspapers before 1936, literature featured in numerous columns, particularly during the first Writers' congress in August 1934.²⁹¹ The Composers' Union remained overshadowed by the Writers' Union for the whole of the 1930s.

²⁸⁸ RGASPI, f.17, op. 163, d. 987, l. 14.

²⁸⁹ Muzyka na patefonnoi plastinke. In *Pravda* February 22, 1936: 4.

²⁹⁰ Atovmian, L. 1933, 131. K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzu sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

²⁹¹ See also Fitzpatrick 1992, 198–199. Music found its way onto the pages of *Pravda* during the first anti-formalist campaign of 1936, when it received negative coverage. Reports and comments about literature in 1934 were of positive nature, and so the development can hardly be perceived as helpful for music.

RESHAPING THE SOVIET MUSICAL STAGE

Musical structures and administrators

The first plenum of the Composers' Union

Although the Party leadership discarded the plan for a powerful Composers' Union in 1932, it still appointed a group of Party members as administrators of the organization. Additionally, several composers and musicologists were willing to take part in the administration of the organization. The lower levels were highly active in defining the policy of the Union. In Leningrad, composers such as Asafiev, Gnesin, and Shaporin, along with the young Shostakovich, were elected as members of the first board.²⁹² None had a Party card. Chairman Boris Fingert was associated more with history and had worked at the Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad (later named after Herzen), but his role at the Union remained distant because of personal illness.²⁹³ In practice, administrative leadership fell to Vladimir Iokhelson, who was very active and who efficiently took care of the running of the Union. Without strict guidance from elsewhere, composers arranged the work of the organization to serve their own needs. Composers even took part in the daily administration of the Union and like Shostakovich, acted as a chairman in certain meeting of the Union.²⁹⁴

Initially, the Composers' Union was supposed to co-operate closely with *Narkompros*, People's Commissariat of Enlightenment. Thus, the main Union

²⁹² The *pravlenie*, board, was filled with composers, musicologists, and leading figures from the musical world. Apart from Shostakovich, all had been educated before the October Revolution.

²⁹³ The Leningrad branch decided upon its office holders at the end of July. Instead of being elected, it seems that they were appointed through some agreement—Tobolkevich, in a letter to Roman Gruber, was able to name them before their official nomination. GTsMMK, f. 285, d. 1051, l. 1.

²⁹⁴ Several notable composers acted as chairmen at these meetings, for example, Dmitrii Shostakovich (September 19, 1934) and Iurii Shaporin, (on October 19, 1934 and, November 27, 1934). Tsentralnii Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Literatury i Iskusstv Sankt-Peterburga (TsGALI SPb), f. 348, op. 1, d. 10, 11, 13.

organs were elected jointly with the art section of *Narkompros*. The Union's municipal branch in Moscow nominated *Narkompros* official Mikhail Arkadiev to act as its chairman. This link with *Narkompros*, however, was short-lived and he was soon succeeded by Nikolai Cheliapov, who had little whatsoever to do with the Commissariat. The position of chairman was important because he attended both board and presidium meetings. The presidium in Moscow consisted of its secretary Gorodinskii and three composers, Nikolai Miaskovskii, Vissarion Shebalin, and Aleksandr Krein, of whom only Gorodinskii and Cheliapov were Party members. At first Shargorodskii took up the post of organizational secretary and assumed responsibility for day-to-day affairs, but he was soon replaced by the energetic Levon Atovmian, also a Party member.²⁹⁵

It appears that the presidium was fairly balanced in terms of age: Miaskovskii and Krein were around fifty, Cheliapov around forty, and Gorodinskii and Shebalin were thirty-years-olds. As a composer, Miaskovskii was associated with the modernist movement of the 1920s and Krein had worked in *Narkompros* under Lunacharskii. Proletarian musicians were not represented on the presidium.

It seems quite obvious that the Party nominated individuals to key positions within the Composers' Union. Had this not been the case, it is highly unlikely that non-composers would have achieved important positions in the organization, unless composers had viewed these as merely administrative positions. After all, artists are not always that keen to take on responsibility for day-to-day administration. Yet, it was very important to have administrators with specialist expertise as well, since the issues discussed by the presidium called for expert knowledge. According to the Union's charters, its congress should have nominated members for different organs but, since the congress was postponed until 1948, the board and the presidium held these powers.²⁹⁶ The board was supposed to nominate individuals to all the other organs and convene regular plenums to discuss important issues. Apart from these main organs, there were a number of sections and sectors working under the presidium that took care of special issues, such as the mass musical genre or finances.²⁹⁷ I have found very few and only secondary references to the occasional elections that took place. However, it is probable that the board and the presidium were chosen through elections.

It seems highly likely that composers would have been unaware that the Party had decided to postpone the establishment of their Union. Indeed, several composers began to prepare for the inaugural congress. Although the main

²⁹⁵ Ia.B. 1933, 140: V Soiuzе sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 1/1933. By autumn 1933, Atovmian was mentioned to be Union's organizational secretary (orgsekreter), see *Struktura Soiuzа sovetskikh kompozitorov*. In *BSSK* 3-4/1933, p. 9.

²⁹⁶ Shchiglik 1970, 80. Kemp-Welch believes that the charters were the most contentious issue for the Writers' Union in spring 1934. The Seventeenth Party Congress and the changed atmosphere affected the establishment of the Writers' Union. The most important decisions relating to the Writers' Congress were taken beforehand, in spring and summer 1934. Kemp-Welch 1975, 79; Kemp-Welch 1991, 161-162.

²⁹⁷ Shchiglik 1970, 82.

emphasis was at times on material questions, there was also active discussion of and attempts to find an ideological framework for Soviet music. Rather than being a search for ideological constraints, for Soviet composers these discussions were about establishing prestige for the Composers' Union. When research is examined, one gets the impression that these discussions existed only to reinforce the ideological rule of the Party over the musical front. Furthermore, even a Soviet legislative study about art unions suggests that they had from the start been Stalinist organizations, and because of that charters were corrected in the spirit of de-Stalinization after Stalin's death.²⁹⁸ Yet, the fact is that Stalinist charters for the Composers' Union were accepted only in 1948.

Autonomous drafting of charters and other organizational aspects suggest that composers were attempting to build a nationwide Union even though the central apparatus of the Party had already dismissed it as pointless. But although charters were important, they must, of course, be approached carefully when studying the Stalinist era. Legislation always came second to political purposes. For example, the Writers' Union was supposed to, according to its charters, hold three plenums a year, but only fifteen plenums were held between 1934 and 1954, less than one per year.²⁹⁹

The Composers' Union appears to have been initially rather pre-occupied with administrative measures. After a year's work, the Union considered that it had established a stable administrative structure. Thus, the Union held its first plenum in autumn 1933. According to Shchiglik's legislative manual of art unions, plenums were for general discussions about the art form in question.³⁰⁰ However, the invitation to the plenum reveals that issues about composers' material well-being and copyright matters were the main items on the agenda.³⁰¹ Rather than political and ideological issues, composers were more concerned about material concerns. Even though the plenum discussed the principles upon which future Soviet music and music research would be based, financial matters were of primary importance.

The plenum and initial work on the Union's charter suggest that the Moscow branch tried to be active at the union-level and not merely municipally. Representatives from Leningrad, Ukraine, Transcaucasia, and Byelorussia all participated in the plenum that was held in Moscow. Alongside the plenum, a series of concerts were arranged in order to introduce new compositions by Soviet composers to plenum representatives.³⁰² Even before the plenum was held, the Moscow branch had tried to organize regional branches

²⁹⁸ Shchiglik 1970, 18. Compare with Nepomnyashchy, Catharine 1994, 132: *Perestroika and the Soviet Creative Unions*. In Norman, John O. (ed.), *New Perspectives on Russian and Soviet Artistic Culture*. Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, Harrogate, 1990. New York: St. Martin's Press.

²⁹⁹ Garrard and Garrard 1990, 45–46.

³⁰⁰ Shchiglik 1970, 82–83.

³⁰¹ Taranushchenko, V. 1933, 155: SSK. *Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost*. In SM 3/1933.

³⁰² Taranushchenko, V. 1933, 155: SSK. *Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost*. In SM 3/1933.

of the Union in Voronezh, Sverdlovsk, Rostov, and Samara.³⁰³ In the spring of 1934, a regional Union was established in Saratov and another, perhaps more successful one, followed in Rostov. The Rostov branch, together with the Radio Committee of the Azov Region, organized a series of eight concerts that featured the music of local composers. The Moscow branch also benefited from this collaboration: it negotiated a contract with Azov Radio for six symphonic and six chamber music concerts of music by Soviet composers. Among the composers whose music was selected for these radio concerts were Shebalin, Shostakovich, and Lev Knipper.³⁰⁴

However, the co-operation between different republics, as well as between Leningrad and Moscow, remained sporadic. In one editorial in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, co-operation between branches of the Union was said to be in a "pitiable state."³⁰⁵ There is very little information about how successful these attempts to organize regional activity from Moscow actually were. Conditions hardly improved during subsequent years, since in 1937 a meeting of republican branches of the Union described connections with Moscow as non-existent. The same meeting described the conditions in republican branches as extremely poor.³⁰⁶ Yet, the Moscow branch could do little about the situation, as in essence, it was not a central organization.

One of the first republican branches was established in Ukraine. Confusingly enough, the Ukrainian Composers' Union already held its first plenum in Kharkov between February 20 and February 23, 1933.³⁰⁷ Although smaller than the Moscow or Leningrad unions, the Ukrainian Composers' Union was still on paper one level above them in the organizational hierarchy. After all, it was a republican, not municipal, branch. The Ukrainian Composers' Union also had its own *orgbiuro*³⁰⁸, which was headed by a certain Beikovich. Beikovich was present at several meetings arranged in Moscow, but otherwise contacts between Russian branches of the Composers' Union and the Ukrainian Union seem to have been intermittent. I have not found an explanation for the fact that an *orgbiuro* was set up for the Ukrainian Composers' Union, while its Russian or Soviet counterparts were denied one. It is likely that the Ukrainian Communist Party was unaware of the *orgbiuro*'s decision not to establish an organizational committee for composers, and that they simply allowed the Ukrainian Union to have their own. Alone, however, the Ukrainian Composers' Union could hardly transform itself into a powerful organization.

³⁰³ Khronika po soiuzu sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 5/1933: 12.

³⁰⁴ Khronika. In *BSSK* 4-5/1934: 21.

³⁰⁵ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7-10 aprelia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 5.

³⁰⁶ With regard to poor connections with Moscow, the Moscow branch had been uninterested in work outside Moscow and Leningrad and the poor conditions that these smaller branches had to work under, see: RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 273, l. 7; RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 269, l. 72; RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 272, ll. 2-5.

³⁰⁷ Muzykalnaia zhizn v Kharkove. SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. In *SM* 3/1933: 156. In the case of Ukraine, so many performers were included that the Union was at first called the Soviet Musicians' Union.

³⁰⁸ For some reason, it was called *orgbiuro*, not *orgkomitet* as would have been the case in Moscow.

Nevertheless, optimism prevailed during the first plenum in 1933. The Union's aims were ambitious: "[A]fter the introduction by the board, a broad discussion will be initiated about basic and leading questions, including the question of socialist realism in music (with concrete examples from the latest Soviet compositions)." Questions about the operation of different musical organizations, the propagation of Soviet music, and the preparation of cadres were mentioned.³⁰⁹ All of these topics were important parts of the Union's discourse of during its initial years. Yet, the foremost question, which was also given due prominence in the reports of the plenum, was the material well being of Union members. However, before we take a look at the results of the plenum, it is important to examine the membership base of the Composers' Union, in order to understand exactly whose issues were being addressed.

Selecting an exclusive membership

The core of the Composers' Union was made up of professional composers and musicologists. However, not all composers were initially accepted as members of the Union. Only those composers who were involved in traditional concert music or were trained at traditional institutes of higher musical education became members. This meant that "light-genre" composers were not admitted to the Union. "Light-genre" did not just apply to occasional songwriters but rather all those vaudeville, variety, and movie composers who made their living from composing and who were thus professionals. Leading composers within the genre were in fact among the materially better-off artists. Most light-genre composers were involved with the State Association of Music, Variety Stage, and Circus Performers (*GOMETs*) and *Vseroskomdram* (which initially also looked after their copyrights). Variety performances were highly popular entertainment and thus could provide composers with a good income. I have not found a clear motive for the initial exclusion of these composers from the Composers' Union, but only hints.

Especially in Leningrad, where many of these light-genre composers lived, the Composers' Union wished to be involved with variety and stage music. The Leningrad branch approached the artistic leadership of *GOMETs* in order to arrange contracts for composers.³¹⁰ Whether through their own choice or due to Union policy, light-genre composers remained outside the Union for several years. A change took place during the second half of the 1930s and in 1937 the most famous film and light-genre composer, Isaak Dunaevskii, became chairman of the Leningrad branch.³¹¹ Matvei Blanter and Dmitrii Pokrass took

³⁰⁹ Taranushchenko, V. 1933, 155: SSK. *Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost*. In *SM 3/1933*.

³¹⁰ Pricker, D. 1933, 125–126: *Vnimanie sovetskoj estrade*. In *SM 3/1933*.

³¹¹ Danilevich, L. V. 1974, 333: Dunaevskii Isaak Osipovich. In Keldysh, Iu. V. (ed.), *Muzykalnaia Entsiklopediia*. Part 2. Moscow: Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia; Stadelmann, Matthias 2003, 232–233: *Isaak Dunaevskii – Sanger des Volkes. Eine Karriere unter Stalin*. Koln: Bohlau Verlag.

up administrative positions in Leningrad. Pokrass even sat on the initial organizational committee with Dunaevskii in 1939.³¹²

The issue of light genres was so important because it was an extremely popular musical form. Although proletarian associations had condemned this “corrupted music,” public demand for jazz and apolitical popular music proved to be enormous after 1932. In Leningrad, a jazz commission was even established.³¹³ Western popular music and jazz became even more popular than they had been in the 1920s. Even the Communist Party supported jazz and consequently state organizations promoted tours by foreign jazz bands. Only after the Second World War did jazz music run into difficulties. However, prior to this the Soviet Union had boasted its own State Jazz Orchestra.³¹⁴ Therefore, it is surprising how little the Composers’ Union initially involved itself with the light genres. The reason for this was perhaps that many of these light genre composers were also active musicians and conductors, or perhaps it was simple jealousy – most successful light-genre composers earned much more than their classical music counterparts could.

Another reason for the exclusion of light-genre composers may be found in the Union’s ideological and creative work, which was determined by attempts to define Soviet music. We have already seen how the question of musical heritage became an important topic after the downfall of the proletarian music movement. Proletarian musicians had tried to set bourgeois traditions aside by creating a new proletarian culture. In the Composers’ Union, the search for links between bourgeois tradition and new Soviet music began anew. The Russian school of music was especially important, as were representatives of the Rimskii-Korsakovian school, in particular. This is not surprising if we consider the membership base of the Moscow branch in 1933. More than 50 percent of Union members had been composing for over twenty years.³¹⁵ Furthermore, most of those educated after the October Revolution had received their education in the conservatories, where little change had occurred during the first half of the 1920s. Traditional techniques and ideas were thus firmly rooted in the Composers’ Union and some perhaps did not take light-genre composers seriously, or even as professionals.

The membership base of the Composers’ Union is of interest from yet another perspective. Despite its name, the Composers’ Union accepted musicologists as members. The *orgbiuro* of the Party decreed that leading performing musicians and conductors should also be admitted³¹⁶, but the reality differed somewhat from the Party’s original statement. Although accepted initially, musicians were eventually denied membership, and throughout the 1930s there would occasionally be disputes over whether a

³¹² See for example RGALI, f. 962, op. 5, d. 218, l. 2. Both were among the first six names included on the list.

³¹³ Fay 2000, 79. Also in Schwarz 1983, 360–362.

³¹⁴ Starr 1983, 125–127, 205–234. The orchestra was not itself an artistic success, according to contemporary testimonies.

³¹⁵ Osnovnye materialy (svedeniia) o rabote SSK po 1/IX 1933 g. In BSSK 2/1933: 15.

³¹⁶ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 114, d. 295, l. 2.

Musicians' Union should have been formed instead of a purely Composers' Union.

It is unclear how many musicians were members of the initial Moscow Union; its official statistics differentiated only between composers and musicologists. In Leningrad, 85 percent of the branch's 122 members were registered as composers, 10 percent as musicologists, and the remaining 5 percent described themselves as performing musicians.³¹⁷ Later on, even the most prominent conductors and musicians were not admitted to membership of the Composers' Union. In Moscow, certain high-profile performers, like piano professor of the Moscow Conservatory, Aleksandr Goldenveizer, were counted as composers.

Kirill Tomoff has described a conflict over musicians' membership that erupted in 1943. Goldenveizer, violinist David Oistrakh, and pianists Iakov Flier and Grigorii Ginzburg tried, through an appeal to Molotov, to turn the Composers' Union into the Musicians' Union.³¹⁸ This conflict, however, was merely an extension of a conflict that originated in the mid-1930s and was hardly a unique phenomenon.

Initially, performers had their own sector inside the Union—just as musicologists had—in line with the *politbiuro* decision to include the most important performers in the organization.³¹⁹ The Union had also actively discussed matters of performance, as suggested by articles in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* published between 1933 and 1934.³²⁰ The role of performers in the Union diminished quickly, however, and in the spring of 1937 a group of young soloists, some of them laureates of international competitions, called for the establishment of a Soviet Musicians' Union. The reasoning behind their demands was the same as it would be seven years later: the Writers' Union was not called the Prosaists' Union so why should there be only the Composers' Union? The soloists maintained that composers dominated only a small part of musical life in the Soviet Union.³²¹ Their argument was valid; performers, not

³¹⁷ Ashkenazi, A. 1934, 61: Leningrad. Leningradskii soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 6/1934. There should have been 104 composers in Leningrad according to Iokhelson. It is interesting therefore, that Viktor Gorodinskii mentioned in one meeting in 1936 that Leningrad had 84 composers, that Moscow had 92, and Rostov-on-Don, 4, see RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, l. 36. These figures are not, therefore, particularly trustworthy, because it is very unlikely that the number of composers in Leningrad would have dropped by 20 in two years.

³¹⁸ Tomoff 2006, 31.

³¹⁹ Postanovlenie orgbiuro TsK VKP(b) o meropriiatiakh po vypolneniiu postanovleniia politbiuro TsK VKP(b) "O perestroike literaturno-khudozhestvennykh organizatsii", 7.5.1932. In Iakovlev, A. N. (ed.), Artizov, A., Naumov, op. 2002: *Vlast i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia. Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kulturnoi politike, 1917-1953 gg.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond "demokratiia", pp. 175-176.

³²⁰ Performers also started to hold meetings, which for some reason ceased after a few years. Resolutions from the first conference of the concert performers suggests that the Composers' Union was on good terms with performers in general, see Rezoliutsiia 1-i Vsesoiuznoi proizvodstvennoi konferentsii kontsertnykh ispolnitelei. In *BSSK* 1-2/1934, pp. 2-5.

³²¹ Bruskov, S. 1937, 4: O kontsertnykh organizatsiakh. Soveshchanie v "Sovetskom iskusstve." In *SI* April 5, 1937. The letter by leading soloists criticizing the Composers'

only composers, were involved with creative work. Furthermore, through international competitions young Soviet musicians had promulgated Soviet superiority and thus enjoyed similar Soviet-hero status as polar explorers. However, it is evident that performers did not manage to get their way in 1937³²², as they were denied membership of the Union in 1943 and 1944.

Yet, musicians were not forgotten altogether. Although membership of the Composers' Union was denied them, musicians were taken care of directly by the Party. Already by 1937, all the laureates from international piano and violin competitions were granted honorary badges, as were their teachers (altogether twenty-four professors from various conservatories). The *politbiuro* allocated 3 million rubles for the construction of a housing complex for professors and top musicians within a year and a half. More money was also given in order to fund the construction of a student housing-complex and additional buildings for conservatories, to increase professors' salaries, and to fund the general expansion of musical education.³²³

It was the Committee on Artistic Affairs that furthered the housing issue of conservatories, although formally it was the Council of People's Commissars that had the powers to enable constructions of this scale. Thus, composers separated themselves quite clearly from issues related with musicians, as well as in this sense conservatories. Although they had common interests, from 1936 the Committee on Artistic Affairs was the link between them on the organizational level. It meant that composers strived for their own well-being and conservatories were something on which they could not have effect. The Committee could also help to channel amounts of funds the Union could only dream of. In the summer of 1939 the construction enterprise of the Moscow Conservatory was given almost 10 million rubles,³²⁴ exceeding multifold capabilities of the Union.

The exact membership base of the Composers' Union remains a mystery because the membership card index has not survived. Luckily, there are reliable statistics that reveal some interesting facts about the new musical elite. In 1933, the Moscow branch drew up a list of its members, only 7 percent of whom had a Party card. Half of all members had started composing before the First World War. Almost half of the members of the Moscow branch were more than forty years old. Only 10 percent had either proletarian or peasant origins, while 60

Union was sent by Ia[kov] Zak; Ia[kov] Flier; M[ariia] Grinberg; Iu[rrii] Briushkov; A[leksandr] Iokheles; A[bram] Shatskes; G[eorgii] Zdelman; T. Gutman; E. Grossman; N. Perelman; P. Serebriakov; V. Razumovskaia; and A. Kamenskii, published as: *Sozdat soiuz sovetских muzykantov*. In *SI* April 11, 1937: 2. A meeting to criticize the Philharmonia was organized (held in the quarters of Soviet Art) at which the young soloists gave their opinion.

³²² Perhaps in order to find support from those musicians that were already in the Union, musicians of the Composers' Union were given opportunity to participate in the Consultation Commission, which was the bridge to the Union. It controlled in practice who were ready to be allowed to become members of the Union, see: *V Soiuzе sovetskikh kompozitorov*. In *SM* 3/1938: 96. It indicated that performers' section received a fixed representative in the Consultation Commission.

³²³ RGALI, f. 962, op. 10, d. 21 l. 53-57. (April 1937)

³²⁴ GARF, f. 5546, op. 23, d. 1851, ll. 7, 16-17, 39-43. From January until 15th November 1939.

percent had completed a course of higher education. In the Moscow branch, 60 percent of members were Russian and 25 percent Jews. Thus, the membership of the Moscow Composers' Union was largely professional and white-collar orientated. Almost all members had been educated using pre-revolutionary methods. The proportion of Jews among the membership is of interest, as St. Petersburg traditionally had a larger Jewish population than Moscow.³²⁵ It is also significant that the list reveals that almost all Union members were men.

The number of women in the Composers' Union remained quite small. Iuliia Veisberg was perhaps one of the most well known composers and was also a pupil and daughter-in-law of Nikolai Rimskii-Korsakov. Another female composer and pianist of younger generation, Zara Levina, described the status of women in the Union in 1936. She complained that women were completely ignored. Most of the Union's recreational activities were only open to men. Levina described how she would have also liked to play tennis or volleyball. Furthermore, she claimed that, because she was a woman, her creative output was undermined in the Union, despite the Red Army acknowledging and greatly appreciating her work. She maintained that women's compositions were not propagated and that they were ignored when contracts were being drawn up.³²⁶ Levina was known for her musical work with the Red Army and had become acquainted with Davidenko and Shekhter in the 1920s. What she said about the Union was presumably true, since most of the members were men, and women were not represented in the administration. Perhaps the situation changed somewhat when her husband, Nikolai Chemberdzhi, was appointed chairman of the Moscow branch in 1937.

Although, as discussed, composers who had been proletarian musicians were granted membership, some were still not satisfied. Long-standing grudges manifested themselves when some members of the Union posed questions about certain proletarian musicians' competence as composers. Young Marian Koval, a former member of *RAPM*, had during one meeting called for better treatment of young composers. In response, Koval's competence was questioned and his original query was thus shrugged off.³²⁷ Some of the more prestigious composers perhaps jealously guarded their position and did not want to be equated with proletarian musicians. The dismissal of Koval is an interesting example, as he would later become one of the most important administrators in the Composers' Union. In 1948, he was named as secretary of the board for the next ten years, and chief editor of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* for the next five. He had been a founding member of *Prokoll* and composed exemplary mass songs like *Za moriami, za gorami* and *Iunost*.³²⁸ Not all were willing to see

³²⁵ Osnovnye materialy (svedeniia) o rabote SSK po 1/IX 1933 g. In *BSSK* 2/1933: 15.

³²⁶ *RGALI*, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, l. 18.

³²⁷ Atovmian, L. 1933, 132: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzu sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933. The reason for this was partly, perhaps, due to Koval himself. He had made a statement in *Soviet Art* that the Composers' Union contained composers who should not have been allowed to join. Koval, Marian 1933, 1: Kompozitor i sreda. Zametki o soiuze sovetskikh muzykantov. In *SI* January 20, 1933.

³²⁸ Tsypin, G. M. 1974. Koval Marian Viktorovich. In Keldysh, Iu. V. (ed.), *Muzykalnaia Entsiklopediia*. Part 2. Moscow: Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia.

current members of the Union as their equals. Old disputes were still too fresh and they would flare up again over the next few years.

Dawn of the future generation

This far, the Party and the Composers' Union have been discussed separately. I have merely mentioned that there were few Party activists in the midst of musical activists before the end of the 1930s. Those few I have been able to identify include Viktor Gorodinskii (date of joining the Party: 1918), Lev Lebedinskii (1919), Levon Atovmian (1920), Vladimir Iokhelson (1921), Viktor Vinogradov (1921), David Rabinovich (1925), and Moisei Grinberg (1930). These men were most important within the musical administration before 1939; afterwards, the most powerful positions were taken by newly recruited members of the Party and non-Party members. Furthermore, all of the aforementioned individuals were musicologists and critics rather than composers.

The first administrators of the Composers' Union, like Cheliapov, were trained in the pre-revolutionary age and were no longer young. In fact, marked generation change took place in the 1930s in the musical world and there would emerge a group that would govern it for several decades. Those who took up leading positions within the Composers' Union after 1948, and in some cases even those who were appointed after 1939, followed similar career paths. They would act as mediators between the Composers' Union and the Party, since Cheliapov remained the last professional Party bureaucrat in the Composers' Union. The first and only general secretary of the Composers' Union, Tikhon Khrennikov (1913–2007) is perhaps the best recalled of such young professional composer-administrators. Other prominent personalities in administration included, for example, Dmitrii Kabalevskii (1904-87) and Aram Khachaturian (1903-78), and former proletarian musicians Viktor Belyi (1904-83) and Marian Koval (1907-71). All had been educated during the 1920s and the 1930s, they had been acknowledged as composers already in the 1930s, and they became full members of the Party during the late 1930s or the early 1940s—with the exception of Khrennikov, who received his Party card in 1947. It has been said that in the 1930s a new Soviet generation emerged to replace the old, pre-revolutionary generation. Especially during 1928-31 and 1937-38 there were true pressures to replace old leaders and masters with a younger generation.³²⁹

³²⁹ Whether or not there was an intention to replace the old guard of the Party, like it was believed in the West during the Cold War, was questioned by J. Arch Getty in 1985, see: Getty, J. Arch 1985: *Origins of the Great Purges*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. He questioned the efficiency of the Stalinist administration and also the fact that the purges of the 1930s would be a planned and coherent process, see especially pp. 1–9. Previous assumption was that main targets in the Great Terror (1936-38) would have been those Party-members who joined before 1917. See also Getty and Chase 1990, 205–206. There are also views in-between these camps, for example, by Sheila Fitzpatrick, see: Fitzpatrick 1992, 178-179. Her views were originally published as: Stalin and the Making of the New Elite, 1928-1939. In *Slavic Review* 38 (3), 1979, pp. 377-402, meaning, before Getty's original monograph.

This claim seems to be borne out by many of the changes in the Union's administration.

Even fewer among musical figures were those Party members who would have participated in ideological education in their childhood. Even the young generation of musicians and composers only became Party members later in their adult lives: a few had been educated to become Party members through *Komsomol*. In 1938, to honor the twentieth anniversary, articles were collected from young professionals who were somehow connected to *Komsomol*. Even a distant relationship with this political youth organization was hard to find among composers. The celebrated pianist Iakov Flier had enrolled in *Komsomol* (1937) when he was fifteen years old. The future tenor of the *Bolshoi*, Solomon Khromchenko, became a *Komsomol* member in 1925, at the age of eighteen. The only composer who actually had been a *Komsomol* member and who wrote a short contribution of his relationship with this organization was Azerbaijani Kara Karaev (Different spellings exist: Gara Garaev/Qara Qaraev). Karaev joined *Komsomol* in 1937, when he was already nineteen years old.³³⁰ Yet, more than once Flier and other young triumphant musicians, Emil Gilels and Iakov Zak, were called "pianist-*Komsomolians*."³³¹ It almost appears like a magnifying glass was needed for finding any connection to composers.

The word "cadre," which is usually associated with Stalin's "Cadres resolve everything" slogan from 1935, is another such example. Cadres are considered to be the group of bureaucrats and officials who were promoted through the ranks of Stalin's administration to replace Bolsheviks who had joined the Party before the Revolution. Cadres were officials of the Stalinist years.³³² Later on, "cadre" came to mean either a committed professional or a professional with the correct political attitude. A typical Stalinist cadre was born in the first decade of the twentieth century, was of proletarian origin, and was educated during the 1920s or the 1930s. Examples of such figures included the future General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev (1906–82) and future Premier Aleksei Kosygin (1904–80).³³³ They would be the power elite of the post-Stalinist Soviet Union and they would stay in power until the perestroika of the mid-1980s. The backgrounds of Khrennikov, Kabalevskii, Koval, and several others in the Composers' Union bore notable similarities to those of the Stalinist cadres, excluding perhaps the proletarian origin.

Cheliapov had stated that the lack of Marxist musicologists was the musical front's greatest deficit.³³⁴ Soviet musicology truly lacked young Communists or even Marxist-oriented individuals to succeed the old bourgeois guard. Perhaps Cheliapov's concern about the lack of Party members in the Union originated in the fear that this might be used to justify slowing down the establishment of the Composers' Union. No loyal, ideologically oriented group

³³⁰ Nas vospital komsomol. In SM 10–11/1938: 47–51.

³³¹ Solodukho, I. 1939, 75: Kontserty dekady sovetskoi muzyki. In SM 1/1939.

³³² Fitzpatrick 1992, 149.

³³³ Fitzpatrick 1992, 160.

³³⁴ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 4: Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen! In SM 4/1933.

existed to take control of the whole musical front—there was a lack of cadres. Hence, the word “cadre” eventually took on quite a different meaning in the musical world. In the 1930s usage it practically became a synonym for “student,” yet, it was charged with positive expectations. A report from Moscow Conservatory’s college-level orchestral department stated that its school for children “was preparing cadres for the college.”³³⁵ Thus, cadres were the future musical professionals. However, cadre was also used to refer to colleagues, as Lev Kulakovskii did when he used it to refer the core of the musicological section of the Composers’ Union.³³⁶

In most cases, cadre was used, especially in the Composers’ Union, to refer to the young generation of students and future professionals. Instead of having direct political meaning, “work among cadres” in most cases referred to youth work. For example, when he stated that the most important work of the Union was cadre-work, Ashkenazi was referring to the need to consider young composers and accept them as members of the Union.³³⁷ Yet, as the generation in question was the one that would become the most influential in the Composers’ Union, the possible political dimensions of this work need to be evaluated.

The young generation was the subject of many discussions and much was expected from them. Atovmian regarded the presence of young composers in the Union as important, despite criticism by some of the older professionals. Atovmian was particularly critical of the fact that young composers were not systematically drawn into the active work in the Union. He maintained that this was partly due to weak connections between the Union and educational institutes. Atovmian believed the situation was severe because of the shortage of creative cadres on the musical front. He urged the Union to look after young composers’ needs and insisted that it should integrate them more fully into the Union in co-operation with their educational institutes.³³⁸ Atovmian also used cadre to refer to the future generation rather than persons with a correct political attitude.

The meeting of music critics in Leningrad in 1934 had also expressed its belief in strengthening cadre-work. It was hoped that older specialists (Asafiev, Aleksandr Ossovskii, and Roman Gruber were mentioned by name) would be able to develop and support the growth of new music critic cadres. Co-operation with the Conservatory and musicological institutes was to be

³³⁵ Mariasin, L. 1934, 79: V orkestrom otdele tekhnikuma Mosk. gos. Konservatorii. In *SM* 7/1934.

³³⁶ Kulakovskii, L. 1934, 97: Pismo v redaktsiiu. Ob organizatsii otдела “Tvorcheskaia laboratorii muzykovedeniia.” In *SM* 3/1934.

³³⁷ Ashkenazi, A. 1934, 61: Leningrad. Leningradskii soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 6/1934.

³³⁸ Atovmian, L. 1933, 132: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933. Later, the Leningrad branch would also emphasize that special attention should be paid to cadres, referring to young and student composers. Ashkenazi, A. 1934, 61: Leningrad. Leningradskii soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 6/1934.

enhanced, since they had played a crucial role in preparing the cadres.³³⁹ All of those mentioned were active in the Union and, significantly, were also prominent figures in these institutes. Thus, the preparation of the future generation and musicological cadres was entrusted to the old bourgeois specialists, without straightforward political conditions being imposed upon them.

The Composers' Union did not just spout mere rhetoric on the subject of cadre-work; it took active measures that gave young composers opportunities to participate in the Union's work. In the winter of 1933, a congress of composition students and future pedagogues was arranged. All of the participants mentioned were less than thirty years old. Aram Khachaturian (born 1903), Gavriil Popov (1904), Iurii Biriukov (1908), Nina Makarova (1908), Boris Mokrousov (1909), Tikhon Khrennikov (1913), and several less well-known composers were mentioned as prominent representatives. According to Atovmian, the congress pointed out that reorganizing the conservatories was already producing results.³⁴⁰

Yet, it seemed as though young composers were being ignored by many other musical institutes, especially when it came to composition contracts. *Muzgiz*, Soviet radio, and the Moscow Philharmonia (*Mosfil*)³⁴¹ were mentioned as important employers who were ignoring young composers. The Composers' Union took on the task of advising these institutes that contracts should also be offered to young professionals. Atovmian emphasized the role of young composers in the struggle for Soviet music.³⁴² In 1937 a leading article by Makarov-Rakitin discussed the issue of young composers defending their rights. He regarded that, despite their successes (Khrennikov and Khachaturian were most often cited), they were not given enough attention and their music was still played too rarely.³⁴³ It seems that a great deal was expected from the future generation.

The Union's work among young composers was constrained and unsatisfying due to a lack of resources. This did not prevent ambitious planning. Dmitrii Kabalevskii suggested that seminars and consultations for cadres should be held in order to improve the quality of their work.³⁴⁴ The Composers' Union targeted the cadres perhaps in order to both train and control future members prior to their full membership in the Union. Kabalevskii's suggestion did not go unnoticed. A youth sector was established at the Composers' Union in Moscow. The sector organized recitals of new

³³⁹ Rezoliutsiia 1-i sessii po voprosam muzykalnoi kritiki, sozvannoi LSSK (16, 17 i 18 noiabria 1933 g.). In *SM* 2/1934: 64.

³⁴⁰ Atovmian, L. 1933, 137: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933. 137.

³⁴¹ Philharmonia was in Soviet use a broader concept than a mere orchestra. Despite a symphony orchestra, it often entailed music libraries, chamber ensembles, arranged lectures. In short, it was rather a concert organization than a sheer orchestra.

³⁴² Atovmian, L. 1933, 137: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

³⁴³ Makarov-Rakitin, K. 1937, 5-10: O kompozitorskoi molodezhi. In *SM* 9/1937.

³⁴⁴ Skoblionok, A. 1934, 72: V Moskovskom Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 8/1934.

compositions and discussions about finished compositions by young composers.³⁴⁵ This sector concentrated purely on young composers, since a sector for children's music had responsibility for matters of musical education.³⁴⁶ In two years, this section was, however, terminated. Kabalevskii, at least, considered this a positive step, since the existence of the youth section (at this point it was no longer a sector) in effect isolated older and younger members from each other. After this restructuring, young composers were better integrated into the Union.³⁴⁷ Yet, only a year later, the youth section re-emerged and the issues of young composers were once again discussed separately.

Professor Maksimilian Shteinberg of Leningrad Conservatory, who taught composition to most of the prominent students of the 1920s and 1930s, regarded that cadre-work in the Conservatory had improved after the April Resolution. In previous years, many students had been "busy with mass songs of average quality," but after the resolution students were developing more rapidly. Shteinberg emphasized that the personal qualities of every student were of most help in understanding the Soviet thematic. Students who had considered themselves proletarian musicians were now composing chamber music, concertos, and instrumental music, all of which had previously been considered formalistic genres. He believed that cadres were now free from the narrow framework of Soviet music, the "fruits of the cabinet indoctrination," offered them by *RAPM*.³⁴⁸

The older generation was concerned not only by the quality of professional education, but also by the activities that the younger generation engaged in. Some were worried that students would not be "cultured" enough. They were not acquainted with classical literature or even with the latest achievements of science and technique:

If there one enquired among young composers and students, one could easily find out that the best thing [about the Composers' Union] was not the free entrance to exhibitions or access to the best stagings of Drama Theater. Yet, none of them would consider leaving concerts by Anserm, Sebastian, or Lualdi³⁴⁹ unattended.³⁵⁰

The report emphasized that, although participation in concerts was of course important, there was a danger that composers would become blinkered and alienated from the other arts.³⁵¹ The concerns expressed about young

³⁴⁵ GTsMMK, f. 286, d. 497, l. 1. The sector was active at least in autumn 1934.

³⁴⁶ GTsMMK, f. 286, d. 497, ll. 24–42.

³⁴⁷ Sobranie molodykh kompozitorov. In *SM* 7/1937: 74.

³⁴⁸ Shteinberg, M. 1933, 124–125: Slushateliu – sovetskuiu muzyku. In *SM* 3/1933.

³⁴⁹ Ernest Ansermet (1883–1969) was a Swiss conductor, composer and musicologist; Georges Sebastian (1903–89, Sebestyén) was a Hungarian conductor; Lualdi refers possibly to Italian composer-conductor Adriano Lualdi (1883–1971). Conductors were musical superstars of the era. Many international conductors visited the Soviet Union before their access to the Soviet Union was restricted in the late 1930s.

³⁵⁰ Atovmian, L. 1933, 137–138: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

³⁵¹ Atovmian, L. 1933, 138: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

composers' cultural ignorance were fairly typical of any older generation reaction to the behavior of the young.

A much more acute concern about the youth work of the Composers' Union was its lack of funds. Still the work was not abandoned altogether. Fifteen contracts were awarded to young composers in 1933 and six young composers received a monthly salary. However, many more young composers were left outside the funding controlled by the Composers' Union.³⁵² The Union could not adequately deal with the needs of young composers by itself; as it was, the Union was already unable to settle other matters in a satisfactory way. Yet, the Composers' Union did as much as it could, and toward the end of the 1930s an increasing number of activities were made available to composers. When contracts were restructured for the season of 1936/37, twenty-six contracts were reserved for young composers.³⁵³ In early March of 1938, for example, concerts were held that showcased works by young composers and creative meetings were held in order to evaluate their music.³⁵⁴

The Composers' Union paid attention to young composers (both members and future members) and tried to control their education. From the viewpoint of the Party, the generation educated in the 1930s was the "power generation" of the future, and composers were no exception to this. Their education was trusted for the old pre-revolutionary intelligentsia and thus they became representatives of the old Russian tradition of composition. The teaching in conservatories came under the close scrutiny of the Party largely through the Committee on Artistic Affairs, because it had been correctly assumed that formalist leanings originated in the teaching given in the conservatories. Yet, although the older administrators were replaced by the Soviet-trained generation, the difference between the generations did not lie primarily in their respective education. Music education did not experience such a dramatic change.

Free discussion

Among young composers proletarian musicians were well represented as quite many of them had been in Conservatories when *RAPM* still existed. They were accepted to the Composers' Union just like non-proletarian musicians, perhaps partly presenting a certain degree of reconciliation between previously disagreeing groups. It is also significant that open criticism was permitted within the organization. Apart from proletarian musicians, even Union leaders belonging to Party were not immune to criticism. Open discussion and free criticism were in fact notable features of the early Composers' Union, so much so that Richard Taruskin has referred to the Composers' Union that existed before the campaign against formalism in 1936 as a forum.³⁵⁵ Although the

³⁵² Atovmian, L. 1933, 138: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzu sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

³⁵³ Sobranie molodykh kompozitorov. In *SM* 7/1937: 74.

³⁵⁴ V Soiuzu sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 3/1938: 96.

³⁵⁵ Taruskin 1997, 517. However, he does not refer to any sources to support this notion.

future of the Composers' Union remained unclear because the inaugural congress had been postponed, there seemed to be a consensus that the Composers' Union would become a large and powerful organization. In general, everyone realized that the Union was only semi-established, but nevertheless most referred to it as a nation-wide organization, which it definitely was not. In many cases, the Union was referred to as "the leading musical organization of the artistic front."³⁵⁶

The fact that there were occasionally calls for contributions on certain themes could sometimes result in very unoriginal articles in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*. In their contributions about the April Resolution, many composers wrote in a way that closely resembled Party jargon. Iurii Shaporin, a composer of some standing, regarded the April Resolution to be a part of the inevitable historical process. Music was about to move into a new developmental phase:

[In art unions] creative activity will not be pressed by formal dogmatism and be dulled by cliquish fanaticism, but will concentrate on the main problems of Soviet musical art, helped by genuine and principal criticism that is given in a comradely and creative atmosphere.³⁵⁷

Shaporin's article emphasized the importance of the April Resolution and the positive impact it had upon the musical world, but Shaporin managed to make it sound very formal and hollow. It could as well have originated from the *agit-prop* section of the Party Central Committee. He was not alone; several other composers wrote positively, but still half-heartedly, about the resolution. This was perhaps due to changes that were taking place in Soviet society. In order to survive these pressures, many individuals hid their private self and created an official persona for public occasions. The official persona would always be enthusiastic about the needs of the Party and society, and, in this way, the private individual was protected. An arrangement of this kind became inevitable for most people simply in order to survive the pressures created by the Stalinist society.³⁵⁸ It is likely that many composers wanted somehow to express their support for the changes that took place after the April Resolution. The easiest way to do this was to repeat official jargon rather than taking the risk of writing one's own personal opinions.

Most of these opinions, whether personal or imitated, were found in discussions that took place generally in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*. Discussion was as lively as it was open. Among the various topics discussed was music history (already perceived in Part I). Some writers made comments about the future of the Composers' Union and ideological themes were discussed. Some writers for

³⁵⁶ For example Taranushchenko, V. 1933, 156: SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. In *SM* 3/1933.

³⁵⁷ Shaporin, Iu. 1933, 127: Moi mysli o godovshchine 23 apreliia. In *SM* 3/1933.

³⁵⁸ Brockdorff, Hans Heinrich 1998, 148-149: The individual and the Collective. A Cultural Approach to the Question of Dualism in Soviet Society. In Bryld, Mette and Kulavig, Erik (eds), *Soviet Civilization between Past and Present*. Odense: Odense University Press. In the case of intelligentsiia Brockdorff perceives that their twofold nature dated back to the 19th Century when artists escaped the problems of reality to their ideal worlds in their minds.

example considered the ways in which music was connected to socialist construction. It is evident from the magazine's archives—in which all discarded articles are stored—that the editors of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* did not prevent or censor contributors' views. Refusal to publish an article was primarily based on its length or style. There are lengthy articles of more than fifty pages—far too long for publication in the magazine—held in the archive, along with handwritten submissions, some of which are almost impossible to read, and contributions that are full of misspellings or simply very obscure that were rejected for publication.³⁵⁹ Genuine debate and conflicting views were common features of the early Composers' Union.

Many musical genres that had faced difficulties during the First Five-Year Plan were once again the subject of discussion. This was especially true of the symphony. The secretary of the Leningrad Composers' Union, Iokhelson, criticized the previous leader of *RAPM*, Lev Lebedinskii, on the grounds that he had undermined symphonic music. Lebedinskii had regarded mass song as the basic compositional genre through which every other musical genre should be approached. In Iokhelson's opinion, symphony should be valued as an instrumental piece of work and was as such the most valuable source of Soviet music.³⁶⁰ Although Iokhelson did not mention *RAPM*, he argued that Lebedinskii was wrong because he had been a proletarian musician. However, former proletarian musicians started to be involved in the same discourse as every other composer. Boris Schwarz among others has argued that ideas of proletarian musicians were banned and thus were doomed once and for all³⁶¹, but this was not the case. Only the autocracy of proletarian musicians ceased. In principle, proletarian musicians were free to express their opinions, although they were still not accepted by everybody.

The diverse writings published in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* also included articles by the long-serving Commissar of Enlightenment, Anatolii Lunacharskii. His article about Richard Wagner was published in the position usually reserved for an editorial. The next issue found his article about Rimskii-Korsakov located right after the editorial.³⁶² The Composers' Union obviously honored him enough to situate his articles prominently. Lunacharskii, however, died the same year and no wider range of his writings could emerge. Although Lunacharskii's articles contained nothing of a political nature, his contributions could still be interpreted by contemporaries as a kind of recognizing of those liberal policies that preceded the First Five-Year Plan, perhaps even a return to them, since Lunacharskii was a well-known figure among composers. After all, several pre-revolutionary composers had worked in *Narkompros* and *Muzo* during the years after the October Revolution. The fact that Lunacharskii was

³⁵⁹ The file (fond) of the *Sovetskaia Muzyka* was in RGALI, f. 654.

³⁶⁰ Iokhelson, V. 1934, 15: Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov k XVII siezdu partii. In *SM* 1/1934.

³⁶¹ Schwarz 1983, 112.

³⁶² Lunacharskii, A. 1933, 1–6: R. Vagner. In *SM* 3/1933; Lunacharskii, A. 1933, 6–12: N. A. Rimskii-Korsakov. In *SM* 4/1933.

writing in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* may have influenced those who had been initially skeptical about the Composers' Union.

Organizing the organization

Bureaucracy and organizational structure were perhaps the issues most discussed by the Composers' Union during its initial years. The Moscow branch had set up a board, a presidium, and several subsections and sectors. There seem to have been quite a number of different organs, when one considers that the membership in Moscow numbered around 150. After a year's work, in autumn of 1933, the first plenum considered the structure of the Moscow branch to be a suitable model for other branches. By this time, its structure had already been altered twice.³⁶³ The emphasis placed on administration reveals two things: firstly, the leaders of the early Composers' Union were bureaucrats, and, secondly, the Composers' Union was preparing for the future. The Composers' Union was obviously trying to establish a structure that could support union-level operations. If this was not the case, then it is difficult to understand why the organization's bureaucracy was so cumbersome. When the inaugural congress failed to materialize, the structure of the Composers' Union became too heavy for a mere municipal branch to bear, as the government official Pavel Kerzhentsev argued at the end of 1936. Kerzhentsev saw it as imperative that the structure and bureaucracy of the Composers' Union be lightened and argued that administration was one of the organization's biggest weaknesses.³⁶⁴ The response to the problem of bloated bureaucracy was to restructure that very bureaucracy.

From the outset, Levon Atovmian (1901–1973) was one of the administrators of the Composers' Union. In getting benefits and material aid for composers, Atovmian was indeed a rainmaker and broker in mediating between different organizations. This energetic man did not have a very high profile outside the Union but, within it, he was responsible for several operations, one of the most important being Union finances. Atovmian served in the Red Army (from 1919 until the end of the 1920s) and joined the Party in 1920. Between 1929 and 1933, he served in *Vseroskomdram* and had already become acquainted with a number of composers. He also occupied an important position within *Rabis*, leading the composers' own subsection (*gorkom kompozitorov*) of Moscow's regional *Rabis*. After this, he became the

³⁶³ The structure of the Composers' Union was extremely cumbersome considering the relatively small number of composers. While the members of the Moscow Union numbered over one hundred, there were four sections divided into several groups for handling special questions. There were also special sectors for musicians, musicologists, and so forth. The level of bureaucracy was unbearable. Atovmian, L. 1933, 6–9: *Struktura Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov*. In *BSSK* 3–4/1933, p. 6–9; Atovmian, L. 1933, 139: *K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov*. In *SM* 5/1933. The structure of the Composers' Union overlapped with that of the city committee of composers, which was the trade union structure for composers. This overlapping concerned administrators in autumn 1932, see: *Po soiuzam. V SSK*. In *SI* November 27, 1932: 1.

³⁶⁴ *RGALI*, f. 962, op. 5, d. 25, l. 1.

organizational secretary of the Composers' Union and eventually in 1939 head of its funding organ, *muzfond*. This final appointment was just part of a logical continuum, as throughout the 1930s he had been the key figure in composers' financial affairs.

Atovmian's report from the first plenum in 1933 considered the Union's main problem to be the isolation of its administration. The presidium was not in touch with the day-to-day issues that concerned composers. Certain sectors took care of practical matters and were overloaded with unnecessary work. Atovmian also shared the plenum's view that there were too many different sections.³⁶⁵ Although the Moscow branch of the Composers' Union had existed for little more than a year, on October 1, 1933, it adopted its third different structure. This one, however, proved to be less cumbersome than its predecessors had been. There were still four sectors that dealt with creative work, mass music and propaganda work, amateur³⁶⁶ art, and administrative work including financial administration. In addition, the various specialists belonging to the Union were organized into three different sections: musicologists (including critics), performers, and "defense" specialists (those involved in military music).

The previous structures of the Composers' Union had been burdened with many more sections than the new structure was. However, in time, the number of sections in the Union would again increase. All these sectors and sections operated under the presidium. Sections seem to have had a little more freedom than sectors, although they did bring together specialists more by profession than by interest. Each sector tried to fulfill some aspects of the Union's primary aims. The creative sector discussed matters concerned with Soviet music, organized contracts and helped composers with their compositions. The propagation of Soviet music and contact with musical organizations (including foreign organizations) was controlled by the mass music and propaganda sector, which also arranged concerts of Soviet music.

The section in charge of amateur art was in contact with worker clubs and amateur musical circles—work that was very important for ideological reasons. This sector also helped to educate and organize musical activity in *kolkhozes* and factories. Responsibility for the efficient running of all other sectors lay with the administrative sector. It also received membership applications and took care of the material and juridical tasks. Of all the sections, "defense" perhaps requires the most explanation. It was responsible for military music and connections with the Red Army.³⁶⁷ In fact, this section had the longest

³⁶⁵ Atovmian, L. 1933, 139: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

³⁶⁶ Amateur art is used here to refer to Russian term *samodeiatelnoe iskusstvo*, which refers to art of non-professionals. Sometimes, an English translation, autonomous art is used, which is not quite correct, since these groups were guided by professionals. The Russian term refers to the myth that these groups had become into existence autonomously and created their own proletarian art regardless of bourgeois professionals.

³⁶⁷ Atovmian, L. 1933, 6–9: Struktura Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 3–4/1933.

history, remained the least changed, and was among the most active sections in the Composers' Union. It met regularly and had a variety of responsibilities – not only organizing the composition of music for the army and thematic military music but also arranging trips for its members to different army garrisons.

Even this number of sections and sectors could not cover the needs of the Union. The sectors were divided into different groups, which then concentrated on a specific issue such as contracts, the sheet-music library, symphony concerts, or work amongst pioneers and *Komsomol*. Obviously, the scale of operations indicates that this structure was designed to serve functions that extended beyond the Moscow Composers' Union.³⁶⁸ A mere municipal branch could hardly have taken advantage of such an extensive administration. But as the establishment of the more extensive Union was delayed, it is interesting to see how the structure was revised five years later, when the Composers' Union was already close in becoming a genuine national organization. In 1938, there were still three sections: performers', musicologists' (and critics), but instead of defensive, there was youth section for young composers. Sectors were now removed and instead ten different groups were organized, all concentrating on different genres: opera (with ballet and operetta), symphonic, chamber and instrumental, vocal, choir, theatre, film, wind instrumental, folk instrumental, and mass and estrade musical genre. Also, three subject matters were promoted to the status of having a commission (perhaps because they entailed most outside consultants): childrens' music, defensive, and music of Soviet nationalities.³⁶⁹

The administration was quite massive, but in 1938 it was directed almost completely towards creative work, unlike five years earlier, when financial and organizational matters were central. The board, consisting of 15 members, took care of many administrative measures, but there was also the secretariat of three members plus the organizational secretary, who had the main responsibility over administration.³⁷⁰ At this point, these positions were reserved by composers and musicologists themselves, not by Party bureaucrats. Final establishment of the Union was also on the horizon.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Composers' Union was, at least in part, an autonomous institution. Leonid Maximenkov has regarded that the administration of music formed a bureaucratic rarity in the Stalinist era. The Composers' Union could act autonomously, or "in half-freedom," a state of affairs that continued for most of the 1930s.³⁷¹ Kirill Tomoff, who has studied the Composers' Union under full-fledged Stalinism, suggests that in the 1940s the Composers' Union was not an autonomous institution, but rather it was "an agency" capable of maneuvering within the system.³⁷² Both definitions could be

³⁶⁸ Atovmian, L. 1933, 6–9: *Struktura Soiuza sovetских kompozitorov*. In *BSSK* 3–4/1933.

³⁶⁹ *Khronika*. In *SM* 6/1938: 92–93.

³⁷⁰ *V Soiuzе sovetских kompozitorov*. In *SM* 4/1938: 90.

³⁷¹ Maksimenkov 1997, 29.

³⁷² Tomoff 2006, 3.

applied to the Composers' Union of the 1930s. It is likely that the Composers' Union had most room to maneuver during the early 1930s, but after the mid-1930s the Union continued to be a significantly powerful organization.

Preserving the past and new acquisitions

The organizational sector of the Composers' Union was lead by Levon Atovmian. It aimed to improve the conditions and standing of composers. In this respect, Atovmian was truly remarkable. One of the concrete measures he took was to acquire musical scores. There was an acute shortage of sheet music, without which composers were unable to work properly. Atovmian himself believed that it was often impossible to obtain certain compositions and so he established a sheet-music library with financial help from the Moscow City Committee of the Party. By 1933, the library already housed over 5,000 titles, including valuable and rare scores from Rimskii-Korsakov, Tchaikovskii, and others. The library, as Atovmian emphasized, did not house mass musical works; these were meant for amateur collectives, which had their own specialist libraries. As was stated, this library concentrated entirely on new and professional music.³⁷³ The library was a good example of an instance in which the Composers' Union was able to respond to the needs and wishes of composers.

Within a few years, the library was operating very efficiently, as the 1935 balance of accounts for the Moscow branch suggests. A notable proportion of the budget was already earmarked for the acquisition of scores.³⁷⁴ It is interesting that among the first scores ordered were works by Alban Berg, Darius Milhaud, Maurice Ravel, Igor Stravinskii, and George Gershwin.³⁷⁵ The scores ordered by the library were among the most modern Western music available. This strongly contradicts the presumed Party policy of banning modernist Western-style music. Indeed, at this time, members of the Composers' Union had wide access to modern music and could easily draw influences from it. Soviet composers were definitely not completely isolated from the rest of the musical world. This openness to Western influences is underlined by the fact that the creative sector of the Union called for a seminar to study recent Western music. Although there was a simultaneous call for a seminar about Marxist-Leninist philosophy, I believe that the former proved to be a more popular suggestion.³⁷⁶

Furthermore, scores by Western composers were not just housed in the repository: concerts based on these works were also arranged. The Union organized, for instance, a concert at the Conservatory in the spring of 1934 that

³⁷³ Atovmian, L. 1933, 138: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

³⁷⁴ RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 1-12.

³⁷⁵ Spisok not. Inostrannykh kompozitorov poluchennykh iz-za granitsy. In *BSSK* 1/1933, p. 10.

³⁷⁶ Postanovlenie Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov s aktivom ot 25/XI 1933 g. po dokladu tvorcheskogo sektora. In *BSSK* 3-4/1933, p. 3.

included music by Francis Poulenc, Arthur Honegger, Henri Tomasi and Ravel. In fact, all of these composers can be connected with Prokofiev, who may have been behind the acquisition of these scores. However, music from other composers such as the British composer Ernest Moeran was also included.³⁷⁷ But the connection endured even after the 1936 campaign against formalism, which is perhaps a bit surprising. For example, in the spring of 1939 a concert of modernist French composers was organized with the support of *VOKS*, state organ for cultural relations abroad. This concert introduced the music of Ravel, Poulenc, Honegger, Albert Roussel and Elsa Barraine.³⁷⁸ Thus, Soviet composers were not completely stranded, although keeping up contacts to the world outside the Soviet Union was not easy. Perhaps these were also rights reserved for the elite; something that was prohibited because of ideological reasons to most was not refused the selected few.

The library also became a center for the music of Soviet composers. Generally, the establishment of this library was in accordance with the overall development of the Soviet Union. During the 1930s, existing museums, archives, and libraries finally began to be renovated and enhanced, and new institutions were established, which was a clear change from the situation during the 1920s.³⁷⁹ All of this was necessary in order to ensure the proper preservation of Soviet classics and Soviet culture. Thus, the museum of musical culture—another concrete attempt to improve conditions for the musical world—was set up at almost the same time as the library was established.

Lev Atovmian put forward the idea of establishing an all-Union museum of musical culture. Numerous houses of commemoration all over the Soviet Union were in a dreadful state because they had neither resources nor workers available to them. As an example, Atovmian spoke about Spendiarov³⁸⁰, whose original manuscripts (held in his house of commemoration) had been subject to abuses and had even been partially destroyed. Atovmian added that some of Rimskii-Korsakov's scores had suffered a similar fate. In order to improve this state of affairs, the presidium of the Composers' Union decided to set up a committee to organize the establishment of the museum.³⁸¹ One of the aims of

³⁷⁷ Khronika. In *BSSK* 4-5/1934: 21.

³⁷⁸ Po soiuzu. In *SM* 5/1939: 79. Perhaps the strong connection with French music was partly due to almost Gorkii-like adulation of French (non-communist, but sympathetic both to the socialist movement and Stalin) writer Romain Rolland (1866-1944), who had met with both Gorkii and Stalin in 1935. Before and especially after that event, Rolland and his works were highly regarded in the Soviet Union. Some of his works were even set to operatic stage, the most successful one perhaps being Dmitrii Kabalevskii's *Colas Breugnon* after Rolland's historical novel of the same name (1913). Rolland became kind of an unofficial cultural ambassador of France in the Soviet Union. Ties were especially close in the field of literature, but they appear to have been close in music as well. However, they naturally existed mainly with those left-leaning artistic circles of France.

³⁷⁹ Kim 1988, 142-143.

³⁸⁰ The composer in question is most presumably Armenian Aleksander Spendiarian (also known as Spendiarov) who died in 1928.

³⁸¹ K organizatsii vsesoiuznogo muzeia muzyki (postanovlenie prezidiuma SSK). In *BSSK* 1/1933, 4. This committee was filled with prominent personalities including Boris Asafiev, Mikhail Gnesin, Reingold Gliere and Aleksandr Goldenveizer. The committee was given a two-month period in which to fulfill its task.

the museum was to collect manuscripts and thus improve the propagation of Soviet music. It was believed that storing compositions centrally would help to preserve them and also enable their proper circulation across the musical community.³⁸²

The musical museum of the USSR was still unestablished in summer 1936³⁸³. Boris Vlasiev wrote that State Hermitage³⁸⁴ was in theory responsible for conserving studies of for example Glinka and Rubinshtein, but in truth these hardly resembled museums. The same applied to the collection of musical instruments. Vlasiev complained that this was far from the proper propagation of Soviet music that was needed. At least Vlasiev knew who to turn to: he considered that this was a task of the Committee on Artistic Affairs to arrange a proper conservation of musical heritage.³⁸⁵

The idea behind the museum was to save and categorize the work of Soviet composers for future generations. This aim was part of a broader attempt to restore Russian cultural heritage. Soviet music was seen as the rightful heir of the Russian school of music. In order to propagate the work of Soviet composers, the Moscow branch compiled a list of musical works composed by its members. However, some of the works mentioned were of pre-revolutionary origin, as was the case with Prokofiev (all of whose works were listed).³⁸⁶ Yet, this is only in line with other attempts to present how Soviet music was a natural continuum to pre-revolutionary Russian music. Therefore is it no wonder that Arnold Alshvang wrote that "Every Soviet musician can justly boast to be a rightful heir of Glinka, Musorgskii, Rimskii-Korsakov and Tchaikovskii."³⁸⁷ The museum thus served the same end as the library: the efficient propagation of Soviet music.³⁸⁸

With his splendid contacts with the Party structure, Atovmian was enabled to arrange the necessary funding for initiatives such as the library and museum. Moreover, while the Composers' Union was still weak, Atovmian was present at a meeting of *Rabis*, during which plans for the Fifteenth Anniversary of the October Revolution were discussed. The Moscow Committee of the Party had called for seven symphony concerts to be arranged. However, 20,000 rubles of funding had to be secured in order to stage these concerts. The Composers' Union announced that it did not have any funds, but Atovmian, who represented *Rabis* at the meeting, replied right away that *Vseroskomdram* (where he also held administrative post) owed money to the Composers' Union.

³⁸² Atovmian, L. 1933, 140-141: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

³⁸³ State Central Museum of Musical Culture was established in 1943 on the premises of the musical museum located in the Moscow Conservatory. This museum was Nikolai Rubinstein's former office, serving as a museum from 1912.

³⁸⁴ State Hermitage Museum is, and was in Leningrad of the 1930s, one of the largest museums in the world.

³⁸⁵ Vlasiev, B. 1936, 79: Ob organizatsii muzykal'nogo muzeia v SSSR. In *SM* 7/1936.

³⁸⁶ Simfonicheskie proizvedeniia sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 2/1933, pp. 5-12 and Spisok proizvedeniia sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 3-4/1933, pp. 10-49.

³⁸⁷ Alshvang, A. 1938, 5-8: Narodnost v russkoi klassicheskoi muzyke. In *SM* 5/1938.

³⁸⁸ Pravila polzovaniia notnoi bibliotekoi Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 2/1933, pp. 12-13.

Atovmian also managed to secure 5,000 rubles from *Muzgiz* and *Mosfil*, but *Narkompros* was unable to provide financial support and could only offer free use of the concert hall. The task of approaching the Party for more money was delegated to Atovmian.³⁸⁹

Search for welfare

Economic well-being of composers

Soviet art unions were not free from mutual competition, careerism, or striving for material gain, meaning that they did not differ from other Soviet organizations.³⁹⁰ One, and I argue that a very important, function of these unions was to provide material well-being for their members. Although the question of earning a living is always present when creating art, in Soviet art unions material questions and creative work were combined in a completely new and integrated way. Slowly but surely artists became part of the new Soviet elite, enjoying benefits that the average citizen could never hope to achieve. Their privileged status, however, was only proportional as the Soviet standard of living never reached that of the West in the 1930s. Still, inside the Soviet Union class distinctions became a reality.³⁹¹

From the outset, the Composers' Union was largely involved in matters that concerned their members' well-being and social needs rather than those connected to art. However, it should be borne in mind that there were other extremely important connections between composers and leading Party officials besides organizational ties.³⁹² Still, at times the primary concern of the Composers' Union during the 1930s seems to have been settling composers' material well-being rather than addressing ideological questions about Soviet music.

A fund, which enabled its members to be well off, was set up for each art union. All of the members of an art union were also members of the fund, which they controlled. Thus, in theory, art unions were autonomous both

³⁸⁹ GARF, f. 5508, op. 1. d. 1848, l. 20-21.

³⁹⁰ Kenez and Shepherd 1998, 25. Careerism was already very widespread in Stalinist times in the Writers' Union according to Garrards (1990, 72). We can assume that this also applied to other arts as well, although connections with the Communist Party were especially close within the Writers' Union.

³⁹¹ One of the best descriptions of the Soviet consumer economy during the early Stalinist era in an English translation from Russian by Elena Osokina, see: Osokina, Elena 2001. *Our Daily Bread. Socialist Distribution and the Art of Survival in Stalin's Russia, 1927-1941*. Translated by Transchel, Kate and Bucher, Kate. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe.

³⁹² About connections between the new elite and Party officials, see: Fitzpatrick, Sheila 1998, 38-40: *Intelligentsia and power. Client-Patron Relations in Stalin's Russia*. In Hildermeier, Manfred von (es.) and Müller-Luckner, Elisabeth, *Stalinismus vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Neue Wege der Forschung*. Schriften des Historischen Kollegs. Kolloquien 43. R. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag.

economically and politically.³⁹³ The charters for writers' and architects' funds were ratified on February 20, 1935.³⁹⁴ In music, the situation was complex throughout the 1930s, as *muzfond* was only established in autumn 1939.³⁹⁵ Artists had to wait even longer for their fund, which was not set up until 1944.³⁹⁶ Despite this, the Composers' Union managed to maintain the belief that the material well-being of composers was improving. Maksimilian Shteinberg wrote that, although the Composers' Union had just been established, "the most visible means for supporting creative work were contracts, which, after a year, started to be broadly available"³⁹⁷

Shteinberg was writing about contracts that provided individuals with a salary, thus allowing them to concentrate on creative work. Shteinberg saw these contracts as a notable sign of improvement in the musical world. He was certainly in favor of the extension of this system of contracts.³⁹⁸ Although the awarding of contracts was only a temporary phase that preceded the establishment of *muzfond*, contracts were an important source of income for composers. Maximenkov has argued that during the lean year of 1932 *Agitprop* and *Narkomfin*³⁹⁹ were only able to concentrate properly on writers. Because of this, music was ignored for some time.⁴⁰⁰ The time was ripe for this to change in 1939.⁴⁰¹

The April Resolution was supposed to bring older composers such as Shteinberg back into the fold of Soviet music. If this was purpose of the resolution, then positive signals like Shteinberg's were indeed important. Shteinberg's writing also revealed other aspects of this system. The Composers' Union acted as a mediator in the awarding of contracts; funding often came from outside the Union. In any case, the contract system expanded quickly. In June 1934, the Leningrad branch reported that contracts already provided the main income for several composers. In 1934, 200,600 rubles passed through the branch's accounts. It received these funds from radio and *LDKhVD* (Leningrad House of Children's Artistic Education) as well as from *Narkompros* and from composers' royalties. Approximately half of this money was spent on

³⁹³ Tsepin, A. I. 1970, 144-169: Rol tvorcheskikh soiuzov v organizatsii truda, materialnom obespechenii i kulturno-bytovom obsluzhivanii tvorcheskikh rabotnikov. In Iampolskaia, Ts. A. (ed.), *Tvorcheskie soiuzy v sssr (organizatsionno-pravovye voprosy)*. Moscow: Iuridicheskaiia literatura.

³⁹⁴ Lvovich, Iu. Ia. 1970, 103: Imushchestvennoe polozhenie tvorcheskikh soiuzov. In Iampolskaia, Ts. A. (ed.), *Tvorcheskie soiuzy v sssr (organizatsionno-pravovye voprosy)*. Moscow: Iuridicheskaiia literatura.

³⁹⁵ RGALI, f. 2077, op.1, d. 21, l. 3.

³⁹⁶ Lvovich 1970, 134.

³⁹⁷ Shteinberg, M. 1933, 124-125: Slushateliu - sovetskuiu muzyku. In *SM* 3/1933.

³⁹⁸ Shteinberg, M. 1933, 124-125: Slushateliu - sovetskuiu muzyku. In *SM* 3/1933.

³⁹⁹ Commissariate on finance.

⁴⁰⁰ Maksimenkov 1997, 29. Maximenkov bases this partially on the fact that meetings between Stalin and composers did not take place in the first half of the 1930s. The first known instance of such a meeting was when Stalin met Dzerzhinskii at the premiére of his opera *Tikhii Don/Silent Don* in January 1936. A few days later *Pravda* launched the infamous anti-formalist campaign.

⁴⁰¹ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1009, l. 23; Rodovskii, B. I. 1976, 804-805: Muzykalnii fond. In Keldysh, Iu. V. (ed.), *Muzykalnaia Entsiklopediia*. Part 3. Moscow: Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia.

contracts.⁴⁰² For composers this represented a notable economic enhancement, since traditionally composers were paid only after they had completed their work. Now they could work knowing that their living was assured.

Despite these sums the Union was able to distribute, its own coffers seemed initially next to empty.

A group of composers has appealed to the presidium of the Soviet Composers' Union to award a prize to A. A. Krein on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday in recognition of his meritorious work on behalf of the artistic world. The presidium of the Soviet Composers' Union has decided to forward this application to *Narkompros*.⁴⁰³

This solemn announcement reveals something about the financial status of the early Composers' Union. Funds were meant for contracts and the Union hardly had any money to prize its members even on the occasion of their anniversaries. Yet, *Narkompros* and later the Committee on Artistic Affairs, was responsible for nominating those who received government prizes and honorary titles; the Composers' Union could only propose grantees. Contracts, however, were initially much more important.

At the first plenum, contracts were identified as the most significant way of supporting compositional activity.⁴⁰⁴ This system of contracts was inaugurated in 1931, but was extended significantly after the April Resolution. Although during 1931 only twelve composers received a share of 15,000 rubles⁴⁰⁵, by 1932 forty composers were awarded a total of 70,000 rubles, and a total of 150,000 rubles was distributed to over a hundred composers and musicologists during the first nine months of 1933. These figures were apparently only for the Moscow area.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰² Ashkenazi, A. 1934, 63-64: Leningrad. Leningradskii soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 6/1934.

⁴⁰³ K plenumu SSK: Khronika SSK. In *SM* 5/1933: 140. The Composers' Union also applied for an honorary title for Krein, see Piatidesiatiletie A. A. Kreina. In *BSSK* 1/1933: 11. In fact, Krein was given the title of "Merited art worker" on 20th October 1933, see GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1911, l. 228.

⁴⁰⁴ Polozhenie o kontraktatsii kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 1/1933, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁰⁵ For comparing the cost of living, in 1936, with one ruble you could get one kilo of bread or 200 grams of rice, or 100 grams of rice, see for example: Kravis, Irving B. and Mintzes, Joseph 1950, 166: Food Prices in the Soviet Union, 1936-50. In *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 32 (2), 1950, pp. 164-168. Official Soviet announcement for average worker in 1936 was 170 rubles per month, see Wollenberg, Erich 1936: Wages and Prices in the Soviet Union. In *New International* 3 (3), 1936, pp. 70-72. In comparison, Fitzpatrick presents a case where a woman working as a typist received a monthly wage of 300 rubles. She and her husband hired one, at times even two girls to act as their personal servants, paying them a salary of 18 rubles per month and giving them a place to sleep in their kitchen. See: Fitzpatrick 1999, 99. In 1938 even regional Party secretaries had their funds raised multifold if compared to that of the worker, to 2000 rubles per month, see Fitzpatrick 1999, 102.

⁴⁰⁶ Atovmian, L. 1933, 136: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzu sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933. These figures apparently only referred to Moscow. The figures for Leningrad were as follows: in 1932, 30,000 rubles were used to fund the contracts of fifteen composers; in 1933, 52,000 rubles for thirty-three composers; and during the first four months of 1934 a total of 106,000 rubles had already been awarded to eighty-five composers. Ashkenazi, A. 1934, 63: Leningrad. Leningradskii soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 6/1934.

In his report, Atovmian stated that at first some composers had regarded these contracts only as a form of favoritism but that suspicion had faded with extension of the system. According to the report, “contracts are one of the most important methods of organizing musical creativity. It is also the most important means of planning musical creation.”⁴⁰⁷ The productiveness of these contracts was stressed and examples of compositions that had been funded through contracts were given including Miaskovskii’s Twelfth Symphony, Shebalin’s symphonic suite *Lenin*, and Shekhter’s *Turkmenian Suite*. In Leningrad, Shostakovich’s *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District* was one of the works that had been funded through a contract. In 1933 it was reported that thirteen operas and ballets, fifty-four symphonic works, twenty-five different instrumental works, fourteen piano works, and twenty-three vocal works—a total of one hundred and twenty-nine titles—had been composed under the contract system. Additionally, ten works of musicology had been funded through contracts.⁴⁰⁸ It must be mentioned, however, that these figures included work that had been started before the contract system began and that these composers merely received money from contracts at some point before they completed their compositions or texts. For example, Shostakovich had already begun to compose *Lady Macbeth* in 1930 but only completed it at the end of 1932.⁴⁰⁹ For administrative reasons it was, of course, expedient to present all these works as the fruits of the contract system. By over-emphasizing its efficacy, it was possible to secure the expansion of the system.

Contracts also had certain drawbacks, as they had been practically unconditional. In his or her application a composer was expected only to state whether the composition was an opera, symphony, or some other musical work. The plenum raised the idea that contracts could help to guide the creative work of the Union. In practice, composers were expected to present an idea or theme for their compositions.⁴¹⁰ This is significant if we consider the possible outcomes of ideological control over creative work. The suggestion that funding should be controlled and depend upon the submission of an account of the proposed composition fulfilled some preconditions of ideological control. These measures were not suggested by the Party; they came from composers themselves. At this point, however, these were only preconditions, since contracts were never used to exert ideological control. The content of compositions remained uncontrolled.

During the early 1930s composers were not forced in any way to compose on a Soviet thematic. Prominent composers voluntarily chose themes that supported the Party or the Soviet cause. Perhaps their motivation was in some cases publicity, a desire to receive further commissions, or even purely financial

⁴⁰⁷ Polozhenie o kontraktatsii kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 1/1933, pp. 7–8.

⁴⁰⁸ Atovmian, L. 1933, 136: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs Sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

⁴⁰⁹ Miheeva 1997, 153–157.

⁴¹⁰ Polozhenie o kontraktatsii kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 1/1933, pp. 7–8. Originally, the idea was that the application for the contract should have been more exacting, but the reality proved to be more free-minded. Atovmian, L. 1933, 136: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs Sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

gain. In 1931, Vissarion Shebalin composed a song-symphony based on Vladimir Maiakovskii's *Lenin*.⁴¹¹ Prokofiev also may have been sincere when he stated that he intended to compose an opera on a Soviet thematic.⁴¹² Shostakovich wrote about his great interest in Soviet opera, but went on to say that the "librettos offered [to me] were extremely schematic. . . . [Its] heroes were anemic and impotent. That's why I turned to classics (Gogol, Leskov)." Still, he called for a libretto that "reaches the greatness of our time. . . . [It should be] about victorious class and construction of socialism" and "[n]ot a libretto 'generally' about the Five-Year Plan."⁴¹³ Aleksandr Krein composed a funeral ode for Lenin in 1925; an opera *Zagmuk* (between 1929 and 1930), which dealt with the theme of the class war (even though in ancient Babylonia); and the symphonic work *USSR – division of shock workers* (1931–32), based on texts by Marx, Lenin, and Stalin.⁴¹⁴ Composers were by no means forced to compose on these themes. Generally, composers chose subjects in which they were personally interested, or they composed on a theme for which they had a commission, that is, were paid for.

Planning and control of creative work was discussed by the plenum, which argued that this was a very complex matter. The problem was that there were neither principles nor the means by which a system of guidance could be set up.⁴¹⁵ The creative sector of the Composers' Union arranged hearings, which were in fact round-table discussions after the work was played. A constructive spirit prevailed when compositions were discussed in the Union.⁴¹⁶ Both young and more experienced composers, like Shostakovich and Aleksei Zhivotov, would submit their compositions to these hearings.⁴¹⁷ In many cases, discussions were held after a composition had been completed; it was much less common for compositions to be discussed while they were still being composed. Thus, the aim of the discussions was more to make other composers aware of new ideas and the general development of their colleagues. At the same time, the discussions gave the other composers an opportunity to present their own views.

⁴¹¹ Schwarz 1983, 162. Music critic Aleksandr Ostretsov discussed in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* Shebalin's symphony *Lenin* quite extensively, see Ostretsov, A. 1934, 4–26: "Lenin" Simfoniia V. Shebalina. In *SM* 3/1934. Shebalin himself raised the subject of his *Lenin* and its development in the first issue of *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, see Shebalin, V. 1933, 122. O rabote nad simfoniei "Lenin". In *SM* 1/1933. See also Razheva, V. I. 2003, 59–60: *V. Ia. Shebalin. Zhizn' i tvorchestvo*. Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia. In these memoirs, Shebalin recalls the excellent reception his symphony received in Leningrad and Moscow in 1931 and 1932.

⁴¹² Prokofiev, S. 1933, 99: Zametki. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁴¹³ Shostakovich, D. 1933: 3. Plakat i smeiat'sia. In *SI* March 3, 1933.

⁴¹⁴ Krein, Aleksander 1933, 120–121: Kompozitor i kritika. In *SM* 1/1933.

⁴¹⁵ Atovmian, L. 1933, 136: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

⁴¹⁶ For example a meeting was held in the Moscow branch of the Composers' Union on 15th November 1934, at which two works by V. O. Ramm were introduced. A discussion followed on Ramm's development as a composer and the ways in which these works could contribute to the mass musical movement, see GTsMMK, f. 286, d. 497, ll. 99–113.

⁴¹⁷ Crucial work for Shostakovich's future career, his 5th symphony, was one the works heard in the Leningrad Composers' Union in 1937, see Fay 2000, 101.

There was already a governmental censorship organ, *Glavrepertkom*, and there was no need for such activity to take place within the Composers' Union. The idea of using the system of contracts to guide creative activity was not meant to enforce censorship, but rather to guide composers' attention to certain genres and themes.⁴¹⁸ In fact, the changes proposed by the plenum were quite reasonable. Composers were to submit a project plan to a committee of experts in order to receive funding. Prior to this, money had been distributed on the basis of a composer's previous achievements. Therefore, experienced composers had received money more easily, even if they did not have a clear plan for their next composition.

The creative sector of the Composers' Union announced at the end of 1933 that it would inspect all contracts awarded during that year by February 1, 1934. The sector had some four months to complete its task.⁴¹⁹ It is highly likely that this inspection only meant that the creative sector would examine to whom the funding was given and what was done with it. The Union seems to have been more eager to produce statistics than to ask composers why their work was not progressing. At least, I have found no indication that funding would have been withdrawn from an individual who had been unable to complete a composition within a set period.

The system, however, was undergoing a process of transformation as it was found to be ill-working. In 1935 the Leningrad branch announced that it had restructured the original system of contracts in order to make creative plans a key priority. This was said to have helped to broaden the themes and genres of compositions. The secretary of the Leningrad branch in 1935 had examined the creative plans of sixty composers.⁴²⁰ In Moscow, Kabalevskii stressed the lack of supervision, which caused composers not to follow plans for which they had received money. In Kabalevskii's view, the old system nurtured recklessness. Responsibility of composers was emphasized in the new system that was inaugurated for the season of 1936/37. Main partners in cooperation in connection with contracts were still *Muzgiz*, *Mosfil* and the Radio.⁴²¹ It seems most likely that the system was enhanced in order to make it more impartial rather than to censor composers' work. Still, it was mentioned that some kind of guidance was apparent, but mainly in order to encourage certain genres and themes.

Money matters

Contracts were related to the question that interested composers perhaps more than anything else in the Union did: namely, their material well-being. Instead of ideology, or even creative issues, the main concern of the Composers' Union

⁴¹⁸ Atovmian, L. 1933, 137: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

⁴¹⁹ Plan tvorcheskogo sektora soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 3-4/1933, pp. 3-4.

⁴²⁰ Svirina, T. 1935, 94: V Len. soiuzs sov. Kompozitorov. In *SM* 11/1935.

⁴²¹ Sobranie molodykh kompozitorov. In *SM* 7/1937: 74.

during its initial years seems to have been issues about composers' financial and living arrangements. This is illustrated by the reports of the first plenum published in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*. The plenum report was divided between two issues: financial and social matters were published first and everything else discussed in the plenum was squeezed into the following issue. Composers obviously expected that the primary task of their Union was to secure the material well-being of its members. This concern was evident in the solemn statement that material issues should be addressed as part of the professionalization of compositional work. It was emphasized that composing could be a profession only in the Soviet Union, where the State was highly interested in artistic affairs.⁴²² Perhaps this was a carrot dangled in front of artists in order to encourage them pursue a Soviet thematic and respond to the State's musical needs. At least, if Atovmian is to be believed, it seems that the financial position of composers in summer 1932 was fairly insecure.⁴²³

Professionalization became the main aim and focus of the Composers' Union. The attempt to professionalize composers' work raised two general groups of issues: the general conditions of creative work and composers' material conditions. The general conditions included ideological aspects, for example "securing the development of the ideological level of art to the ideological standards of Marxism-Leninism." The material conditions consisted of income and copyright issues.⁴²⁴

One can ask whether composers were consciously sacrificing artistic freedom in order to improve their quality of life. Yet, although ideological commitment had already been overtly connected to material benefits in the April resolution of 1932, the connection between ideology in music and material gain was in fact rather vague. The first plenum of composers for example, did not emphasize this connection and it would be an oversimplification to allege that composers were consciously sacrificing anything. Aspects of ideological requirement were easy to dismiss as mere rhetoric. Yet, it is not possible that all composers were naïve enough to believe that enhancement of their personal income would be gratuitous.

Although the actual salary received by a Soviet citizen was not necessarily the most accurate measure of an individual's well-being, fluctuations in composers' incomes can still be revealing. Previously composers' income had fallen into one of ten income bands, with monthly salaries varying from 2.5 to

⁴²² SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK). In *SM* 4/1933: 156.

⁴²³ GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1717, l. 149. In a meeting of *Rabis* on July 27, 1932, Atovmian mentioned that along with receiving poor salaries, composers were suffering in terms of their recreation, nutrition and housing. Yet, composers were not alone, as the overall standard of living collapsed to its all time low after the free market of the NEP (1922-1927) collapsed and the new system of rationing and distribution was introduced. From 1931, the catastrophic situation with food and consumer goods was being restructured. See for example: Osokina 2001, 42-58. Composers' efforts to enhance their livelihood coincided with these overall efforts to restructure the system.

⁴²⁴ SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK). In *SM* 4/1933: 156.

1,000 rubles⁴²⁵. Most composers' incomes had been in the lower bands and only light-genre composers had reached the highest income levels. The differences in income were reduced in 1933: the lowest monthly income band was raised to 15, and the highest lowered to 500 rubles.⁴²⁶ Apparently, *Rabis* was the organization that determined these salaries.⁴²⁷ As the bulk of Composers' Union members were not light-genre composers, it is understandable that composers tried to bring the higher and lower ends of the scale closer together. Naturally, many light-genre composers strongly opposed any change to the salary scale. Perhaps the fact that the Composers' Union was able to successfully press for such a change sent a signal that the Union mattered. In any case, the raised salaries at the lower end of the scale were welcomed by young composers and those whose music was played irregularly. With the increased salary, they were at least able to work.

A list of the total income paid to thirty-five Muscovite composers illustrates that salaries represented mere pocket money for famous composers. It also reveals the difference between renowned composers and their younger colleagues. In 1933, Reingold Glier earned the sum of 62,300 rubles⁴²⁸ from copyrights, contracts, and *Muzgiz*, while Vissarion Shebalin earned 25,000 rubles. However, Aram Khachaturian and Dmitrii Vasiliev-Buglai earned only 5,710 and 7,000 rubles respectively.⁴²⁹ Many composers, of course, worked in conservatories and other institutions and their total income was substantially greater than their salaries received through the Composers' Union. Still, this list suggests that the music of certain composers was played more often than that of others. The income differential would have been even more dramatic had light-genre composers been included in this list. The Union's own capacity to distribute money was limited. This is evident when one examines the case of Ippolitov-Ivanov, who was awarded the Order of the Red Flag for his life's work in 1934. At the same time, the Union decided to reward Ippolitov-Ivanov for his contribution to music with a life-long salary of 500 rubles per month.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁵ Average salary in the Soviet Union in 1937 was 250 rubles. In 1928 it had been 60 rubles. Chapman, Janet G. 1963, 109: *Real wages in Soviet Russia since 1928*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. However, between these years the real wage, the buying power of rubles sunk, and the overall standard of living reached the bottom in 1932–33, rising to only 60% of the 1928 level by 1937. See for example: Filtzer, Donald 1986, 125: *Soviet workers and Stalinist industrialization. The formation of modern Soviet production relations, 1928–1941*. London: Pluto. Thus, the official price of leather boots had increased from 9 to 97 and half a litre of vodka from 0,9 to 6,50 and rye flour from 0,1 to 1,60 rubles in a period between 1928 and 1937. See: Chapman 1963, 190–193. Yet, in closed stores things could be acquired with lower than official prices, thus underlining the difference between the privileged and average people.

⁴²⁶ SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK). In *SM* 4/1933: 157.

⁴²⁷ In the summer of 1932 Atovmian told *Rabis*'s presidium that composers received an average salary of between 175 and 200 rubles, see GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1717, l. 149.

⁴²⁸ Yearly average salary in the Soviet Union in 1937 was 3000 rubles, which was already considerably higher than that in 1933. See: Chapman 1963, 109. Presumably, Glier earned at least 30-times the Soviet average, at this point.

⁴²⁹ Spravka o zarabotke kompozitorov, sostoiashchikh chlenami Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov (s okrugleniem v storonu uvelicheniia). In *BSSK* 1–2/1934, p. 7.

⁴³⁰ Postanovlenie Prezidiuma Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 3/1934, p. 4.

As suggested by the preceding figures, copyrights were an important source of income for many composers. With more concerts that included Soviet music in their programs being staged, composers' incomes increased. Supporting concerts that featured Soviet music was an important aspect of the Union's work, and this will be discussed in more detail in later sections of my text. However, in connection with copyrights, it should be noted that the number of concerts at which only Soviet music was performed increased from eight in the 1930–31 concert season to fifty-two concerts in the 1932–33 season.⁴³¹

Collaboration with other musical institution aimed at two things: for more contracts for its members, but also at increasing amount of Soviet music played or staged. Judging by the the number of concerts with Soviet music, the administrators of the Composers' Union succeeded and managed to have a significant impact upon composers' incomes. Atovmian was especially active in this sense. In December 1933, he brokered a deal with the Radio Committee's manager of musical broadcasts, Gusman, according to which the Radio agreed to award contracts—totaling almost 100,000 rubles—to Soviet composers. In return for this sum, the Radio Committee would receive fifty-five works in 1934, including two symphonies, four chamber works, two oratorios, and a host of smaller compositions.⁴³²

Needless to say, the question of copyrights and royalties was a major issue for composers. Basic legislation on copyright and royalties was passed in 1928, but the law, once again, originally referred to literary works. Thus, composers complained about the poor state of their copyrights throughout the 1930s. In their mind, royalties should have been paid according to performance. However, it was alleged that concert organizations were still only paying composers for the first few performances of their compositions instead of making a payment for every performance. The most difficult situations were found outside Moscow and Leningrad. Composers even turned to the Supreme Court in 1933 in order to secure their rightful share of royalties. They groaned that copyrights and royalties for recorded work were in a particularly chaotic state. The Supreme Court eventually ruled in favor of a correction on behalf of composers.⁴³³ This was an important case as the recording industry was growing rapidly and would soon become one of the most important sources of income for some composers.

Another problem, which further underlines how central the literature was among Soviet arts, was that from 1933 onwards, all copyright issues were subordinated to the Writers' Union. Thus, the plenum of the Composers' Union strongly recommended that responsibility for copyrights and royalties should

⁴³¹ SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK). In *SM* 4/1933: 157.

⁴³² Dogovor 336 (Radiokomitet i SSK). In *BSSK* 1–2/1934, pp. 15–16.

⁴³³ Raziasnenie 45-go plenuma Verhovnogo suda Soiuza SSR o prave avtora muzykalnogo proizvedeniia na avtorskoe voznagrazhdenie pri vosprvedenii i rasprostranenii ego proizvedenii putem zapisi na grammofonnuuiu plastinku 20 noiabria 1933 g. In *BSSK* 3–4/1933, p. 2.

be transferred to a copyright fund under the remit of *Narkompros*.⁴³⁴ *Narkompros* acted as a mediator in this issue. Once again, Atovmian, who represented the Moscow branch of the Union, spoke on behalf of composers, along with Ashkenazi (who seems to have been heavily involved in administrative issues in Leningrad). In this matter, *Rabis* was represented by musicologist Aleksei Ogolevets. Together, they reached an agreement with *Narkompros* that copyrights would be transferred to an organization that was not controlled by the Writers' Union.⁴³⁵ By 1935 copyrights were actually being handled by a new organization, not by the Writers' Union.⁴³⁶

Shelter for the artist

The living conditions of composers were improved through several minor amendments. Again, Levon Atovmian was a crucial figure in this process. The protocols of the presidium of *Rabis* suggest that until spring 1932 composers had not been represented in *Rabis*, but rather in the Union of Print Workers. Only in 1932 was responsibility transferred to *Rabis*. *Gorkomy* (municipal committees by profession) were then established in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kharkov.⁴³⁷ Atovmian—who was in charge of the *gorkom* in Moscow—reported to the presidium of *Rabis* that the situation for composers was extremely difficult. Composers' salaries were low and, although there was a desperate need of vacations and rest homes, composers were largely unable to undertake any recreational activities. Atovmian had managed to secure 15,000 rubles from ZRK⁴³⁸ in order to manage food distribution, but he argued that it was imperative for a permanent solution to this and the housing problem be found.⁴³⁹ The presidium ruled that *Mosoblrbis* should arrange food distribution, arrange credit for composers, find places in rest homes, manage housing matters, and urge *GOMETs* to rework its tariffs for composers.⁴⁴⁰

Housing was a particular problem, as both Moscow and Leningrad suffered from an acute lack of living space.⁴⁴¹ Living conditions were thus central issues for composers, along with the rest of the population. Already by

⁴³⁴ SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK). In *SM* 4/1933: 158.

⁴³⁵ Soveshchanie v Narkomprose po voprosu o sbore avtorskogo gonorara dramaturgov i kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 3/1934, p. 2.

⁴³⁶ Chertkov, V. L. and Chernysheva, S. A. 1970, 224: Rol tvorcheskikh soiuzov v okhrane avtorskikh prav ikh chlenov. In Iampolskaia, Ts. A. (ed.), *Tvorcheskie soiuzy v sssr (organizatsionno-pravovye voprosy)*. Moscow: Iuridicheskaia literatura.

⁴³⁷ GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1717, l. 96ob.

⁴³⁸ *Zakrytyi rabochii kooperativ*, closed workers' cooperative. This was a kind of a closed chain of stores, which distributed goods and food for a selected group of customers. They were not open for everyone and in this sense, not genuine stores at all, but rather typical for the Soviet system.

⁴³⁹ GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1717, l. 149.

⁴⁴⁰ GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1717, l. 150.

⁴⁴¹ In 1930, average living space in Moscow was 5,5 square metres per capita, in 1940 it was hardly above 4. In other industrializing towns and cities the situation was even more dire. Communal apartments with one family per room were the standard form of housing. See: Fitzpatrick 1999, 46–47.

autumn 1932 *Rabis*'s promise to tackle the housing issue had been partially realized when six special composers' apartments were organized for composers with families. This was seen as a symbolic but important gesture, "considering the general living standards in Moscow." Many composers were also given the opportunity to secure long-term credit, through the *gorkom*, specifically to fund improvements and alterations to their current apartments.⁴⁴²

Two months later *Mosoblrbis* reported that things had improved, although some acute issues, like tariffs, were still left unresolved. The supply section of *Rabis* was to provide urgent help with food, housing, and musical instruments. Additionally, fifteen places at Abramtsevo's rest home were to be reserved for composers. The April Resolution was mentioned at the end of the report, where it was stressed that *Rabis* was supposed to abide by the Resolution and offer its support to composers.⁴⁴³ Thus, this trend continued and composers were soon the equal of factory worker elite in matters of "maintenance." This was significant, as shortages were at this time widespread among the general population. Thus, in principle, maintaining musical production was equally important as keeping factories operational. During 1933, *GORT*⁴⁴⁴ also ruled that forty composers and musicologists were to receive special deliveries. This meant special maintenance and a remarkable improvement in living conditions. As access to goods was limited, this kind of special access was of greater value than an increase in income levels. Already by 1932 composers had their own special closed delivery point, from which they could obtain groceries and other perishable goods.⁴⁴⁵ Composers were well on their way towards achieving elite status, plainly over even that of the best worker category.⁴⁴⁶

While composers slowly became an elite group in the Soviet Union, it must be noted that differences to the West were great. From our, and even from the viewpoint of the contemporary western worker, privileges of the elite might

⁴⁴² SSK. *Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK)*. In *SM* 4/1933: 158.

⁴⁴³ GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1726, l. 210.

⁴⁴⁴ *GORT (gorodskaiia organizatsiia roznichnoi torgovli, State Association of Retail Trade)* was responsible for distributing perishable goods for the privileged, the elite. They distributed special food stuff and rations, luxuries like sausage and eggs, clothes, shoes, soap and all the other kinds of articles hard to obtain. Strange as it is, in these closed stores articles were actually much cheaper than in shops that were open to everyone. See: Fitzpatrick 1999, 96-97. Illustrative tables have been provided about the difference of prices in different shops by Osokina. In a store for elite in Moscow milk was, in the autumn of 1932, only a sixth, butter a fourth and eggs a thirteenth of the list price. Prices in the workers' stores were usually a bit higher than those in the elite stores, except for sugar and flour. See: Osokina 2001, 208. Of course, elite stores had usually more things available than those of workers'.

⁴⁴⁵ SSK. *Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK)*. In *SM* 4/1933: 158.

⁴⁴⁶ Already in the autumn, those selected composers who were included in the special supply norms for intellectual elite received certain goods multifold compared to that of an average worker. Although the daily amount of bread was the same for all, intellectual elite received four kilograms of flour per month while the usual norm was one kilo. Herring and eggs elite received a threefold and tea a fourfold amount. Elite also had soap, candy, fresh fish, cheese and other goods, which were not on the normal supply. See: Osokina 2001, 206-207.

have been ludicrous. Yet, for a Soviet worker, access to a special distributor, just an extra piece of bread a day, or an extra meter of living space were true privileges. These benefits could be compared to an extra car or house in the United States.⁴⁴⁷ Yet, during the years to come, these differences only deepened and all composers received their (even if unequal) share of benefits reserved for the elite.

The state willingly lent a helping hand to composers trying to improve their living standards. In autumn 1933, *TsIK* (Central Executive Committee, that is the highest legislative body) made a decision that affected composers' rights to housing. *TsIK* had earlier ruled in favor of improving housing for scientific workers and this measure was first extended to writers and then to composers. This decree should have guaranteed housing and a working space for every scientific worker after September 1933. Additionally, separate housing projects for specialists were planned.⁴⁴⁸ The next logical project, therefore, was to start planning a house for composers.

A house for composers and the formation of a housing company (RZhSKT) were among the topics discussed in 1933. In the autumn, affiliates were sought in order to acquire or build living quarters. Building was to begin during 1934 and the project was to be completed by the following spring.⁴⁴⁹ However, the construction was finished only in 1937 as the housing shortage was such that skilled workers for numerous construction sites were hard to find.⁴⁵⁰ Thus, still in the spring of 1937 the progress of the construction had to be discussed at a board meeting once again.⁴⁵¹ Meanwhile, in 1933, although the housing project had been delayed, composers managed to obtain a sum of 400,000 rubles in order to improve their living and social conditions. An additional 250,000 rubles was allocated for the renovation of existing living quarters.⁴⁵² Things were already quite different from the situation only two years earlier when the average housing of composers was not notably better than those of an average citizen.

⁴⁴⁷ Osokina 2001, 93.

⁴⁴⁸ Postanovlenie Soveta narodnykh komissarov Soiuza SSR ob uluchshenii zhilishchnykh uslovii sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 2/1933, p. 2; Postanovlenie TsIK i SNK SSSR ob uluchshenii zhilishchnykh uslovii pisatelei. In *BSSK* 2/1933, p. 2; Postanovlenie TsIK i SNK SSSR ob uluchshenii zhilishchnykh uslovii nauchnykh rabotnikov. In *BSSK* 2/1933, p. 3; Postanovlenie Vserossiiskogo tsentralnogo ispolnitelnogo komiteta i Soveta narodnykh komissarov RSFSR o zhilishchnykh pravakh sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 5/1933, p. 1; Tsirkuliar Narkomkhoza, Narkomiusta i Narkomprosa RSFSR No 207 ot 9/XII 1933 g. o rasprostranении na sovetskikh kompozitorov zhilishchnykh prav i lgot nauchnykh rabotnikov i pisatelei. In *BSSK* 5/1933, p. 2; Instruksiia No 248 NKKKh RSFSR, NKlu RSFSR, komissii sodeistviia uchenym pri SNK SSSR, TsB sektsii nauchnykh rabotnikov I Soiuza sovetskikh pisatelei o zhilishchnykh pravakh i lgotakh nauchnykh rabotnikov i pisatelei (rasprostranennaia na kompozitorov-chlenov SSK). In *BSSK* 5/1933, pp. 2–6.

⁴⁴⁹ O zhilishchnom stroitelstve. In *BSSK* 1/1933, p. 14.

⁴⁵⁰ Osokina (2001, 96) describes how even inhabitants in Kremlin suffered from housing shortage and had to wait for improvements in their housing.

⁴⁵¹ RGALI, f. 1929, op 1, d. 802, l. 12.

⁴⁵² Dom kompozitora. In *SI* August 5, 1934: 1.

Although *Rabis* had managed to make many improvements, composers still had several issues that they wanted to resolve as quickly as possible. These included granting an annual vacation for composers, setting up social insurance, and improving the—currently meager—quality and quantity of equipment (scores and musical instruments) required for creative work. Meanwhile, the Composers' Union and *Rabis* had managed to arrange a fund of mutual help, journeys to sanatoriums, and a rest home for composers—although there were complaints that the latter was not large enough. An eatery for composers was being organized and was already partly operational; in the meantime, composers could attend a number of highly appreciated restaurants, including *Dom Gerzen*, *Teaklub*, and *Dom Petsati*. Composers were able to access medical services at a specific clinic. All of this was said to be only the start of improvements, but nevertheless it offers us an insight into the kinds of important benefits that composers felt the Composers' Union could help to deliver for them.⁴⁵³ Before the Composers' Union had its own fund, the *gorkom* of *Rabis* seems have acted like an art union fund, at least in its channeling of these benefits.

The Composers' Union was also concerned with the rewards composers received for their creative activity. In February 1932, before the establishment of the Union, *Rabis* had taken a routine decision that no action was required on composers' tariffs. Composers were not present in this meeting.⁴⁵⁴ However, after Atovmian raised the issue, a decision was made to examine tariffs. Thus, a meeting organized by *Muzgiz*, at which composers were present, was arranged in December 1932.⁴⁵⁵ Music publishers, theaters, movies, radio, and recordings were all important sources of income for composers. Radio was the most problematic, since existing legislation did not apply to it. At first, composers had received practically nothing for radio performances of their compositions.⁴⁵⁶ Later, probably after composers took action in a similar way as others had over tariff issues, *Narkompros* ratified tariffs so that a composer would receive approximately 1 percent of the sum paid by movie theaters to the movie makers. Other tariffs were treated in the same way.⁴⁵⁷

All of this fits the picture of elite status formation in the Stalinist Soviet Union.⁴⁵⁸ Although many errands and services were carried out outside institutional structures, through the patronage relations described by Fitzpatrick, they still illustrate the change.⁴⁵⁹ Furthermore, all this indicates that composing started to become a profession. Composing was no more a hobby or

⁴⁵³ SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK). In *SM* 4/1933: 158.

⁴⁵⁴ GARF, f. 5508, op.1, d. 1717, l. 32.

⁴⁵⁵ Decision to rework tariffs: GARF, f. 5508, op.1, d. 1726, l. 210. The announcement that the meeting would take place on 25th December 1932 GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1718, l. 183. However, I have not found the protocols for this meeting.

⁴⁵⁶ SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK). In *SM* 4/1933: 157.

⁴⁵⁷ SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK). In *SM* 4/1933: 158.

⁴⁵⁸ Fitzpatrick 1992, 227–229.

⁴⁵⁹ Fitzpatrick 1998, 35–53.

a secondary occupation for most involved with this art form. In a way, by establishing composing as artistic profession, they also managed to change their status in society to that of the elite. Composers' concerns about earning their daily bread were over. The Union's plenum stated that they had succeeded in professionalizing work, since as early as the summer of 1933 over forty composers had been freed from their previous occupations. Occupations other than composing naturally hampered the ability of a composer to undertake creative work. Now these forty composers were able to devote themselves entirely to composing.⁴⁶⁰ Many more would follow as the 1930s proceeded. Of course, many retained their existing positions in conservatories and different institutions, but numerous were those composers who had previously worked in occupations that had little to do with music.

Financial constraints in the Composers' Union

The professionalization of literary work was very much tied to the Stalinization of the Writers' Union, suggesting that material benefits came only with certain ideological and political conditions. In this sense, the Composers' Union was only a proto-professional organization. Composers, of course, did not want the Party to take an active part in creative issues, but many hoped the Party would resolve professional problems, particularly material issues. Problems were, however, plentiful. The Composers' Union did not emerge into an administrative vacuum; rather, it had to co-operate with several institutions, some of which did not accept the Union's attempts to establish its authority. In addition, as it openly admitted in 1933, the Union was unable to improve the material status of composers on its own. Thus, the Union tried to enlist other institutions to do the work for them. Indeed, Atovmian compiled a list of things that composers needed—living space, general equipment, resorts, notepaper, and cars, among other requirements—and started to act as a broker between different organizations in order to secure these needs.⁴⁶¹

One of the key organizations was *Rabis* and its subsections for composers, *gorkomy*. Therefore, it is important to examine *Rabis* in a little more detail. First of all, the Composers' Union was apparently dependant on *Rabis* and without its material help the Union would most likely have collapsed or at least been left crippled. The Moscow branch of the Union had to turn several times to the local *Rabis* and *gorkom*. *Gorkomy* were established in order to channel material support to the Composers' Union, but they also provided *Rabis* with musical expertise when this was required.⁴⁶² The *gorkom* was a provisional solution to ensuring the flow of funds. In 1933, the establishment of the composers' *gorkom*

⁴⁶⁰ SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK). In *SM* 4/1933: 157.

⁴⁶¹ Postanovlenie Prezidiuma Soiuza sovetских kompozitorov s aktivom ot 25/X 1933 g. po dokladu orgsektora (t. Atovmian). In *BSSK* 3-4/1933, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁶² GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1717, l. 264. In October of 1932, *Rabis* was planning to hold a meeting with Muzgiz and the State Publishing Company, Ogiz. The *gorkom* was assigned to make suggestions about a publishing plan for musical material in 1933 as well as for subsequent years of the Second Five-Year Plan.

was hailed as the beginning of great improvements that would lead to the professionalization of composers' work.⁴⁶³

In the summer of 1932, when the Composers' Union emerged in Moscow, it was completely without financial means. The man who saved the Composers' Union from its first economical crisis was the one who would do it several times in subsequent years, Levon Atovmian. He took the issue forth in *Rabis* and after presenting the situation composers were in (average salary less than 200 rubles per month, without recreational facilities, without rest homes, outside food distribution) things started proceeding. *Rabis* ordered credit for composers, composers tariffs suddenly started to be reworked, there was fixing of rest home beds to composers, fixing of housing for composers and arranging of food distribution for composers.⁴⁶⁴ All this was transferred as the *gorkom's* responsibility as soon as it was established.

In short, the *gorkom's* main objective was to enable and support composers' creative work. In other words, its aims overlapped with those of the Composers' Union. Thus, there was some confusion, over who should scrutinize composers' creative plans, for example. Most of the *gorkom's* energy nonetheless went into channeling material support. This was also later encouraged by the Central Committee of *Rabis*, which was concerned about possible conflicts between these two organizations. *Rabis's* Central Committee suggested that *gorkom's* main priorities should be the organization of work, meeting material needs, furthering political-cultural education, and most of the composers' financial issues. The *gorkom's* "raison d'être" was thus to support the creative activity of composers through professionalizing.⁴⁶⁵ All the forms of support mentioned by *Rabis*, perhaps with the exception of political education, corresponded to the support the Composers' Union wished to secure for its members. Because it was impossible for the Union to achieve these aims alone, help from *Rabis* was welcomed.

Gradually, the Composers' Union broke away from *Rabis* by becoming economically more independent, but not before the mid-1930s. Even after that time, musicians and other workers in the musical world would remain within the confines of *Rabis*. The major problem with *Rabis* was that composers themselves were not able to control the way in which material support was channeled. Within *Rabis*, artists were able to wield very little authority compared with professional administrators, and this was something that would cause some trouble between bureaucrats and artists. The Central Committee of *Rabis* scrutinized the *gorkom* closely, but concluded in the summer of 1933 that it was doing well, despite the fact that some issues about copyrights and royalties

⁴⁶³ SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK). In *SM* 4/1933: 156.

⁴⁶⁴ GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d.1717, ll. 149-150. *Mosoblrbis*, which was the regional representative of *Rabis*, took as its task to execute these orders. By October 1932 most of the issues were settled, but of course, only for some composers. For example, place in a rest home could be targeted only for 15 composers per year. See, GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d.1726, l. 210.

⁴⁶⁵ Postanovlenie Prezidiuma Tsentralnogo komiteta RABIS po dokladu gorkoma kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 1/1933: 11-13.

had still not been settled.⁴⁶⁶ It seems likely that the administration of *Rabis* had already ensured that the *gorkom* became more like an extension of the Composers' Union than an organization competing against it. Although *gorkom* acted like a sister organization of the Composers' Union, it continued to be controlled by a different organization and by administrators, although some composers did sit on the Central Committee of *Rabis*. Conflicts thus emerged over both how the Composers' Union should act and how it should use its funds.

In the relationship of *Rabis* and the Composers' Union, there were many interesting features. First of all, *Rabis* was an extremely bureaucratic organization that produced exact protocols of everything it did and discussed. Therefore, both co-operation and confrontation of *Rabis* with the Composers' Union are well documented. When *Rabis* sent an investigating commission to examine branches of the Composers' Union, Union meetings were called "drunken parties."⁴⁶⁷ After several such clashes the Composers' Union tried to separate itself from *Rabis* and become also economically autonomous. Administrators, however, did not leave composers alone. In 1936, when connections to *Rabis* had become redundant, it came under the auspices of the Committee on Artistic Affairs and thus found itself at odds with a different kind of administration.

Striving for professional control

Taking control of Soviet music

The definition of Soviet music and its basic principles were central issues during the early years of the Composers' Union. This was very much an issue of discussion for composers, as only after 1936 would there be conflicts with administrative authorities over how to define Soviet music. Thus, composers and musicologists started to formulate a definition of Soviet music that would become the intellectual property of the Composers' Union. At first, the question was not so much about socialist realism, but rather about finding concrete examples from compositions by Soviet composers that could be seen as exemplary works of Soviet music. There were disputes about different genres and composition types as well as about individual compositions. The fate of Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District* is also closely related to this issue. The means by which Soviet music should be propagated was linked to this question, and, in fact, this became one of the single most important topics of discussion during the initial years of the Union.

⁴⁶⁶ Postanovlenie Prezidiuma Tsentralnogo komiteta RABIS po dokladu gorkoma kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 1/1933: 11-12.

⁴⁶⁷ Quoted in Tomoff 2006, 60.

Composer Andrei Pashchenko emphasized that the most important task was to improve the distribution of Soviet music, although this would mean completely restructuring the music publishing system. He maintained that strong propaganda was needed in order to establish Soviet chamber, symphony, and choral music as regular fixtures on concert programs.⁴⁶⁸ This idea was in line with the decision taken by the *politbiuro* to include new Soviet plays in the repertory of theaters (see Part 1). Pashchenko, and other composers, called for similar changes to be implemented in areas of music outside the theater. The Composers' Union started working towards this objective, but eventually could not achieve their aim. Still, many composers believed that the Composers' Union would manage to succeed in its work. The optimism expressed by Khristo Kushnarev in his article *Let us organize tighter around our union* was shared by many others. Less than a year after the Union had been established, Kushnarev asserted that the Composers' Union was going from strength-to-strength and that its greatest problems were already behind it.⁴⁶⁹

The Composers' Union maintained that its right to lead the restructuring of the musical world was justified on the grounds of its social aims. Socialist construction in general was mentioned on several occasions. Composers emphasized that the Composers' Union would enable music to support the overall aims of society. Soviet music could also unite all composers, even those who up until this point had been hostile towards each other.⁴⁷⁰ Iuliia Veisberg continued that composers could now be honest in their creative work. In the Composers' Union, she stated, everyone had the right to artistic self-determination and so the proletarian cause could now be served "not out of fear, but out of conscience." This was in contrast to the situation before 1932, when, she alleged, pressure and force had been used to motivate service in the proletarian cause.⁴⁷¹

If the Composers' Union was perceived by composers as a space in which artistic freedom could prevail, there was also a trend to canonize musical works. Already in the early 1930s, during the composers' first plenum, one speaker drew attention to the fact that references were made to the same handful of composers whenever Soviet music was being discussed. The names of these leading composers were repeated "forever," according to this speaker.⁴⁷² Canonizing is often connected with the Communist Party. Within the Party, a special nomenclature developed that defined individuals' places in the hierarchy. However, the Composers' Union seems to have been developing a hierarchy of its own. Just as in official public speeches given by Party members certain names were always recited in a specific order, names of certain composers and works started to be repeated in official speeches about music. In the 1930s, these composers included, for example, Nikolai Miaskovskii,

⁴⁶⁸ Pashchenko, A. 1933, 124: *Protiv gruppovshchiny*. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁴⁶⁹ Kushnarev, Khr. 1933, 132: *Tesnee splotimsia vokrug nashego soiuz!* In *SM* 3/1933.

⁴⁷⁰ Iudin, M. 1933, 131: *Doverie-moguchii stimul tvorchestva*. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁴⁷¹ Veisberg, Iu. 1933, 126: *O prave kompozitora na iskrennost*. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁴⁷² Atovmian, L. 1933, 138: *K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov*. In *SM* 5/1933.

Vissarion Shebalin, and Dmitrii Shostakovich, who were all frequently mentioned, especially in connection with symphonic music. Lev Knipper, Viktor Belyi, and Boris Shekhter, as well as Boris Asafiev and Sergei Prokofiev were also often mentioned, at least when Soviet compositions were listed.

The first plenum of composers in 1933 considered this trend dangerous; it argued that, if a list of composers was repeated in this way, Soviet music would come to be defined in very narrow terms. Young composers, in particular, would have a hard time establishing themselves in the shadow of their more prominent colleagues. The plenum called for measures to be taken that would generally improve the status of young composers, which was regarded to be fairly low.⁴⁷³ Despite the plenum's warning, in subsequent years the canon would only strengthen, and only a handful of composers would be awarded leading status. In particular, Shostakovich's star would rise over the next decades until he came to occupy the foremost position among Soviet composers. The younger generation of Soviet composers would even feel themselves suffocated by the glorification of Shostakovich. Although the process proceeded slowly and no individual composer was presented as superior to the others, canonizing did begin in the 1930s. Additionally, when they experienced political misfortunes, composers or at least their compositions would completely disappear from official addresses and speeches.

The Composers' Union also started to restructure Soviet musical life within its own organization. Indeed, the Union was a place where, at least in theory, all professionals involved in composition and musicology met. As Kiril Tomoff suggests, the Composers' Union in the 1940s was striving to become a leading professional organization with control over the music profession. However, it partly managed to achieve this aim already during the 1930s. Tomoff asserts that the Consultation Center of the Union—designed to give professional help and educate young composers in particular—was established in 1944. In effect, the Consultation Center became a kind of intermediate step between the submission of an application to join the Composers' Union and admittance as a full member.⁴⁷⁴ The Union could therefore effectively control who should be considered a composer and, specifically, what the professional level of composers chosen to be members should be.

The idea of consultation work was by no means alien to the initial Composers' Union. As early as 1933, the creative sector of the Union had carried out consultation work very similar to that undertaken by the Consultation Center, and the Consultation Commission before that, in the 1940s. In 1933, as would be the case later, it was stated that any composer was free to ask for assistance with his creative work. The creative sector also held seminars specifically for younger composers and about special themes, such as theater music.⁴⁷⁵ After *Pravda's* editorials in 1936, Consultation Commission was still working as before. In May and June 1937 Gnesin's, Vasiliev-Buglai's

⁴⁷³ Atovmian, L. 1933, 138: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

⁴⁷⁴ Tomoff 2006, 40.

⁴⁷⁵ Plan tvorcheskogo sektora soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 3–4/1933: 4.

and Goldenveizer's works among others were heard in the Commission.⁴⁷⁶ By then, however, the selective nature of Commission's work had come under criticism. There were complaints by young and non-professional composers that they were being dismissed and mistreated by the commission. In practice, non-professionals' output went often uncommented and disregarded.⁴⁷⁷ It was as if the Composers' Union would have wanted to keep the Soviet music as professional property.

Seemingly, the process of defining Soviet music, and discussion about measures to increase its popularity, proceeded in a peaceful atmosphere. Although the amount of bureaucracy has already been mentioned as one immediate problem, it did not, at first, inhibit the productive atmosphere. The calls of many composers for a brotherly atmosphere led to the establishment of a club, where composers were able exchange experiences or ideas and could listen to each other's compositions. This club was part of the creative sector's plan for 1934. The sector planned to hold two meetings per month jointly with "the club of the brotherhood." These meetings were said to involve listening to and evaluating new compositions and creative discussion about the national thematic, problems of opera, mass song issues, and so forth.⁴⁷⁸

The creative sector became one of the most important sections within the Composers' Union. It was around this sector that all creative activity began to center and in which the most important discussions about Soviet music were convened. By late 1935, the creative sector could already boast that it held five meetings per month and that an overall schedule for the following year had been prepared. Every month, three of these meetings were reserved for listening to and evaluating new works composed by Union members, another was reserved for a public concert evening that would showcase these new compositions, and the fifth for musicologists' presentations (although musicologists were, of course, invited to all creative sector meetings).⁴⁷⁹

Attempts to establish hegemonic control

The ultimate objective behind many of the Union's measures seems to have been to broaden its authority over other musical organizations – in other words, to make it the leading organization in the musical front. This aim was occasionally expressed during the initial years of the Union, and it appears to have remained its primary task until 1948.⁴⁸⁰ One of the greatest obstacles to increasing the Union's authority was the meager amount of general publicity it received.⁴⁸¹ The lack of attention that the Union generally received posed a

⁴⁷⁶ V Moskovskom soiuze sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 8/1937: 85-86.

⁴⁷⁷ Kak "rabotaet" Konsultatsionnaia komissia. In *SM* 12/1937: 128.

⁴⁷⁸ Plan tvorcheskogo sektora Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 3-4/1933, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁷⁹ Kl. V. 1935, 85: Edinii plan tvorcheskoi raboty. In *SM* 12/1935.

⁴⁸⁰ Tomoff 2006, 35.

⁴⁸¹ K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933: 131.

serious problem if it was to become the ideological center for Soviet music, as Atovmian had pronounced it would.⁴⁸²

The Association of Proletarian Musicians, *RAPM*, had a similar aim to that of the Composers' Union, at least according to Amy Nelson. She considers that *RAPM*'s strive for hegemony over musical front was its principal feature. Nelson maintains that it was hard for the leadership of *RAPM* to believe that other musical organizations were not competing with it.⁴⁸³ *RAPM*'s problem was that it did not manage to draw sufficient support from the musical world; it too often found itself embroiled in arguments with others. The Composers' Union was much more successful at securing consensus and was thus better equipped to achieve hegemonic control. The success was in that it gathered up all the representatives of the profession, or furthermore, established composing as a profession.

The reports of the first plenum in Moscow suggest that, in the absence of central Union organs, the Moscow branch often worked on behalf of composers across the Soviet Union. Additionally, because composition (other than the simplest of songwriting) required skills that could only be acquired from specialized institutions of higher education, the few cities with conservatories became centers of musical activity. Furthermore, the Union's charters of 1948 suggest that there should be a minimum of seven members in each branch of the Composers' Union.⁴⁸⁴ This limit did not apply at first, as there were branches, such as Rostov, that had only five members, while others may have had even fewer. Still, in most cities some active musical figures were in danger of being left outside the reach of the Composers' Union. Acknowledging this danger, the first plenum stated that the Union should accept the task of reaching out to "all workers in the musical front."⁴⁸⁵

The Composers' Union was, however, unable by itself to control everyone who was composing. Not being able to accomplish this alone, the Union looked to *Narkompros* and pressed for changes to existing legislation. In order to "raise the standard of Soviet music," the Composers' Union urged *Narkompros* to prevent musical directors from establishing a monopoly within their places of employment.⁴⁸⁶ Musical directors of movie theaters, circuses, and different concert stages often filled the repertory with their own compositions and collected the royalties and provisions for performances of their works. It was also common for theaters to use a composer who was already familiar to them, which helped composers to create monopolies in certain theaters.⁴⁸⁷ The plenum's primary concern with the situation was that many of these monopoly-holders were insignificant "artisans" – in other words, non-professionals. The

⁴⁸² K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933: 141.

⁴⁸³ Nelson 2000, 123.

⁴⁸⁴ RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 1, l. 5, 10.

⁴⁸⁵ Atovmian, L. 1933, 132: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

⁴⁸⁶ Postanovlenie Prezidiuma Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov ot 16/VI po dokladu organizatsionno-kontsertnogo sektora (t. Shebalin i Atovmian). In *BSSK* 1/1933, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁷ Dokladnaia zapiska organizatsionno-kontsertnogo sektora na prezidiume Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov ot 16/VI. In *BSSK* 1/1933, p. 3.

Composers' Union was in favor of prohibiting an organization from playing compositions written by anyone who worked in that organization.⁴⁸⁸ This would have represented an important step towards the Union's aim of controlling musical creation in the Soviet Union. However, the enforcement of this kind of proposition was prevented by a number of problems. The primary problems were firstly that Soviet music was not very well known and secondly that there was a serious lack of sheet music. The lack of available sheet music meant that it was often easier for an orchestra or ensemble to perform works composed by their conductor, as he would at least be able to prepare hand-written scores for musicians himself.

Marketing and distribution were at the heart of the first problem. The Composers' Union had brought together all the foremost and lesser-known composers, but their music was not especially popular. Soviet music was rarely publicized by the general press. Musicologist Iosif Ryzhkin considered that music should receive greater public exposure and that musicologists should be at the forefront of such a drive. He argued that Soviet music would be more popular if musicologists started discussing music in a suitable way within the press.

Musicologists should always work in terms of political topicality and timely content; they should try to philosophically understand the description of reality; they should see clarity of musical language; stress approachability and effectiveness.⁴⁸⁹

Although he did not express himself particularly clearly, Ryzhkin's message was that work should be more systematic and that efforts should be made to publicize Soviet music. If music were better connected to political discourse, then it would be much easier to publicize in the general press as well. Plans were drawn up for the establishment of a press office for the Composers' Union.⁴⁹⁰ Although this office failed to materialize, at least during the 1930s, it represented a logical and necessary step toward effectively publicizing works by members of the Composers' Union.

Composers truly seemed to be somewhat sidelined, since certain works that one would expect to have aroused attention, such as Shebalin's symphonic poem *Lenin*, were largely ignored by the press. Generally, no discussions about new compositions took place outside the Composers' Union in the early 1930s. Even within the Union, discussions were described as low-key, at least in connection with two of Miaskovskii's symphonies and Shebalin's *Lenin*.⁴⁹¹ However, this view is contradicted in a report from Leningrad that stated that in the Leningrad branch forty-eight creative discussions had been held during

⁴⁸⁸ SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK). In *SM* 4/1933: 157.

⁴⁸⁹ Ryzhkin, N. 1934, 54: O muzykovedcheskoi rabote Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 2/1934.

⁴⁹⁰ GTsMMK, f. 286, d. 497, l. 26.

⁴⁹¹ Atovmian, L. 1933, 132: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

1933.⁴⁹² Either, Leningrad and Moscow differed in this respect, or the point was that not enough was being done to publicize these discussions and new compositions more generally. As a solution, it was proposed that a musical magazine for the public, following the example of *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, should be founded. This issue eventually brought together individuals who had previously been at odds with each other. Lev Lebedinskii, who had once called Mikhail Gnesin “a personification of liberal, bourgeois decadence,”⁴⁹³ now wrote jointly with Vissarion Shebalin in favor of a new popular musical magazine.⁴⁹⁴

A magazine of this kind was eventually established in 1937 as a venture of the Committee on Artistic Affairs under the name *Muzyka*, music. However, it ceased publication the same year. During the 1930s, composers could only dream of a magazine that would spread the gospel of Soviet music.⁴⁹⁵ Only in 1957 would *Muzykalnaia Zhizn* permanently meet this need. Although the popular musical magazine, *Muzyka*, survived for less than a year, it illustrates how composers could find genuine consensus and work towards common goals. Old adversaries were ready to work together in pursuit of the common good for Soviet music.

Other similar ventures were also unsuccessful. Early in 1936, there were plans to arrange a festival, *dekada*, of Soviet music in Moscow, which was to be a major event for the propagation of Soviet music. Plans were drawn up together with the Moscow Committee of the Party and only ten days before it was due to be held, everything seemed to be proceeding smoothly. The festival was supposed to highlight the differences between Soviet and Western music. The festival would have been coordinated by the Composers' Union, but involved were the Philharmonia, *Muzgiz*, the Radio Committee and a host of composers, musicologists and performers, thus there was a genuine possibility of a major success. There were to be concerts in factories, clubs, and major concert halls for as many as 100,000 people over a ten-day period Cheliapov envisaged. Shock workers were to have special concerts. In short, this festival should have been a major showcase and triumph of Soviet composers and their music.⁴⁹⁶

However, the timing went wrong. The last joint meeting was held on January 31 and the event was planned for mid-February 1936. Too many factors were working against the success of the project. The Committee on Artistic Affairs, established only a month earlier, was not invited. This super-administration strived for power over the artistic field and was surely not happy about large-scale activities in the arts proceeding without its surveillance. Additionally, *Pravda* had launched its assault against modernist tendencies in music just days before the festival and the Composers' Union

⁴⁹² Ashkenazi, A. 1934, 61. Leningrad. Leningradskii soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 6/1934.

⁴⁹³ Quoted in Edmunds 2000, 294.

⁴⁹⁴ Gnesin, M., Lebedinskii, L., Shebalin, V. and Demianov, N. 1935, 38–40: Kakim dolzhen byt massovyi Muzykalnyi zhurnal. In *SM* 4/1935.

⁴⁹⁵ Pashchenko, A. 1933, 124: Protiv gruppovshchiny. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁴⁹⁶ Kl. V. 1936, 66–67: Dekada sovetskoi muzyki. In *SM* 2/1936.

itself was suffering from internal controversy. Thus, conditions were not favorable, despite the fact that this time the Party was involved in the preparations of the festival.⁴⁹⁷

Reports from the festival seem to underline the fact that things did not go as planned. The major newspapers appeared to have ignored the event and it seems highly unlikely that most of the concerts planned ever took place, at least within the confines of the festival. Only in the April issue of *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, were there a few short reports from concerts held during the dekada. One of the reported concerts was a chamber concert arranged in the factory *Red Proletarian* for its Party activists and Stakhanovites. Although the atmosphere was said to be highly enthusiastic, even here the concert was preceded by a long discussion of *Pravda's* articles about music. In fact, the whole report from this factory concert was mostly about the shortcomings of music: how it should be closer to people, about people's lives, and about leaders, especially about Stalin.⁴⁹⁸ Another report presented a slightly more positive picture about this festival, at least it listed many of the composers who were involved in the festival. The article listed the composers involved in the festival: Glier, Khachaturian, Miaskovskii, Belyi, Kabalevskii, Lev Knipper, Koval, Sergei Vasilenko, and Krein. Yet, the report talked of an "audience of several thousands" instead of more than 100,000.⁴⁹⁹ Thus, interest in the festival dwindled just before it was going to take place.

The propagation of Soviet music through big events like this rose to a new level at the end of 1937, when the standing of the Composers' Union was already changing. Composers' expectations for the festival of Soviet music that took place in connection with the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution were not thwarted. Then, a large-scale festival was finally arranged, resulting in major publicity for music. In November 1937, all was administrated satisfactorily and the festival took place not only in Moscow, but also in Leningrad, Minsk, Kiev, and Tbilisi. It was a festival that introduced Soviet music on an unprecedented scale.⁵⁰⁰ Moreover, it was repeated the next year; if possible, on an even grander scale.⁵⁰¹

Yet, in 1937 the festival was no longer the sole achievement of the Composers' Union; the Committee on Artistic Affairs used its vast resources and put its prestige behind it. In the festival in Moscow over fifty concerts were arranged. The closing concert on November 30 at the *Bolshoi* theater was absolutely enormous. It involved the State Symphonic Orchestra, the State Choir, the State Orchestra of National Instruments, the State Orchestra of Wind Instruments, the State Ensemble of Folk Dances (all controlled by the Committee), Ensemble of the Red Army, Harp Ensemble, [Leonid] Utesov's jazz

⁴⁹⁷ Kl. V. 1936, 66–67: Dekada sovetskoi muzyki. In *SM* 2/1936.

⁴⁹⁸ Chemoanov, S. 1936, 69–70: Dekada sovetskoi muzyki. *Vecher sovetskoi muzyki na zavode "Krasnii proletarii"*. In *SM* 4/1936.

⁴⁹⁹ Polianovskii, G. 1937, 26–34: Dekada sovetskoi muzyki. *Kontserty v rabochikh klubakh*. In *SM* 4/1936.

⁵⁰⁰ Khubov, G. 1937, 26–34: Smotr sovetskoi muzyki. *Tvorcheskie itogi dekady sovetskoi muzyki v Moskve*. In *SM* 12/1937.

⁵⁰¹ See for example Kuznetsov, K. 1939, 19–24. Dekada sovetskoi muzyki. In *SM* 1/1939.

ensemble, and numerous soloists including Heinrich Neuhaus, David Oistrakh, Valeria Barsova, and several others. Concerts in Leningrad introduced Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony.⁵⁰² It seems that for Soviet music, the year 1936 was crucial in more than one way. Usually it is only associated with *Pravda's* attack on Shostakovich, but there were other notable changes, which were welcomed by most composers. These features will be discussed in detail in the fourth part of this book.

Taking control of concert activity

Control of concert activity was one of the keys to the successful propagation of Soviet music. Naturally, the Composers' Union started to put significant effort into persuading concert organizations to change their repertory in line with the direction it favored. However, it was difficult to get these organizations into line. The Moscow Philharmonia was particularly tough to persuade, as during the early 1930s Soviet symphonic works had been largely omitted from its repertory. Yet, new concert music and symphonies could have been effectively showcased by this orchestra. Musicologist Ivan Martynov put the desires of the Composers' Union rather openly: "Philharmonia has many responsibilities, but the most important are to propagate music of Soviet composers, broadly present best examples of musical heritage, organize concert-lectures and introduce musical achievements. [- -] It is not a concert bureau, [- -] but its task is to actively participate in construction of Soviet musical culture."⁵⁰³ Thus, in his view, the Philharmonia existed to support the objectives the Composers' Union itself had.

In the end, the Composers' Union managed to achieve little change during its first years. In February 1934, the Union's bulletin listed all the works played by the ensembles of the Philharmonia in their concerts. During the first half of the concert season, there was only one concert in the symphonic cycle that contained any music written by Soviet composers. Practically all of the Soviet music played at this time was performed at special concerts, which were usually built around one composer and sponsored by the Composers' Union, or at smaller occasions, such as chamber concerts. The situation with radio seems to have been only slightly better.⁵⁰⁴

Only in March of 1934 did the Philharmonic Orchestra perform Miaskovskii's Sixth Symphony and works by five Georgian composers.⁵⁰⁵ The position of Soviet music in chamber concerts was somewhat better: compositions by Prokofiev, Knipper, Aleksandr Aleksandrov, and others had already been performed.⁵⁰⁶ Yet, the most important venues for Soviet music

⁵⁰² Dekada sovetskoi muzyki. In *SM* 12/1937: 125-126.

⁵⁰³ Martynov, I. 1938, 78-84: O rabote Moskovskoi filarmonii. In *SM* 6/1938.

⁵⁰⁴ Khronika. In *BSSK* 1-2/1934: 17-18.

⁵⁰⁵ This Georgian theme was prolonged—in April there was a concert that featured works by Zakhari Paliashvili, Dmitrii Arakishvili, Grigol Kiladze, and others (all well-known Georgian composers). Khronika. In *BSSK* 4-5/1934: 22.

⁵⁰⁶ Khronika. In *BSSK* 3/1934: 10-11.

were practically all arranged by the Composers' Union. For instance, in the winter of 1933–34 the Moscow branch arranged a series of five concerts in Voronezh that included new Soviet compositions. Composers such as Prokofiev and Shostakovich attended these concerts. The Union planned to arrange five more of this type of concert in the spring.⁵⁰⁷ Although radio was somewhat more eager than the Moscow Philharmonia to play Soviet music, in February 1934 only five symphonic works by Soviet composers were broadcast.⁵⁰⁸

Composers were deeply worried about how little Soviet concert music was being performed. The Composers' Union applied effective pressure to legislative organs and, eventually, the Vice-Commissar of Enlightenment, K. A. Maltsev, decreed that all concert organizations were to include Soviet compositions in their repertory. Every concert given by any philharmonia—festivals, jubilees, and concert cycles excluded—had to include music by Soviet composers. Furthermore, in circuses, movies, worker cafes, and parks at least one third of all music was to be of Soviet origin. *Glavrepertkom* was given responsibility for overseeing surveillance. The decree was signed by Maltsev, Arkadiev, and Pshibyshevskii, all *Narkompros* officials.⁵⁰⁹ However, it seems that this order was circumvented, since by March 1934, (as noted above) little had changed in the Moscow Philharmonia. Indeed, at this time Commissar Bubnov himself renewed the decree and restated that *Glavrepertkom* had the authority to enforce this order, if necessary.⁵¹⁰

The Union did its best to support this order. It started to distribute scores to various orchestras and ensembles in order to ensure that Soviet compositions could be performed. Additionally, it sought to draw up a list of ensembles (and their leaders) that performed in movie theaters, parks, circuses, and clubs.⁵¹¹ This kind of list would have greatly helped the Union to control what music was being performed and to propagate Soviet music more efficiently. Moreover, it would also have meant that the Union would be in a better position to supervise the correct payment of royalties.

It appears that the Composers' Union initially much more successful in getting Soviet music quickly into the repertories of smaller ensembles that performed at circuses, worker cafes, parks, and movie theaters. Although barely mentioned in the Composers' Union, proletarian musicians had earlier started to arrange similar plans and this may have helped the Union to achieve its aims. At the very least, the Union certainly had a base upon which to build. A host of works were published for distribution to these arenas. Clubs, cafes, parks, and circuses were seen important because these venues were ideal for the mass propagation of Soviet music. The music selected for these venues largely took the form of excerpts from ballets or theater suites, dance suites, or

⁵⁰⁷ Khronika. In *BSSK* 3/1934: 10.

⁵⁰⁸ Khronika. In *BSSK* 3/1934: 10.

⁵⁰⁹ Rasporiazhenie Narkomprosa No 632 (600) 9 ot 2/XI 1933 g. vsem teatram, zrelishchnym predpriiatiiam, gomets, uzp, soiuzkino. In *BSSK* 3–4/1933, p. 1.

⁵¹⁰ Prikaz Narodnogo komissar po prosveshcheniiu No 198 ot 8/III 1934 g. In *BSSK* 4–5/1934, p. 2.

⁵¹¹ Prikaz Narodnogo komissar po prosveshcheniiu No 198 ot 8/III 1934 g. In *BSSK* 4–5/1934, p. 2.

light-genre music.⁵¹² Although very different from the ones that met in concert halls, these audiences were far more numerous. Overall, this initiative was an important success for Soviet composers both financially and in publicizing their work.

Yet, it took many more years to get bigger orchestras into line. In late 1937, mostly likely with the aid of the Committee on Artistic Affairs, the Composers' Union had managed to get the Moscow Philharmonia to support its objectives more efficiently. When Ivan Martynov, a music critic, analyzed *Mosfil's* concert season of 1937/38 two events rose above others: a festival of Soviet music and a festival of Russian classical music. The Philharmonia had become the vanguard of both pre-revolutionary tradition and the new Soviet music. However, even now things were not good: Martynov considered the quality of orchestra's concerts to be poor, i.e. it played badly.⁵¹³

The desire of the Composers' Union for greater publicity helps to explain why the Composers' Union was so interested in radio and the recording industry as well as concert organizations. Some composers were perhaps just hoping that their music would become more popular, while others were looking for further royalty payments. In general, however, the project of making Soviet art popular was a success. If Soviet art education can be measured by the population's knowledge of art, then the results seem to have been above average and can be seen even today in the average knowledge of people about their national art. Art unions were an important part of the art education project, and, indeed, they seem to have started the process in the 1930s. In order to publicize the music of Soviet composers, the Composers' Union organized special concerts based on the work of a single composer. Among the first to receive this kind of treatment were Vasilenko, Knipper, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and Leonid Polovinkin.⁵¹⁴ Reports mention that a series of new compositions were performed at these concerts. Propagation of its members' music, thus, was adopted as a major task in the Composers' Union.⁵¹⁵

The increasing number of different festivals and of general performances of mass music became an important feature of the Soviet music scene in the 1930s. They were of ideological importance because large numbers gathered for these performances, thus enabling mass propaganda. For composers, mass events offered an important venue for the propagation of Soviet music, although these venues had previously been regarded by most composers as unsuitable arenas for the performance of their music. Yet, it was now reasoned

⁵¹² Tematicheskii plan orkestroteki, izdavaemyi Biuro zakazov i kontroliia Soiuzu sovetskikh kompozitorov i Otdelom rasprostraneniia Vserosskomdrama dlia muzykalnykh ploshchadok (kino, sady, tsirki, rabochie kafe). In *BSSK* 3/1934, pp. 5–6.

⁵¹³ Martynov, I. 1939, 79: O rabote Moskovskoi filarmonii. In *SM* 6/1938.

⁵¹⁴ Atovmian, L. 1933, 134: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzu sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933. Leonid Polovinkin (1894–1949) did not become a composer of great repute. Lev Knipper (1898–1974) then again did become a significant Soviet composer as well as Sergei Vasilenko (1872–1956), the latter of whom was a well-known composer, pedagogue and conductor.

⁵¹⁵ Taranushchenko, V. 1933, 156: SSK. Tvorcheskaiia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. In *SM* 3/1933.

that, while concert halls could reach audiences of approximately 10,000 per month, cinemas, park concerts, circuses, and open stages involved hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions, of individuals. Therefore, the Union stated, in 1933, that the music performed at these venues should not be composed by amateurs. Members of the Union were urged to write occasional music, which had been neglected by almost all but proletarian musicians.⁵¹⁶

However, things were slowly changing. Reports from *Gorky Park* in Moscow (*TsPKiO im. M. Gorkogo*) suggest that already in 1933 and 1934 the Composers' Union had organized concerts, at which compositions by Miaskovskii, Knipper, and Anatolii Novikov were performed.⁵¹⁷ Later, the *Gorky Park* would introduce all the top musicians and conductors of the Soviet Union. In summer 1938, for example, soloists that performed in the park included professors Lev Oborin, Grigorii Ginzburg and Heinrich Neuhaus. Conductors during that summer included professors Shteinberg and Glier, but also a host of other celebrities.⁵¹⁸ Slowly but surely the music of the Composers' Union's members filled even the non-traditional concert venues.

Cheliapov argued that criticism was essential in choosing what was propagated. The compositions that were being propagated should be ones that had been carefully subjected to close scrutiny. He reminded readers that the Association of Modern Music, *ASM*, in the 1920s had defined its mission as the dissemination of modern music. For Cheliapov, this represented uncritical propagation, where all that mattered was that music was new.⁵¹⁹ There would always be those who would maintain that ideological and political durability should be the only criteria applied when works of art were being chosen for distribution.

Composers were the cause of one of the major obstacles that prevented the popularization of their music, although they were otherwise committed to the project. Performers, top soloists, and conductors, who were eventually denied the membership in the Composers' Union, were all in key positions when it came to introducing concert music. Members of the Composers' Union often lamented that performers were poorly acquainted with Soviet music and were even indifferent towards it. Even while there was still a soloists' section in the

⁵¹⁶ Atovmian, L. 1933, 135: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

⁵¹⁷ V parkakh kultury i otdykha. Muzykalnaia samodeiatelnost v Tsentralnom parke kultury i otdykha im. Gorkogo. In *SM* 9/1934, 57-58. In the next issue, however, the leadership of the park was criticized for its unsystematic work and it was recommended that the leadership should seek help from specialists, see Kiselev, M. 1934, 53: Finaly-smotry odinochek-ispolnitelei v TsPKiO im. Gorkogo. In *SM* 10/1934. *Gorky Park* was important both because masses of people gathered there and for Stalinist purposes. Karl Schlögel has studied the use of public space for the purposes of Stalinism and has used *Gorky Park* as an example. See, Schlögel, Karl 1998: Der "Zentrale Gor'kij-Kultur- und Erholungspark" (CPKiO) in Moskau. Zur Frage des Öffentlichen Raums im Stalinismus. In Hildermeier, Manfred von (ed.) and Müller-Luckner, Elisabeth (ed.), *Stalinismus vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Neue Wege der Forschung*. Schriften des Historischen Kollegs. Kolloquien 43. R. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag.

⁵¹⁸ Khronika. In *SM* 6/1938: 94.

⁵¹⁹ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 2: Istoricheskaia godovshchina. In *SM* 2/1933.

Union, it was not part of the creative sector, which took care of new compositions.

One proposed solution to the problem was to expand the system of contracts to include high-profile performers. The propagation of Soviet music would be much more efficient if contracts were offered to soloists for performing certain new compositions.⁵²⁰ With new compositions included on the repertory of high-profile performers, this music would be performed across the prime concert stages of the Soviet Union, and in some cases, even abroad. Still, in propagation of their own music, composers saw the more important channel in numerous orchestras and other musical institutes than just individuals.

“Play it again Ivan!” Controlling the masses through music

The means of mass control grew rapidly in the 1930s, and they were actively exploited by composers when propagating their own work. The authors of solemn speeches continuously reiterated that the bourgeoisie had never understood the process of development of culture and its durable links to people. In the Soviet Union, a genuine mass consumption of arts was said to have developed instead of the arts being the property of just a small number of elite. Opening the doors of museums, theaters, concert halls, and art schools resulted in a surge of interest and activity in the arts.⁵²¹ Yet, this was the official version, which, however, never mentioned that the State, and artists themselves, actively ushered people toward the arts and defined what forms of art should be of interest to people.

The importance of radio in mass broadcast and propagation was noticed early in the Soviet Union’s history.⁵²² The relationship between radio and music had also been very close from the outset. The Composers’ Union also increased its role in developing the radio since it became an increasingly important factor in propagating and influencing music.⁵²³ The message of the Composers’ Union for the work with radio in the 1933 was that it worked without proper professional guidance. Musical broadcasts lacked coherence and did not follow

⁵²⁰ Atovmian, L. 1933, 137: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzu sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

⁵²¹ See for example in connection with the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution: Iampolskii, I. 1937, 85–89: *Tvorcheskii rastsvet*. In *SM* 10–11/1937.

⁵²² The role of the radio was especially significant in the countryside. The Party particularly emphasized the value of radio and cinema in cultural and educational work outside the cities in the early 1930s, see Mitiaeva, op. I. 1981, 77: *Kommunisticheskaia partiia – organizator kulturno-prosvetitelnoi raboty sredi krestianstva v gody kollektivizatsii*. In *Voprosy Istorii KPSS* 3/1981.

⁵²³ Political control through radio has been widely researched by Tatiana Goriaeva. Outcomes of her research can be found in Russian and in German, see especially Goriaeva 2000: *Radio rossii. Politicheskii kontrol radioveshchaniia v 1920-kh – nachale 1930-kh godov. Dokumentirovannaia istoriia*. Moscow: Rossiiskaia politicheskaiia Entsiklopediia; Gorjajewa Tatjana 2000: *Unterwerfung und Gleichschaltung des Rundfunks in der UdSSR*. In Beyrau, Dietrich (ed.), *Im Dschungel der Macht. Intellektuelle Professionen unter Stalin und Hitler*. Translated from Russian by de Kegel, Isabelle. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

a proper plan. Consistent educational work was completely absent. Composers and musicologists were obviously interested in controlling radio broadcasts to better serve their needs.⁵²⁴ Artistic broadcasts were something that called for close co-operation between different radio committees and artistic unions. Its forms of work and even objectives were still being sought for when the Composers' Union became active.⁵²⁵

Radio was important for Soviet composers, but it was difficult for them to gain access to it, at first. This is illustrated by articles from the mid-1930s. The main problem for composers was that too few Soviet compositions were broadcast. Therefore, the Leningrad branch of the Union organized contracts with the radio.⁵²⁶ After half a year of co-operation, composers expressed their satisfaction: "Radio is of utmost importance in propagation of Soviet music."⁵²⁷ The overall situation of Soviet music in Leningrad was reported to have improved a year after the Union's contract with radio was implemented. Radio in Leningrad had been assisted by musicologists Boris Asafiev, Semion Ginzburg, Roman Gruber, and David Rabinovich. With their help, the radio's musical program was said to have been rationalized and improved. There were also special broadcasts for new areas, including Soviet Karelia.⁵²⁸ The composers' demands for coherence were met, as were their attempts to get Soviet music promoted on the radio.

As we saw in the previous chapter of this book, the Composers' Union attempted to gain hegemony in the musical sphere. The Union tried to use other organizations that had sufficient resources to distribute Soviet music, i. e. its members' works. While this aim was not very socialist as such, it was closely connected to the question of Soviet music. On several occasions, the Composers' Union used the concept of Soviet music as an instrument by which it could persuade other organizations. They reasoned that it was ideologically untenable for Soviet music to be absent from their repertoires. Along with radio, orchestras occupied a key position in publicizing new works. However, there were also concerns about the type of audiences that attended these

⁵²⁴ Groman-Solovtsov, A and Ryzhkin, I. 1933, 66: Muzykalnoe radioveshchanie za god. In *SM* 4/1933.

⁵²⁵ This is suggested by "a Creative union-wide meeting about the objectives of artistic broadcasts" held in January 1934. Main objectives as well as guidelines were discussed. Three main points in short were to follow the Party line and benefit and support the socialist construction; to support the cultural growth and political education of the masses; to have an active role in the artistic life, especially music. See: Iz postanovleniia Vsesouiznogo tvorcheskogo soveshchaniia o zadachakh khudozhestvennogo radioveshchaniia, 13 apreliia 1934 g. In Gorიაeva, Tatiana 2000, 148-150. In general, Gorიაeva's monograph discusses the birth and the activities of the Radio. By being closer to the Party, the Radio Committee formed one of those organizations that had a possibility to act as a filter between artistic world and the public.

⁵²⁶ Dogovor 336 (Radiokomitet i SSK). In *BSSK* 1-2/1934, pp. 15-16. Soviet radio agreed to air a certain number of unpublished Soviet compositions. According to the contract, the radio retained the right to broadcast these works for one year.

⁵²⁷ Iuferov, K. 1934, 51-52: Muzyka sovetskikh kompozitorov v sisteme Leningradskogo radioveshchaniia. In *SM* 9/1934.

⁵²⁸ Bogdanov-Berezovskii, V. 1934, 69: O rabote leningradskogo muzykalnogo veshchaniia. In *SM* 12/1934.

concerts. If the music was to support ideological purposes, concert audiences should have been as broad as possible. Therefore, the Composers' Union also paid attention to the issue of changing the methods of orchestras, for example.

Philharmonias, as primary concert organizations of traditional concert music, were crucial institutions in this sense. Instead of being a single orchestra, a philharmonia could entail several kinds of orchestras and ensembles. *Mosfil*, the Moscow Philharmonia was established by Lunacharskii and leading musical exponents in 1921. It had brought such names as Arthur Rubinstein, Efrem Zimbalist, Jascha Heifets, Otto Klemperer, and Marian Anderson to the Soviet Union. In 1923 it had introduced the legendary *Beethoven quartet* and in 1928 it established its own symphony orchestra, *Sofil*, Soviet Philharmonic Orchestra. Although the umbrella organization *Mosfil* changed its name several times during the 1930s, it remained by far the same until in 1936 it was seized by the Committee on Artistic Affairs, which gradually took control of the whole network of philharmonias across the Soviet Union. Leningrad had its own Philharmonia, symphony orchestra of which dated already from the nineteenth century. Both were crucial for Soviet composers in their distribution of Soviet music, as was the symphony orchestra of the radio, established in 1930.

In 1933, philharmonias seem to have been reluctant to accept any changes to their policies. Only in 1934 did *Mosfil* begin to adopt forms of work that supported ideological objectives rather than those purely musical. In an article entitled "How *Mosfil* serves proletarian audience," *Sovetskaia Muzyka* described how *Mosfil* arranged special concerts for worker clubs and factories. But, alas, the ideological framework for these concerts was reported to be lacking; compositions were not properly explained to the audience.⁵²⁹ However, improvements were already under way. Certain side-activities, such as exhibitions and quizzes, were planned for the proper orientation of the audience. Additionally, factory workers could receive discounts on concert tickets and shock workers were given free admission to concerts arranged by *Mosfil*.⁵³⁰ In late 1936, the Composers' Union was already able to arrange special concerts of Soviet music with the Moscow Philharmonia. Yet, sometimes concerts were poorly arranged and chances for propagation were squandered. The program for the concert held on December 24, 1936 was changed without the audience being informed of the alterations. Compositions were not introduced and the pieces themselves were badly selected, *Sovetskaia Muzyka* complained.⁵³¹

Indeed, mass audiences had truly become interested in music, whether as a consequence of active propagation or not. Sergei Prokofiev – while regularly visiting, but with permanent residence still outside, the Soviet Union, – gave

⁵²⁹ Druzhinina, E. 1934, 71: Kak *Mosfil* obsluzhivaet rabocheho slushatelia. In *SM* 7/1934.

⁵³⁰ Druzhinina, E. 1934, 71: Kak *Mosfil* obsluzhivaet rabocheho slushatelia. In *SM* 7/1934.

⁵³¹ N. K. 1937, 87–88: Kak ne nuzhno provodit pokazy. In *SM* 2/1937. Criticism continued in connection with the following concerts of *Mosfil*, see S. K. 1937, 98–100: Kontserty iz proizvedenii sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 3/1937.

reports of Soviet musical life to the foreign press. He described how Soviet audiences craved for musical performances. Soviet attendance at musical events was growing and, in contrast to audiences in the West, audiences were made up of average workers and peasants. He further remarked that there were so many talented young Soviet composers that the country almost ran out of blank sheet music.⁵³² Despite the fact that the lack of sheet music was due to shortages rather than prolific work by composers, Prokofiev's remarks are still interesting. The amount of musical activity had increased, thus contributing to the worsening situation of musical industry. Music was becoming a mass art—a genuine art of the people—that was practiced and enjoyed by millions. This can be considered a major achievement of the Soviet government, although its underlying motives could hardly be termed altruistic.

Along with *Mosfil*, another traditional musical domain of old bourgeois elite was the *Bolshoi* theater, Moscow. It was also expected to change its working habits and find new audiences in order to propagate new kinds of music. During the 1933/34 concert-season, the *Bolshoi* reserved 1,650 of its seats for factory workers, with a preferential quota for shock workers. Six special box-offices to distribute these tickets were established in factories *Sickle and Hammer*, *Kaganovich* and *Stalin*. The *Bolshoi* also arranged special exhibitions and introductions for worker audiences when different operas were staged. This work was referred to as a cultural campaign, *kultpokhod*.⁵³³ By the spring of 1934 *Bolshoi* boasted of having conducted 780 thematic discussions over different productions, 183 quizzes, 112 exhibitions connected with repertory and artists, and of having committed 1,600 seats of 4,000 total to shock workers. In all, *Bolshoi* boasted of having involved over 150,000 people in three seasons after 1930.⁵³⁴

Although performances at the *Bolshoi* and *Mosfil* were also packed with members of the new elite groups, it was ideologically important to enlist ordinary workers to the audience. Attendance at musical performances was also seen as part of cultural education. In this way, the cultural activities valued by the new elite were also in some ways seen as belonging to the new workers' elite—shock workers.

Eventually, also *Mosfil* took its educational function quite seriously. For the 1934/35 season a new serial ticket was issued that allowed holders entry to different types of concerts: a couple of symphony concerts, a concert version of an opera, a concert with a soloist, and one musical literary evening.⁵³⁵ This advantageous ticket was introduced to acquaint the uneducated audience with different types of concert music. Despite the concerts' educational function, the new ticket was necessary in order to attract new audiences. If concert activity was still largely restricted to concert halls, it was difficult to introduce music to

⁵³² RGALI, f. 2658, op. 2, d. 53, l. 24.

⁵³³ Kiselev, M. 1933, 118: Gosudarstvennyi akademicheskii Bolshoi teatr SSSR. In *SM* 6/1933.

⁵³⁴ Remezov, I. 1934, 94–96: Massovaia rabota s rabochim zritelem v Bolshom teatre. In *SM* 4/1934.

⁵³⁵ Shlifshstein, S. 1934, 47: O rabote Moskovskoi filarmonii. In *SM* 9/1934.

new audiences. This was in accordance with the Union's objective of taking music out to the people.

The Composers' Union wanted both to control the musical life of the Soviet Union and to propagate the music of its members. Therefore, composers were deeply worried about the leading musicians, whose repertory consisted almost completely of pre-revolutionary music. In 1938, one music critic complained that Heinrich Neuhaus, Emil Gilels, David Oistrakh, and Lev Oborin "all played sonatas of Grieg, Brahms, Kreutzer⁵³⁶, Grieg, [and] Brahms," although there were a host of suitable Soviet counterparts.⁵³⁷ One critic complained that there was not a single Soviet composition among the repertories of the young triumphant pianists Iakov Flier, Emil Gilels, and Iakov Zak.⁵³⁸ The Composers' Union wanted to ensure that in the future the most important concerts and well-publicized concert events would contain Soviet music.

The central organization that would establish centralized control over concert activity would emerge only in 1936, and in the meantime the Composers' Union tried to look beyond the concert halls of Moscow and Leningrad to promote Soviet music everywhere in every possible venue. Concerts were held in parks, workers' clubs, and even factories. One of the largest occasions of this kind was the autumn 1937 festival of Soviet music. Following its success, the concept was repeated over following years during the festivities to commemorate the October Revolution. The idea was to arrange a series of concerts that featured compositions by Soviet composers on concert stages and also in non-traditional venues, such as factories.⁵³⁹ During the second festival of Soviet music, a large proportion of the concerts staged were reportedly held in factories, army garrisons, and mines.⁵⁴⁰ This work was another example of how work originally conducted by proletarian musicians was continued and expanded by the Composers' Union. Simultaneously, however, the ideological meaning of this work was diminished to simply introducing Soviet and pre-revolutionary concert music to worker audiences. The Composers' Union was concerned with the limited geographical reach of their work rather than the content of these concerts. The majority of musical activity was concentrated in Leningrad or Moscow during the 1930s. Provincial ensembles were largely beyond the reach of the Union.⁵⁴¹

Many provincial cities were in fact facing a musical vacuum. *Sovetskaia Muzyka* carried reports of these deficits throughout the 1930s. A broad article

⁵³⁶ It was stated like this, although most likely it should read Beethoven's 9th, *Kreutzer*, Sonata for Violin.

⁵³⁷ Vinokur, L. 1938, 84-85: Kontrolirovat rabotu muzykalnikh organizatsii. In *SM* 12/1938.

⁵³⁸ Solodukho, Ia. 1939, 75: Kontserty dekady sovetskoi muzyki. In *SM* 1/1939.

⁵³⁹ For example, in the concert season of 1938/39, this festival was already the most important event at which Soviet composers and their music could be introduced, see: Podgotovka k kontsertnomu sezonu. In *SM* 7/1938: 76.

⁵⁴⁰ Solodukho, Ia. 1939, 72: Kontserty dekady sovetskoi muzyki. In *SM* 1/1939.

⁵⁴¹ Atovmian, L. 1933, 132: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs Sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933; see also Druzhinina, E. 1934, 71-72: Kak Mosfil obsluzhivaet rabocheho slushatelia. In *SM* 7/1934.

about musical life in Sevastopol stated that musical activity and organization in Moscow, Leningrad, or Kharkov did little to address Sevastopol's musical needs. Sevastopol had no symphonic orchestra or musical institutes of any kind and, yet, many residents and tourists craved music.⁵⁴² The same issue of the magazine also discussed the situation in city of Gorky (Nizhny-Novgorod) where all musical institutions, radio, musical college, and amateur circles, were said to be adrift.⁵⁴³ Resources were targeted for the biggest cities and there was little left for the less important areas. The Composers' Union had faced major difficulties and had only meager means to fulfil its mission outside the major cities. Still, Gorodinskii continued to emphasize that this was the task of the Composers' Union. This was also one reason why the Composers' Union should undertake work in kolkhozes and army divisions even in the most distant areas. The Composers' Union was to support the musical activities of political departments in sovkhozes and on tractor stations (*MTS*), both of which were setting up musical clubs in the countryside.⁵⁴⁴

In essence, this work had previously been embraced by the proletarian music movement that in solemn speeches had been criticized both for its methods and ideology. Still, *RAPM's* mass musical activities were not abandoned, and Union's general objectives were no different nor less ideological than *RAPM's* aims had been. Furthermore, the basis of this work was significantly broadened and expanded into areas where proletarian musicians had been unable to operate. The Composers' Union managed to engage many more composers in its work than *RAPM* had ever been able to, and, thus, the work could be furthered notably. The proletarian music movement managed to have effect on the Composers' Union, although this was publicly denied.

In their lengthy article about proletarian music movement, Kaltat and Rabinovich were quite correct when they claimed that mass musical work continued by the Composers' Union had in many respects been inaugurated by *RAPM*:

It should not be forgotten that *RAPM* was the first to set up the question of the class nature of music and to evaluate class forces in the Soviet musical front; *RAPM* was first to wage war against bourgeois tendencies in music on behalf of proletarian music; *RAPM* was first to create a number of works that had positive effects on Soviet musical culture. This cannot be disregarded."⁵⁴⁵

Still, these connections were soon denied and claims for recognition about *RAPM's* role suppressed all throughout the 1930s⁵⁴⁶—even though the work of the Composers' Union testified to the contrary. Only a few overt remarks about

⁵⁴² Livshits, A. 1934, 34: Muzykalnaia zhizn Sevastopolia. In *SM* 10/1934.

⁵⁴³ Muzykalnaia zhizn v Gorkom. In *SM* 10/1934: 46.

⁵⁴⁴ Gorodinskii, V. 1933, 1-2: Vypolnim nash dolg pered kolhozami. In *SM* 6/1933.

⁵⁴⁵ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 6-7: Na dva fronta! Deiatelnost b. *RAPM* i voprosy sovetского muzykal'nogo tvorchestva. In *SM* 2/1933.

⁵⁴⁶ Still in 1938 *RAPM's* agenda was rebuffed with similar arguments than in 1932-1933. See: Khristiansen, L. 1938, 9-14: Pokonchit s perezhitkami *RAPM*ovshchiny. In *SM* 5/1938.

the similarities between the Composers' Union and proletarian music movement survived.

Music publishing: An obstacle to hegemony

The vast nature of the Union's primary objective to lead the entire musical front of the Soviet Union brought with it plenty of problems. The capacity of the Composers' Union to bring pressure to bear upon other organizations was somewhat limited. This is especially well illustrated in the case of the State Musical Press, *Muzgiz*, which was, from the outset, at odds with the Composers' Union, especially over the question of the proletarian music movement and its heritage. Yet, *Muzgiz* was an extremely important organization, since in practice it wielded a monopoly over music publishing. This meant that *Muzgiz* could effectively control what was played on concert stages across the Soviet Union.

The Union's claim that *Muzgiz* was still a *RAPMist* organization was only the start of a series of criticisms, which were to reveal how limited the Union's influence actually was. The presidium of the Composers' Union passed a resolution on April 16, 1933, in which *Muzgiz* was urged to print scores of Soviet compositions as quickly as possible. The style of the resolution was very authoritative and the urgency of the matter was stressed.⁵⁴⁷ In practice, however, the Composers' Union was forced to negotiate, no matter how strongly worded its resolutions were.

Originally, *Muzgiz* was part of *Ogiz* (the State Publishing House), but it became independent in 1931. Thus, it had enjoyed an established position as an independent organization before the Composers' Union was founded. It had also formed very close ties with the proletarian music movement and criticisms of this past error were not easily overcome. Iurii Shaporin was one of those who accused *Muzgiz* of consistently pursuing *RAPM's* policies in its publishing work.⁵⁴⁸ Shaporin did not specify exactly what he meant by this; but, if he was suggesting that *Muzgiz* favored former proletarian musicians, he was not necessarily wrong in his accusation. If we take two months from early 1934, reports from the concert section of *Muzgiz* show that it had published works by eleven Soviet composers during this time. These composers included Belyi, Koval, and Boris Shekhter, who had all been members of *RAPM*, along with Kabalevskii and Khachaturian, who had both former members of *Prokoll*. The mass music section of *Muzgiz* had published works by eight composers, of whom at least Koval, Aleksandr Davidenko, and Nikolai Chemberdzhi had been members of *RAPM*.⁵⁴⁹ This is significant, when one considers that there were not actually that many proletarian musicians among Soviet composers.

The close relationship between *Muzgiz* and *RAPM* dated back to the establishment of *RAPM* in 1923. Three employees of *Ogiz's* Music Sector

⁵⁴⁷ Postanovlenie prezidiuma Soiuzs Sovetskikh kompozitorov ot 16/VI po dokladu organizatsionno-kontsertnogo sektora (t. Shebalin i Atovmian)". In *BSSK* 1/1933: 2.

⁵⁴⁸ Shaporin, Iu. 1933, 128: *Moi mysli o godovshchine 23 apreliia*. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁵⁴⁹ *Khronika*. In *BSSK* 4-5/1934: 23.

founded *RAPM* and used their offices as *RAPM*'s first headquarters.⁵⁵⁰ Although representatives from the Music Sector later abandoned *RAPM*, after 1929 *RAPM* was able effectively to control the Music Sector and later *Muzgiz*. This was illustrated, for example, in the scores that *Muzgiz* chose to publish. Shaporin considered it to be beyond comprehension that after 1932 *Muzgiz* continued to function as though *RAPM* still existed.⁵⁵¹

Maksimilian Shteinberg believed that the difficulties Soviet composers faced in getting their compositions performed were largely due to *Muzgiz*'s policies.⁵⁵² Therefore the Composers' Union also sought allies from other organizations against *Muzgiz* to get it work like composers wished. Despite their occasional confrontations, the Composers' Union found such ally in *Rabis*. While the Composers' Union lacked in authority, *Rabis* was all the more powerful in 1932.⁵⁵³ Yet, the policies against *Muzgiz* were set by composers in their Union and other organizations merely called to support Union's initiatives.

The first plenum of the Soviet Composers' Union concluded that *Muzgiz* lacked clear reasoning. The organization had no coherent and systematic policy that would have enabled Soviet music to establish itself.⁵⁵⁴ *Muzgiz* was capable of thematic planning and contributing to the effective propagation of Soviet music, but, it was argued, these opportunities were missed. This understandably caused a great deal of irritation among members of the Composers' Union. However, some sympathy towards *Muzgiz* and the organizational problems it faced was also expressed:

Among [several other questions the presidium has had to consider] the most important is publishing. The status of our publisher is poor. The technical situation arouses fear. . . . The present technical status and conditions of the only publisher [in the Russian Federation] results in a situation where this publisher cannot support but rather hampers the development of musical culture.⁵⁵⁵

Muzgiz was in dire straits largely because it was tied to industry. The lack of necessary material, especially paper for sheet music, was a problem that composers understood all too well. According to the plenum's report, only 10 percent of all symphonic works written by Soviet composers were published – the remaining 90 percent existed only as manuscripts.⁵⁵⁶ However, not all *Muzgiz*'s problems were caused by external shortages and difficulties. Even when the material conditions of *Muzgiz* improved, it continued to attract criticism from composers. In 1936, one composer claimed that *Muzgiz* had a sign on its door that read "no entry for authors," seeming to suggest that composers were not particularly welcome at its offices.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁰ Edmunds 2000, 12; Nelson 2000, 105.

⁵⁵¹ Shaporin, Iu. 1933, 128: *Moi mysli o godovshchine 23 apreliia*. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁵⁵² Shteinberg, M. 1933, 124–125: *Slushateliu – sovetskuiu muzyku*. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁵⁵³ GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1718, ll. 240–241.

⁵⁵⁴ K plenumu SSK. *God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov*. In *SM* 5/1933: 137.

⁵⁵⁵ K plenumu SSK. *God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov*. In *SM* 5/1933: 139.

⁵⁵⁶ K plenumu SSK. *God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov*. In *SM* 5/1933: 140.

⁵⁵⁷ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 272, l. 8.

The lack of sheet music in early 1930s was an immediate problem. The difficulty of obtaining musical scores was causing serious difficulties for conservatories as well as composers. Conservatory students spent much of their time copying out scores – not merely of contemporary compositions but even of the most common of Beethoven’s sonatas. The Union plenum reasoned that the lack of sheet music made the propagation of Soviet music extremely difficult, as students could not even obtain these scores from the specialist music shops.⁵⁵⁸ It is obvious that, if professionals were having a hard time, the situation was much worse for amateurs. It was alleged that *Muzgiz* presented reports about the “large number of works published,” but, in reality, they struggled even to produce copies of scores for amateur music circle leaders, who would then copy them by hand and distribute them to members of their group.⁵⁵⁹ Thus, even the ideologically important mass musical movement suffered because of this shortage.

The catastrophic situation was evident in the statistics, which showed that in 1931 *Muzgiz* received 15 million offset sheets, in 1932 only 11 million, and in 1933 less than 9 million sheets. The machinery used by *Muzgiz* was also aging and falling apart. Furthermore, the lithography of valuable printing machines was also being changed. Printing piano versions of new operas, ballets, and symphonies was becoming practically impossible, since this required an arduous change of setting in *Muzgiz*’s only printing machine.⁵⁶⁰ Thus, piano versions, important for practicing, had to be hand-written by composers for theater rehearsals, thus taking time away from creative activity.

The Composers’ Union proposed drastic measures to correct the status of music publishing. It hoped that the needs of the concert organizations could be centralized under a separate publisher.⁵⁶¹ It was suggested that a separate publishing house of the Soviet Composers’ Union could be established in Leningrad. A music publisher *Triton*, which had experience as a pre-revolutionary music publisher, was to serve as the operational base for this new publishing house. It was emphasized that this would ease the heavy burden currently being shouldered by *Muzgiz*.⁵⁶²

These plans progressed slowly. A year later, in summer 1934, a report from the third congress of music print-workers stated that a serious chasm existed between consumers’ demands and output of sheet music. More than three quarters of all orders were not fulfilled. The congress hoped that publishing houses and composers would concentrate more on small-scale music, piano, chamber, and mass musical works, for which there was a great demand. Thus far, the relationship between publishing houses and composers had been argumentative and co-operation between them had been practically

⁵⁵⁸ K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933: 139.

⁵⁵⁹ K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933: 139–140.

⁵⁶⁰ K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933: 140.

⁵⁶¹ K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933: 140.

⁵⁶² Postanovlenie prezidiuma Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov s aktivom ot 25/X 1933 g. po dokladu orgsektora (t. Atovmian).” In *BSSK* 3–4/1933: 4; K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933: 140.

non-existent. The conference remarked that, although previous conferences (held in 1932 and 1933) had been failures, the third was already giving hope that mutual understanding could prevail.⁵⁶³

Gofman, the conference chairman, sent a letter to the leadership of *Muzgiz* and the Composers' Union. It revealed that *Muzgiz* had reserved a large proportion of its output for Soviet music. According to Gofman, the conference had argued that one of the most pressing shortages was in pedagogical material, which was by this time largely obsolete.⁵⁶⁴ This letter illustrates how many different bodies were actually involved in the process of printing scores. Alongside the Composers' Union, there was the music publisher *Muzgiz* and partially independent printing houses. In addition, customers requiring sheet music included organizations such as orchestras, amateur collectives, different ensembles, and conservatories.

It now seems clear that, although it had been separated from the State Publishing House, *Muzgiz* was not being given the resources it needed in order to survive and function efficiently. Thus, by the autumn of 1933 the Composers' Union had already turned to *Ogiz*. A request was sent to *Ogiz* to restore and increase the production of sheet music; this was accompanied by details of the statistics that had so alarmed the Composers' Union. The Commissariat of Heavy Industry also received a request to replace broken parts and some of the old machinery at *Muzgiz's* printing offices. A request was made to the Commissariat of Light Industry and *Gosplan* (the State Planning Office) that the amount of paper supplied to *Muzgiz* should not be decreased. It was essential that the annual supply of paper to *Muzgiz* should not fall below 25 million sheets. For 1933, an additional 15 million sheets were requested along with a further 2.5 million sheets to enable the establishment of the Union's own publishing house.⁵⁶⁵ Unfortunately, there are no available statistics for 1933 and 1934, but in 1935 *Muzgiz* published only 8.6 million sheets and in 1936, some 15 million.⁵⁶⁶ These statistics prove that significant increases in sheet-music printing were not achieved until 1936, when the situation finally started to improve. By this time, the Committee on Artistic Affairs had been established and was in charge of administration. Up until this point, the Composers' Union had tried to deal with the economy of shortage in the way it knew best: ask for more than you need.

The plan to establish its own publishing house was perhaps an attempt by the Composers' Union to release itself from *Muzgiz's* immediate control. This publishing house would have increased the output of Soviet music regardless of what *Muzgiz* decided to do. The Composers' Union would then have had a certain degree of autonomy in music publishing as well. The plans proceeded to the point where even the funding of the proposed publishing house had been

⁵⁶³ Smyslovskaia, V. 1934, 72: 3-e soveshchanie notnikov i zadachi Muzgiza. In *SM* 7/1934.

⁵⁶⁴ Gofman 1934, 73-74: Soiuzy sovetskikh kompozitorov i Gosudarstvennomu muzykalnomu izdatelstvu. In *SM* 7/1934.

⁵⁶⁵ K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzza sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933: 140.

⁵⁶⁶ RGALI, f. 962, op. 5, d. 36, l. 1, 6.

resolved. It was to receive money from composers' copyright payments, which indeed sounds like a good investment since copyrights were tied to distribution of composers' music.⁵⁶⁷ However, the publishing house *Sovetskii Kompozitor* was only established in the 1950s. Thus, once again the plans of the Composers' Union were left unrealized.

Eventually, a consensus between *Muzgiz* and the Composers' Union was reached. However, this was preceded by the suppression of *Muzgiz*'s independence and its fusion with the *Ogiz*. The then chairman of the Composers' Union, Reingold Glier, rescued *Muzgiz* in early 1939, by appealing straight to Premier Molotov. Thus, the independence *Muzgiz* had been granted in 1931 was restored because of the special nature of music publishing.⁵⁶⁸ At this point, the Composers' Union was already sufficiently well established to be able to act like a prominent governmental organization and was obviously much more powerful than *Muzgiz*.

In its pursuit of hegemony over the musical front, the Composers' Union was following the same path as the Writers' Union. Yet, the connections between these art unions remained remote. The Composers' Union criticized the Writers' Union for not paying enough attention to musical affairs⁵⁶⁹. Iokhelson believed that the two unions had common interests in theater and opera, but still the Writers' Union completely ignored even the major events of the Leningrad branch of the Composers' Union.⁵⁷⁰ Indeed, the two art unions were quite different organizations and it is possible that this was essentially the reason why there was so little co-operation between them.

The status of literature was much more prominent than that of music in the early 1930s. The Writers' Congress and the introduction of socialist realism received significant attention from both the people and the Party. Literature became part of official discourse, in *Pravda* for example. Literary works were evaluated according to largely extra-artistic criteria that had much more to do with the Party line and rhetoric than artistic merit.⁵⁷¹ The comparison of literature and music is worthwhile, since it highlights the differences between these two organizations. Yet, this does not mean that ideological and political features would have been viewed as completely irrelevant by the Composers'

⁵⁶⁷ SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. O materialno-bytovom polozhenii kompozitorov (iz materialov k plenumu SSK). In *SM* 4/1933: 158.

⁵⁶⁸ RGASPI, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1019, l. 1. Molotov forwarded the letter on February 7, 1939, to Zhdanov, for whom he recommended following Glier's proposal. *Muzgiz* regained the independence it had achieved in 1931.

⁵⁶⁹ Interestingly, *Pravda* raised the same criticism of the Writers' Union in connection with the campaign against formalism in the spring of 1936. It was argued that the Writers' Union had completely neglected *Pravda*'s writings, even though these had relevance for literature, see: Iasnii i prostoi iazyk v iskusstve. *Obzor pechati*. In *Pravda* February 2, 1936.

⁵⁷⁰ Iokhelson, V. 1934, 15: Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov k XVII siezdu partii. In *SM* 1/1934.

⁵⁷¹ Brooks, Jeffrey 1994, 973: socialist realism in *Pravda*: Read All about It! In *Slavic Review* 53(4), 1994; Schull, Joseph 1992, 484: The Ideological Origins of "Stalinism" in Soviet Literature. In *Slavic Review* 51(3), 1992. Schull argues that arts faced transformation from part of civil society into part of the Stalinist governmental system in the early 1930s.

Union during its initial years. For instance, the creative sector of the Union pressed for a seminar on Marxist-Leninist philosophy to be organized, in addition to the sector's usual activity.⁵⁷²

Ideological and political work did receive significant attention, although in a very different way than was the case in literature.

⁵⁷² Postanovlenie prezidiuma Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov s aktivom ot 25/XI 1933 g. po dokladu tvorcheskogo sektora (Vasilenko-Kabalevskii). In BSSK 3-4/1933, p. 4.

IDEOLOGY MEETS MUSIC

Music approaching socialism

Socialism and music: A vague connection

So far, the early structure and initial phases of the Composers' Union have been discussed. It seems that composers were especially interested in the material benefits of their profession—better housing and salaries—and acted accordingly. However, from the outset the Union engaged in work that had obvious ideological connotations, such as organizing musical activity in *kolkhozes*, for instance. Although it escaped the attention of high-ranking Party officials, the Composers' Union still actively participated in ideologically and politically important work. It also discussed the principles of Soviet music and even socialist realism, despite the lack of Party officials participating in these discussions or urging composers to undertake such work.

The concept of socialist realism is usually associated with the system of art unions. Indeed, both came into existence at around the same time. In the context of the Cold War, the West willingly saw Soviet artists as purely victims of Communist rule. In this view, art unions as governmental organizations were part of the system, just as socialist realism guided their work. Thus, socialist realism would have been seen merely as a censorial attempt by the totalitarian regime to destroy “real” art and its authors. Socialist realism was, however, a much more complex phenomenon, and theoretical literature on this subject continues to grow.⁵⁷³ Like art unions, socialist realism was a state-sponsored method that all artists in the Soviet Union had to adhere to more or less. Although Soviet discussion of socialist realism began the same spring the art unions were founded, its principles are much older and can be traced back

⁵⁷³ For a concise summary of socialist realism and its main principles one should consult either: Terras, Victor, 1991: *A History of Russian Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press; or Kenez and Shepherd 1998.

to nineteenth-century literary aesthetics. The ideas put forward by Nikolai Chernyshevskii and Vissarion Belinskii are of particular importance.⁵⁷⁴ This also indicates that socialist realism was originally a literary concept.

If socialist realism is equated with Stalinism, we fail to appreciate how multi-faceted the history of socialist realism was and why it was such an important issue for art unions. High-ranking Party officials occasionally used socialist realism (and even more often, the lack of it) to bind certain artists more firmly to Party objectives. The most notorious example in music was, without question, the campaign against formalism led by Andrei Zhdanov that pinnacled in 1948. This, along with other attempts to canonize and prohibit works of art, contributed to Western views that socialist realism was simply part of totalitarian control of the arts. Boris Groys was one of the first to approach socialist realism more objectively. He pointed out that only parts of art were prohibited or canonized and that only certain artists were persecuted.⁵⁷⁵ Although I do not intend to provide an exhaustive account of who took part in canonizing and what music was canonized or prohibited, these topics are touched upon in this study. Members of the Composers' Union were actively involved in the canonizing process and there are a number of examples to illustrate this trend.

The actual contribution of artists to the canonizing process, which was closely connected to socialist realism, has not yet been fully covered in research. The formation of the principles of socialist realism and the selection of works of art that conformed to "socialist realist" ideals has too often been regarded as arbitrary Party rule. Boris Groys noted, in 1988, that researchers were dismissive of art created under Hitler's or Stalin's regimes, particularly when it was compared to "real art." Groys believes that this has been due to the fact that, according to twentieth-century art aesthetics, art has been seen as a creative process that was independent from external forces.⁵⁷⁶ Thereby, only an artist working independently would be able to create art. However, within the history of art, it is easy to see that artists have always served rulers and states. The idea of the individual artist was thus quite a new phenomenon.

⁵⁷⁴ socialist realism has been studied in detail from different viewpoints. If we exclude vast amount of studies produced in the Soviet Union, the prominent Russian collection is: Giunter, Kh. and Dobrenko, E. (eds.) 2000: *Sotsrealisticheskii kanon*. St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt. A selection of older Western monographs on socialist realism include following: Ermolaev, Herman 1963: *Soviet Literary theories 1917-1934. The Genesis of the socialist realism*. Berkeley: University of California Press; James, C. Vaughan 1973: *Soviet socialist realism: Origins and theory*. London: Macmillan; Robin, Règine 1992: *socialist realism: An Impossible Aesthetic*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Groundbreaking ideas of the nature of socialist realism were presented by Boris Groys, whose ideas will be examined in detail in this part, see Groys 1988 and Groys 1992. The study of socialist realism gained new momentum after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This is well-illustrated in a collection of papers from International Musicological Colloquium titled *socialist realism and Music: Anti-Modernisms and Avant-gardes* held in Brno, Czech Republic from first to third October 2001, see Bek, Mikuláš; Chew, Geoffrey and Macek, Petr (eds.) 2004: *socialist realism and Music*. Prague: Koniasch Latin Press.

⁵⁷⁵ Groys 1992, 5-6.

⁵⁷⁶ Groys 1992, 7.

Often the art of the socialist realist phase is ignored simply because of its political nature. The first decade and a half after the Revolution have been much more widely admired; this was supposedly the era of “individualist” avant-garde. This view suggests that a great chasm separated avant-gardism and socialist realism. In contrast to this view, Groys states that there was a link between these two seemingly contradicting concepts. Avant-gardists aimed to take art out of museums and concert halls—its traditional “performance” arenas—and into the midst of ordinary people. In fact, socialist realism fulfilled this and many other avant-gardist aims, including the eradication of the division between high and utilitarian art, thus uniting artists behind a single purpose.⁵⁷⁷

The link between socialist realism and the avant-garde is not as vague as one might first imagine. There are certain concrete statements from initial phases of the Composers’ Union that support this view. One of the key figures of the Composers’ Union was musicologist and Party-member Viktor Gorodinskii, who would also build many important bridges between music and ideological demands. On several occasions, he urged composers to follow the ideological aims of the Party and encourage creative work among the people. He believed that the socialist realist style first of all required fieldwork instead of theoretical reasoning and research. Music ought to be taken from concert halls to the factories and kolkhozes.⁵⁷⁸

In his earlier theoretical writings, Gorodinskii emphasized, “Music was not a metaphysical abstraction, but a realistic, concrete issue of class war in the ideological front.” He offered concrete examples: Nikolai Miaskovskii’s depictions of rural life in his symphonies, the Western revolutionaries in Belyi’s *Hunger March*, Shebalin’s portrayal of Lenin, and Knipper’s Red Army compositions. The Composers’ Union had also begun to implement many of the methods described by Gorodinskii. In his view, there were several ways to approach ideology through music. Perhaps some of his views were thus accepted by the Composers’ Union.⁵⁷⁹

“To the kolkhozes, comrades!” Concrete ideological work

As organizations were established by the Party decree, art unions were expected to undertake ideologically important work. Before 1932 proletarian art organizations had taken care of mass artistic work, mass art education, and the nourishment of autonomous art circles. This work also became an important part of the new art unions’ programs. In the Composers’ Union, however, the contrary at first seemed to be the case. The Party was expected to supervise this work, as it had political as well as ideological importance. Indeed, in 1932 the

⁵⁷⁷ Groys 1992, 7.

⁵⁷⁸ Gorodinskii, V. 1933, 2: Vypolnim nash dolg pered kolhozami. In *SM* 6/1933.

⁵⁷⁹ See especially: Gorodinskii, V. 1933, 2: Problema soderzhaniia i obraznosti v muzike. In *SM* 5/1933; also Gorodinskii, V. 1933, 6–18: K voprosu o sochialisticheskom realizme v muzyke. In *SM* 1/1933; Gorodinskii, V. 1933, 2: Muzykalnye itogi. Put k socialisticheskomu realizmu. In *SI* April 26, 1933.

highest Party organ, *orgbiuro*, had nominated a committee to look into the mass song issue⁵⁸⁰, but this work was never accomplished—nor is it clear if the committee was even inaugurated. The issue of mass song was simply not topical enough. According to one Skimmel, in 1932 both amateur and mass musical work collapsed in Leningrad. Skimmel was concerned, since it was the Composers' Union's task to take care of public needs just as *RAPM* had done earlier. However, amateur composers, for example, had been left completely without guidance.⁵⁸¹

It seems that after *RAPM* was closed down mass musical work suffered because many composers had little genuine interest in it. The number of new songs for amateur collectives imploded and those that were composed were of poor quality. There were only a few compositions for folk instruments and many of those that were composed were left unpublished by *Muzgiz*.⁵⁸² It seems that Soviet musical life was experiencing a phase of uncertainty about the correct path of ideological work. While the Party did not guide music, composers chose to foster music that best suited themselves and concentrated on issues they believed to be most urgent. However, mass musical work was not abandoned altogether. This genre actually became one of the foremost activities of the Composers' Union. This, however, did not happen as a result of direct intervention by the Party but rather because of changes in Soviet society. Mass festivities and the glorification of socialist construction called for new music. As an organization striving for control over creative musical activity, it was in the Union's interests to ensure that people had songs to sing. Thus, the Composers' Union engaged in fieldwork.

Celebrated composer Vissarion Shebalin, who initially headed the sector for autonomous art in Moscow, recalled in his memoirs that they started to work in kolkhozes in the winter of 1933–34. He considered this work as an attempt to find new ways for creative work.⁵⁸³ This work, indeed, did become an important part of what the Composers' Union's operations. For some, work in kolkhozes was a means of approaching socialist realism, while others perceived it as a way to find new audiences for the music they composed. In any case, a composer visiting some kolkhozes of Leningrad or Moscow area was not an uncommon occurrence during the Union's initial years. At the kolkhozes, Union members would undertake musical work, instruction, conducting, and composing.⁵⁸⁴

In his memoirs, Shebalin touched upon perhaps one of the first more extensive such undertakings by the Union when Atovmian and Shebalin together were establishing connections with the kolkhozes in late 1933. One of

⁵⁸⁰ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 114, d. 300, l. 5.

⁵⁸¹ Skimmel, R. 1933, 131–132: K nachinaiushchim rabochim kompozitoram. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁵⁸² Bogoslovskii, Iurii 1934, 52–53: O tvorchestve dlia samodeiatelnosti. In *SM* 8/1934.

⁵⁸³ Shebalin 2003, 41.

⁵⁸⁴ Almost every issue of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* included these kinds of reports, see one example: Orlova, L. 1935, 93–94: V Leningradskom soiuze sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 2/1935.

the most important connections was with Veniov's Tractor Station⁵⁸⁵, situated 150 kilometers south of Moscow, where they were to help the station to conduct art education. The Union committed itself to setting up a twenty-four-member balalaika orchestra, a jazz orchestra with twelve members, a wind orchestra with sixteen members, and a choir. The Union would provide an instructor and provide ongoing help to these ensembles, as well as arrange musical inspections, organize concerts of Soviet music, and even set up a sheet-music library for the station. In return, the kolkhozes would feed their guests.⁵⁸⁶

Months later, in the spring of 1934, instruments for the wind orchestra had already been provided and a group of musicians visited a number of kolkhozes in the area giving concerts and rehearsing with local groups. At concerts they played compositions by Shostakovich, Miaskovskii, and Koval, alongside classical works.⁵⁸⁷ The propaganda of Soviet music was by no means forgotten. However, perhaps the most important contribution of the Union was to send energetic Aleksandr Davidenko to Veniov's kolkhozes for a three-month period in the spring of 1934. There, he managed to organize a high-quality kolkhoz choir of forty singers, write several mass songs, and engage in political discussions about spring sowing.⁵⁸⁸ Perhaps Davidenko overworked himself, since he died only days after he returned from Veniov, on May Day.⁵⁸⁹

At first, it seems that the Union received nothing in return for its efforts. Of course, composers might have worked simply to satisfy ideological ends or in order to participate in political work, either voluntarily or out of compulsion. However, there is also the possibility that composers were looking for food and either rest or a peaceful environment for working when they visited the kolkhozes. In 1933 food was still scarce after disastrous harvest years. By arranging a permanent post for couple of composers in a kolkhoz farm, these composers were guaranteed a share of the farm produce while they did light work instructing a few kolkhoz ensembles. The value of rest tends to be underestimated. In a busy city like Moscow, yearning for the countryside may have been considerable, especially because Russians had always been attached to country life and summer cottages.⁵⁹⁰

Whatever the reason, already in 1933 similar deals were drawn up with other kolkhozes, like that with kolkhozes by the Ilinsk's Tractor Station—an area known to be a major bread producer.⁵⁹¹ Several other contracts followed.

⁵⁸⁵ Tractor Stations (MTS) were like their name refers, centers of collective machinery and skilled workforce to use them, but they were also political centers of kolkhozes, where both ideological and political education centered.

⁵⁸⁶ Dogovor SSK i Venevskoi MTS. In *BSSK* 1-2/1934, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁸⁷ Khronika. In *BSSK* 3/1934: 11-12.

⁵⁸⁸ Otzyv o rabote tov. A. A. Davidenko v Venevskoi MTS. In *BSSK* 4-5/1934: 4-5.

⁵⁸⁹ Heatstroke mentioned in: Edmunds 2004b, 119.

⁵⁹⁰ See especially Lovell, Stephen, *Summerfolk: History of the Dacha, 1710-2000*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003. The section on "Soviet dacha" describes this phenomenon quite well. For an examination of the leisure and recreational activities of composers during 1930s (written in Finnish), see Mikkonen, Simo, "Votkaa ja fokstrottia—säveltäjät stalinistisen vapaa-ajan järjestäjinä ja kuluttajina. In *Finnish Historical Journal* 2/2007, 191-204.

⁵⁹¹ Postanovlenie prezidiuma soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov ot 9/VII 1933 g. o shefstve nad Ilinskoi MTS (soobshchenie t. Atovmian). In *BSSK* 1/1933, p. 4.

In 1935, a couple of composers and musicians participated in harvest celebrations in Skopinsk County. A number of other composers, including Reingold Glier, Marian Koval, Viktor Belyi, Vladimir Fere, and many others took part in expeditions to kolkhozes in Tula, Kashira, Naro-Fominsk, and other counties, most of which were located within a 100 miles radius of Moscow.⁵⁹² Composers seem to have preferred to remain relatively close to their hometown, seldom travelling to distant places. While the mundane side of life is often disregarded in Soviet connections, the need for rest and recreation might explain why, for example, Shebalin had such nostalgic memories about this work.⁵⁹³ Shebalin is not usually considered to be a very political figure so it seems unlikely that this future professor of composition was working out of purely ideological sentiments and his nostalgic sentiments point out that he certainly did not participate involuntarily.

The initiative of using music for political ends was at least not entirely the product of Party suppression, but something that the Composers' Union was autonomously practicing. Of course, the Party had drawn of writers to Soviet society in, for example, the highly publicized Writers' Congress in 1934. The Composers' Union wished to extend its authority and perhaps thus encouraged its members to undertake ideologically important work. It is very difficult to find any evidence of political suppression during the first half of the 1930s. Although Cheliapov and Gorodinskii, both Party members, strongly urged composers to join in with ideological work, they and the Union did not pressure composers to do so. Soon, the Union's fieldwork yielded concrete results with the completion of large-scale compositions on a kolkhoz theme, including Miaskovskii's Twelfth Symphony.⁵⁹⁴ The Composers' Union was also ready to arrange for leading musicians to be sent to kolkhozes to give concerts. In one case, in a four week-cycle, artists toured kolkhozes in four different counties, from Kashira to Noginsk. Leading musicians, such as piano professor Grigorii Ginzburg, were included in the troupes.⁵⁹⁵

In the winter of 1936, kolkhoz expeditions had expanded in both size and number. Together with the Moscow Committee of the Party, the union arranged several extended visits by composers to kolkhozes in the Moscow area. In their lengthy reports, composers described how music had become an important part of life in the kolkhozes and how they had been impressed by the quality of music being performed there. Several composers claimed that their own compositions had been deeply affected by these expeditions.⁵⁹⁶ During the

⁵⁹² See for example, *Kompozitory na prazdnike urozhaia*. In *SM* 2/1936: 71; *Kompozitory v kolkhozakh*. In *SM* 2/1936: 71-72.

⁵⁹³ Shebalin 2003, 41. Shebalin describes with respectful tones his companion Davidenko on this first trip, and how Davidenko was prepared and able for organizing musical work in kolkhozes.

⁵⁹⁴ Keldysh, Iu. 1934, 8: 12-ia simfoniia Miaskovskogo i nekotorye problemy sovetskogo simfonizma. In *SM* 2/1934.

⁵⁹⁵ V Moskovskom Soiuze sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 4/1936: 82.

⁵⁹⁶ At least Dmitrii Kabalevskii, Viktor Belyi, Nikolai Ivanov-Radkevich, Dmitrii Vasiliev-Buglai, Mikhail Cheremukhin, Vladimir Fere, and about fifteen others gave reports about their expeditions to the Kolkhozes in four issues of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* (from the 3rd to 6th issue) in 1936. Composers from the younger as well as older

latter half of 1935, the Leningrad branch of the Composers' Union also undertook a series of joint ventures with kolkhozes in the Leningrad area. Expeditions similar to those by the Moscow branch were definitely sent to the Tikhvin and Starorusskii districts. Additionally, a collection of new music by Leningrad composers was published specifically for kolkhoz ensembles, with large proportions for the *baian* (a folk accordion). The published music included some catchy tunes, including Isaak Dunaevskii's march from the film *Cheerful Lads*.⁵⁹⁷

Eventually, even *Pravda* acknowledged the Union's work in the kolkhozes. In the spring of 1936 when the Party had started to re-activate its interest in music, *Pravda* mentioned composers' systematic work in kolkhozes of the Moscow region and referred to Kabalevskii and Belyi by name.⁵⁹⁸ It is no surprise, then, that the ideological side of this work was later emphasized, even if the different motives had actually inspired the early visits. In the spring of 1936, Viktor Vinogradov wrote two articles in adjacent issues about the Union's work in the kolkhozes. In the first, he wrote about the importance of learning from the life in the kolkhozes and drawing influences from that life for creative work. The second was an article concerned with giving instructions on how to improve cultural life in the kolkhozes.⁵⁹⁹

After 1936, however, the Composers' Union was not necessarily involved in arranging musical activity in the kolkhozes. The Committee on Artistic Affairs expanded musical work in the kolkhozes to such an extent that the Composers' Union could no longer contribute. Although composers were no longer actively involved, their music was still central to this work. The Committee continued to send leading musicians to perform in kolkhozes. In 1939, the first festival of music in kolkhozes had been arranged; these village concerts would introduce top soloists, including David Oistrakh, Iakov Flier, and Busia Goldshtein, and leading opera singers such as Valeria Barsova along with other *Bolshoi* stars.⁶⁰⁰ While composers were no longer primarily responsible for work in the kolkhozes, their opportunity to participate in recreational activities through their Union had improved markedly. Although this might not be the foremost reason for the change, it still indicates the extent to which composers became full-time specialists. They were now expected to compose rather than be doing all kinds of things loosely connected with composing. All the necessities, including food and recreation, were provided for composers through their Union. This trend is also suggested by other means of ideological work engaged by composers in early 1930s.

Another ideologically important, and concrete, initiative taken by composers was to work in army garrisons. Composers were to draw up a

generation, and former proletarian musicians along with previous modernists, all submitted their contributions.

⁵⁹⁷ Svirina, T. 1935, 95: V Len. Soiuzе sov. kompozitorov. In *SM* 11/1935.

⁵⁹⁸ Muzykalnye shkoly v kolhozakh moskovskoi oblasti. In *Pravda* March 2, 1936: 4.

⁵⁹⁹ Vinogradov, V. 1936: 53-56: Nado izuchat novyi byt kolkhozov. In *SM* 4/1936; Usilit prakticheskuiu pomoshch kolkhozam i tvorcheskuiu rabotu. In *SM* 5/1936: 83-84.

⁶⁰⁰ Festival muzyki v kolhozakh. In *SM* 5/1939: 75-77.

repertory for the Red Army, both for its professional ensembles and for autonomous circles. It was believed that this could not be accomplished unless composers were on the spot.⁶⁰¹ The motives behind this work were once again diverse. One was perhaps the music played in the Army. As illustrated by the Olympiads for non-professional ensembles of the Red Army, works by nineteenth-century composers, such as Tchaikovskii or Beethoven, were most often performed. There were not many suitable Soviet compositions.⁶⁰² As I discussed earlier, composition contracts and royalty issues were both central concerns for composers. The Red Army offered composers contracts and the number of its ensembles continued to grow very fast. Thus, the inclusion of Soviet compositions in the Army repertory meant both fame and royalties for composers.

Therefore, composers' worries were justified. Autonomous groups in general were said to perform non-Soviet music almost without exceptions. According to Vinogradov, Soviet music was rarely included in the repertoires of kolkhoz groups in certain areas. At an Olympiad, one group included only one Soviet composition out of thirty works performed. Vinogradov claimed that the situation was only slightly better in other groups.⁶⁰³ Despite Vinogradov's obvious exaggeration, which was intended to direct attention to the kolkhozes once again, he put forward the idea that the Soviet repertory had not yet been successfully introduced and that this was the objective of the Composers' Union.

The early concern about repertory eventually gave birth to a fairly long-lasting co-operation not only with the kolkhozes, but also between the Composers' Union and the Red Army. At the end of 1935, the Composers' Union could boast that four different symphonies composed on military themes and a host of other compositions had been composed. Shebalin's Fourth Symphony, *Perekopean*, was the result of his work in divisions of Black Sea Fleet in Crimea. While the Composers' Union could claim that composers had been influenced by the Army, they had also created the basis of the repertory for the Army they had originally intended. This repertory included not only marches and military music, but also jazz and other forms of light music.⁶⁰⁴

The Red Army of Peasants and Workers was a central institution in the Soviet Union and its ideological meaning was indisputable. It was part of the mythology of the Civil War, and its myths were now further strengthened by art—notably the film industry and also music, including Shebalin's *Perekopean*. (The Isthmus of Perekop, which connects the peninsula of Crimea to the mainland, was the site of the Red Army's decisive victory over General Wrangel's White Army in 1920.) As well as supporting official myths, music

⁶⁰¹ Postanovlenie Prezidiuma Soiuzs Sovetskikh kompozitorov s aktivom ot 25/XI 1933 g. po dokladu tvorcheskogo sektora (Vasilenko-Kabalevskii). In BSSK 3-4/1933, p. 4.

⁶⁰² Kiselev, M. 1934, 69: Itogi okryzhnoi olimpiady kasnoarmeiskoi khudozhestvennoi samodeiatelnosti MVO. In SM 3/1934.

⁶⁰³ Vinogradov, V. 1937, 82: Ispravit nedochety nashei muzykalnoi samodeiatelnosti. In SM 8/1937.

⁶⁰⁴ Chemberdzhi, N. 1935, 86: V oboronnoi sektsii SSK. In SM 12/1935.

seems to have been very important in underlining the friendly and cheerful nature of the Red Army. Every detachment of the Army had its own singers, dancers, and entertainers, and evenings in the camps were full of joy, cheer, and spirit.⁶⁰⁵ For this, the Red Army needed ideologically correct yet catchy songs from Soviet composers.

Composers' work on the Red Army repertory seems to have been very productive. In 1935 there were plans to publish a songbook of new Soviet music, *Leningrad Composers for the Red Army*, based on composers' work in the garrisons.⁶⁰⁶ According to Chemberdzhi, around twenty composers had undertaken expeditions to Red Army garrison during the summers of 1934 and 1935.⁶⁰⁷ These expeditions were described as serving a double function, just like the work in kolkhozes. Composers were expected to draw positive influences for their creative work from their experiences on the kolkhozes. At the same time, composers had an opportunity to teach their own compositions to local ensembles and even engage in new composing contracts. This was the appeal of working with the Red army, which had good resources. Thus, meetings between the Red Army administration and the Composers' Union increased noticeably in 1934.⁶⁰⁸ The number of Red Army musical ensembles was increasing, as was their place in the musical life of the Soviet Union. Therefore, it was very profitable for a Soviet composer to participate in garrison excursions. The defense section, and later the commission, of the Composers' Union became one of the most active ones of the Composers' Union. The section continually reported that new works had been composed by its members, including Viktor Voloshinov's *Sharp-shootress* and Arsenii Gladkovskii's *Symphony of the Red Army*.⁶⁰⁹

The growth of musical activity connected with the Red Army coincided with the increasing importance of the military's role in Soviet society generally. Indeed, the Central House of the Red Army (*TsDKA*) and its ensemble quickly took on a leading position in the Soviet Union. *Red Army Ensemble* was established in 1928 with eight singers and three dancers. From the start, the ensemble's purpose was to glorify the Red Army and the history of its various divisions. One of the first the ensembles depicted-was the First Cavalry, Semion Budionnii's legendary "horse army" from the Civil War. Aleksandr Vasilievich Aleksandrov, in his 1938 summary of the history of the ensemble, was quite correct when he said that the ensemble's success was the result of Stalin's and Voroshilov's attention and guidance.⁶¹⁰ The ensemble of the Red Army was important in both foreign and domestic policy. Yet, it is important to appreciate that the frequently emphasized "amateur" nature of the *Red Army Ensemble* was, in fact, a myth. Most members of the ensemble were professionals and had

⁶⁰⁵ Aleksandrov, A. 1938, 18-19: Muzyka i Krasnoi Armii. In *SM* 2/1938.

⁶⁰⁶ Svirina, T. 1935. 95: V Len. Soiuze sov. kompozitorov. In *SM* 11/1935.

⁶⁰⁷ Chemberdzhi, N. 1936, 15: Sovetskie kompozitory - Krasnoi armii. In *SM* 2/1936.

⁶⁰⁸ Skoblionok, A. 1935, 78-83: V SSK. Rabota oboronnoi sektsii Soiuzu Sov. Kompozitorov. In *SM* 1/1935.

⁶⁰⁹ Orlova, L. 1935: 93-94: V SSK. V Leningradskom soiuze sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 2/1935.

⁶¹⁰ Aleksandrov, A. 1938, 18-24: Muzyka i Krasnoi Armii. In *SM* 2/1938.

never actually been soldiers. Aleksandrov was ready to admit this obliquely when he described how he would answer “mostly” whenever he was asked whether his ensemble was made up of soldiers.⁶¹¹

This ensemble, and its leader, was one of the first musical collectives to be awarded a number of honorary badges and order nominations. On November 26, 1935, the Central Executive Committee (*TsIK*) awarded the ensemble the Order of the Red Star (military order) and renamed it the *Red Army Ensemble of Song and Dance of the Red Flag of the Soviet Union*. Its leader, Professor Aleksandr Aleksandrov, received the Order of the Red Star and thirteen members of the ensemble were each given the Order of the Badge of Honor.⁶¹² The Badge of Honor was a civilian award given for outstanding social achievement; these thirteen musicians were among the first to receive the award, as it had only been introduced on the same day. The ideological role of the Army was outlined by Molotov: “our Red Army is not only the country’s main defense, but also a school of the new culture of workers’ and peasants’ state.”⁶¹³ Later, it would also become an important part of the Soviet Union’s cultural export; in 1937 the ensemble had already given victorious performances in Paris and toured Czechoslovakia.⁶¹⁴ This was only an overture for the ensemble’s tours after the Second World War.

Ties between the Composers’ Union and the Red Army further deepened towards the latter half of the 1930s. A festival on military thematic was organized in March of 1936 by the political administration of the Red Army and the Composers’ Union. Compositions by thirty-seven different composers were played at several concerts and radio broadcasts.⁶¹⁵ Although this was not a grandiose festival of the type that would later be held on other themes, it still demonstrates the new role of military music. The Red Army and its commander, Kliment Voroshilov, were even the theme of one *Sovetskaia Muzyka* issue on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Red Army. Dmitrii Vasiliev-Buglai’s *Song of Voroshilov* (text by Vasilii Lebedev-Kumach) was published on the first pages of the issue and the editorial was entitled “The Army of the Socialist State.” The Red Army was identified as a fitting subject for musical compositions and it was said that these works reached millions. The importance of music for the Army was also emphasized.⁶¹⁶ Officials tried to make it clear to everyone that the Army mattered, and composers willingly supported these attempts.

⁶¹¹ Aleksandrov, A. 1938, 18: *Muzyka i Krasnoi Armii*. In *SM* 2/1938. Issue was also touched upon, when the leader of the ensemble, Anatoli Aleksandrov was introduced in detail, see: Nestiev, I. and Iarustovskii, B. 1937, 16–20: *Khudozhnik-boets*. In *SM* 5/1937.

⁶¹² *Postanovlenie Tsentralnogo Iсполnitelnogo Komiteta Soiuza SSR*. In *SM* 1/1936, p. 64.

⁶¹³ Chemberdzhi, N. 1936, 9: *Sovetskie kompozitory – Krasnoi armii*. In *SM* 2/1936.

⁶¹⁴ Aleksandrov, A. 1938, 20: *Muzyka i Krasnoi Armii*. In *SM* 2/1938.

⁶¹⁵ Chemberdzhi, N. 1936, 16–19: *Dekada sovetskoi muzyki na oboronnuu tematiku*. In *SM* 4/1936.

⁶¹⁶ *Armiia sotsialisticheskoi derzhavy*. In *SM* 2/1938: 12–13.

The Red Army became one of the core elements of the Soviet society. It was said to be the favorite child of the Bolshevik Party and beloved by the whole nation. Military music was a crucial part of the Soviet musical scene and thus was eagerly taken up by the Composers' Union. Music was also an important part of shaping the public image of the Army. There were a number of songs about the Red Army, but the numerous ensembles and musicians in every garrison gave a rather cultured image of Army life. Composers and musicians could point out their importance for society and argue why music ought to be supported by the State. Thus, *Sovetskaia Muzyka* continued to keep music for the Red Army in an important position. The second issue of the journal in 1939 (coeval with the anniversary of the Red Army) included considerable coverage of military music.⁶¹⁷

Methods of encouraging socialist music

While in solemn addresses the work in kolkhozes and in army garrisons was described as directing composers toward ideological and Soviet thematic, there were other, more concrete methods to achieve these aims. Competitions were arranged around certain themes in order to encourage composers to compose on these subjects. The ideological nature of these competitions is illustrated by the fact that one, in the early 1930s, was named after Stalin.⁶¹⁸ However, even its name could not bring the competition sufficient national attention, and attendance at the event was poor. Despite this setback, musical competitions continued to increase.

An interesting example of how competitions directed creative activity can be found in an international choral composition competition organized by the International Association of Revolutionary Theatre (*MORT*) and the International Musical Bureau of *VOKS*. First, entrants' works were regulated, just as they are in most competitions. The theme for competition entries was to be revolutionary proletarian struggle. The antifascist movement, defense of the USSR, the idea of internationalism, and struggle against imperialist armies were mentioned as subjects for compositions. The first prize was 1,500 rubles and the second and third 750 rubles each.⁶¹⁹ In addition, all works that were published were to receive the usual fees. A three-week-luxury-vacation in USSR would have been substituted for the monetary prize had a foreigner won the

⁶¹⁷ See for example, *Krasnaia armiiia i sovetskaia muzykalnaia kultura*. In *SM* 2/1939: 8–10. Half of this issue of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* was devoted to military music and music for the Red Army.

⁶¹⁸ *Uchastniki konkursa t. Stalinu*. In *SI* June 2, 1933: 3.

⁶¹⁹ As a reminder, an average wage in the Soviet Union 1937 was around 250 rubles per month. Chapman 1963, 109. However, this amount was often exceeded with different bonuses, sometimes even multifoldly, see: Filtzer 1986, 213. Indicative figures in retail prices suggest at least something of the buying power of a ruble: chicken was around 10, butter 20, potatoes 0,40 and rice 6 rubles per kilogram. See: Chapman 1963, 190–191.

competition.⁶²⁰ Unfortunately, the content of this luxury vacation was not specified.

In the 1930s, competitions were increasingly arranged around numerous themes, such as for ditties (*chastushki*) about kolkhozes.⁶²¹ In many cases, these competitions issued strict ideological instructions that indicated what kind of emotional content compositions should have. In the case of one competition for *Komsomol* (Communist youth organization) music, compositions were to reflect the power of *Komsomol*, the energy and brightness of komsomolians, their adamant devotion to the cause of Lenin and Stalin, and the role of *Komsomol* in socialist construction. Four thousand rubles were to be awarded for the winning symphony, oratory, or cantata and 2,000 rubles, to the winning song or solo work. Altogether, a total of twelve works were to be awarded some sort of prize.⁶²²

The prizes for this contest were higher than those that had been awarded at a similar *Komsomol* competition two years earlier. Furthermore, when one considers the salaries composers received from the Union, participation in competitions seemed worthwhile and potentially lucrative. Of course, for well-off composers the glory of winning a competition would have been enough, but the average composers must surely have appreciated these financial rewards. Competitions were also viewed as an opportunity to teach and elevate young Soviet composers and give them chance to be in the limelight.⁶²³ However, the results of the competitions that I have been able to study indicate that, at least at major competitions, those composers with some kind of established reputation tended to be awarded the top prizes.

Competitions also served an important administrative function in moving different musical organizations closer each other and helping them to find new composers. One pioneer song competition, for example, involved *Muzgiz*, *Komsomol*, and the Writers' and Composers' unions. Furthermore, the best songs from the competition were to be performed at a concert and compiled as a songbook published by *Muzgiz*. Thus, there was a fair chance for such a song to become a classic.⁶²⁴

The ideological importance of pioneer song competitions further lay in their particular usefulness in creating a new Soviet man. It seems that, as was claimed, Pioneer songs truly became part of a shared Soviet childhood. It was deemed important for songs to be healthy, to deal with the greatness and happiness of Soviet existence, and to teach children facts about the Soviet way

⁶²⁰ Diament, G. and Sabo, F. 1934, 5: Mezhdunarodnii konkurs na luchshii mnogogolosnii khor. In *BSSK* 4-5/1934.

⁶²¹ Svirina, T. 1935, 95: V Len. Soiuzе sov. kompozitorov. In *SM* 11/1935.

⁶²² O konkurse na muzykalnoe proizvedenie, posviashchennoe Komsomolu, priurochennoe k X siezdu VLKSM. In *SM* 5/1935: 92-93.

⁶²³ Gorodinskii described competitions as follows: "[I]n pre-revolutionary Russia and in the West they are closed and corrupted occasions of personal contesting. In the Soviet Union the decisions are made objectively and results are not the kind of lottery [as in the West]", see: Gorodinskii, V. 1933: Smotr sovetskikh masterov muzyki. *Moskovskii konkurs nachinaetsia* 10 apreliia. In *SI* April 8, 1933: 4.

⁶²⁴ Atovmian, L. 1933, 141: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzа sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

of life.⁶²⁵ Dmitrii Kabalevskii, whose work on children's music has been widely recognized, criticized the existing children's repertory and regarded their text with a sad grin. He examined an excerpt of a text from 1928: "Ai, ai, ai. Stomping of feet here and there! In the republic of work we live, lead our life and anew begin. Ai, ai, ai!"⁶²⁶ Under the guidance of Kabalevskii and other active representatives of the children's sector, the Composers' Union was deeply involved in the creation of a new repertory for Soviet youth.

Dmitrii Kabalevskii believed that musical work with the young could reach the same standard that had already been achieved through composers' work with the army.⁶²⁷ While acknowledging the central role of the army in music politics, he was also concerned of the field in music which was going to become his specialty. Kabalevskii had already been praised and rewarded for his work with pioneer music.⁶²⁸ In his case, competitions seem genuinely to have helped him to establish a reputation and a sound position in the youth section of the Composers' Union administration. Later on, Kabalevskii would become one of the most luminous musical pedagogues in the Soviet Union. While Kabalevskii was not the only name mentioned—reference to Aleksandrov, Fere, and Khachaturian was also made in connection with youth music—Kabalevskii was still the most saliently brought forward.⁶²⁹

Although competitions became an important vehicle for drawing composers' attention to a certain thematic by using awards and glory as carrots, the work was not without its problems. Another song competition for a youth song about May Day is a fine example of this. The competition was opened by Commissar Andrei Bubnov and the secretary of *Komsomol's* central committee, Kosarev.⁶³⁰ Although the Party was at least nominally involved, the results were still disappointing. Iokhelson regarded that the first round of the May Day competition had produced only barely satisfactory compositions. He was deeply concerned that composers concentrated on their personal projects rather than on music that would arouse public interest.⁶³¹ Yet, Kabalevskii, who won the competition, received wide publicity from the competition—*Soviet Art* even published a large cover photo of Kabalevskii.⁶³² This may have been done in order to emphasize the importance of competitions. Maximenkov has discussed awards from December 1936, when Isaak Dunaevskii, a composer of popular songs, was presented with the Order of Red Flag. The Committee on Artistic

⁶²⁵ Opendak, E. 1935, 10-11: Radostnuiu pesniu sovetskoi detvore. In *SM* 2/1935; Shatskaia, V. 1935, 16-17: Muzykalnoe vospitanie pionera i shkolnik. In *SM* 2/1935; also: Sozdadim podlinno-khudozhestvennuiu pesniiu dlia detei. (Materialy tvorcheskogo soveshchaniia o detskoj pesne). In *SM* 2/1935: 20.

⁶²⁶ Kabalevskii, D. 1935, 20: O rabote nad detskoj pesnej. In *SM* 2/1935.

⁶²⁷ Kabalevskii, D. 1935, 20: O rabote nad detskoj pesnej. In *SM* 2/1935.

⁶²⁸ Itogi konkursa na pioneskuiu pesniu. In *SM* 2/1934: 63.

⁶²⁹ Lokshin, D. 1934, 95: K voprosu o muzykalnom vospitanii detei. In *SM* 3/1934.

⁶³⁰ Bubnov, A. and Kosarev, A. 1934, 63-64: Konkurs na pervomaiiskuiu pesniu shkolnika i pionera. In *SM* 2/1934.

⁶³¹ Iokhelson, V. 1934, 51-52: K itogam pervogo tura konkursa na massovuiu pesniu (V oznamenovanie 15-letia VLKSM). In *SM* 6/1934.

⁶³² Pesni pionera i shkolnika. Itogi konkursa narkomprosa i TsK VLKSM. In *SI* June 29, 1934: 1.

Affairs and *Komsomol* proposed that the composer should be officially recognized and reasoned to Stalin that, by giving Dunaevskii this title, others would come to understand the meaning of this genre.⁶³³ Thus, awards served as carrots to tempt composers on certain thematic.

During the first half of the 1930s, however, musicians and composers were not given awards in great numbers. By the end of the decade, the value and prestige of awards would increase drastically. Competitions remained more important than Soviet titles only during the initial years of the Composers' Union. First, competitions seemed to be an increasingly important way of directing composers' attention to needs of the society and of bringing art closer to everyday life. But even during the War, competitions would produce hundreds of well-known songs.⁶³⁴ Some of those compositions that became well known and highly acclaimed as a result of winning competitions could also be rewarded later with further prizes and decorations, bringing their composer unparalleled glory and advantages.

There were a number of problems associated with competitions, which perhaps was not problematic for the Moscow branch: even competitions for national music brought in contestants from Moscow. In 1936, a competition for the best Mari composition concluded with the suggestion that the gathering of folklore and issues of national minorities were also furthered through competitions. Symphonic music was separated into a separate category from other type of compositions. Half of the winning contestants were Maris, while the other half were from Moscow.⁶³⁵

Yet, an even larger problem was that many competitions were not able to attract leading composers. To one competition for a mass song from 1938 six hundred songs were submitted, but none was awarded the first or even the second prize. The third prize was given to Nikolai Chaplygin for *Dva sokola* (the title refers to two hawks, *sokoly*, which represented Lenin and Stalin) and Nikita Mkrtychian's *Novaia kolybelnaia pesnia* (*New lullaby*).⁶³⁶ The main prizes do not seem to have been awarded at competitions where the most prominent composers were not represented. Especially during the latter half of the 1930s, leading composers seem to have been less interested in minor competitions and were presumably seeking awards and nominations that were more prestigious.

Yet, the pinnacle of competitions was still to come; the competition for a Soviet Anthem took place in 1943/44 and was won by Aleksandr Aleksandrov for a composition that still today serves as the national anthem of Russia. This massive competition was overseen by Stalin personally and the competing compositions had been selected rather than originally composed for the

⁶³³ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 163, d. 1094, l. 103, quoted in Maksimenkov 1997, 166

⁶³⁴ Tomoff 2006, 80-85.

⁶³⁵ Postanovlenie zhiuri konkursa na lushchee mariiskoe muzykalnoe proizvedenie, napisannoe k 15-letnemu iubileiu Mariiskoi avtonomnoi oblasti. In *SM* 9/1936, p. 84. Yet, this competition did not award a first prize and in the category of symphony not even the second prize was awarded.

⁶³⁶ Zakonchilsia konkurs na massovuiu pesniu. In *SM* 5/1938: 87.

competition. Aleksandrov's work had originally been composed as *Anthem of the Bolshevik Party* from 1938.

Still, perhaps the one of the most grotesque early examples of these competitions was "a competition for the best song" organized jointly by *Pravda*, the Writers' Union, and the Composers' Union in the summer of 1935. Over 2,000 entries were proposed by 120 composers and more than 1,000 non-professionals. The result was that the first prize was not awarded, because "no composition could fulfill requirements of the competition." In this case, prominent competitors had submitted compositions. However, for some reason, an agreement on the winner could still not be reached. In the end, runner-up prizes were awarded to four compositions, composed by Belyi, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, and Klimentii Korchmarev. The third prizes were also awarded to four compositions, two of which were written by women: Natalia Levi, a champion of mass music, and Zara Levina, a former member of *Prokoll*.⁶³⁷

Competitions were said to be especially important in mass musical work because they could guide composers' creativity to certain thematic and direction. It was suggested that competitions managed to underline the social nature of music and thus make it more valuable in the eyes of policymakers. Yet, the crucial control of these contests lay in the hands of different sectors of the Composers' Union, which, in many cases could specify the objectives for competitions. Once again, two features of the competitions were emphasized: first, they produced new music on selected themes, and, second, composers could themselves learn from such contests.⁶³⁸ Overall, competitions were generally at least partly controlled by composers. They were always represented on competition juries and had the expertise to assess compositional quality. Yet, through these competitions, composers served the objectives of socialist construction by encouraging compositions on mass musical work and themes of the day.

New approach toward mass musical work

Music to the masses had been the basic principle of the proletarian music movement. The basis of this work was never abandoned, although it seemed otherwise for a short period after the April Resolution was issued in 1932. Composers were also riveted to the resurgence of mass musical culture during the middle of the decade, which coincided with the general increase of celebrations and festival culture.⁶³⁹ Musical works that could be termed "socialist" at least on paper were increasingly composed by members of the Composers' Union. Several composers who had previously shunned or avoided composing occasional music now either changed or hid their previous views and took part in expeditions to kolkhozes or army garrisons and later would

⁶³⁷ Itogi konkursa na luchshchuiu pesniu. In *SM* 4/1936: 3-4.

⁶³⁸ Anisimov, A. 1935, 69-70: Massovye Zhanry v tvorchestve leningradskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 11/1935.

⁶³⁹ Petrone 2000, 14.

even visit faraway mines.⁶⁴⁰ Some of the music was occasional—that is, composed for a specific occasion and perhaps not meant to have lasting value—while some of it was composed with a higher purpose in mind.

Referring to these works as occasional or mass music distinguishes it from the genre of traditional concert music. Soviet sources talk of mass musical genre, or just mass genre rather than occasional music. Often it was considered to incorporate autonomous musical circles and non-professional elements and was perhaps thus shunned by some reputed composers. The fact that the genre had been largely dominated by proletarian musicians up until 1932 also caused suspicion of the genre in some circles. Even after 1932, former proletarian musicians continued to have their own platform in *Muzykalnaia Samodeiatelnost* for four years; it was involved with mass music and offered support to autonomous musical circles. The journal was closed when the Composers' Union had been centralized and further united in order to serve a common cause. Perhaps the intention was to signify that the mass musical genre was a cause that concerned the whole Composers' Union.

A report from the Leningrad branch in 1935 indicated that a change in mass music had perhaps already taken place. At least, an increasing number of composers were said to be involved in this genre, and the mass musical genre was generally heavily propagated. The report from Leningrad also emphasized the role of competitions in this process.⁶⁴¹ On the other hand, the rise of the mass musical genre was perhaps at least partly due to the fact that the boundaries of different genres had started to vacillate. The definitions of many genres, especially light music—which had been shunned by proletarian musicians—were fluid and, in fact, were accepted as a form of mass music, as it was truly popular.

In a way, mass musical genre offered an answer to one of the major general problems facing music in the twentieth century: the tastes of ordinary people and educated musical experts did not often coincide. Many established composers jealously guarded traditional genres as the only authentic area of music. As Kiril Tomoff has suggested, in the 1940s there would even be disputes over whether popular songwriters should be admitted as members of the Composers' Union at all.⁶⁴² This question is closely related to the nature of music, whether the categories of “high” and “low” music were valid or not. However, already by the 1930s these boundaries started to be blurred. Some were even ready to regard popularity as the meter of a composition's value.

Aleksandr Krein, a reputed Jewish composer of the *USSR – Shock workers' Brigade*, for example lamented that, although it was highly popular, critics still

⁶⁴⁰ See for example: Livshits, A. 1939, 74–75: Shakhterskii ansambl pesni i pliaski. In *SM* 5/1939. A composers' expedition was sent from Moscow to mines in Donbass in order to organize a song and dance ensemble, a jazz ensemble, and a folk ensemble, to train local musicians and to teach them compositions by Soviet composers. Lazar Kaganovich attended a concert held in the mines after composers had trained local workers.

⁶⁴¹ Anisimov, A. 1935, 69: Massovye zhanry v tvorchestve leningradskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 11/1935.

⁶⁴² Tomoff 2006, 70–71.

undermined his music. He went on to imply that popularity was more important than reviews. He described how some musical experts saw that the major problem was the “backwardness” of public, although in fact it was music criticism that was backward.⁶⁴³ In his view, the elitism of musical experts was the greatest of barriers to music serving Socialist construction. It seems that at least some reputed composers were ready to admit that publicity mattered. Socialist realism is sometimes perceived as a solution to the problem of the audience being distanced from the ideas of musical experts. It seems that some composers shared this concern and chose to involve themselves in mass musical work, especially when it meant popularizing the work of Soviet composers.

RAPM had heavily criticized most popular musical genres, jazz music, gypsy romances, and in practice almost every kind of light music. For seven years from 1922 onwards, *Narkompros* allowed jazz music to flourish, but when Bubnov took charge in 1929 *Narkompros* joined RAPM’s campaign against jazz, also supported by Maksim Gorkii.⁶⁴⁴ The April Resolution of 1932 effectively freed jazz and light music once again and made it more popular than ever. Ideological change allowed composers and musicians of this genre to prosper. Whereas previously mass song had been a means of direct agitation,⁶⁴⁵ after 1932 mass songs came closer to light genres, making them genuinely popular. Yet, while mass songs were composed in great numbers, many, perhaps even most, were of questionable quality and full of repetition and imitation of the most popular songs, as Khubov admitted in 1939.⁶⁴⁶

Extremely popular composers of the light genres, including Isaak Dunaevskii and Matvei Blanter, as well as the Pokrass brothers, composed genuinely popular Soviet classics for the mass musical genre. They did not dramatically change the style of their compositions in the 1930s, but their music still became an important part of this genre. Muradeli made this clear when he said, “there is not a part in the Soviet Union where songs of Dmitrii and Daniil Pokrass would not be sung.”⁶⁴⁷ In the 1930s, these composers adopted themes such as harvest, the Red army, or even Stalin. Pokrass’ songs composed for texts by Lebedev-Koumach became extremely popular, including the pre-war hit *If War Comes Tomorrow*. The music of these light genre composers remained largely unchanged, but the accompanying lyrics now supported the objectives of socialist construction and the values of the Stalinist era in general.

Despite the changes in official attitudes toward the light genre, many composers, along with former critics of this genre, had trouble changing their attitudes. In this light, the views expressed for former proletarian musician Marian Koval, who had ardently opposed light genres, are interesting. He remarked that the later campaigns of RAPM against light music had been both successful and just. He claimed that in the post-1932 situation light-music was

⁶⁴³ See for example: Krein, A. 1933, 120–121: *Kompozitor i kritika*. In *SM* 1/1933.

⁶⁴⁴ Edmunds 2000, 25.

⁶⁴⁵ See the resolution of the Party’s Orgbiuro from 1932, in which the agitational nature of mass music is stressed: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 114, d. 300, l. 5.

⁶⁴⁶ Khubov, G. 1939, 4: *Dezhurnaia pesnia*. In *Pravda* June 21, 1939.

⁶⁴⁷ Muradeli, V. 1938, 24–26: *Pesni bratiev Pokrass*. In *SM* 12/1938.

composed by professionals rather than by amateurs and that the situation had thus improved. Koval took Shostakovich as a positive example, who, in his view, had used jazz elements skillfully in his music. The bottom line, however, is that light music was now treated as an important part of Soviet music. The radio, in particular, transmitted a great deal of light music by Soviet composers.⁶⁴⁸ While some composers were at first wary of light genres, such music eventually came under the control of the Composers' Union. However, for a few years after 1932 light genre composers remained outside the Union. The official opinion of the Composers' Union began to change in the mid-1930s. In December 1936, Cheliapov emphasized that jazz criticism erroneously juxtaposed jazz with symphony. He stated that there was good jazz and good symphonic music, which were in no way mutually exclusive. People expected light music from Soviet composers and this demand had to be satisfied. The Committee on Artistic Affairs took a similar line. The biggest problem with this type of music was deemed to be its obvious Western influences.⁶⁴⁹

The masses generally had been important for the Bolsheviks from the October Revolution onwards. However, in the 1930s there was a change in how these masses were perceived. If the earlier emphasis had been on initiative of masses, according to Richard Stites the 1930s saw attempts to establish an orthodox mass culture. The state actively subsidized large-scale activities, mass musical work, folklore, parades, movies, and radio in order to exert control over mass activities.⁶⁵⁰ This change was especially salient from 1936 onwards, but the Composers' Union was no longer at the center of this activity. Still, the Union did quite a lot to implement the mass policies of the Party. Although traditional classical music was the main topic of most discussions, the boundaries between different genres were truly shifting.

Occasional music in general occupied a very important place in Soviet life. The Soviet leadership recognized the importance of festival culture and nurtured it from the outset. Spontaneous demonstrations were transformed into arranged festivities. Particularly in the mid-1930s, public festivities grew into massive state-sponsored festivities, ranging from the Pushkin Celebration to New Year's gatherings.⁶⁵¹ Public occasions and festivities called for music. Russian music history is littered with several such occasional pieces like Tchaikovskii's *1812*, but Soviet festivities called for specifically Soviet music.

⁶⁴⁸ Koval, M. 1935, 58–59: O "legkoi" muzyke. In *SM* 12/1935.

⁶⁴⁹ Rasshirenoe sobranie prezidiuma SSK. In *SM* 1/1937: 105. The debate over jazz music went on, see for example: Volkov-Lannit, L. 1937, 21–26: Kakoi nam nuzhem dzhaz. In *SM* 5/1937. Volkov-Lannit tried to make a point of good jazz. He maintained that in the Soviet Union both foreign jazz orchestras and techniques were poorly known, mainly through mere recordings. He implied that resentment for jazz was caused by the lack of familiarity with this musical form. He talked at length about Duke Ellington and his style. Yet, there were others who wanted to emphasize how Soviet jazz was different from its Western counterparts because it opted for a Soviet thematic and abandoned decadent techniques. See: Renskii, B. 1937, 6: Za sovetskuiu tematiku. In *Muzyka* 26th March 1937. Also in Brooke 1999, 121, 149–150.

⁶⁵⁰ Stites 1992, 65. Edmunds also discusses at length how proletarian musicians perceived masses, see Edmunds 2000, 17–46.

⁶⁵¹ Petrone, Karen 2000, 13–14: *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades. Celebrations in the Time of Stalin*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Indeed, Soviet musical history has seen thousands of pieces of occasional music—songs about pioneers, about the navy, about the military, about Stalin, and about the Motherland. The mechanism by which such a large number of compositions were produced is interesting, since the natural interest of composers lay in more traditional concert music. Composers began to compose mass music (practically a Soviet synonym for occasional music), attracted by fame and material benefits. Competitions based around a certain theme, such as the aforementioned May Day youth song competition, were particularly successful at achieving this aim.⁶⁵²

Alongside competitions, the State also requested compositions on very specific themes. Music was expected to support current political needs, for example, in connection with Polar expeditions, which became the subject of major celebrations in the mid-1930s. Zinovii Kompaneets, a popular songwriter and pupil of Glier, composed a piece called *Goodbye/Papanin's Ice Field* (text by A. Zharov), which was performed and recorded by the Ensemble of the Central House of the Red Army in 1936.⁶⁵³ The song tells the whole glorified story of the Papanin's Polar expedition. It fits perfectly within the new genre in which great heroes and Soviet achievements were to be emphasized. Interestingly, rather than being overtly optimistic, the work is melancholic. Still, the heroic nature of the story is underlined along with the glorification of the Soviet Union.

The Red Army already enjoyed close co-operation with the Composers' Union and Soviet polar heroes received the honor of being memorialized in songs, while others similarly craved recognition for their achievements through music. *Sovetskaia Muzyka* occasionally published letters from celebrities—possibly encouraged by administrators or Party leaders—who wished to direct composers' attention to social issues and political agendas. For example, in 1937 Soviet pilots were breaking records. Mikhail Gromov, who flew over 10,000 kilometers from Moscow to California, urged Soviet composers to compose songs that would help the Soviet people to appreciate the achievements and heroism of these "Stalinist hawks."⁶⁵⁴

While this glorification of popular Soviet heroes, both real and imagined, became a commonplace, the glorification of the Party leadership and Stalin also intensified. During the celebrations of the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution *Sovetskaia Muzyka* published an article by Boris Iarustovskii, who later became known as the Party's Central Committee's expert on music. The article's theme was songs about Stalin, whose "name," according to

⁶⁵² For example, on 27th July 1933 Leningrad's Komsomol arranged a competition for composers and writers with the brief of a mass song for the youth. The first prize for a composer was 2,000 rubles; the second, 1,500; and the third, 1,000. Usually these competitions were announced with the co-operation of the Composers' Union, just as this one was. See: Postanovlenie sekretariata leningradskogo komiteta VLKSM ot 27/VII 1933 g. ob organizatsii konkursa na massovuiu molodezhnuiu pesniu. In *BSSK* 1/1933, p. 9.

⁶⁵³ Yet, only in March 1938 did an issue of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* report that this record was finally being published, see: *Pesni o geroiakh-papanintsakh*. In *SM* 3/1938: 96.

⁶⁵⁴ Gromov, M. 1938, 16-17: *Chego zhdut letchiki ot sovetских kompozitorov*. In *SM* 2/1938. About the record breaking flight, see for example: *Red Record*. In *Time* July 26, 1937.

Iavorskii, “was written in history with golden letters.” Miaskovskii, Khachaturian, Ferenc Szabo, Koval, Fere, and several others had written songs about Stalin. Perhaps the single most celebrated work was Khachaturian’s twenty-two-minute symphonic poem with a chorus.⁶⁵⁵ It is obvious that these songs celebrated Stalin in person and Stalinist policies in general, but it was also significant that many of the texts were written by national minorities, including the Kazakh poet Dzhabbul or Karelian (actually Finnish) poet Jalmari Virtanen. It was also stressed that, although the amount of songs about Stalin increased, not all sides of the leader had been examined.⁶⁵⁶ Like all great leaders do at some point, Stalin had obviously now passed the point where he had become an inexhaustible source of music and poetry.

Music was also exploited in mass happenings and festivities around election campaigns, which glorified the leaders but were also supposed to emphasize Soviet democracy. Concerts were arranged for the electorate and new compositions were ordered for election days. At the end of 1937, when the Supreme Soviet was convened and its representatives elected, works that were published in the honor of this event also illustrate the nature of these elections: *Song of Stalin* by Khachaturian, *Country votes* by Korchmarev, *Let our country become younger* by Budashkin, and works by Aleksandr Aleksandrov and Dunaevskii, among others.⁶⁵⁷ Music supported and popularized Party politics in these campaigns. Works were of course commissioned for these events, rather than existing compositions being used.

The glorification of leaders and their speeches became a more salient part of the musical world in the second half of the 1930s. *Sovetskaia Muzyka* started to publish speeches by Party leaders more often but, at the same time, the number of compositions about Party leaders increased notably. On December 1, 1936, the Composers Union arranged a special concert evening in order to evaluate songs about Stalin. The message of the evening was that songs using texts by local minorities or other folk idioms were the most warmly welcomed.⁶⁵⁸ The Composers’ Union had not gathered songs of Stalin and Lenin before and therefore it also announced its hope that every composer would send any relevant compositions, folk songs included, to the Union.⁶⁵⁹

Parts of this mass (or occasional) music were reminiscent of a symbiosis of great group scenes of the late nineteenth-century Italian opera of the Verdian style and golden age Hollywood film music. Some of this music became very popular and attracted an untrained audience, particularly when the Pokrasses,

⁶⁵⁵ See for example, Ryzhkin, I. 1939, 47–52: *Stilevye cherty sovetskoi muzyki*. In *SM* 3/1939. Ryzhkin examined (in his view) the two most salient examples of the development of Soviet music, Shostakovich’s First String Quartet and Khachaturian’s *Poem about Stalin*. Both were premiered during the second Festival of Soviet Music in November 1938.

⁶⁵⁶ Iarustovskii, B. 1937, 42–43: *Pesni o Staline*. In *SM* 10–11/1937.

⁶⁵⁷ *Khronika*. In *SM* 12/1937: 124–125.

⁶⁵⁸ Khubov, G. 1936, 9–10: *Pesni o Staline*. In *SM* 12/1936. Songs by Ferenc Szabo, Samuil Feinberg, Vladimir Fere, Lev Revutskii, and several others were played. Miaskovskii, Belyi’s, and others’ Stalin-compositions were still unfinished.

⁶⁵⁹ *Vsem muzykantam Sovetskogo Soiuz*. In *SM* 1/1937: 105.

Blanter, Dunaevskii, and other light genre composers were involved. The Soviet film industry also used a lot of this music. When taken out of the festive or film environment, this music can sound naïve or simple, but so does the music of several great Hollywood classics. The mass music of the 1930s fits quite smoothly into the tradition of Russian empire, where works like Tchaikovskii's *Slavonic March, 1812*, or *Moscow Cantata*, written for the coronation of Aleksandr III, supported the Russian government and also became the beloved national property of the Russian people. Soviet nations were now offered their own Soviet music for Soviet festivities.

Nationality politics

Another musical issue with clearly political connotations that experienced a resurgence in the 1930s was folk, or national, music. In 1932 Aleksandr Veprik, in a letter, expressed his fear of great-Russian, *veliko-derzhavni*, chauvinism. In his view, Russian folk music was being supported, rather than European or folk music in general. All this was making it a hard time to be a composer in the USSR.⁶⁶⁰ Because of the fear of Great-Russian chauvinism, *Muzgiz* at first refused to publish Goldenveizer's collection of eighty-six folk songs for children (of which seventy were Russian).⁶⁶¹ The songbook was eventually published and went on to become a respected Soviet text-book.

Folk music in general had in fact been experiencing serious problems in the face of the initial Soviet emphasis upon internationalism. Only after 1930 did things improve for the music of national minorities. The changing status of the Piatnitskii Folk Choir was a good example of this. Established in 1911, it already had an established reputation but found itself in dire straits following the Revolution. During the early 1930s, the choir experienced a change of fortune. At the end of 1932, *Rabis* discussed the situation of the Piatnitskii Choir and decided to support it materially and through administrative measures. The meeting also mentioned the great value of the choir for the preservation of Russian musical culture.⁶⁶² However, the musical cultures of numerous Soviet republics would experience even stronger revivals than Russian folk music, which at times seemed to be in minority compared to other nationalities in folk music.

The official blessing for the work among the Soviet nationalities is often dated to Stalin's speech in the summer of 1930 at the Sixteenth Party Congress, although the speech had in the first place been directed against great-Russian chauvinism.⁶⁶³ Later, however, the status of other Soviet nationalities was deliberately leveled. Composers were also encouraged by the Party to work among different nationalities and folk music. During the Seventeenth Party

⁶⁶⁰ RGALI, f. 645, op. 1, d. 352, ll. 12-14.

⁶⁶¹ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, l. 32.

⁶⁶² GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1848, ll. 9-10. (Meeting of *Rabis* in 21st October 1932).

⁶⁶³ Stalin, I. V. 1934, 191-198: Ob uklonakh v oblasti natsionalnogo voprosa. Iz doklada na XVI s'ezde VKP(b) 7 iyunia 1930 s. In *Marksizm i natsionalno-kolonialnii vopros. Sbornik izbrannykh statei i rechei*. Moscow: Partizdat TsK VKP(b).

congress, Cheliapov summarized, following official rhetoric, the achievements of the Soviet Union and also analyzed the nationality question: “different nationalities were now growing culturally [- -], especially in socialist [- -] culture. ‘National in form, proletarian on behalf of content’ (Stalin) is the basis of this literature and art.”⁶⁶⁴

The shift from the internationalism in the 1920s towards the xenophobic slant towards all foreign influence seems at first stunning. After all, Marxist ideology and socialist ideals seem to support cooperation beyond state boundaries. In the 1920s Soviet nationalities were heavily endorsed to the extent of affirmative action. Assimilation to Russian majority was even discouraged and instead children were stipulated to attend schools with their native language against the will of their parents. Nationality, thus, became one of the crucial determinators of an individual. After the mid-1930s national cultures were emphasized to the extent of exoticism. The main point, however is that Soviet nationalities received the main emphasis while at the same time, attitude towards foreign nation-states became critical. Logical continuum in this new thinking was that while there were several foreign nationalities, like Germans, Finns, Poles, Chinese and many others, in the Soviet Union, they were considered to be loyal mainly to their titular nation-states.⁶⁶⁵ Thus, they became internal enemies.

The Soviet nationality policy in the 1920s was state-sponsored conflation of language and culture which evolved towards the First Five-Year Plan to “the most extravagant celebration of ethnic diversity that any state had ever financed.” Although this policy was reduced to some extent in the mid-1930s Soviet titular nationalities (Kazakhs, Azeris, Georgians, etc.) received evermore support, no matter whether genuine or artificially created.⁶⁶⁶ Both of the aforementioned features, new emphasis on Soviet nationalities and more hostile attitude towards foreign ones, were reflected in Soviet musical life of the 1930s and the Composers’ Union actively engaged in concrete work in the midst of Soviet nationalities.

The Party regarded the work among Soviet nationalities as an ideologically important part of socialist construction. The work also became connected with socialist realism. Initially, the Composers’ Union actively encouraged composers to use the folklore of Soviet nations and exploit folk melodies. As early as 1933, the Composers’ Union agreed on contracts with autonomous republics for gathering folk music. This music was later produced and arranged as compositions and edited as song collections.

The Chuvash Autonomous Republic was one of the early focuses of the Union. Prominent personalities such as Mikhail Gnesin and Vasili Nechaev,

⁶⁶⁴ Cheliapov, N. 1934, 7: Muzykalnyi front k XVII partsiezd. In *SM* 1/1934.

⁶⁶⁵ Martin, Terry 2000, 353–358: Modernization or neo-traditionalism? Ascribed nationality and Soviet primordialism. In Fitzpatrick, Sheila (ed.), *Stalinism. New Directions*. London: Routledge.

⁶⁶⁶ Slezkine, Yuri 2000, 313: The USSR as a communal apartment, or how a socialist state promoted ethnic particularism. In Fitzpatrick, Sheila (ed.), *Stalinism. New Directions*. London: Routledge.

were involved in co-operation with Chuvash.⁶⁶⁷ In October of 1934, the Composers' Union organized a meeting with the title "Question on Chuvash culture." The aim was to publish an anthology of 400 folk songs of which around a hundred had been collected from local kolkhozes in recent years.⁶⁶⁸ The collection of folk songs in faraway republics became a common way to expiate ideological mistakes during the Stalinist era; it was also a part of the Union's everyday work.

This work, however, is yet another example of work that had already been started by *RAPM* and upon which the Composers' Union built. Ethnographic work and the organized collection of indigenous music from Chuvash had been practiced by proletarian musicians for years. Belyi, Koval, and Szabo were among those who participated in such work during the *RAPM*-years.⁶⁶⁹ This work was simply adopted and taken further by the Composers' Union. In 1934, the Union could already boast notable results.⁶⁷⁰ A year later *Ten Chuvash songs* and a *Suite on Chuvash themes* by Belyi were published.⁶⁷¹ The educational nature of these journeys was also acknowledged. It was reported that through songs the Chuvash peasants learned words that had previously been unknown to them: "workshop, brigade, shock worker, canteen, and graduate."⁶⁷² This was to prove in practice how music was socially important and useful for socialist construction, not to mention for Soviet nationality politics. Perhaps it was for this reason that the publication of a collection of 450 Chuvash songs was planned to coincide with the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution.⁶⁷³ The work went on and in 1938 the famous piano professor Samuil Feinberg edited and arranged a number of Chuvash melodies for the piano.⁶⁷⁴

Folklore and folk creation became part of the upper concept of the Soviet thematic. The Soviet thematic incorporated all different forms of Soviet life, which were often categorized rather mechanistically. Composers were urged to compose about different manifestations of socialist construction and about new Soviet people. In the meantime, it was stressed that interest in national minorities and folk art was not exoticism as it had been among the bourgeois. Neither was it academic, but it represented genuine artistic interest, which would enable rich and versatile national creation.⁶⁷⁵

The policies on nationality were also supported by music outside the use of folk idioms. One of the most salient examples in which music helped to

⁶⁶⁷ V soiuzе sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SI* October 10, 1933: 1.

⁶⁶⁸ GTsMMK, f. 286, d. 497, ll. 179, 184.

⁶⁶⁹ Edmunds 2000, 285.

⁶⁷⁰ In the spring of 1934, it was reported that a songbook had already been published and other results were expected to follow. Krivonosov, V. 1934, 2: Muzykalnyi byt Chuvashskoi derevni. Ekspeditsiia v kolhozy Chuvashii. In *SI* March 3, 1934: 2.

⁶⁷¹ Edmunds 2000, 185.

⁶⁷² *Pesni sovetskoi Chuvashii*. In *SI* October 10, 1934: 1. All these words were an important part of the Soviet vocabulary.

⁶⁷³ Livshits, A. 1937, 59: O chuvashkoi narodnoi muzyke. In *SM* 4/1937.

⁶⁷⁴ See review by Grossman, V. 1939, 34–39: Chuvashkie pesni S. Feinberga. In *SM* 1/1939.

⁶⁷⁵ Khubov, G. 1936, 10: O narodnoi pesne. In *SM* 10/1936.

support Stalinist objectives was the treatment of Nikolai Shchors. Shchors had been a Ukrainian Civil War hero who was “found” by the Stalinist administration in the mid-1930s. Largely forgotten earlier, this deceased commander was remembered in songs and films, and several places were named after him. The Soviet Union needed to find proper national heroes for every Soviet nation and, in pursuit of this objective, the musical world was able to help by producing highly and genuinely popular songs, such as Matvei Blanter’s *Shchors*.

An earlier and grander composition that dealt with socialist construction was Maksimilian Shteinberg’s Fourth Symphony, *Turksib*—named after the grandiose railway construction. While Shteinberg’s symphony was loosely connected with nationality politics, the other most frequently mentioned works with a Soviet thematic, Krein’s *USSR – Shock Workers’ Brigade* and Vissarion Shebalin’s *Lenin*, were not related to national musical cultures.⁶⁷⁶ Yet, composers were gradually drawn towards themes connected to Soviet nationalities. Dmitrii Vasiliev-Buglai, educated as composer of religious music, changed tack after the October Revolution and became a proletarian musician and a prominent song composer. Vasiliev-Buglai had already been active in Soviet Republics before 1932.⁶⁷⁷ He continued this work in the Composers’ Union, and he was finally rewarded for his work collecting and harmonizing Udmurtian folk music and for establishing a choir and an orchestra in Udmurtia. His prize was a mere 500 rubles but, more significantly, the Udmurtian Art College was named after him.⁶⁷⁸ In this way, Vasiliev-Buglai joined the honor guard of Soviet composers.

Although the Composers’ Union became involved with the music of Soviet nationalities, this was mere tinkering when compared to what happened in 1936 when the Committee on Artistic Affairs took control of this work. Many composers looked askance at the national musical cultures and especially the use of folk instruments, despite the fact that the Composers’ Union had started this work. Emphasis on folk instruments became part of the official policy, but composers were still inclined toward traditional concert instruments of the West rather than those of the national minorities of the Soviet Union. In the spring of 1936, a concert evening for folk instruments was arranged in the Composers’ Union to counteract this patently erroneous attitude. The concert included, for example, J. S. Bach’s *Aria* arranged for cello and *baiian* (Russian accordion) and Glinka’s fugue again arranged for *baiian*. Music for the mandolin, guitar, and balalaika were also featured. The intention was to demonstrate the possibilities of these traditional instruments to composers.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁶ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 2: Opera i simfoniia. Puti sovetskoi muzyki. In *SI* November 7, 1933.

⁶⁷⁷ Edmunds 2000, 179–181.

⁶⁷⁸ Postanovlenie prezidiuma soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov ot 4/XI 1933 g. O premirovanii v sviazi s shestnadsatoi godovshchinoi Oktiabria luchshikh obshchestvennikov – kompozitorov i sotrudnikov. In *BSSK* 3–4/1933, p. 5; Postanovlenie Izhevskogo oblispolkoma o rabote kompozitora D. S. Vasilieva-Buglaia. In *BSSK* 3–4/1933, p. 5.

⁶⁷⁹ B. Ia. 1936, 77–78: Veche narodnykh instrumentov. In *SM* 7/1936.

The Composers' Union perhaps lacked the means and interest for the kind of large-scale work involving the music of nationalities that the Committee on Artistic Affairs was later able to undertake. The Committee on Artistic Affairs also had a better awareness of what the nationality policies expected from the arts. However, composers were not sidelined in this work; their contribution proved to be important when the musical cultures of different nationalities were eventually built. Yet, at this point composers were no longer in charge of this work.

Musicology resolves everything

The diverse field of Soviet musicology

After 1932, musicology became very important to Soviet music and the definition of its ideological role. If the Stalinist era saw a general return to conservative values (at least in some respects), then musicology had a central role in rehabilitating pre-revolutionary Russian music. This rehabilitation was vitally important for the conceptualization of Soviet music, since Soviet music could now find an obvious predecessor in Russian romanticism. Glinka, Aleksandr Borodin, Sergei Rakhmaninov, and several others were placed upon a pedestal as representatives of the Soviet musical past. This also explains why certain aged and reputed composers of the nationalist romantic tradition became so important for the canon of Soviet music during the 1930s. With the help of musicology, composers such as Boris Asafiev, Reingold Gliere, and Nikolai Miaskovskii became part of the Soviet musical continuum, linking Soviet music to pre-revolutionary traditions. All of these composers were trained in the Rimskii-Korsakovian school, well before the October Revolution. This was a logical compromise with public taste, since Russian national romantic music had already proved extremely popular in the Soviet Union. Most of the opera venues still staged old, pre-revolutionary operas and ballets rather than the Soviet alternatives written in the 1920s and the early 1930s.

Musicology, as the scholarly art of music history and theory, became crucial to establishing theory-based definitions of "Soviet music." This applied both to its ideological and political definitions. Soviet musicology was given important ideological objectives: it was to root Soviet music in the Russian realistic tradition. Musicologists were expected to find links between nineteenth-century music and new Soviet music. The way in which Mili Balakirev, Borodin, or Rakhmaninov used popular melodies in their compositions was something Soviet composers should learn to do—not least because works by these masters were highly popular among the public. However, it was equally important to root Marxist music theory in history. Iosif Ryzhkin emphasized that if Marxist musicology was to be established, it should be based on previous scholarly work. Thus, Ryzhkin regarded that Soviet musicology would benefit from critical study of the thinking of Philipp Rameau

and Jean-Baptiste Lully from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁶⁸⁰ Ryzhkin was obviously speaking on behalf of his own scholarly work rather than genuinely for a Marxist approach to musicology. Yet, historical roots were important for Marxism and, thus, historiography of musicology did indeed become important.

Another musicologist, Semion Ginzburg, introduced a more recent theorist, the nineteenth-century German musicologist Eduard Hanslik, whose thinking he regarded as exemplary for Soviet musicology. According to Ginzburg, Hanslik had tried to eradicate taste from the evaluation of music and to find a scientific basis for criticism. He argued that the fact that Hanslik had a major effect on Russian music critic German Larosh made him an important part of Soviet musicological heritage.⁶⁸¹ Yet, Hanslick was outwardly a formalist who believed that music was beautiful through its form rather than through any extra-musical associations. This was something Ginzburg wisely omitted from his discussion of Hanslik. This selective approach toward history and heritage was something Cheliapov had on many occasions called for when he called for a “critical approach to heritage.” Yet, Ginzburg’s and Ryzhkin’s ideas reflect how musicologists’ discussions in the Composers’ Union were uncontrolled. Even Marxist theory in music was not initially defined by the Party but was the domain of musical experts themselves.

The importance of musicology is underlined by the fact that the musicological section was the only one in the Moscow branch that endured all of the structural changes of the 1930s—unchanged, even in name. All of the other sections and sectors were restructured, fused, and once again dissolved, but not the musicological section. The working plan of the musicological section reveals that the section discussed different theoretical problems in its meetings, including socialist realism, even as early as 1933. However, the section also kept an eye on the work and policies of other organizations, such as *Muzgiz*.⁶⁸² The working plan implies something very noteworthy: socialist realist music was something musicologists and critics would discuss separately from composers. Indeed, musicologists participated in the work of different sectors, but it was rare for composers to take part in the musicological section. In a way, the ideological discussions, at least at the theoretical level, were treated as a musicological issue rather than a practical creative matter.

The problem with the musicologists’ section was, however, that it did not work very well, at least not in the eyes of administrators. Several defects were vigorously brought forward by *Sovetskaia Muzyka* in its first issues. The main problem was precisely its isolation from composers. Musicologists worked as a closed faction and there was little interaction with composers. Communication problems between the Leningrad and Moscow branches were also

⁶⁸⁰ Ryzhkin, I. 1933, 74: Traditsionnaia shkola teorii muzyki. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁶⁸¹ Ginzburg, S. 1934, 4–5: Na putiakh konkretnoi muzykalnoi kritiki. In *SM* 6/1934.

⁶⁸² Atovmian, L. 1933, 141: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

mentioned.⁶⁸³ If it were presumed that the musicological section was responsible for ideological theorizing, should the sector not work properly, it would be the natural target of Party representatives.

The Moscow and Leningrad branches had a decisive role in musicology since the most important higher educational institutes were the State Institute of Arts History (*GIII*) in Leningrad and the State Institute for Musicology (*GIMN*) in Moscow. Both were organized in 1921 by *Narkompros* while Lunacharskii was Commissar for Enlightenment and Arthur Lourié headed *Muzo*. These institutes are said to have contributed notably to the development of Soviet musicology and music history.⁶⁸⁴ Thus, both institutes were more than ten years older than the Composers' Union. Still, the Union would come to determine the work carried out in these institutes as well. The most important musicologists were also members of the Composers' Union. Eventually, musicology made some significant approaches toward concrete compositional work, although problems were not overcome in the initial years.

At first, the Composers' Union had problems in extending its authority over other musical institutions, and musicological institutes did not form an exception. Iokhelson wrote in January of 1934 about musicological work in Leningrad:

[R]egretfully, this far the [State] institute [of Art History] is far from being a backbone [in defining Soviet music], capable of giving concrete help for compositional work and for the objectives it has been given. From our point of view the institute would need considerable and immediate strengthening of its leadership and structure. Otherwise, we shall all witness how solutions of theory and music criticism for the massive problems of creativity remain inexcusably and substantially backward.⁶⁸⁵

The basic research in musicology and leading scholarly work were primarily conducted in these two institutes and they were, therefore, important for the Composers' Union. If the Composers' Union wanted to become the highest authority on musical issues, it needed to control musicology and consequently these two institutes. At first, co-operation in the field of musicology was poor, not only in relation to these two institutes but also with republican institutes, like the ones in Ukraine.⁶⁸⁶

Although most of the theoretical and creative research in musicology was conducted in these institutes, much of music research, especially practical or applied research, was concentrated in conservatories. This type of music research was more widespread and thus even more music research was carried out in conservatories than in musicological institutes. All this made the unification of musicology increasingly problematic. Moreover, musical research was also undertaken at least to some extent by philharmonias and the State

⁶⁸³ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7-10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 5.

⁶⁸⁴ Schwarz 1983, 88, 92.

⁶⁸⁵ Iokhelson, V. 1934, 15: Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov k XVII siezdu partii. In *SM* 1/1934.

⁶⁸⁶ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7-10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934, 5.

Hermitage in Leningrad. They published books and leaflets about music and issues related to music criticism. Radio also had its own section for music, as did many theaters, which were all practicing some kind of musicological activity.⁶⁸⁷

The absence of a leading figure and overarching ideology was a problem, because the musicological front could not be grouped behind any notable author or idea. This diversity was a problem for the Composers' Union, which aspired to centralize the musical front. Soviet musicology would later find such uniting figures in Boris Asafiev and Boleslav Iavorskii, when they were institutionalized by the state, but this was still in the middle in the 1930s. Yet, the Composers' Union, even in its initial phases, served as a medium for all the notable musicologists; in fact, it was the only common institution for all leading musicologists. Musicology was eventually combined with creative compositional work in the Union. Perhaps the most salient manifestation of this practical work was in public hearings, *pokazy*, occasions at which compositions were introduced and evaluated.

Musicology directing creativity

In the previous part, we already saw how composers started to arrange "brotherly" evenings for hearing and commenting upon each other's works. This collegial method, however, evolved into certain less desired manifestations. Censorship in the Soviet Union was highly institutionalized and had been extended from Tsarist days. Closely connected to the work of *Glavlit*, the main organ for literary censorship, was the organization *Glavrepertkom* (1923), which took care of the musical repertory performed across Soviet concert stages.⁶⁸⁸ Perhaps because *Glavrepertkom* was at times perceived as being capable of only routine censorship, art unions were later expected to conduct internal censorship of the work of its members. As art unions gathered together all productive artists and undertook peer review of members' works, they had some means by which they could control their field of art and could only allow art to be published that satisfied official requirements. This would also reduce the need for formal censorship. The early Composers' Union, however, gave little indication that internal censorship was being practiced, even though this could have been undertaken. Instead, many composers appreciated the opportunity to receive collegial, constructive advice about their creative work. Some unfinished compositions were introduced in the Union so that composers could benefit from collegial advice while composing.⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁷ Grachev, P. 1935, 88: Sektor muzykovedeniia Gos. inst. iskusstvoznaniia v 1935 g. In *SM* 11/1935.

⁶⁸⁸ Blium 2000, 243–244.

⁶⁸⁹ The first surviving protocol from this kind of meeting refers to discussions of Shaporin's symphony held at the Leningrad Branch on April 3rd and 14th, 1933. TsGALI SPb, f. 348, op. 1, dd. 1, 6. The protocol of the meeting is over fifty-six pages of full text.

Meetings to discuss compositions were held as soon as the Union had been organized. Shteinberg was among the first to refer to them as creative reviews, *tvortsheskikh prosmotrakh*, in the spring of 1933. Later they would be more commonly known as *pokazy*. Shteinberg regarded this work as important, but argued that it needed re-structuring, because its underlying principles had not yet been established. According to Shteinberg, the creative sector of the Union should rework these principles in the spirit of “more genuine, comradely critic” and “dissociate it from sad practices of recent years.”⁶⁹⁰ Shteinberg was probably referring to the review practices that the *RAPM* had sometimes employed a few years earlier, and he seems to have hoped that these new reviews would take place in a more convivial atmosphere. Yet, this “comradely” practice would in future evolve into something reminiscent of preventive censorship. In 1937, Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony was deemed a “suitable” Soviet symphony long before it was premiered⁶⁹¹. It also seems as though “fraternity,” *sodruzhestvo*, between composers and music critics was chanted to such an extent that it started to sound more like a cliché than anything else.⁶⁹²

The practice of listening to and evaluating the work of its members throughout the composing process, however, was something that the Composers’ Union had aspired to. In order to achieve its objective of exercising control over Soviet music, the Union needed to control the work of its members. Originally, the practice was not supposed to be censorial, but it nevertheless made censorship possible. During these creative reviews, *pokazy*, compositions were played either in part or in full in the presence of the author and a number of composers and musicologists. Composers were in favor of these kinds of reviews, as long as they were friendly gatherings. However, works had also been reviewed in this way before the Composers’ Union was established. On several occasions after the Revolution, spectacles and performances had been presented to proletarian audiences for evaluation. Particularly while proletarian music associations had dominated the Soviet musical scene, proletarian musicians had been eager to submit their work for assessment by proletarians. It was typical of the organization’s ethos that the Composers’ Union chose to bring this practice of review into the professional domain instead of leaving it in the hands of non-professional or even uneducated audiences.

The need to guide creative work was expressed simultaneously with the desire of members to share comradely views about compositions. As the pressures on music to answer to the needs of socialist construction grew, these two objectives started to fuse. Chairman Cheliapov expressed the need by stating: “there is not yet a single [composition] that as such would reflect the

⁶⁹⁰ Shteinberg, M. 1933, 124–125: *Slushateliu – sovetskuiu muzyku*. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁶⁹¹ Taruskin 1997, 516; Fay 2000, 99–100. Shostakovich’s Fourth Symphony was also withdrawn only a few days before its premiere, see: Fay 2000, 95.

⁶⁹² *Diskussii o muzykalnoi kritike*. In *SM* 6/1939: 87–89. In 1939 *sodruzhestvo*, fraternity was already emphasized rather ritualistically in connection with the music criticism meeting in Moscow (May 7–10).

whole heroism of our day and would settle to the heights of our days.”⁶⁹³ Musicologists were expected to help composers to find ways to compose according to needs of socialist construction. Later, musicology was expected to interpret what socialist realism meant in music and help composers to work within it. From the composers’ point of view, the problem was that at first they were unused to this kind of practice and new compositions were often heard only long after they had been completed.⁶⁹⁴ The amount of unfinished compositions played at these meetings would gradually increase. This made it possible for others to help or to guide a composer while he or she was still working on a composition.

The Composers’ Union also started to supervise the creation of Soviet music by publishing extensive lists of completed works and, significantly, those works that were being composed. The fifth issue of the Union’s *Bulletin* from 1933 provided details of composers’ current activities: Lev Knipper was working on his fifth symphony, Dmitrii Kabalevskii on his Third Symphony *Requiem*, Sergei Vasilenko had just completed a suite for piano and balalaika or violin and was about to finish his opera *Kristoffer Kolumbus*, and Mikhail Cheremukhin was writing an oratorio *1905* based on Boris Pasternak’s text. The list was extensive and detailed.⁶⁹⁵ The aim was for the Composers’ Union to be aware of all that was happening in Soviet musical life.

Attempts to keep musicologists informed about Soviet music seem to have failed at first. Cheliapov passed a stern judgment on musicology for its passiveness. At the same time, he revealed something of the importance that musicology was considered to have:

[M]usicology has fallen behind the tasks and requirements of socialist construction, as well as ideological class struggle and its prospects. It is necessary as soon as possible and most decisively to change this fact! This task has to be put to the foremost position in Soviet musicology where nothing has been done during its seven or eight months’ existence.⁶⁹⁶

Cheliapov’s criticism was followed by a meeting on questions about musical criticism in Leningrad. Secretary Iokhelson viewed the meeting as an initial attempt to bring “all progressive-minded music critics together.” The meeting was intended to activate and further the development of music criticism. According to Iokhelson, the meeting succeeded in bringing forth and initiating discussion of several basic questions of music theory and criticism.⁶⁹⁷ Cheliapov and Iokhelson believed that musicology had failed to consider how its theories could be applied to the practice of music and that the task of musicology was to help composers.

⁶⁹³ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 4: *Istoricheskaia godovshchina*. In *SM* 2/1933.

⁶⁹⁴ Atovmian, L. 1933, 136. K plenumu SSK. *God raboty Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov*. In *SM* 5/1933.

⁶⁹⁵ *Nad chem rabotaiut moskovskie kompozitory*. K plenumu SSK. In *SM* 5/1933, 141.

⁶⁹⁶ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 5: *Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen!* In *SM* 4/1933.

⁶⁹⁷ Iokhelson, V. 1934, 15: *Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov k XVII s'ezdu partii*. In *SM* 1/1934.

The leadership of the Composers' Union was apparently dissatisfied with music criticism. The Leningrad meeting of music criticism made it clear that the way in which critics had thus far worked as individuals made it hard to find common ground for subsequent work. It was reported that especially the Marxist-Leninist music critical thinking was hindered by formalism, primitivism, and schematism and by the abstract nature of criticism. Active leadership of the field was lacking and there was no control over music criticism.⁶⁹⁸ An explanation what Marxist-Leninist music criticism meant was not given.

The Union's need to control music criticism sprung from the fact that it was the main source of information about music that audiences were exposed to. Reviews in magazines and newspapers evaluated Soviet music and, in some cases, could even decide the fate of a work. Controlling Soviet music would be impossible if the music criticism was not brought into line. In 1934, musicologist Iosif Ryzhkin regarded that the situation with music criticism was already showing signs of visible development, but massive work still lay ahead. Ryzhkin called on all musicologists to take the work of Soviet composers more into account.⁶⁹⁹ Almost two years later, the situation had not improved significantly. Roman Gruber lamented that, although critics eagerly repeated slogans in meetings, little happened in practice. Critics were unable to give practical help to composers, let alone guide them.⁷⁰⁰

The Composers' Union had some active musicologist members, including Lev Kulakovskii, who actively worked to bring musicology closer to musical practice. He wrote a letter to *Sovetskaia Muzyka* in which he pressed for a more open discussion of musicology. Musicologists needed to study composers', pedagogues', and club leaders' experiences of music, he argued. Kulakovskii hoped that this would make musicology less introverted and provide material for new musicological works. He added that there was a yearning for new musicological works, but none had been published to satisfy this demand.⁷⁰¹ Kulakovskii was arguing on behalf of a more socially orientated musicology, which would also have a clear purpose: to provide support to Soviet music and composers. Although there were other musicologists who shared Kulakovskii's views, few dared yet to take up the challenge and write about socialist realism, or what "Soviet music" really was, beyond music composed by Soviet composers.

Despite initiatives by Kulakovskii, Ryzhkin, and others, *Sovetskaia Muzyka* continued to pour scorn upon musicology and music criticism. One editorial maintained that the state of music criticism could not even be termed "satisfactory." Although the evaluation of musical heritage and analysis of

⁶⁹⁸ Rezoliutsiia 1-i sessii po voprosam muzykalnoi kritiki, sozvannoi LSSK (16, 17 i 18 noiabria 1933 g.). In *SM* 2/1934: 64.

⁶⁹⁹ Ryzhkin, N. 1934, 51. O muzykovedcheskoi rabote Soiuzu sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 2/1934.

⁷⁰⁰ Gruber, R. 1935, 49: Voprosy leningradskoi muzykalnoi kritiki i muzykalnoi nauki za sezon 1934/35 g." In *SM* 12/1935.

⁷⁰¹ Kulakovskii, L. 1934, 97: Pismo v redaktsiiu. Ob organizatsii otdela "Tvorcheskaia laboratorii muzykovedeniia." In *SM* 3/1934.

Soviet works had shown some development, criticism was said to be lagging behind.⁷⁰² It would take five years of work by the Composers' Union before the first appraisal of Soviet musicology would appear in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*. As part of the evaluation around the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution, Lev Kulakovskii emphasized that musicology had been developing notably over the previous couple of years, although the magazine also argued that the development of musicology was generally lagging behind that of music.⁷⁰³ Yet, in articles that were connected to these kinds of celebrations, it was next to compulsory to seek out and discuss achievements and successes even if they hardly existed.

It has become clear, thus far, that in the Composers' Union musicology was seen as connected to music criticism and that critics were identified with musicologists, at least in political speeches. Music critics had a mixture of backgrounds and could be anything from non-professional musicians to academics. Musicologists in the Composers' Union, however, aimed to raise their own status and make music criticism part of their own professional domain. It was to become a scholarly practice, a subject for education, and an integral part of musicology.

From the Union's point of view, incoherency and lack of explicit leadership were the biggest problems facing music criticism. Most concert reviews were published in papers over which the Union could exert little influence. Critics—particularly those outside main urban areas—were in many cases non-professional musicians, making it all the more difficult for the Union to have an effect on them. The Composers' Union admitted that it had “poor connections to the general press and radio.”⁷⁰⁴ Some composers held the firm belief that musicology could help them to find ways to compose new music. Krein believed that the whole “old guard” of composers would continue to flounder in its search for new music unless there was a notable change in the development of music criticism.⁷⁰⁵

Yet, personal conflicts between Union members seem to have hindered attempts to establish general consent for musicology to guide creative work. Musicologist and critic Ivan Sollertinskii is often mentioned in connection with *Pravda's* editorials in early 1936 that condemned two of Shostakovich's works; Sollertinskii was one of the few to defend Shostakovich, and modern Western music, publicly. *Pravda* called him “defender of formalism” because of his stance.⁷⁰⁶ Liudmila Mikheeva argues that similar accusations had already been

⁷⁰² Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7-10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 3.

⁷⁰³ Kulakovskii, L. 1937, 117–118: Sovetskoe muzykoznanie. In *SM* 10–11/1937.

⁷⁰⁴ Skoblionok, A. 1934, 72: V Moskovskom Soiuzе sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 8/1934.

⁷⁰⁵ Krein, A. 1933, 121: Kompozitor i kritika. In *SM* 1/1933.

⁷⁰⁶ Sobranie leningradskikh kompozitorov (Ot leningradskogo Korrespondenta “Pravdy”). In *Pravda* March 4, 1936: 4; Iasnii i prostoi iazyk v iskusstve. Obzor pechati. In *Pravda* February 13, 1936. These articles described Sollertinskii as a musicologist who had had a harmful influence on Shostakovich's music.

raised against Sollertinskii in 1934.⁷⁰⁷ In an article titled *About Bolshevistic self-criticism in the musical front*, written by Iokhelson and Gorodinskii—both powerful Party members, Sollertinskii was called a “modern recidivist of revisionism.” The writers devoted three out of the seven pages of their article on self-criticism to criticism of Sollertinskii.⁷⁰⁸ Initially, many composers had hailed the Composers’ Union for introducing peaceful coexistence in music. Heated debate around certain topics such as formalism, however, never entirely disappeared.

Although debates and personal conflicts were always part of the Composers’ Union, up until 1936 these debates seemed to be theoretical and somewhat boring to many composers—even to Shostakovich, who was actually at the center of many of these debates. In a letter to Sollertinskii, Shostakovich wrote that Valerii Zhelobinskii had accused Dinamov⁷⁰⁹ of formalism and that Dinamov had given a worthy reply to these accusations. He also mentioned the criticism of Sollertinskii and remarked that he was becoming tired of these worthy replies before concluding his letter with a complaint that lard was running short.⁷¹⁰ It does not seem as though Shostakovich took the accusations made against his friend very seriously. Obviously, he had no reason to believe that any severe action would follow from such criticism.

The other major problem was the non-professionalism of music criticism. Therefore, it is no wonder that the unscholarly nature of music criticism was the subject of ongoing discussion. Many composers worriedly remarked that reviews were based on personal taste. Andrei Pashchenko argued that reviews based solely on an axis of “pleases—does not please” could hardly be considered professional criticism capable of offering an informed judgment about the quality of a composition. He reasoned that a review could be of value to art forms and orientate audiences only if it was based on scientific methods and considered social points of view.⁷¹¹ The Composers’ Union was in a key position to unite musicologists and composers, since both were already members of the organization, but despite attempts to unite their efforts they were still too apart from each other and furthermore leading musicologists only wrote a fraction of all musical reviews.

It was argued that seizing control of music criticism was essential. Trends that the Union considered erroneous should be rooted out in order to achieve coherence in music criticism. This was to be carried out by the leadership of the Composers’ Union.⁷¹² The first major meeting on music criticism was held in Leningrad, but it was soon followed by another in Moscow in April of 1934, attended by representatives from Kharkov and Leningrad. The meeting was

⁷⁰⁷ Miheeva 1997, 169.

⁷⁰⁸ Gorodinskii, V. and Iokhelson, V. 1934, 6-12: Za bolshevistskuiu samokritiku na muzykalnom fronte. In *SM* 5/1934.

⁷⁰⁹ Most likely literature critic Sergei Dinamov, specialist in foreign literature, who was eventually arrested in the autumn of 1938 and shot in April, 1939.

⁷¹⁰ Miheeva 1997, 169.

⁷¹¹ Pashchenko, A. 1933, 122: Protiv gruppovshchiny. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁷¹² Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7-10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 3.

reportedly organized in an “unclear situation,” which may have referred to “obscurities” in or confusion over the establishment of the Union’s central organs. The central message of the meeting was that dangerous trends were affecting music criticism.⁷¹³ The reference to “obscurities” is interesting, as is the timing of this important meeting. Around this time, the Writers’ Union was preparing for its first congress, and the Composers’ Union had its charters approved by *SNK*; at that moment, it seemed that the Composers’ Union would also soon be inaugurated. However, perhaps musicology was not easily united and the Party considered that the time was not ripe, as the Composers’ Union was denied its central organs.

This meeting about music criticism in Moscow, however, made it clear that the Union’s objective was to gain a decisive hold over music criticism in the Soviet Union. According to an editorial in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, this meeting presented all the current trends of practical musicology and, significantly, introduced the most influential music critics. The editorial in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* concluded that there was a need for more Party-mindedness and self-criticism. There was, the magazine argued, fear of self-criticism within the Union, which only illustrated that the nature of this criticism was misunderstood.⁷¹⁴

Certain details suggest the special nature of this meeting. The editorial in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* published after the meeting differed from all the previous editorials in significant ways. For the first time, certain individuals were criticized, and the editorial was published anonymously, which had never happened before. Cheliapov had previously written under his own name. Although no archival sources indicate that Cheliapov was pressured to make these changes, it is likely that the Union was under some kind of pressure in connection with this meeting about music criticism. The reason for this could be the planned establishment of the Union, suggested by the approving of the charters. Stressing the Party line and self-criticism would also testify that something had changed in the organization. Yet, after this meeting, little happened and attempts to introduce more Party-mindedness into the Composers’ Union were half-hearted. For some reason the establishment of the Union was once again left uncompleted. Perhaps the reason was that the issue was never forwarded to the level of the Party leadership, as the absence of any documents suggests.

The meeting itself, however, resulted in interesting debates about tendencies that had slowed down the development of music criticism. Generally, the *Sovetskaia Muzyka* editorials were full of concepts expressed through Party vocabulary, including tendency, hamper, development, and, especially, Party-mindedness, further underlining the change.⁷¹⁵ It is obvious that some level of the Party had now become interested in the Composers’

⁷¹³ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7–10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 3–4.

⁷¹⁴ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7–10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 4.

⁷¹⁵ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7–10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 4.

Union. Otherwise, these issues would not have been underlined in this way. The interest of the Party is all the more important when one considers that the campaign against formalism—when art criticism was the center of attention—was still almost two years away.

The editorial suggested that music critics had been advised by the meeting to pay more attention to their language, style, and methodology. It appeared that dogmatism was hanging over the meeting since the need to establish some kind of formula for music reviews was emphasized.⁷¹⁶ These suggestions seem to lean quite strongly toward the direction of the Party. Although this trend did not endure, it is still worthwhile to look into some details of this meeting, especially since it seems to have been attended by the most influential musicologists and critics—from Viktor Gorodinskii to Ivan Sollertinskii and from Viktor Belyi to Mikhail Glukh.⁷¹⁷

Ivan Sollertinskii from Leningrad was mentioned to have been on the defensive for most of the meeting. A list of threats to the development of music criticism followed the mention of his name in the editorial, as if implying that Sollertinskii was somehow linked with these threats. The perceived threats included internal incoherence, cheap cliquishness, and fear of criticism. All these tendencies in musicology were said to be “sheltered by the naively benevolent and passive leadership [of the musicological section].”⁷¹⁸ Yet, Sollertinskii was not alone in receiving criticism.

The meeting had also claimed that there was a split between Moscow and Leningrad. Formalist tendencies and the influence of the late *ASM* were said to affect musicologists in Leningrad. Muscovites, on the other hand, were accused of being influenced by schematic and dogmatic ideas that were derived from *RAPM*, especially in connection with discussions of Shostakovich’s *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*.⁷¹⁹ Although this statement was very polemical, Leningrad was indeed the center of modernist influences in the Soviet Union. However, Moscow, which had been the base for proletarian musicians, attracted the most criticism. Several previous proletarian musicians were named “knights of the sad countenance of *RAPMist* dogmas.” The editorial named the quixotic individuals as Iurii Keldysh, Viktor Belyi, and one Polferov who had all “in their speeches stubbornly repeated worn out theses of *RAPM* and tried to cover obviously erroneous points of views.” Their “perfect lack of self-criticism” was highlighted. The editorial maintained that this showed that cliquishness was still strongly affecting musicological work.⁷²⁰ It appears that,

⁷¹⁶ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7–10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 4.

⁷¹⁷ Sollertinskii and Glukh were active in the musicological section of the Leningrad branch. See for example: TsGALI SPb, f. 348, op. 1, d. 13, l. 1a. Gorodinskii and Belyi were active participants in the musicological section of the Moscow branch, GTsMMK, f. 286, d. 497, ll. 147, 180.

⁷¹⁸ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7–10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 4.

⁷¹⁹ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7–10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 4–5.

⁷²⁰ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7–10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 4–5.

although they were definitely not persecuted in the Composers' Union, proletarian musicians were criticized on a number of occasions. Whenever they tried to bring forward any ideas connected to *RAPM*, they were subjected to demands for self-criticism by way of a response.

Generally, there was some confusion over what "self-criticism" meant. Andrei Rimskii-Korsakov, son of the famous composer, proposed his father as an example of how self-criticism could be productive. Nikolai Rimskii-Korsakov had regarded self-criticism to be one of the basic elements of his authorship, allowing more rapid development of compositions and their better quality.⁷²¹ What Andrei Rimskii-Korsakov described was self-criticism as a personal quality, not as an institutionalized principle. This was indeed how most composers and musicologists would surely have wanted to perceive it. Perhaps Andrei Rimskii-Korsakov strived to give self-criticism a more positive character through his father's authority. Despite this, more Party-orientated self-criticism was gradually beginning to take place in music. Music criticism required discipline and here self-criticism was underlined. The assimilation of Party vocabulary gives the impression that the authority of the Party over music criticism was growing. Even the word, *udarnichestvo*, which referred to shock work, was used in connection with music criticism. Shock work was said to be necessary in order to create a scientific Marxist-Leninist methodology and Party ideology for music criticism.⁷²² Shock work was indeed what would have been needed, as the work hardly seemed to be proceeding at all.

The scientific nature of music criticism was an important feature of ideological influence in music. In contrast to bourgeois music criticism, which was perceived as mere artificial concert portrayal, Marxist music criticism was seen as being based on science. The problem was that the press wrote about sports and the other arts but spared only a little space for music, which meant that reviews were reduced to a few stereotypic lines. Once again, eyes were turned to the past: Soviet musical reviews were given very little coverage compared to pre-revolutionary critics like Aleksandr Serov, German Larosh, or Vladimir Stasov.⁷²³ All the mentioned names, perhaps with the addition of Cesar Cui, were the great names of nineteenth-century Russian music criticism and now they were made models for the Soviet criticism. Stasov had been especially keen on a distinct Russian school of music and he often emphasized Russian folk songs and their genuine nature as musical material. Thus, he was an ideal figure when emphasis turned to the Russian musical past.

These individuals do not easily fit the requirements of coherent criticism that would follow some kind of formula and it merely illustrates how different the views in the musicological field were. Thus, the need for more concrete music criticism was repeated time after time. Only a month before *Pravda's*

⁷²¹ Rimskii-Korsakov, A. 1934, 22–27: Rol ucheby i samokritiki v tvorcheskoi deiatelnosti N.A.Rimskogo-Korsakova. In *SM* 10/1934.

⁷²² Rezoliutsiia 1-i sessii po voprosam muzykalnoi kritiki, sozvannoi LSSK (16, 17 i 18 noiabria 1933 g.). In *SM* 2/1934: 65.

⁷²³ Pashchenko, A. 1933, 122: Protiv gruppovshchiny. In *SM* 3/1933.

editorials, which had a permanent effect on music criticism, Roman Gruber argued that music criticism ought to support and guide compositional work.⁷²⁴

Opera: the critical discussion

All of this theoretical writing about music criticism would perhaps not deserve such a place in this study if it had not found practical manifestations in and after 1936. A more practical approach to musicology surfaced during the first campaign against formalism. Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District* was attacked and although this was done anonymously, there are several links to musicological discussions of previous years indicating that *Pravda's* editorials did not appear out of thin air.

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District premiered in 1934 and even prior to this it had been the subject of several discussions in the Composers' Union. *Sovetskaia Muzyka* described these discussions as "boiling."⁷²⁵ In many studies, the attack against this opera has been described as sudden,⁷²⁶ but this is not completely accurate. *Lady Macbeth* was closely examined and even criticized because its theme was morally and socially suspicious. Although Shostakovich spoke on behalf of Soviet power, he was described for years as too interested in formalist and modernist tendencies. An influential critic and Party member Moisei Grinberg, for instance, lamented in 1933 that Shostakovich was subjected to elements of jazz, Western stage, and old Russian bourgeois music, although he otherwise praised the young composer.⁷²⁷

Against the enormous success and praise of this opera, criticism was in any case sudden. First, *Lady Macbeth* had seemed to be what musicology yearned for: a work that aroused passions. Discussions about the opera waged in Leningrad from February 16 to 20, 1934 were reportedly heated. The authors of the report, Iokhelson and Gorodinskii, chose to present largely positive remarks made about the work.⁷²⁸ Only few weeks before *Pravda* published its article condemning the opera, *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* mentioned *Lady Macbeth* alongside Dzerzhinskii's *Silent don* as one of the most luminous examples of Soviet opera.⁷²⁹ Although the conditions surrounding *Lady Macbeth* and its condemnation will be discussed in the fourth part of this book, discussions about Soviet opera in general prior to 1936 are worth examining in some depth

⁷²⁴ Gruber, R. 1935, 48–49: Voprosy leningradskoi muzykalnoi kritiki i muzykalnoi nauki za sezon 1934/35 g. In *SM* 12/1935: 48–49.

⁷²⁵ Gorodinskii, V. and Iokhelson, V. 1934, 6: Za bolshevistskuiu samokritiku na muzykalnom fronte. In *SM* 5/1934.

⁷²⁶ This criticism has been described as sudden by, at least, the following studies: Schwarz 1983, 123–124; Ferenc 1998, 116; Fitzpatrick 1992, 185; Volkov 1980, 142–145. Laurel L. Fay 2000, 74–75 is more accurate when she states that most composers praised, and even those who were critical approved, this music. Thus, the change of attitude was more or less forced.

⁷²⁷ Grinberg, M. 1933, 3: Nепреодоленные соблазны. Avtorskii kontsert Dm. Shostakovicha. In *SI* April 14, 1933: 3.

⁷²⁸ Gorodinskii, V. and Iokhelson, V. 1934, 6: Za bolshevistskuiu samokritiku na muzykalnom fronte. In *SM* 5/1934.

⁷²⁹ Grinberg, M. 1936, 3: Tikhii Don. In *SI* January 11, 1936.

here, as the establishment of the Committee on Artistic Affairs would change the nature of these discussions notably.

Opera was one of the major themes where one can see both the fusion of musicology and music criticism and their new ideological tasks. It is illuminating that, before Party involvement, the two most discussed operas of the mid-1930s—Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth* and Dzerzhinskii's *Silent don*—were very different operas both in choice of theme and musical content. Just months before Stalin and Molotov attended its *Bolshoi* premiere, *Sovetskaia Muzyka* published an article on *Silent don*. Although the opera received a favorable, but not exemplary, review, the distinction between *Silent Don* and operas by proletarian musicians, like Davidenko's *1905* or Korchmarev's *Ten Days That Shook the World*, was drawn. Still, in conclusion, it was argued that, despite being one of the most important operas of recent years, and it was realistic, too, *Silent Don* did not make full use of musical possibilities, orchestration and expression when compared for example to Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth*. *Silent Don* was still considered especially worthy because it was Dzerzhinskii's first large-scale work, showing that he was very promising an artist.⁷³⁰

In discussions of Soviet music, opera generally occupied a special position. Although it seems as though the focus on different musical genres changed according to trends, opera was always considered an important art form. It seems that large-scale musical forms in general were in the ascendant in the Soviet Union, as the symphony was also experiencing revival. In the meantime, the musical development in the West went in another direction.

Soviet opera seemed to be ahead of the symphonic genre, at least if theoretical discussions are followed. Although the discussion largely involved those works that were staged on the most important opera stages, the Union's work on the opera also resulted in operatic works that were produced for quite different arenas. One of the ideological milestones was a kolkhoz opera accomplished in the autumn of 1937. Vasiliev-Buglai and Genrikh Bruk composed *Fatherland is calling, Rodina zovet*, said to be the first opera composed specifically for a kolkhoz choir and instrumental ensembles. The kolkhoz that premiered the opera was named after Kirov and was situated in Rybnovsk County in the Moscow oblast.⁷³¹ Although these kinds of new approaches took place, both the Party and composers still considered traditional stages as more important and this occupied the attention of composers in the future as well.

During the 1930s, Leningrad had become the center for Soviet opera, especially its *Malyi* Theater (also known as *Malegot*). While other theaters reportedly shunned new Soviet opera, the *Malyi* operated like a laboratory and produced a number of works, including Dzerzhinskii's *Silent don*, Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth*, and *Komarinskii Muzhik, Imeniny* and *Mat (Mother)* after Gorkii, by Zhelobinskii⁷³². The *Malyi* aimed to generate a creative and

⁷³⁰ Budiakovskii, A. 1935, 38–46: "Tikhii don" I. Dzerzhinskogo. In *SM* 11/1935.

⁷³¹ Kolkhoznaia opera. In *SM* 10–11/1937: 158.

⁷³² Zhelobinskii was a very talented composer of both opera and film music, but he died young, at the age of thirty-three, and has perhaps thus been mostly forgotten.

encouraging atmosphere in which new kinds of works could emerge.⁷³³ Musicologist Ivan Sollertinskii explained why he believed Leningrad was so much more successful than Moscow at producing new operas. He regarded that premieres of Western operas in Leningrad contributed notably to development of new Soviet opera. Richard Strauss's *Salome*, Franz Schreker's *Die Ferne Klang*, Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, Ernst Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf*, and many others Western operas had recently been staged in Leningrad, where connections with the Western world had been most enduring.⁷³⁴ Yet, the *Malyi* Theater was given the Order of Lenin in 1939 for its work on behalf of Soviet opera and many individual staff members had been decorated with different medals and awards.

Opera was also the subject of much discussion because of its broad themes. Opera was a particularly good vehicle by which to strengthen the historical consciousness of the people, it was reasoned. As the Soviet state started to root itself in the Russian tradition, operas based on historical subjects were actively encouraged. Iokhelson, for instance, emphasized historical chronicles as "safe sources" for operas.⁷³⁵ He made a remark about Musorgskii's *Boris Godunov*, which has been interpreted as a reference to Musorgskii's criticism of Russian emperors.⁷³⁶ Khubov wanted to go even further. He insisted that it was only from pre-revolutionary realistic musical drama, and mastery of its composers, that Soviet opera would spring. Soviet opera was realistic drama that was concerned with the life and reality of the Soviet people.⁷³⁷ Khubov, as a future *Pravda* correspondent on music, was a man to take into account.

Yet, no one could have been left in any doubt that Soviet opera was and should be the direct heir of the Russian school of music. Mikhail Glinka, who was perceived as the first genuinely Russian composer, had composed his opera and masterpiece *A Life for the Tsar* in 1836. It had since become the obligatory piece to perform at imperial opera theaters every season. In 1917, it was renamed *Ivan Susanin*, after the principal character, also following the original intention of Glinka. Yet, there were still numerous references to the Tsar; these references were only reduced for the new version that premiered in 1939. *Ivan Susanin* was based on a Russian legend of a woodcutter who, at the end of the "Time of Troubles" (1598–1613), helped to save the Tsar Mikhail Romanov (founder of the Romanov dynasty) from Polish troops by exposing himself to torture and death.

⁷³³ An interesting detail is that after 1936, when Shostakovich's opera's, *Lady Macbeth* and *Nose* had already fell out of favor, the *Malyi*, which premiered them, still included Shostakovich and his works along its other successes. Yet, in *Malyi*'s list of composers and works these Shostakovich's sole, and now disgraced operas, were referred only as "operas of Shostakovich", with no further details given. See Sh. A. 1938, 110–111: 20-letie Malogo Opernogo teatra. In *SM* 3/1938.

⁷³⁴ Sollertinskii, I. 1935, 78–79: Tvorcheskie profili muzykalnykh teatrov Leningrada. In *SM* 11/1935.

⁷³⁵ Iokhelson, V. 1934, 17: Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov k XVII siezdu partii. In *SM* 1/1934.

⁷³⁶ Taruskin 1997, 75–80.

⁷³⁷ Khubov, G. 1939, 25–33: Sovetskaia opera i ee kritiki. In *SM* 1/1939.

The Romanov dynasty had used this martyr legend in pro-tsarist propaganda. Although several Soviet operas with Great-Russian themes were planned in the latter half of the 1930s—including *Minin and Pozharskii* by Asafiev and Mikhail Bulgakov (1936) also set during the defeat of Polish armies in 1612, as well as *Peter the First* by the same authors⁷³⁸,—*Ivan Susanin* marked the high-point in the rise of Russian-national operas. Glinka was hailed as a “genius” and his work, a “monumental” opera whose meaning for the Soviet music was “immeasurable.” The threat posed by German fascists was overtly connected with the defense of the Russian Empire more than 300 years earlier.⁷³⁹ Opera was employed to strongly support the national sentiment and call for unity against external enemies. Here, the Russian classics had a particularly important role.

The turning point at which opera theaters started to embrace more politically topical works seems to have taken place during the mid-1930s, by the time *Pravda*'s editorials were published in early 1936. Yet, a far more important factor than these articles was likely to have been the emergence of the Committee on Artistic Affairs. The Committee was very active in relation to opera. Thus, the latter half of the 1930s saw the composition of a host of Soviet operas that would form the core of the Soviet opera repertory: Dzerzhinskii's *Virgin Soil Uplifted* and *Silent Don*, Khrennikov's *Into the Storm*, *Mother* by Zhelobinskii (the first Soviet opera after Gorkii), *Battleship Potemkin* by Oles Chishko, and several operas from the core repertory of different Soviet republics. In all, twenty-five new operas were composed in three years.⁷⁴⁰

Thus, officials saw opera as a musical form that could most saliently carry extra-musical messages. This, along with the fact that Party officials regarded theater art in general to be important, explains why opera and ballet were so often at the center of ideological and political debates in the Soviet Union.

Symphony: how to “speak” black into white

Another large musical genre that aroused wide-ranging discussions before 1936 was symphonic music. Discussions about the symphonic genre highlighted many important features of Soviet musicology and particularly music criticism in the early 1930s. A special conference about the symphonic form was even arranged. Discussions about this conference on Soviet symphony also

⁷³⁸ Neither of these operas ever reached the stage, apparently. *Minin i Pozharskii* was first denied staging in December 1936 after which authors tried to rewrite it to suit the stage. However, fragments of it were merely broadcasted on the Radio at the end of 1938. Natov, Nadine 1996, 183–184: The meaning of music and musical images in the works of Mikhail Bulgakov. In Milne, Lesley (ed.), *Bulgakov: the novelist and playwright*. London: Routledge. The score of *Minin* was finally published in 1980 and *Peter the First* under the name *Peter the Great* in 1988.

⁷³⁹ Khubov, G. 1939, 32–36: “Ivan Susanin”. In *SM* 2/1939.

⁷⁴⁰ See for example: Grinberg, M. 1939: *Rabotat na sovetskoi operoi*. In *SM* 3/1939, pp. 53–59.

exemplified several important features of the early Composers' Union. It was also one of the main themes handled in 1935, especially in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*.⁷⁴¹

Although this conference, and the discussions that followed, failed to produce any real concrete results, many implications and conceptions of the conference were developed further and reached their pinnacle in the autumn of 1937 when Dmitrii Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony premiered. The Beethovenian tradition was eventually stressed, but Beethoven's modern successors, Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss—the last great names of the symphonic genre—were excluded from official precedents for Soviet music.⁷⁴² Indeed, discussions about Soviet symphony were closely linked with discussions about music heritage. The quest for finding acceptable composers from history paralleled the development of Soviet symphony. The most notable proponent of the Mahlerian symphonic tradition was Ivan Sollertinskii. He had already spoken out in favor of Mahler in 1932. He believed that through critical analysis Mahler's music would serve as one of the precedents of Soviet music.⁷⁴³ Shostakovich among others exhibited obvious links with the Mahlerian tradition, especially in his Fourth Symphony.⁷⁴⁴

Around fifty Soviet symphonies were produced between 1932 and 1936, and, as Fairclough has remarked, a remarkable lack of conformity is evident.⁷⁴⁵ An agreement even over the basic principles of Soviet symphony could not be settled. On the other hand, perhaps it is more accurate to say that the basic principles and connection of symphonies to the socialist esthetic was left so vague that almost anything could be accommodated within the definitions that resulted from these discussions. It even seems highly likely that many were willing to keep these definitions vague enough for their own styles to be termed socialist without any notable alterations.

Aleksandr Ostretsov's opening remark was still very promising from the viewpoint of those who wanted to bring symphony more concretely into the service of ideology. He believed that symphonic works had the potential to deal with ideological problems in some depth and even more explicitly than other forms of music. Ostretsov discussed symphonism in a lengthy but yet non-specific manner. Ostretsov compared symphony to drama or novels, perhaps in order to raise its importance compared to more socially valued literary forms.⁷⁴⁶ This conference on symphonism, opened by Ostretsov, took place from

⁷⁴¹ These discussions have been examined in detail by Pauline Fairclough in her outstanding article: Fairclough, Pauline 2002: The "Perestroyka" of Soviet Symphonism. In *Music and Letters* 83(2), 2002, pp. 259-274. My aim, however, is somewhat different and I try to connect these discussions to the general musicological discussions of the era.

⁷⁴² See for example: Bogdanov-Berezovskii, V. 1934, 30: K Probleme sovetskogo simfonizma (O simfoniakh G. Popova i Iu. Shaporina). In *SM* 6/1934.

⁷⁴³ Sollertinskii, I. 1932, 30: Gustav Maler i problema evropeiskogo simfonizma. In Cheliapov, N. I. (ed.), *Muzykalnyi almanakh, Sbornik statei*. Moscow: Muzgiz. This ideas were also published as a booklet, see: Sollertinskii, I. 1932: *Gustav Maler*. Leningrad: Muzgiz.

⁷⁴⁴ See especially Fairclough's monograph on the subject: Fairclough 2006.

⁷⁴⁵ Fairclough 2002, 259-260.

⁷⁴⁶ Ostretsov, A. 1935, 3: Sovetskoe simfonicheskoe tvorchestvo. In *SM* 4/1935.

February 4 to February 6, 1935, and conference speeches were published in the three following issues of *Sovetskaia Muzyka*. It is significant that it was Ostretsov, rather than a Party figure, who delivered the keynote speech. Although he used Party vocabulary, Ostretsov was still a musicologist and not a Party official. Music was not even then considered sufficiently important for Party officials to attend important meetings. Instead of being simplified to political ends, musical questions were discussed more in the terms of musical theory.⁷⁴⁷ Additionally, modern Western symphonism was openly presented and discussed—from Jean Sibelius to Honegger, although certain names like Beethoven surfaced more frequently.⁷⁴⁸

Shostakovich, the symphonist at the center of attention during the following years, was also present at these meetings. He addressed themes of content and formalism and in practice points of views that were later condemned as formalist. He also considered Knipper's Third and Fifth symphonies, praised by Ostretsov, to be unclear and even primitive. He believed that knowledge about Western symphonism was poor and that a seminar for studying Western style in depth should be held.⁷⁴⁹ His proposition received support. Sollertinskii gave some statistics that helped to explain why modern music was not well known or understood. According to him, during the last concert season the [Moscow?] Philharmonic Orchestra had played only one work by Arnold Schoenberg while works by Rimskii-Korsakov and Tchaikovskii numbered 189 and 190 respectively.⁷⁵⁰ Rejection of bourgeois modernism on behalf of Russian classics could not have been more evident. This state of affairs was not welcomed by those wishing for a more progressive approach to symphonic music.

Viktor Belyi believed that the "Soviet symphony" did not yet exist, although he did argue that several aspects of contemporary compositions indicated development towards it. It was not enough to say that a Soviet symphony was simply a symphony composed by a Soviet composer; it ought to be something distinct from the Western symphony. Belyi was searching for a realist style with a Soviet essence,⁷⁵¹ but he was unable to give any concrete examples of such a style. Iosif Ryzhkin took a different approach to the definition of Soviet symphony. He emphasized that every era had had its own

⁷⁴⁷ Additionally, the keynote speaker Ostretsov was mocked for his haziness. Shebalin, V. 1935, 41: Vystuplenie tov. Shebalina. (Diskussiia o sovetskom simfonizme). In *SM* 5/1935. Quoted in Fairclough 2002, 261. It is also noteworthy that these discussions were obviously uncensored when they were published in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*.

⁷⁴⁸ Even the names of Finnish composers Uuno Klami, Leevi Madetoja, and Väinö Raitio, all little known outside Finland, were mentioned, which shows that the most recent Western works were easily available in the Composers' Union, since connections between Finland and the Soviet Union were far from cordial during the 1930s, see: Kuznetsov, K. A. 1935, 23–28: O sovremennom simfonizme na Zapade. In *SM* 5/1935.

⁷⁴⁹ Shostakovich, D. 1935. 32–33: Vystuplenie tov. Shostakovicha. (Diskussiia o sovetskom simfonizme). In *SM* 5/1935.

⁷⁵⁰ Sollertinskii, I. 1935, 29: Vystuplenie tov. Sollertinskogo. (Diskussiia o sovetskom simfonizme). In *SM* 6/1935.

⁷⁵¹ Belyi, V. 1935, 34–38: Vystuplenie tov. Belogo. (Diskussiia o sovetskom simfonizme). In *SM* 5/1935.

mass audience for music. In the nineteenth century, the audience had been bourgeois, while in the Middle Ages church was the primary audience. In the Soviet context, the mass audience that expected music to be composed for them was composed of workers and peasants.⁷⁵² In Ryzhkin's reasoning a symphony would become "Soviet" only when it was targeted for the proletarian audience. Needless to say, Ryzhkin did not convey how a symphony could be targeted for a proletarian audience.

This conference was not the first occasion on which symphony was discussed in the Composers' Union. It seems that it was a consequence of preceding discussions, which had called for a broader platform to present and share ideas. Ryzhkin, for example, believed that composers were yearning for such discussion and waiting for musicology that could help them in their work. He also presented some of his own ideas about the preconditions for Soviet symphony, which he would repeat more than a year later at the conference.⁷⁵³ Symphony became an important topic after 1932 since proletarian musicians had effectively shunned instrumental music in general. Symphonic music thus became one of the major topics for the Composers' Union, but ideological content was one of the major problems for this musical form. Unlike an opera, a symphony could not present explicit ideological content.

There were different attempts to solve the problem of ideological content. On the radio, the problem was bypassed by preceding the actual broadcast of the composition with a proper introduction. This approach was utilized actively, which is illustrated by Taranushchenko's complaint that one symphony was broadcasted without a proper introduction. He stated that now listeners would not understand the work because the key moment for musical education had been missed.⁷⁵⁴ The same effect could be produced at concerts through the use of a compère or handouts. Handouts were particularly important at premieres. The content of the composition could in this way be manifested, or even invented. Atovmian stated that proper introductions would make premieres, "instead of ordinary concerts, the highlights of musical front."⁷⁵⁵

Although the musicological conference on symphony hardly managed to develop a coherent line on its main subject, it certainly made the point that the symphonic tradition had become an important part of Soviet musical life. This became especially evident in the autumn of 1937 when a festival of Soviet music was arranged in connection with the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution.

⁷⁵² Ryzhkin, I. 1935, 3: Zadachi sovetskogo simfonizma. In *SM* 6/1935.

⁷⁵³ Iosif Ryzhkin believed that, while the Composers' Union was searching for a direction for musicological work, the Soviet symphony was one of the most important tasks facing musicologists. See: Ryzhkin, N. 1934, 52: O muzykovedcheskoi rabote Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 2/1934.

⁷⁵⁴ Taranushchenko, V. 1933, 155–156: SSK. Tvorcheskaia i organizatsionnaia deiatelnost. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁷⁵⁵ Atovmian, L. 1933, 136: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

At this point, the theoretical discussions of the previous years found a somewhat sounder basis in creative work but the limits of what was acceptable in symphonic music were becoming narrower. The festival introduced a host of new symphonic works by Soviet composers. After this festival at the end of 1937, Georgii Khubov made some interesting remarks about Soviet symphonism. He listed the most important features of Soviet symphonism and stressed its difference from Western bourgeois modernism. The key feature above all was in *narodnost*, how music connected directly to the people. Here, Khubov emphasized the heritage of composers with strong *narodnost* in their music, including [J.S.?] Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and Tchaikovskii. New Soviet symphonic music answered to social needs and was no longer “art for art’s sake” but rather reflected life of the Soviet people.⁷⁵⁶ In itself this was not very clear a guideline.

Music critics had to give examples of recent works in order to give a more concrete idea of these prerequisites. One of the exemplary works chosen was Shcherbachev’s Fourth Symphony that was completed in 1936 and composed during the years of the aforementioned discussions. The work was named *Izhorskaia*, after a crucial factory in the 1905 Revolution. Yet, in his review, Ostretsov managed, typically for him, to speak in riddles, not about the work at hand – mostly about *narodnost* in general.⁷⁵⁷ Thus, it seemed that the approved method of choosing an ideological theme or title for the work was the way to make it admissible. However, there were signs of change. Discussions no longer took place at an exclusively abstract level. Compositions were now expected to display concrete features of socialist art. Although hardly anyone mentioned socialist realism in connection with musical examples, thus keeping it at a more theoretical level, ideological issues had become more acute. One editorial in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* was dedicated to this matter after a festival of Russian classical music, emphasizing especially the role of *narodnost* in music. The festival was overseen by the Committee on Artistic Affairs and perhaps this was why reviews now more than ever before concentrated on evaluating compositions’ ideological features.⁷⁵⁸

In late 1937 Khubov had become not only the regular music critic of *Pravda*, but also one of the leading music critics to raise ideological issues in connection with music, especially with large-scale productions like symphonies and national operas. He was soon also on close terms with the Party in other means than just through *Pravda*, as the fourth part of this study suggests. Yet, he became a Party-member only in 1943. Khubov graduated from Moscow Conservatory in 1930 and became the leader of musical work in *Gorky Park* and a general exponent of mass musical work in unconventional musical arenas. He was said to be an important pedagogue from 1932, and in 1936, at the age of thirty, he became a docent at the Moscow Conservatory. He was an editor of

⁷⁵⁶ Khubov, G. 1937, 29: Smotr sovetskoi muzyki. Tvorcheskie itogi dekady sovetskoi muzyki v Moskve. In *SM* 12/1937.

⁷⁵⁷ Ostretsov, A. 1938, 15: 4-ia (“Izhorskaia”) simfoniia V. Shcherbacheva. In *SM* 5/1938.

⁷⁵⁸ Alshvang, A. 1938, 5–8: Narodnost v russkoi klassicheskoi muzyke. In *SM* 5/1938, 5–8.

Sovetskaia Muzyka for the whole of the 1930s. He became the Chief Editor from 1952 until 1957—the same time that he was secretary of the Composers' Union. During the Second World War, he was an editor of radio broadcasts.

In one of his articles, Khubov introduced several Soviet composers and their work on symphonic music. First of all, he emphasized the work of Miaskovskii, whose Eighteenth Symphony (dedicated to the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution) was premiered during the festival of Soviet music. Khubov believed that Miaskovskii's symphonies represented the development of Soviet symphony after the Revolution. Miaskovskii's Fifth Symphony had been composed in 1918 and in Khubov's view from this point on Miaskovskii's development as a Soviet composer began and extended to such glorious works as his Sixteenth Symphony that was dedicated to the Soviet aviation. The only thing Khubov lamented was that out of Miaskovskii's repertory only the eighteenth and fifth symphonies were performed at the festival, thus leaving his development as a Soviet composer insufficiently represented.⁷⁵⁹

Khubov also introduced, largely in a positive light, other symphonic composers, including Khachaturian, Shaporin, and Prokofiev. He argued that although Prokofiev had technically been a master of composition for a long time, only now was he transformed into a genuine Soviet composer by abandoning his formalistic style.⁷⁶⁰ Khubov wrote nothing about Shostakovich in this article, but he went on to write about Shostakovich in depth in following issues of *Sovetskaia Muzyka*.

Musicologists seem to have been able to interpret the difficult language of symphony for the wider audience and explain when a work fulfilled the ideological requirements and when it did not. The problem, however, was that musicologists were not unanimous in their judgments. In this context, the opinion of those, like Khubov or Gorodinskii, who were on close terms with the Party, carried considerable weight.

While a great deal has been written about Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, it is important to view it as part of musicological discussions as well as considering the mechanism by which it was approved. This work permanently raised Shostakovich to the status of Soviet composer. Moreover, it brought to an end Shostakovich's difficulties that had more or less persisted since February of 1936. The premiere of the symphony on November 21, 1937 was his triumph. Although it was not favorably received by everyone, most musical personalities and the public willingly accepted this symphony as an expression of Shostakovich's will to return to the community of Soviet composers.⁷⁶¹ Overexcitement, hype, in modern terms, surrounded this work. Khubov—who contributed to the extremely influential *Pravda* as well as *Sovetskaia Muzyka*—was seemingly trying to calm the hype down. In the March 1938 issue of

⁷⁵⁹ Khubov, G. 1937, 30–32: Smotr sovetskoi muzyki. Tvorcheskie itogi dekadyy sovetskoi muzyki v Moskve. In *SM* 12/1937.

⁷⁶⁰ Khubov, G. 1937, 30–32: Smotr sovetskoi muzyki. Tvorcheskie itogi dekadyy sovetskoi muzyki v Moskve. In *SM* 12/1937.

⁷⁶¹ See for example Fay 2000, 99–103.

Sovetskaia Muzyka, he discussed Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony in some depth. He criticized previous reviews of this symphony for merely using "generally praising phrases" yet saying nothing nor providing detailed analysis. Khubov maintained that with this symphony Shostakovich was responding to just criticism (he quoted Shostakovich) and that was precisely why the work ought to be analyzed in detail, because it deserved such an analysis.⁷⁶²

After providing a musical analysis of the symphony, Khubov emphasized that, on the basis of his analysis, during the composing process Shostakovich had obviously understood the awesome power of optimism with regard to art. However, Khubov noted that Shostakovich had not fully grasped that only connection to the life of the people could provide release from the tragic "loneliness" to which Shostakovich was referring.⁷⁶³ Khubov's more professional analysis was followed by a typical layman's review of the symphony and its political meaning. Mikhail Gromov, pilot and Soviet hero, evaluated symphony and its meaning. Following political lines, he believed that *Pravda's* articles had done well in guiding Shostakovich, as shown by the Fifth symphony. "It feels as though Shostakovich has experienced and rethought a lot. He has grown as an artist. Austere and forthright criticism obviously helped his growth," Gromov reasoned.⁷⁶⁴

Although ideological viewpoints were discussed in connection with concrete examples of music instead of mere theory, especially after 1936 guidelines hardly became any clearer. In theoretical discussions, some principles of socialist realist music were discussed and even agreed to some extent after 1936, but they still remained vague, as the next part of this study suggests. However, there was another trend, which began to shape Soviet symphonic music and gave it a distinctive character for several years. Perhaps not surprisingly it is connected with the past.

In the field of symphony, as was the case for opera, pre-revolutionary Russian music experienced a strong revival as pointed out in many discussions and numerous articles. While Mikhail Glinka was better known in the field of opera and musical drama, he became like a musical Pushkin, an overall musical figure who was quoted in connection with almost every musical issue. Thus, Ivan Martynov's article, *About Glinka's Symphonism*, is, in this sense, very illuminating. He regarded that, although Glinka only had a few symphonic works, "his ingenious operas were from the start to the end symphonic." Especially salient, in Martynov's view, was the *narodnost* in Glinka's symphonic style.⁷⁶⁵ Thus, Glinka, the "founder of the Russian music," was used to justify the essence of Soviet symphonic music as well. Not Glinka alone, but all the major pre-revolutionary composers were one by one held up as predecessors of the Soviet style. The 100th Anniversary of Modest Musorgskii was yet another

⁷⁶² Khubov, G. 1938, 14-15: 5-ia simfoniia D. Shostakovicha. In *SM* 3/1938.

⁷⁶³ Khubov, G. 1938, 27-28: 5-ia simfoniia D. Shostakovicha. In *SM* 3/1938.

⁷⁶⁴ Gromov, M. 1938, 29: Zametki slushatelia (o 5-i simfonii D. Shostakovicha). In *SM* 3/1938.

⁷⁶⁵ Martynov, I. 1938, 64-70: O simfonizme Glinki. In *SM* 3/1938.

occasion that emphasized how Soviet opera and symphonic music were now strictly bonded to Russian musical traditions.⁷⁶⁶

The Russian musical past became a very delicate matter, the subject of dogmatizing, with no place for alternative views. Apparently, the musicologist Tamara Livanova crossed the line with her book published in 1938 entitled *Essays and Material about the History of Russian Musical Culture*. Livanova was said to have distorted the development of Russian music. In particular, it was argued that Livanova had undermined and twisted Russian music's relationship to the people and its distinctiveness from Western musical traditions. Worst of all, several other professors had hailed Livanova's work as exemplary.⁷⁶⁷ Thus, the Russian line of development had to be emphasized at the cost of the Western one. This was in line with the general shift from the pro-European attitude towards Russian chauvinism and anti-western sentiments that became prevailing in the mid-1930s.

Emphasis on the distinctive nature of Russian music, as the precursor of Soviet music, was supported by many musicologists. Somewhat surprisingly, the strongman of early Soviet musical administration, Arthur Lourié, who was exiled already in 1921, wrote in 1932 to the influential *Musical Quarterly* journal about the distinctive nature of Russian music. He argued that there were three main schools of music: Latin, Slavic, and German, with the latter being predominant. In his view, the Latin and Slavic schools, represented by France and Russia respectively, were closer to each other and both were trying to struggle against the German hegemony in music. Glinka, Musorgskii, and the *Mighty Handful* in his view represented the Russian school of music, which, like contemporary Russian composers both in the Soviet Union and abroad, tried to counter German hegemony.⁷⁶⁸ However, Lourié claimed that Soviet musical life was backward because foreign connections had been cut off. Despite being the first Russian futurist and internationalist, his view about a special Russian musical essence was surprisingly close to that of the many Soviet exponents of Russian heritage. Thus, this trend was firmly grounded, but had now been raised over others as the main Soviet line of musical thinking.

It is now clear that musicology was expected both to connect Soviet music to its past and to show the way forward. Musicology eventually started to guide the ideological work of Soviet composers. Professionalized music criticism was in particular expected to provide guidelines for composers' practical work. This idea was promoted by several musicologists. Not everyone was willing to give way to political demands in what they perceived as their professional domain, but the Party was able to find enough influential musicologists to support its cause. Khubov argued that the task of music critics was to point out to composers that certain musical genres mattered. He was a strong supporter of mass musical work and believed that musicology could

⁷⁶⁶ See the fourth issue of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* 1939. The whole journal of over 100 pages was devoted to Musorgskii.

⁷⁶⁷ See especially: Martynov, I. 1939, 81-90: *Iskazhennaia istoriia*. In *SM* 5/1939.

⁷⁶⁸ Lourie, Arthur 1932: *The Russian School*. In *Musical Quarterly* 18 (4), 1932, pp. 519-529.

develop creative work in this direction.⁷⁶⁹ In numerous similar addresses, musicologists defined Soviet music and connected music to the tasks of socialist construction.

The motives of those musicologists who gave in to these demands surely differed and can be but guessed at. In any case, had some professional musicologists not made concessions, it is probable that, at some point, non-professionals who were willing to take more radical actions would have emerged. In a way, it was all about surviving the pressures of the Stalinist system, which expected every sphere of life to support socialist construction and the tasks defined by the Party. The Composers' Union took the wise step of attempting to define in professional context how music could serve these objectives, since it allowed the Union more room to maneuver than would have been the case had the Party intervened.

Music is made a social art

Part of the work to make music correspond to socialist construction lay in finding Marxist methods for musicological work. While the transformation of music criticism into a scholarly pursuit made it easier for the Composers' Union to influence or exert some control over what was written about compositions, this was not enough. Music criticism also needed to be based upon Marxist principles, at least in theory.

Prominent Leningrad musicologist Semion Ginzburg wrote an editorial in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* about redirecting music criticism's line. Ginzburg argued that the essential problem of Soviet musicology was its concrete analysis of content in composition. According to Ginzburg even those who sincerely strived for Marxist-Leninist analysis had not overcome formalism. He declared that the liquidation of the barrier between music theory and practice should be the foremost task of musicology.⁷⁷⁰ Ginzburg's writing featured vocabulary familiar from Party addresses but which would also become more common in future music criticism. This political vocabulary included words such as liquidation, development, struggle, hinder, and brake. Although writings about musical theory would not have changed in content, they did become more politically correct. It must be emphasized that Ginzburg was a former modernist and pupil of Boris Asafiev, hardly a Party member.

Attempts to centralize music criticism were closely related to its general re-structuring. To this end, *Sovetskaia Muzyka* organized a special conference that was held on March 16 and 17, 1935. It was stressed that analysis of a single composition was inadequate for music criticism. Instead, analysis should always be connected to general problems of Soviet music. When a symphony was analyzed, the general discussions about Soviet symphony should have been observed. However, compositions and composers were evaluated almost

⁷⁶⁹ Khubov, G. 1934, 5: Za massovuiu pesniu, za massovuiu simfoniuiu! In *SM* 2/1934; similar ideas were present for example in Kulakovskii, L. 1937, 117-125: *Sovetskoe muzykoznanie*. In *SM* 10-11/1937.

⁷⁷⁰ Ginzburg, S. 1934, 4: Na putiakh konkretnoi muzykalnoi kritiki. In *SM* 6/1934.

totally separately from topical musicological discussions. The conference agreed on a resolution that stated that the current incoherent status of criticism hindered the improvement in quality of Soviet music and made the struggle against formalism much harder.⁷⁷¹ It was suggested that the theory of Soviet music and music criticism had been driven apart from each other and that the Composers' Union did not have means to influence or interact with music critics in general. The situation could only be improved by centralizing the field of music criticism and by better publicizing theoretical discussions. Deficiencies in the struggle against formalism and isolation of music criticism were features that would also be mentioned by *Pravda* in its criticism less than a year later.

The lack of authority and leadership was regarded as the biggest obstacle standing in the way of coherent musicology that would help Soviet composers. According to *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, this illustrated how dissatisfactory the operation of the musicological section actually was. In spite of requests, there was no decisive struggle against cliquishness, and modernists continued to work separately from former proletarian musicians. Some music critics even fell for demagogic phraseology, and sloppy or indifferent work, *Sovetskaia Muzyka* argued.⁷⁷² Such writing reduced the situation prior to 1932 to a mere struggle between modernist and proletarian groups, naming them "ASMists" and "RAPMists," which was a clear over-simplification.

Musicology remained divided for a long time. Musicology was urged to unite and turn theoretical activity into practical work. Still in the autumn of 1935 the same problems seemed to be prevailing: an editorial of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* emphasized that deep and serious theoretical research should simultaneously be highly practical. Formal analysis would be in vain unless the content and conditions surrounding a composition were also considered.⁷⁷³ An editorial implied that the opposite was prevailing and that the social dimension of musicology had to be further emphasized.

All these remarks surrounding discussions of Soviet musicology illustrate that it was guided away from the individualist conception of music that prevailed in the West. During the initial years of the Composers' Union, Cheliapov, as the Chief Editor of *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, on several occasions attempted to clarify the role of critics and musicologists in the composition process. He stated that music was not a "technology," since as art it was not dependant on exact mathematical laws like physics: "[Art] is about a group of methods through which artist expresses his ideology. . . . It is not about "the work of the forces of nature," but rather it is about artists' creative conscience."⁷⁷⁴ A consequence of this vague conception was that musicology had the ability to help artists to express and develop their ideology. The essential thing was that art was able to express ideologies and was not merely

⁷⁷¹ Konferentsiia zhurnala "Sovetskaia Muzyka." In *SM* 7-8/1935: 130.

⁷⁷² Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7-10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 3.

⁷⁷³ Za deistvennuiu kritiku. In *SM* 9/1935: 3-5.

⁷⁷⁴ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 3: Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen! In *SM* 4/1933.

an individual means of expression. The aim was to produce ideologically sophisticated music. Thus, it was announced that Marxist-Leninist musicology ought to be instated and that concrete music criticism should be its vanguard.⁷⁷⁵

The attempt to emphasize the social nature of music was one of the leading principles in Soviet music throughout the Stalinist period. While distinctiveness from Western music was supposed to be one of its defining features, the Western reaction to the fruits of these new ideas is well-illustrated by famous music critic Gerald Abraham. He reviewed one of the symphonies of Iurii Shaporin in London in the 1930s. In his review, he wondered how revolutionary Russia could produce music that was so far from being revolutionary.⁷⁷⁶ His comment was not ignored. At the same time, Boris Asafiev commented on Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* and argued that it represented the helplessness of the Western European petit-bourgeois intelligentsia in the face of fascism. According to Asafiev, *Wozzeck* revealed the crisis of the whole musical culture of the West.⁷⁷⁷ Stressing the social nature of music was seen as one of the leading ways of drawing a distinction with the bourgeois West.

The emphasis on the social nature of music was not repellent to Soviet composers; on the contrary, many were willing to "express their artistic ideology" in public. Shteinberg willingly unraveled his Fourth Symphony, *Turksib*, its creative process, and the ideas that were carried within it. *Turksib* was a great railway construction and in Shteinberg's words it represented

"a great struggle against the vast wilderness and wild summits in the name of the construction of socialist culture to the extent that this was possible in instrumental music."⁷⁷⁸

Shteinberg stressed the role of socialist construction in his writing. According to him, the idea for the work had originated in the simple words of a Kirgizian delegate about the motives for building the *Turksib* railroad: "that the people would not have to moan and live in poverty."⁷⁷⁹

Shteinberg had a story to tell and these kinds of heroic tales were what the Party had called for. As Shteinberg's work was instrumental, one obvious way to make it programmatic and give it a clear content was to explain the creative process (in the ideological context). He described how he had studied Semion Kirsanov's *Song of Turksib* and Demian Bednyi's *Shaitan-Arba*, but these works were used merely as background material. However, Shteinberg did use some elements of local folklore in the form of folk songs.⁷⁸⁰ It was more common, however, to create the social essence for musical works through texts. Prokofiev was among those who announced their desire to compose on the Soviet

⁷⁷⁵ Za vysokoe kachestvo sovetsoi muzykalnoi kritiki (k itogam sessii muzykalnoi kritiki v Moskve (7-10 apreliia 1934 g.)). In *SM* 5/1934: 3-4.

⁷⁷⁶ Abraham, Gerald 1970, 90: *Eight Soviet Composers*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

⁷⁷⁷ Asafiev, B. 1936, 25: *Volnuiushchie voprosy*. In *SM* 5/1936.

⁷⁷⁸ Shteinberg, M. 1933, 124-125: *Slushateliu – sovetskuiu muzyku*. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁷⁷⁹ Shteinberg, M. 1933, 124-125: *Slushateliu – sovetskuiu muzyku*. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁷⁸⁰ Shteinberg, M. 1933, 124-125: *Slushateliu – sovetskuiu muzyku*. In *SM* 3/1933.

thematic. He had opera in mind, but he lamented the lack of a proper libretto. He wanted to have positive, but not schematic or caricature-like, heroes.⁷⁸¹

In most cases the socialist content seems to have been constructed through text. There were, however, examples of works in the early 1930s that tried to approach the Soviet thematic in purely instrumental works. All of them, however, had at least a title or a dedication that suggested their theme—some even had a program. Knipper for example dedicated his Third Symphony (1933) “to the Army of the Far East” and his Fourth Symphony (1933) was entitled *Poem for Komsomol-soldiers*. Vissarion Shebalin’s *Lenin* (1934) was finished for the tenth anniversary of Lenin’s death. Miaskovskii’s Sixteenth Symphony (1936) *Red Wing*, was about the air force. Mokrousov’s First Symphony was named *Antifascist*. While *Sovetskaia Muzyka* published listings of ongoing work by composers, sometimes composers would announce that they were working on some politically topical works, which, however, were never completed, if they were ever started. Shostakovich, for instance, announced that he had started to compose his Sixth Symphony based on Maiakovskii’s poem *Lenin*.⁷⁸² A politically timely theme or title could make a work more acceptable.

Knipper’s Fourth Symphony, *Poem for Komsomol-soldiers*, had a program to introduce its ideological content. Knipper’s symphony was said to be based on a true story. In 1918 he had met a young boy who had joined up as a partisan to defend Soviet power. The boy’s mother would not have allowed him to leave, out of love for her son. The boy left home anyway and eventually died in action against the White Guard. This plot constituted the first three movements of the symphony. The fourth movement took place in a kolkhoz some years later, where young members of *Komsomol* remembered the young boy and the harsh war years.⁷⁸³ Thus, Knipper managed to combine three popular themes of the time: Civil War, *Komsomol*, and kolkhozes. It is also worth mentioning that, before starting in musical education, Knipper had been a member of the Red Army, adding credence to his claim that the symphony was based on a true story.

Descriptions of Shteinberg and Knipper fit perfectly into the scheme of what was expected of music in relation to socialist construction. Themes popular in socialist realist literature included the socialist growth tale and man’s victory over nature.⁷⁸⁴ Musicology was expected to nourish this type of compositions and direct composers to engage in topical themes like these. Critics were supposed to concentrate on focusing, guiding, and stimulating composers’ work.

An empirical solution to these challenges was proposed: musicology ought to find problems in Soviet music by studying recent works by Soviet

⁷⁸¹ Prokofiev, S. 1933, 99: Zametki. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁷⁸² Shestaia simfoniia Shostakovicha. In *SM* 5/1938, 88. Fay (2000, 115) dates this announcement to the autumn of 1938, but Shostakovich hinted at this idea already in spring. Yet, he only began his Sixth Symphony a year later and eventually had nothing to do with Maiakovskii or any other poet he had mentioned previously.

⁷⁸³ Knipper, Lev 1934, 1: Moia piataia simfoniia. Poema o boitse-komsomoltse. In *SI* March 29, 1934.

⁷⁸⁴ Ks. esim. Vihavainen 2000, 244.

composers.⁷⁸⁵ At a meeting of music critics in Leningrad during early 1934, the main objective was set as clarifying music's class nature and intensifying the political nature of practical work. This implied that the Party line was being followed in music critical work.⁷⁸⁶ Ryzhkin added that the separation of practice and theory, that is, critics and musicologists, was something that belonged to bourgeois culture not Soviet culture.⁷⁸⁷ Theory and criticism were crucial in establishing a new tradition of Soviet music.

In theory, everyone agreed that musicology should support practical creative work, meaning composers. However, there was no conformity whatsoever over practical measures. The empirical approach suggested that the solution could be found in the compositions of the recent years and this was perhaps some kind of compromise, in which the baton was passed back to composers. Overall, musicology did make attempts to combine theoretical discussions and music practice, especially during the latter half of the 1930s when the political situation changed in regard to music and many features of these discussions were brought into practice. Still, most commonly the Soviet art is attached with the theoretical principle of socialist realism, which is still left open. The socialist realism was indeed discussed by composers and musicologists, but very differently than in those discussions that took place in literature between 1932 and 1934.

Searching for socialist realism

Marx meets musicology

It was ideologically important to define the relationship between musicology and the overarching science of the Soviet Union, Marxist-Leninism. This would have helped to make the difference clear between Soviet and bourgeois music and musicology. The initial attempts within the confines of the Composers' Union to bring Marx and Lenin to music were as artificial as these philosophers had been distant to art aesthetics. Initially, quotes from Lenin's speeches were simply used to back up views that had very little to do with Marxist-Leninism. Two musical editors, Kaltat and Rabinovich, used this method in their early writings in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*:

. . . in the republic of workers and peasants all the decisions concerning enlightening - especially in the field of art must be penetrated by the spirit of proletarian class struggle in order to achieve the proletarian dictatorship, to defeat the bourgeois. . . .⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁵ Atovmian, L. 1933, 137: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

⁷⁸⁶ Rezoliutsiia 1-i sessii po voprosam muzykalnoi kritiki, sozvannoi LSSK (16, 17 i 18 noiabria 1933 g.). In *SM* 2/1934: 64.

⁷⁸⁷ Ryzhkin, N. 1934, 51: O Muzykovedcheskoi rabote Soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 2/1934.

⁷⁸⁸ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 7: V boiakh za nasledstvo. In *SM* 3/1933.

Kaltat and Rabinovich quoted Lenin's statement in order to underline the importance of studying music history. Lenin's statement had nothing to do with the authors' point. By citing Lenin, they were simply trying to make their point more authoritative. Yet, if Stalin himself used Lenin to support his own ideas, then why should musicologists not try to use the same practice?

References to Lenin became at times almost hilarious. Proletarian musicians had been at the forefront of using Leninist principles in music. Kaltat and Rabinovich implied in their article that *RAPM* had tried to justify the destruction of the pre-revolutionary culture by referring to Lenin. According to Kaltat and Rabinovich, Lenin had taken the opposite view: bourgeois culture should not be destroyed, but its best achievements should be used to benefit the proletarian cause.⁷⁸⁹ It seemed that Lenin could be used to justify anything from bourgeois musical tradition to the creation of a completely new proletarian culture. Perhaps, therefore, some circles decided that composers and musicologists needed education in order to understand Marxist-Leninism.

The Central Committee of *Rabis* announced, quite soon after the Composers' Union was established, that the Marxist-Leninist education of composers was lagging behind.⁷⁹⁰ The upheaval of composers' ideological and political consciousness was set as the objective. A correspondence course was organized in order to achieve this aim. The course covered political economy, history of the Bolshevik Party, dialectical materialism, theory of Soviet economy, and facts about Leninism. Hence, in his spare time, the composer could now easily become ideologically enlightened. The cost of the course was a mere twenty rubles per year.⁷⁹¹ Unfortunately, no information has survived about the number of composers who signed up to these correspondence courses.

The Leningrad branch can shed some more light on the ideological education of composers. In August of 1936, two study groups about the history of the Communist Party were organized for composers. Those still attending the meetings after two months included Shostakovich, Sollertinskii, Dzerzhinskii, Arseni Gladkovskii, and Khristo Kushnarev, among others.⁷⁹² Although composers were hardly enthusiastic about studying Marxism-Leninism, composers probably felt compelled at least to pretend to be interested in the subject as they were representatives of what was at least on paper an ideological organization.

Despite the education program, during the initial years of the Composers' Union Marxism most often surfaced in superficial use of ideological terminology. One editorial in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* can serve as an example of this. Cheliapov summarized post-revolutionary development of art as follows: "as short historical experiences have shown, proletarian dictatorship has enormous

⁷⁸⁹ Kaltat, L. and Rabinovich, D. 1933, 8: V boiakh za nasledstvo. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁷⁹⁰ Postanovlenie Prezidiuma Tsentralnogo komiteta RABIS po dokladu gorkoma kompozitorov. In *BSSK* 1/1933, pp. 11-13.

⁷⁹¹ O zaochnykh kursakh marksizma-leninizma. Prezidium SSK. In *BSSK* 1/1933: 8.

⁷⁹² Svirina, T. 1935, 95: V Len. Soiuzhe sov. kompozitorov. In *SM* 11/1935.

creative force in all areas of economic, culture, and social life.”⁷⁹³ Whatever the achievements, they were claimed in the name of socialism or proletarian dictatorship. Despite that, it was mostly rhetoric, even though the Composers’ Union actively sought links to the life of the people. Links between the arts and social life had to be emphasized, no matter what. Thus, the development of Soviet music was connected with socialist construction. Here, the process already seemed reminiscent of canonizing as certain compositions were mentioned more often than others were.

Yet, if we consider which compositions were mentioned in 1933 as great Soviet achievements, it seems that they hardly resembled each other and were far from coherent. The most frequently mentioned compositions were Belyi’s *Hunger March*, *Golodnyi pohod* (see in detail *SM* 2/1933); Miaskovskii’s Twelfth Symphony (in detail *SM* 5/1933); Asafiev’s ballet *Flame of Paris*; Shostakovich’s *Lady Macbeth*; Shteinberg’s *Turksib*; Popov’s and Shaporin’s symphonies; Zhelobinskii’s *Komarinskii Muzhik*; and Aleksei Zhivotov’s symphonic song cycle.⁷⁹⁴ These works were repeatedly said to offer something new, but were not still perfect. There was a strong need to find exemplary works but the lack of consensus prevented the final step been taken.

After *RAPM*’s downfall, Lev Kulakovskii undertook one of the first attempts to find common ground between Marxism and musicology. His aim was to create new, more scientific methods for musical analysis. In the first two issues of *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, he discussed some important aspects of analysis of melody and harmony. He tried to study ways of isolating elements from composition in order to make dialectical-material examination of the work possible. He emphasized that abandoning formalist analysis would make it possible to grasp the class nature of music.⁷⁹⁵ According to Marx, humankind was striving toward absolute truth and a classless society. Here, art was seen as important because it was believed to reflect human thought and feelings. If art were to overcome class boundaries, it would have to reflect the absolute truth. Thus, the value of art was determined by its ability to transcend class boundaries.⁷⁹⁶ Kulakovskii reasoned the need for his kind of approach from the Marxist perspective, but otherwise his approach remained rather traditional. Even so, his article illustrates how ideas that seemingly could have very little to do with Marxism or with the Communist Party, started to be reasoned and discussed through ideological connections.

Sovetskaia Muzyka rather quickly became the most important forum for discussions about new methods in musicology. Cheliapov was eager to summarize these discussions and use the conceptions of different musicologists in his writings in order to find definitions for Soviet music. The first attempts at defining Soviet music were quite vague, but they were still ardently supported

⁷⁹³ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 2: *Istoricheskaia godovshchina*. In *SM* 2/1933.

⁷⁹⁴ Iokhelson, V. 1934, 16: *Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov k XVII siezdu partii*. In *SM* 1/1934.

⁷⁹⁵ Kulakovskii, L. 1933, 76. *O probleme izucheniia ladovogo stroeniia muzykalnykh proizvedenij*. *SM* 2/1933.

⁷⁹⁶ Bakst 1977, 278–279.

by *Sovetskaia Muzyka*. This was in line with what Cheliapov had presented as objectives of the journal:

Contribute to construction of Marxist-Leninist musicology; research and critical analysis of Soviet music; critical acquaintance with the rich heritage of previous cultures; struggle for high artistic techniques of composers and artists; examine general methodological, theoretical, and historical problems; clarify pedagogical questions and so forth.⁷⁹⁷

From the ideological point of view, Marxist-Leninist musicology was important. Without Marxist-Leninism, it would have been hard to draw a distinction between Soviet music and that of bourgeois cultures. Thus, in the first issue, Cheliapov named four main authorities for the work of the Composers' Union: Marx, Engels, Lenin, and, naturally, Stalin. In Cheliapov's view they would enlighten how socialist ideology in art would be discovered. But even Cheliapov emphasized that it was the artists' task to find a practical form for socialist music. The Party was merely a guide for artists.⁷⁹⁸

Socialism and proletariat were in theory considered somewhat differently than had been the case before 1932. We have already seen how part of the practical work practiced by *RAPM* endured in the Composers' Union. Mass musical work, work in *kolkhozes*, and the fieldwork with the army were also considered important by the Composers' Union. Yet, the April Resolution necessitated a clear break from the ideology of proletarian associations. Thus, Cheliapov emphasized that methods of proletarian associations had only succeeded in making socialist art vulgarly simple and distorting the will of the Party. He argued that the special features and nature of art should not be forgotten when political speeches were made within the musical sphere.⁷⁹⁹ Cheliapov underlined the special nature of art, while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of the Party line. Socialist art was still art, but it would operate inside frames set by the Party.

This resulted in a contradiction. The majority of those who had previously approached music through ideology were proletarian musicians. They were forced to renounce some of their previous ideas, at least at an institutional level. Yet, criticism was limited largely to *RAPM*, which was not the only proletarian music association. *ORKiMD*, Association of Revolutionary Composers and Musical Activists had a somewhat different experience. Firstly, *ORKiMD* was established by officials from the State Publishing House's (*Ogiz*) Music Sector and it operated in its extreme vicinity. Secondly, Neil Edmunds, who has produced the best survey of this organization, states that *ORKiMD* aimed to promote its members' music, devising theoretical programs and models for workers' concerts.⁸⁰⁰ When we compare this program to that of the Composers' Union, it seems that there was much common ground. The journal of Musical department of *Ogiz*, *Muzyka i revoliutsiia*, which published most of the writings

⁷⁹⁷ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 2: O zadachakh zhurnala "Sovetskaia Muzyka". In *SM* 1/1933.

⁷⁹⁸ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 2: O zadachakh zhurnala "Sovetskaia Muzyka". In *SM* 1/1933.

⁷⁹⁹ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 2-3: O zadachakh zhurnala "Sovetskaia Muzyka". In *SM* 1/1933.

⁸⁰⁰ Edmunds 2000, 158, 161.

by *ORKiMD*'s members, was edited by Cheliapov and Moisei Grinberg, along with its establisher Lev Shulgin.⁸⁰¹ After the April Resolution, the first two editors mentioned were initially among the most active commentators who made ideological observations about music.

What is more, *ORKiMD* had already been closed by 1929, while *RAPM* continued to function right up until 1932. It may be that *ORKiMD*'s heritage was not initially perceived in such a negative light as *RAPM*'s was. Yet, all organizations of proletarian musicians had gathered together those who believed that music and ideology were inseparable. One of *RAPM*'s objectives had been musicological work and particularly the development of Marxist methods for musical analysis.⁸⁰² In practice, the agenda of *RAPM* could not be discarded by the Composers' Union, like it was impossible in many other areas connected with ideology. As Edmunds has noted, several proletarian musicians successfully pursued a career in the Composers' Union.⁸⁰³ My findings support this fact. Many former proletarian musicians were quite active, for example in participating in musicological discussions in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*.⁸⁰⁴ What is more striking and significant is that the Composers' Union achieved in engaging many bourgeois musicologists in the same cause.

Roman Gruber (1895–1962), became a Professor at Leningrad Conservatory in 1935 and from 1941 at Moscow Conservatory, and he was one of the most authoritative Soviet musicologists. He had completed his studies at *GIII*⁸⁰⁵ in 1922 and had since worked with Asafiev and Shteinberg, among others. During the 1930s, he wrote extensively on the history of music, including studies of Wagner and Handel, for example. He emphasized the "enormous social meaning of music," perhaps in order to gain prestige for music. According to Gruber, evaluation of music's social significance was incomplete in 1934, but the medium's social nature was unquestionable.⁸⁰⁶ Notwithstanding the possibility that Gruber and other bourgeois musicologists sincerely believed in the social nature of music, it was also important to emphasize music's social significance for another reason. After all, material benefits from the government were believed to be dependant on how useful music was. Resources would not have been as plentiful if music had not been able to express how it could support the needs of the State and the Party and how it could be useful ideologically and politically. Furthermore, the search for Marxist-Leninism in music presupposed emphasis on the social nature of music.

Stalin has often been named as the father of the idea that art was a valuable part of socialist construction. This interpretation held that socialist realism was a device for harnessing art and artists to the tasks of Stalinist

⁸⁰¹ Edmunds 2000, 163.

⁸⁰² Edmunds 2000, 27; Nelson 2000, 109.

⁸⁰³ Edmunds 2000, 298-301; Nelson 2000, 101-132.

⁸⁰⁴ Lebedinskii and Keldysh (musicologists) and Shekhter, Koval and Belyi (composers) were active contributors in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* in the first years of the Composers' Union.

⁸⁰⁵ State Institute of Art History.

⁸⁰⁶ Gruber, R. 1934, 13: O realizme v muzyke. In *SM* 6/1934.

socialism. Socialist realism has often been said to have made writers “active constructors of the new, classless society.”⁸⁰⁷ The idea of art’s role in socialist construction had been developed by proletarian artists. The systems of art unions merely set this objective for the entire artistic front. In music, there was a clear contradiction between the modernist conception of art and socialism. The Association of Contemporary Music, *ASM*, had held that music was purely an art form incapable of carrying any kind of ideological content. This formalist conception was officially rebuked by the Composers’ Union, but in practice very little changed at first. It even appears that profound changes in musical practices were not initially required because proletarian and modernist tendencies both seem to have been able to operate within the same Union. But in theory, it was of the utmost importance to find ways to make music part of socialist construction.

Leningrad branch’s secretary Iokhelson believed that attempts to establish a Marxist-Leninist analysis of music were unbalanced. He maintained that the “Marxist-dialectic method does not build up out of name tags but of true and deep study of creative process in all its contradictions.”⁸⁰⁸ Iokhelson argued in favor of an open approach to the concept of socialist music rather than the narrow conceptions practiced before 1932. In his view modernists, or “*ASMists*,” had not understood just how harmful some bourgeois music could be to Soviet music. Iokhelson stated that pre-revolutionary music was highly important for socialist construction but argued that it should not be imitated as some “academic fetishists” did. Soviet music should find new approaches rather than rely on imitation.⁸⁰⁹

Modernists had found a home in *ASM*—in an organization that spoke on behalf of contemporary, Western, and Soviet music alike. While it was viewed as the counterpoint of *RAPM* after 1932, both *ASM* and *RAPM* agreed on one important point: a new musical culture should have been built in place of the prevailing musical culture that nurtured pre-revolutionary music. *ASM* maintained that modernist music would benefit the proletarian dictatorship. They were criticized by proletarian musicians for fostering “petit-bourgeois music of Western art elite.” *ASM* responded with the argument that socialism grew out of capitalism and that the bourgeois phase was inevitable. *ASM*’s argument was portrayed by Cheliapov in the second issue of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* and instantly rebutted. He believed that using this conception *ASM* managed to come up with new readings of all theses written by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin on the subject of the development of socialism. He commented scornfully that there was no need to reconstruct socialism according to the needs of music.⁸¹⁰ Both *ASM* and *RAPM* were to be discarded as organizations in the

⁸⁰⁷ Vihavainen 2000, 217–218; see also Tucker 1998, 11; Radzinskii 2002, 300–301; Garrard and Garrard 1990, 29–30.

⁸⁰⁸ Iokhelson, V. 1934, 16: Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov k XVII siezdu partii. In *SM* 1/1934.

⁸⁰⁹ Iokhelson, V. 1934, 16: Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov k XVII siezdu partii. In *SM* 1/1934.

⁸¹⁰ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 3: Istoricheskaia godovshchina. In *SM* 2/1933.

search of Soviet music. Although through Cheliapov the Party would have been able to define how socialist theorists were to be interpreted, the Party chose not to use this prerogative, at least in the initial phase of the Union.

Peter Demetz, who has examined the roots of Marxist literary criticism, argues that Stalinist bureaucrats installed the Marxist literary doctrine as the theory of socialist realism at some point between the April Resolution and the Writers' Congress of 1934. Socialist realism eventually grew out of Marxist review.⁸¹¹ Therefore, it is important to follow how discussions on Marxism developed in the Composers' Union. In practice, Demetz's interpretation would mean that Marx, Lenin, and lesser authorities of Soviet Socialism were accepted as authorities in art. In music the situation was complex. While literature is scarcely mentioned in the work of Marxist theorists, music is practically non-existent in these studies. However, this did not prevent musicologists from trying to present music in a Marxist framework.

Applying Marxism to music did not attract universal support. According to Cheliapov, there were musicologists who were willing to keep music separate from Marxism, although composers' class dependency was acknowledged by most. Cheliapov maintained that although Marxism appeared to have little direct links to music, music could still be viewed from a Marxist point of view. In Cheliapov's mind, the problem lay in the academism of musicology. He argued that theory had been deliberately detached from musical practices. He pointed out that literature and other arts were ahead of music in fusing theory to practice.⁸¹² In Cheliapov's view, musicology did not meet the requirements of socialist construction.

Cheliapov tried to ground future discussions by generalizing some features of art and Marxism. He believed that an artist's expression incorporated philosophical, esthetic, and scientific phenomena. An artist's psyche and class-conscious ideology affected how these ideas were formulated. Thus, art conveyed the ideas and thoughts of artist, he continued. In music, this would happen by means of melody, harmony, and instruments. Cheliapov maintained that—because musical outcome was so complicated and its analysis such an arduous process—the development of Marxist-Leninist musicology lagged behind the other arts.⁸¹³ This view was accepted in principle by many respected musicologists. Roman Gruber emphasized the same principles two years later. He also believed that music criticism was behind other forms of art criticism when it came to meeting the challenges of socialist construction.⁸¹⁴

Marxist-Leninist musicology was something that existed only in theoretical discussions in the early 1930s; it was not something that was

⁸¹¹ Demetz, Peter 1967, 127: Marx, Engels, and the Poets. *Origins of Marxist Literary Criticism*. Translated from German by Sammons, Jeffrey L. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

⁸¹² Cheliapov, N. 1933, 2, 5: Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen! In *SM* 4/1933.

⁸¹³ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 4: Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen! In *SM* 4/1933.

⁸¹⁴ Gruber, R. 1935, 48: Voprosy leningradskoi muzykalnoi kritiki i muzykalnoi nauki za sezon 1934/35 g. In *SM* 12/1935.

practiced. Thus, Cheliapov urged musicology to gather basic facts about musical analysis to serve as a starting point for concrete work. Musical analysis was not to be merely about the formal and technical side of a compositions' structure. Cheliapov believed that it would be more important to understand the meaning, both ideological and emotional, of a composition. Structural analysis should not be disregarded but it should only assist and guide more important analysis. Cheliapov argued that musicology should gather those aspects from Soviet compositions that managed to reflect socialist construction in general and in detail. This would provide material for Marxist musical analysis.⁸¹⁵ In Cheliapov's view, content was superior to musical form. Yet, his approach of identifying the details in a composition that would reflect socialism was rather mechanistic and underrated the complexity of musical analysis.

Another reformer of music theory in the Soviet Union was Boris Asafiev. He has been justifiably described as a chameleon⁸¹⁶, since during his career he supported modernist music, Russian traditions, and connections with Western Europe. He was a famous music critic, musicologist, and composer. He had had links to Russian traditions as he had been trained in pre-revolutionary traditions at the Conservatory of St. Petersburg. In his youth, he had become acquainted with Vladimir Stasov, who was now placed upon a pedestal, along with Serov and Larosh, as an exemplary figure for Soviet music critics. His links and admiration of Stasov made Asafiev even more valuable to Soviet authorities. Stasov's emphasis on Russian folk song and resentment of German musical influences were further stressed in the Soviet Union, and this increasingly affected Asafiev in his later years. Just as Stasov became a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, so Asafiev became the only representative of music ever admitted to the Soviet Academy of Sciences (in 1943). Asafiev was awarded the Stalin Prize in 1948 for his theoretical work.

By the early 1930s, Asafiev had abandoned his modernist cause and little by little became the leading figure of Soviet musicology; he was even a symbol of Stalinist era musicology, since he was especially prominent during the music scandal of 1948.⁸¹⁷ Therefore, his views from the early 1930s are especially interesting. However, in the 1930s his enormous theoretical output was temporarily brought to a halt while he changed to practical compositional work.⁸¹⁸ Two of his ballets of the era, *Flame of Paris* (1932) and *Fountain of Bakhchisarai* (1934), were regarded as the first examples of heroic Soviet ballet.⁸¹⁹

⁸¹⁵ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 4: Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen! In SM 4/1933.

⁸¹⁶ Elina Viljanen, from Aleksanteri Institute at the Helsinki University, who is preparing her doctoral thesis on Asafiev's legacy, has described Asafiev as a "chameleon." She has used this metaphor to describe how Asafiev adapted to the current political situations very easily, contrary to many other academics.

⁸¹⁷ Yet, already in connection with Pravda's attack on Shostakovich, he was one of those who actively took part in discussions about formalism and analyzed Shostakovich's stance on formalism. See for example SM 5/1936, 24-27.

⁸¹⁸ Tull, James Robert 1976, 64-65: *B. V. Asafiev's musical form as a process: translation and commentary (volumes I-III)*. PhD thesis, Ohio State University.

⁸¹⁹ See for example Bakst 1977, 346. The first ballet is about the French Revolution of 1789-92. The second is based on Pushkin's poem of the same title. These are also the

In 1933, Asafiev stated that composers should enrich their creative method with the class war of the proletariat. He clarified his intents and argued that the surrounding reality should be understood through Marxist-Leninist philosophy and method. He asserted that the social nature of music was the basis for future work on Soviet music. Music was not a symbol, a mere copy of reality, but rather it represented the reality itself.⁸²⁰

Asafiev seemed to have already abandoned the view held by *ASM* that music was an individual art form, detached from ideology. Now he was thinking along the lines of Roman Gruber, with whom he actually was in active correspondence throughout the 1930s.⁸²¹ In Asafiev's—as in Gruber's—thinking, the key was to accept the social nature of music. Unless music could portray reality or ideology, it would not prove to be useful for socialist construction. Asafiev continued that the April Resolution was a turning point in music. The Composers' Union had freed music from the dogmatism and tyranny of *RAPM*. He contended that musicology did not benefit from strict, dogmatic guidance but from soft leadership, which enabled creativity.⁸²²

Asafiev emphasized the responsibility of each composer to think how he or she could support and contribute to socialist construction. He mentioned review practice, *pokazy*, as one possible way of enabling mutual guidance of creativity toward the needs of socialism. He called for the elevation of composers' political consciousness in order to raise the quality of compositions.⁸²³ Although he seemed to employ several seemingly empty political concepts in his writing, Asafiev underlined the collective nature of art instead of individualism. The purposes of society were more important than artists' own aims, he insisted. Several musicologists with different backgrounds found common ground in this position. Asafiev was not alone in his view. Georgii Khubov summarized that an artist should abandon individualism, but still maintain individual character in art. Art should be attainable for the widest possible audience. The starting point of art should be the people, not the artist. Khubov implied that the decisive difference between Soviet and bourgeois art was the driving force behind art: the people for Soviet art, instead of the artist in bourgeois art.⁸²⁴

only works of his extensive output that are still performed. In the early 1930s, when *Bakhchisaraiskii fontan* was performed at the *Bolshoi* theater, Moscow, one critic wrote that the work would surely be permanently included in the repertory of the theater. See, A.K.S. 1936, 76: "Bahchisaraiskii fontan" B. Asafieva v Bolshom teatre. In *SM* 8/1936.

⁸²⁰ Asafiev, B. 1933, 107: *Istoricheskii god*. In *SM* 3/1933. Therefore it is interesting that Asafiev himself was particularly reluctant in composing about contemporary thematic. Rather, most of his output in the 1930s was about historical themes. Apart from the two aforementioned historical ballets there were *Ivan Bolotnikov* (1938), *Stepan Razin* (1939), operas *Minin i Pozharskii* (1936), opera project *Petr Velikii* (1938) and several others. The sole exception seems to be the ballet *Partisans* (1935) set in the Civil War period. Tull 1976, 72–73.

⁸²¹ See for example *GTsMMK*, f. 285, Gruber's fond, where there are extensive correspondence between the two.

⁸²² Asafiev, B. 1933, 107: *Istoricheskii god*. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁸²³ Asafiev, B. 1933, 108: *Istoricheskii god*. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁸²⁴ Khubov, G. 1934, 7: *Za massovuiu pesniu, za massovuiu simfoniiu!* In *SM* 2/1934.

Soviet music had to demonstrate its difference from bourgeois culture, but this was as such still a rather vague and unformed argument. Of course, work amongst the people and drawing influences from the people were important, as was the “national” line—stress on Russian musical heritage. Nevertheless, musicology still needed to establish a more concrete theoretical basis, as Cheliapov urged. The links between Marxism and musicology were still fairly tenuous. Formalists claimed that they were studying unchanging features of music, i.e. its structural side. However, Cheliapov maintained that counterpoint and other musical forms were merely the creations of certain phases of historical development in music. Thus, they were connected to the ideological and emotional content of a specific musical era. The role of musicology was, therefore, to point out that Soviet music required a new kind of analysis that would suit its needs.⁸²⁵

Although Marxist musicology was an insubstantial and unformed concept, Kulakovskii was ready to insist upon changes being made to the way that music theory was taught. He pointed out that the situation would never change if teaching remained the same. He maintained that teaching was based on pre-revolutionary textbooks and it was therefore imperative to compile a book on music theory based on the most recent research. He emphasized that there had been a lot of fruitful discussion in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, which could be exploited. Even first-year-students should be encouraged to study the music of the Soviet nations, Kulakovskii maintained. He claimed that at that time technical matters were emphasized during the early phase of studies, while ideological concerns were entirely absent from daily pedagogical work. The students’ ideological guidance was thus adrift.⁸²⁶

A textbook for college-level music education edited by Kulakovskii was swiftly published. Although it was basically quite traditional, the examples it referred to were works by Soviet composers or Soviet folk tunes. The textbook was also recommended by *Narkompros*, which approved all the textbooks, anyway.⁸²⁷ Kulakovskii’s book on music theory affirms that Marxism initially played only a tertiary role in music. The teaching of music theory was based on old traditions, but it was subject to some updating. Instead of classical examples, excerpts were selected from Soviet music and the music of Soviet nationalities was particularly emphasized. Kulakovskii alleged that his textbook adopted a Marxist approach, but it appears that the only notable ideological choice was to include the music of the nationalities, which had more to do with the Party politics than Marxism. When *Sovetskaia Muzyka* published a review of this book, it also leveled accusations against *Muzgiz* about evading the

⁸²⁵ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 2: Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen! In *SM* 4/1933.

⁸²⁶ Kulakovskii, L. 1933, 90–91: V borbe za uchebnyk teorii muzyki. In *SM* 6/1933.

⁸²⁷ Kulakovskii, L. and Kiselev, G. 1934: *Muzykalnaia gramota. Posobie dlia muzykalnykh tehnikumov i muzrabfakov*. Moscow: Muzgiz.

reconstruction of textbooks on musical theory for the whole of the 1920s. This new textbook was given a circulation of 10,000 copies.⁸²⁸

The work on textbooks was obviously an attempt to reclaim musical heritage from the Soviet point of view. Kulakovskii's early textbook for lower levels would be soon followed by more advanced volumes. The administration of musical institutes of the Committee on Artistic Affairs was especially keen to see that these textbooks were written and published, although they also benefited Soviet composers and musicologists, since textbooks reasserted their authority as well. The textbooks certainly represented Soviet music in a positive light and provided Soviet students with pedagogical material written from a Soviet point of view.⁸²⁹ The strong tendency for centrally administered music pedagogical work was prevalent. In 1938 a conference of musicologists from twenty-five Soviet cities was organized by the Committee; standardizing the way in which music history and theory were taught was the aim of the conference.⁸³⁰ Textbooks were crucial to this work. Yet, it took time to reach a situation where Soviet educational material was dominant.

In the summer of 1938, the work on new textbooks for Conservatories was behind schedule. A textbook of the music history of the people's of USSR was being prepared by Professor Ossovskii and a team of professors that included Asafiev, Gruber, Kuznetsov, and others. However, even more importance was placed on a series of four volumes about West European music for pedagogues and conservatories' faculties of historical theory. A number of musicologists, including Gruber, Ossovskii, and Sollertinskii, were working on this project.⁸³¹ The history of music was being re-written by scholarly professionals. Although the music of the Soviet nationalities was given emphasis, the most important part of musical education was still the West European tradition, in other words traditional concert music.

This did not have much to do with Marxism, and most musicologists seem to have been satisfied with the slow pace of change. Roman Gruber suggested that before foundations of the Marxist musicology could be laid, the nature of music should be defined properly. The starting point for such a definition was to study musical realism. He asserted that the ways in which music could convey ideological content could be found in musical realism. Discussion of the class nature of music without first defining limits of music would be the "bringing of water to the mill of formalism," he explained.⁸³² Gruber held an important position in the Conservatory and might have thus spoken for ideological conceptions. Yet, his later correspondence with Asafiev indicates

⁸²⁸ Dovgiallo-Garbuz, M. and Maksimov, S. 1934, 76: Za sovetskii uchebnik muzykalnoi gramoty. In *SM* 11/1934.

⁸²⁹ Sozdat khoroshchie uchebniki dlia muzykalnoi shkoly. In *SM* 7/1938: 7-10.

⁸³⁰ Konferentsiia muzykovedov. In *SM* 8/1938: 86.

⁸³¹ V leningradskom muzykalnom nauchno-issledovatelskom institute. In *SM* 7/1938: 77.

⁸³² Gruber, R. 1934, 13: O realizme v muzyke. In *SM* 6/1934.

that he did not disassociate himself from political discussions over music but rather actively participated in such discussions.⁸³³

In Gruber's view, all art reflected the objective reality of each class in its developmental phase. Music differed from the other arts only by its means. Gruber contended that the nature of music was not in question. It was important to find the "correct" methods for expression. He claimed that besides esthetic pleasure, music could affect the whole consciousness and body. Music was the result of the active exploitation of nature by human. Gruber alleged that music did not only carry esthetical quality but was, in the words of Marx, "a product of the world history."⁸³⁴ Although the stressing of the class nature of music had been central for proletarian artists, after 1932 even notable bourgeois musicologists started to talk about the social nature of music. Yet, while proletarian artists had emphasized the inner class war of the arts, this position was now condemned as out of hand. The era of labeling artists as "hostile," "transitional," or "one of us" was over. Cheliapov proclaimed that socialist realism would not divide composers into "pure" or "impure."⁸³⁵

The importance of socialist realism increased rapidly with the approach of the Writers' Congress held in August of 1934. With discussion on the social nature of music, formalism quickly became the counterpoint for socialist realist music. Although they had been ongoing for ten years,⁸³⁶ discussions about musical formalism were now of a very different nature. As socialist realism proved a very difficult concept to define, formalism was a concept against which socialist realism could be defined, at least roughly.

On the road to socialist realism

Socialist realism was first officially introduced and its basic principles defined in the Soviet literary world. Although members of the musical front were able to discuss socialist realism without involvement from Party officials, they were influenced by the discussions on literature. After all, it is hard to imagine that the Writers' Congress of August, 1934, the public festival around literature, and the socialist realism that ensued, would have gone unnoticed in musical discussions. Naturally, what happened in the Writers' Union and how socialist realism was defined there had its effect, even if musical discussions were more or less open.

Jeffrey Brooks believes that the most important outcome of the first Writers' Congress were the restrictions placed upon Maksim Gorkii. His travel rights were suppressed and he was eventually displaced from the leadership of

⁸³³ GTsMMK, f. 285, d. 663, l. 1-3. Gruber wrote to Asafiev about the meeting of the Leningrad Composers' Union in February 1936, at which *Pravda's* articles on formalism were discussed. He discussed their political implications.

⁸³⁴ Gruber, R. 1934, 14-16: O realizme v muzyke. In *SM* 6/1934.

⁸³⁵ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 3: Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen! In *SM* 4/1933.

⁸³⁶ Ostretsov, A. 1934, 6: Protiv formalizma v muzyke. (O tvorchestve G. Litinskogo). In *SM* 4/1934.

the Union.⁸³⁷ Brooks appears to be unsure as to whether the art unions were Stalin's creation or if they were merely used by him for his own purposes. The difference is obvious: If these structures were created by the Stalinist bureaucracy, art unions would have been less likely to bring up their own ideas. If they had been formed autonomously, even in part, the unions' ideas could have contradicted some principles of the Stalinist system. Brooks has examined socialist realism through articles and discussion in *Pravda*, but he concentrates on literature. His references to music are rather scarce and sometimes imprecise.⁸³⁸ However, as he studied Stalinist public culture and socialist realism through writings published in *Pravda*, Brooks is able to offer a valuable insight into how socialist realism was perceived by the media and the kinds of changes it underwent during its early years.

The basis of socialist realism as it was formulated after the Writers' Congress can be followed quite exactly if taken as a literary tradition. Bolsheviks were not the architects of the idea that art was capable of serving the state interests. The basic ideas of socialist realism can be found in the ideas of Nikolai Chernyshevskii, Vissarion Belinskii, and even Friedrich Schiller. Yet, Marx and Engels both seem to have been poorly acquainted with literary ideas, even those of Chernyshevskii.⁸³⁹ His novel, *Chto delat? Iz rasskazov o novykh liudiakh* (*What is to be done?*), written in 1862 whilst he was imprisoned, urged writers to participate in revolutionary activism, and it later famously influenced Lenin himself. Chernyshevskii's idea was that art was educational and that it was never politically neutral.⁸⁴⁰ *What is to be done?* became one of the standard works of socialist realism. The principal character of this book is an ardent revolutionary who sleeps on a bed of nails and eats only meat in order to become a stronger revolutionary.⁸⁴¹ Gorkii could be termed Chernyshevskii's direct heir, especially in his novel, *Mother*, regarded as a proto-socialist realist work.⁸⁴² Direct historical links were important for Soviet literature in order to prove its historical roots and development. In music, similar ties were actively sought and found in, for instance, Musorgskii's realist style.

Sometimes the April resolution of 1932 and the first Writers' Congress are uncritically bundled together with Stalinist bureaucracy and socialist realism.⁸⁴³

⁸³⁷ Brooks, Jeffrey 2000, 109: *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Eduard Radzinskii described how the travel restrictions placed on the Gorkii would have been imposed only during the first half of 1936, see: Radzinskii 2002, 382.

⁸³⁸ See Brooks 1994, pp. 973-991; also, Brooks 2000, 121-122, in which he refers to Maximenkov's monograph *Sumbur vmesto muzyki*, but quite inaccurately. Simultaneously, he regards that Shostakovich's memoirs by Volkov were really authentic. While Maximenkov stresses that *Pravda's* editorials were hardly against Shostakovich, in memoirs by Volkov this is one of the core themes. Of course, the viewpoint is somewhat different and this is not the main point that Brooks is trying to make. However, it does underline that in most cases literature is central when Soviet art is being discussed.

⁸³⁹ Demetz 1967, 126.

⁸⁴⁰ Kemp-Welch 1990, 156.

⁸⁴¹ Garrard and Garrard 1990, 15-17.

⁸⁴² Garrard and Garrard 1990, 30-31.

⁸⁴³ Garrard and Garrard 1990, 29.

A more justifiable view was taken by Anthony Kemp-Welch, who argues that socialist realism was the subject of heated debate especially throughout 1933. The definitive return of Gorkii to the Soviet Union on May 17, 1933 marked a turning point in these discussions.⁸⁴⁴ According to Kemp-Welch, the Party acquired control over the Writers' Union through its secretariat established in the autumn of 1933. Rather than being a pre-planned intervention, these actions were a practical response to the obstacles the Party came up against during discussions about creative method and problems of administration.⁸⁴⁵ Yet, Kemp-Welch asserts that Stalin and his totalitarian plans were a major force in the formation of the Writers' Union and socialist realism.⁸⁴⁶

The Writers' Congress itself was a two-week event marked by its carnival atmosphere. The Congress consisted of more than 200 reports, declarations, and speeches. The proceedings even opened with an orchestral performance. Delegations of workers and peasants also interrupted the proceedings by parading across the stage. Rather than being a venue for serious discussion, the Congress was more of a festival. Still, two themes in these speeches should be emphasized: First, writers' social responsibilities; the workers' parades were an attempt to remind writers of this. The second central theme was the need to reject modern bourgeois influences and emphasize the special character of the Soviet Union and socialist realism.⁸⁴⁷ At the Congress, these points were made in a rather positive atmosphere.

More negative expedients were used after Leningrad Party boss Sergei Kirov was murdered – an incident that many see as the starting point for the Terror inside the Party itself, instead of peasants and foreign national minorities. The Writers' Union also became even more dependent on the Party. It adopted overtly political guidelines in February of 1935. Literary criticism was introduced as a political instrument, not an aesthetic one. Stalin's notion of "the correct depiction of Soviet reality" was adopted as a guideline for Soviet literature. Ties between the Party and the Writers' Union became even more intense when the Central Committee apparatus was reorganized. The *Kultprop* secretariat was replaced with a Department of Cultural and Enlightenment Work, *Kultpros*, which oversaw libraries, clubs, and other venues with literary activity. Aleksandr Shcherbakov, who was already head of the Writers' Union, was appointed to lead the new department.⁸⁴⁸

The Writers' Union and literature were tightly bound to the Party both ideologically and politically. This kind of political tie did not exist between music and the Party. Ideological ties then again are a much more complex matter. Composers followed events in literature closely. This was perhaps because literature was ahead of music in terms of organizational development. It has been said that *RAPM* imitated the more powerful *RAPP* in order to

⁸⁴⁴ Kemp-Welch 1990, 142–146.

⁸⁴⁵ Kemp-Welch 1990, 148–149.

⁸⁴⁶ Kemp-Welch 1990, 256–257.

⁸⁴⁷ Kemp-Welch 1990, 175–176 (social needs), 179–180 (rejecting bourgeois influences).

⁸⁴⁸ Maksimenkov 1997, 54–55; see also Kemp-Welch 1990. 192–194.

receive a share of its success.⁸⁴⁹ In 1933, Andrei Pashchenko assessed that the remnants of bourgeois philosophy were already being abandoned in music but that the process was still only beginning in music while literature was some years ahead.⁸⁵⁰ Literature and writers received broad attention and substantial benefits, whereas composers had to cope with much less of both. It was apparently assumed that the Composers' Congress would necessitate a similar process in music, thus enhancing the public standing of music and bringing glory and prosperity to composers.

Matchmakers for musical socialist realism

As soon as the Composers' Union was set up, certain musicologists tried to discuss the issue of socialist realism. Later, the Union was strongly affected by what happened in literature, but initial discussions were quite open and broad. One of the early advocates of socialist realism in music was Boleslav Pshibyshevskii. He had been one of the architects of the reorganization of conservatories between 1929 and 1931 and the rector of the Moscow Conservatory during these years, but he was eventually forced to resign in the autumn of 1932.⁸⁵¹ After that, he published a three-point program for the construction of a basis for socialist realism in music. His "points" were the relationship between form and content, the ability of music to depict reality, and musical heritage.⁸⁵² This basis was also adopted by other early proponents of musical socialist realism.

Gorodinskii agreed with Pshibyshevskii and underlined how analysis of the realistic tradition and realistic nature of music were important.⁸⁵³ These, indeed, had become important points that were discussed in the Union, as we have seen. Furthermore, Gorodinskii and Pshibyshevskii were appointed by Chairman Cheliapov as the keynote speakers at a Union meeting held in October of 1933, at which socialist realism was being discussed. They were Cheliapov's first specialists on socialist realism.⁸⁵⁴

Socialist realism is often associated with political control over art. It is linked to Stalin's seizure of power, and it is assumed that it was a vehicle used by Stalin to enslave artists. According to this scheme, socialist realism is usually seen as a pre-planned process, which manifested itself for example in the Stalin-cult, in which the arts took part in glorifying the great leader.⁸⁵⁵ However, the process by which socialist realism became part of the Party's official chain-of-

⁸⁴⁹ Nelson 2000, 110–111.

⁸⁵⁰ Pashchenko, A. 1933, 121: *Protiv gruppovshchiny*. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁸⁵¹ Edmunds 2000, 103.

⁸⁵² Pshibyshevskii, B. 1933, 2: *K voprosu o socialisticeskom realizme v muzyke*. Neskolko tezisov. In *SI* May 26, 1933.

⁸⁵³ Gorodinskii, V. 1933, 2: *Problema soderzhaniia i obraznosti v muzike*. In *SM* 5/1933. Gorodinskii did not specify where Pshibyshevskii had presented these ideas.

⁸⁵⁴ *V soiuze sovetskikh kompozitorov*. In *SI* September 8, 1933: 3.

⁸⁵⁵ See for example: Brooks 2000, 106–108.

command was much more complicated.⁸⁵⁶ Especially when one considers music, it is clear that at first it was composers and musicologists themselves who ushered in discussion of socialist realism. It is therefore interesting to examine the kinds of values that were attributed to socialist realist music.

In a wider context, Boris Groys has unraveled the totalitarian outlook of socialist realism and its alleged role as a mere extension of Stalinism. Socialist realism has been described as the representation of the elite's taste. This view is given more weight when we bear in mind that there was a shift in Soviet values from revolutionary toward petit bourgeois in the 1930s, especially among the new elite. Socialist realism had a lot in common with bourgeois romanticism. But was it, then, the representation of the taste of the political or artistic elite? Boris Groys is sure of one thing: socialist realism had very little to do with the taste of "the people," although it was the lives and experiences of "the people" that socialist realism was supposed to embody.⁸⁵⁷

According to Groys, socialist realism was formulated by much the same educated and experienced elite which actively championed the avant-garde during the 1920s. He considers socialist realism to be a didactic method oriented outside ordinary life. Ordinary people were more inclined toward Hollywood-comedy and jazz than toward socialist realism.⁸⁵⁸ Obviously, Groys connects socialist realism to traditional concert music, not to Soviet occasional or light genre music, both of which became genuinely popular in the 1930s. Indeed, the discussions about socialist realism involved usually only this serious genre and not the popular ones. All in all, Groys's analysis merits a more detailed examination of the situation in the musical world.

Viktor Gorodinskii maintained that the technical basis of the socialist realist style in music should be found in the old classics. However, he did add that modern music contained features that could be useful for socialist realism, thus pointing out that the principles were open for discussion and that modernists had an established position and were not to be merely dismissed from the outset. This is also in line with Groys, who considered that those involved with the avant-garde of the 1920s had also offered opinions about socialist realism during the 1930s. Gorodinskii went further, claiming that the impulse and subject for socialist realist music was to be found in factories and kolkhozes: the essence of socialist realism was to be found in the lives of people.⁸⁵⁹ Gorodinskii as a musicologist was part of the artistic elite and he did believe that socialist realism was defined by an elite, not by the people. Yet, he did not abandon the people altogether; he saw the people as both a subject and muse. This was not mere rhetoric as we have seen. Nevertheless, there was no

⁸⁵⁶ Leonid Maksimenkov is one of the researchers who has pointed this out. Maksimenkov 1997, 3-16.

⁸⁵⁷ Groys 1992, 6-9. Similar ideas can be found also in Gutkin, Irina 1999, 150: *The Cultural Origins of the Socialist Realist Aesthetic 1890-1934*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

⁸⁵⁸ Groys 1992, 6-9. See also, Fitzpatrick 1992, 216-217.

⁸⁵⁹ Gorodinskii, V. 1933, 2: Vypolnim nash dolg pered kolhozami. In *SM* 6/1933.

longer any expectation that the people would create their own art forms, as proletarian musicians had presumed (in theory, at least).

Another interesting view of socialist realism worth contesting in music is offered by Kenez and Shepherd, who maintain that socialist realism was eventually a compromise between the views of the Communist Party leadership and the Soviet intelligentsia. The Writers' Congress in itself illustrates the diversity between existing views and how even objectives of creative activity sometimes had to be compromised. The definition of socialist realism was not given by the party leadership in the Congress, but it slowly emerged as a compromise in which middle level intelligentsia had an especially prominent position. Socialist realism remained a vague compromise for which no exhaustive definition was ever found.⁸⁶⁰ This was the situation even more acutely in music than in literature. In music, the Party initially left the issue completely for the musical elite to discuss.

Although the principles of socialist realist music were actively discussed, few dared to mention any concrete musical examples. Rather, works that paved the way for socialist realism were mentioned for instance by Leningrad secretary Iokhelson. On the threshold of the Seventeenth Party Congress, he called Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth* and Asafiev's Ballet *the Flame of Paris* "the most noteworthy compositions of the previous years." These works were, besides their professional quality, examples of high ideological standard, *ideinost*.⁸⁶¹ In research, a high ideological standard is often referred to as one of the basic elements of socialist realism. It refers to Soviet ideology and to how works of art managed to reflect this ideology.⁸⁶² Another two basic concepts linked with socialist realism are *partiinnost* (party-mindedness) and *narodnost* (*narod* referring to people). The latter term refers to the depiction of reality through the people's point of view, reflecting its aspirations and ideas in an understandable way. Above these two there loomed the primary concept, party-mindedness. The Party was the vanguard of the proletariat and classless society. It had the right to provide rulings and definitions on ideological matters and was thus the authority in socialist realism as well.⁸⁶³

This theoretical definition was reached during contemporary theoretical discussions but was arrived at through later research. Thus, it only corresponds to the musical discussions of the 1930s in certain points. This is no wonder, since in Soviet artistic life socialist realism eventually became a cliché. Socialist realism became part of political discussions about art and theory, not practice. Few conscious attempts were made to create art that would meet socialist

⁸⁶⁰ Kenez and Shepherd 1998, 47–48.

⁸⁶¹ Iokhelson, V. 1934, 16: Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov k XVII siezdu partii. In *SM* 1/1934; this search for new elements was also viewed by Krein as an important feature after the resolution of 1932, Krein, A. 1933, 120. *Kompozitor i kritika*. In *SM* 1/1933.

⁸⁶² Kenez and Shepherd 1998, 48.

⁸⁶³ Kim 1988, 47; Bakst 1977, 285; Kenez and Shepherd 1998, 48; Pesonen 1998, 176. Often, a fourth concept, *klassovost'*, class-consciousness, is linked to the early theoretical discussion about socialist realism.

realist standards.⁸⁶⁴ Officially, however, it remained the leading star of Soviet artistic life until the 1980s.⁸⁶⁵ In the 1930s, when discussions about socialist realist music were just beginning, the situation was somewhat different. Many composers appear to have sincerely believed that it would develop into a genuinely creative method.

As well as these three aforementioned basic concepts, there was historical optimism, which was often mentioned in research of socialist realism. In practice, this meant confidence in a better, socialist future. Reality was to be presented as a revolutionary development—the development towards socialist society.⁸⁶⁶ Hence, socialist realist art did not portray prevailing faults, but the future utopia that was believed to be at hand. Here historical optimism was connected to the “correct” ideology, the requirement of *ideinost*, and to two other basic features: the depiction of what life in the future would be like for the people and faith that the Party could provide the route to this future. These features were typically part of the initial discussions about socialist realist music, but they would never all be discussed in one address. Individual addresses would mention one or two of these features, but there were also a host of other ideas which did not become part of the later definitions of socialist realism.

Georgii Khubov’s detailed article about national features in music is illuminating in this sense. Although he carefully avoids mentioning the concept of socialist realism, he began his article by quoting Stalin’s famous remark about the need for art that was “national in form, socialist in content.” As he continued, he mentioned several features that would later be associated with socialist realism. The whole theme of his article was linked to *narodnost*: he emphasized the connection between Soviet music and the people. He also underlined how music of Bach, Chopin, Borodin, Liszt, and others was highly popular; Soviet music was continuing the tradition, whereas the West was heading away from the people. Khubov also mentioned happiness as one of the important features of Soviet music, thus coming close to the concept of historical optimism.⁸⁶⁷ Khubov wrote in 1937, when discussions on musical socialist realism had already waned. Before 1936 discussion was more active; it seems that although issues remained largely the same (as Khubov’s article suggests), the question of socialist realism was no longer posed as a topic for vigorous debate.

Even before 1936, discussions came close to those definitions attached to socialist realism by later research. In Roman Gruber’s view, music should support socialist construction. He claimed that it was not enough that art was in harmony with reality, but that reality should be an element in, or active part of,

⁸⁶⁴ There were composers of the younger generation like Alfred Schnittke, Rodion Shchedrin and many others who consciously abandoned the search for Socialist realist art while there were those who continued in the same conservative vein deriving from the 1930s and from farther off. But never was it clear what the Socialist realist music really was.

⁸⁶⁵ Pesonen 1998, 176.

⁸⁶⁶ Bakst 1977, 285–286; Pesonen 1998, 175; Kenez and Shepherd 1998, 48.

⁸⁶⁷ Khubov, G. 1937, 24–41: Zolotoi vek narodnogo tvorchestva. In *SM* 10–11/1937.

a work of art. Yet, as music expressed reality at a conceptual level, Gruber maintained that this was an abstraction.⁸⁶⁸ Gruber represented the basic problem of socialist realist music. If music portrayed reality, but only on a conceptual level, should socialist realist music then be approached through Soviet composers' music or merely as a theoretical principle? The early Composers' Union attempted to both find works that represented socialist realism and define its theoretical basis. However, the future of the musical discussions testified that these definitions could not proceed far from their starting point.

Sovetskaia Muzyka addressed the dichotomy between the theory and practice of socialist realism, arguing that musical language was to be found by meeting the requirements of socialist realist music. Of course, the socialist realist method had to be defined first. This could be achieved by analyzing music, both old and new, the editorial reasoned.⁸⁶⁹ It was emphasized that definition of socialist realism was a task that belonged to the Composers' Union and especially to musicology, which could interpret composers' achievements. Indeed, musicology and musicological discussions became core themes in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, just as the editorial had promised.⁸⁷⁰ Yet, the reasoning was circular. If socialist realist music was needed in order to define socialist realist principles, the problem could be solved only if some work was assessed to be representative of socialist realism. Thus, in the following years, an important feature of the musical political struggle was the right to determine which works could be termed "socialist realist." This was, in part, what the campaign against formalism in 1936 was about.

At a theoretical level, *Sovetskaia Muzyka* outlined the initial basic problems that musicology should solve on the basis of Gorodinskii's and Pshibyshevskii's definitions. Along with the dichotomy of form and content, musical realism and the question of subjectivism and objectivism were included as some of the foremost problems. The importance of these issues was further underlined by *Sovetskaia Muzyka* when it pronounced that the answers to these questions would form the basis of socialist realism and Soviet music.⁸⁷¹ Although the list was rather mechanistic, it did address some of the fundamental questions about art. It is very illuminating of Marxist-Leninist thought that subjectivity was considered harmful and that there had to be universal laws of art. If these laws were found, then art could be used to help benefit society. Still, even if these basic questions were commonly accepted, there were a host of different solution models and stresses within these confines. As Kenez and Shepherd have suggested, emphasis and interpretation were points that artists as well as the Party could use to their own ends in order to manipulate one another.⁸⁷²

It is notable that the Composers' Union was processing the matter by itself, since in literature, where socialist realism is said to have originated, the

⁸⁶⁸ Gruber, R. 1934, 19: O realizme v muzyke. In *SM* 6/1934.

⁸⁶⁹ K tvorcheskoi diskussii. In *SM* 5/1933: 1.

⁸⁷⁰ K tvorcheskoi diskussii. In *SM* 5/1933: 1.

⁸⁷¹ K tvorcheskoi diskussii. In *SM* 5/1933: 1.

⁸⁷² Kenez and Shepherd 1998, 47-48.

process was still unfinished at the time that musicologists were holding their own discussions. As the Writers' Union had to postpone the process, composers discussed the topic independently. According to Cheliapov, some were ready to use socialist realism to evaluate composers even though there was no agreement over its characteristics.⁸⁷³ As socialist realism in music remained an ever-vacillating concept, it is no wonder that it was used in events such as the campaigns against formalism in 1936 and in 1948.

It is possible that one reason for postponing the Composers' Congress until 1948 was that the nature of socialist realist music could not be defined. In the case of literature, the congress was postponed for a year until the Writers' Union and the Party could at least come to some kind of agreement about the concept. In music, the process proved to be much slower, as the Party's comparative lack of interest suggests. Cheliapov tried to urge colleagues to work on socialist realism more actively, both in theory and as a practical application, even toward an approximate definition.⁸⁷⁴ Cheliapov seemed to grow rather frustrated at the slow pace of progress during this process. Cheliapov's concern suggests that socialist realism was an important nominator for an art union although they were a different thing.

The issue of realism opens up another interesting viewpoint. C. Vaughan James has written that realism in socialist realism was connected to art's aspiration to reflect and interpret life from the viewpoint of social relations. Socialism was connected here to the practices of the Communist Party and its role as a manifestation of society. Socialist realism would therefore be based on the straight relationship between artist and socialist construction. If art were to be based on socialist realism, it would be colored by the experiences of the proletariat on its journey to Socialism.⁸⁷⁵ This latter aspect was expressed occasionally by leading figures, including Boris Asafiev who underlined relationship between composer and proletariat.⁸⁷⁶ Roman Gruber was thinking along the same lines and emphasized objectivity. He quoted Lenin, who had recommended that there should be an attempt to "reduce individual haphazardness." The social qualities of music ought to be utilized more actively.⁸⁷⁷ The practical work of the Union discussed earlier in this thesis points out that this was indeed regarded as important.

James mentions the Second Composers' Congress in 1958⁸⁷⁸ and the definition Nikita Khrushchev put forward of socialist realist music:

The method of socialist realism demands from Soviet composers a systematic struggle with aesthetic over-refinement, lifeless individualism, and formalism, as well as with naturalistic primitiveness in art. Soviet musicians are called upon to reflect reality in moving, beautiful, poetic images, permeated with optimism and

⁸⁷³ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 3: Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen! In *SM* 4/1933.

⁸⁷⁴ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 4: Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen! In *SM* 4/1933.

⁸⁷⁵ James 1973, 88.

⁸⁷⁶ Asafiev, B. 1933, 107: Istoricheskii god. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁸⁷⁷ Gruber, R. 1934, 21: O realizme v muzyke. In *SM* 6/1934.

⁸⁷⁸ James has made a mistake when he states that this congress took place in 1957.

lofty humaneness, the pathos of construction and the spirit of collectivism—all that distinguishes the Soviet people's perception of the world.⁸⁷⁹

Khrushchev's statement is enough to suggest that in music socialist realism remained at a rather general, theoretical level. This allowed the Party to make occasional interventions into musical life. Although these intrusions remained infrequent, a more precise definition may have eradicated even this possibility.

Yet, it could be that the Composers' Union aimed to keep socialist realism at a general level. Cheliapov seems to have accepted rather broad definitions. He claimed that art was a means of expressing class-consciousness, making form of secondary importance since it existed outside class struggle and public interest. Composers' ideas were socially determined, Cheliapov maintained, and therefore questions of style and musical language were not of central importance from the socialist point of view. Cheliapov stressed that emotional and ideological content were crucial and that all features that emphasized class nature and conscious should be of primary concern.⁸⁸⁰

Although style became secondary to content generally, socialist realism was kept open as a concept. Iokhelson even regarded that impressionism or Russian mysticism were both fully acceptable if they were approached with the realistic method. Old achievements and styles could be used, but they needed to be evaluated from the viewpoint of the present.⁸⁸¹ Thus, even such bourgeois composers who had hardly any connection to the Russian school of composition such as Piotr Tchaikovskii, could be "read" as victims of the bourgeois system and thus acceptable in the Soviet repertory.⁸⁸²

Socialist realism in music basically seems to have been about how things were approached. Still, it has to be borne in mind that censorship operated, even if only broad principles were defined. According to Herman Ermolaev, when positive representation of Soviet heroes and events was accepted as part of socialist realism, this was enough for censorship to direct art in this direction.⁸⁸³ Therefore, the Composers' Union was performing a high wire act. It needed to keep the concept of socialist realism in music vague enough, but not so vague as to arouse attention from the Party.

⁸⁷⁹ James 1973, 88; Khrushchev, Nikita 1958, 64–65: *Za tesnuiu sviaz literatury i iskusstva s zhizniu naroda*. Moscow: Iskusstvo. James advises one to compare this to the formalistic view from the 1920s. The difference is notable, see for example: "Music does and can not express any ideology as such . . . it is an independent world, from which is not possible to approach any logic or ideology without violence or artificial means." Sabaneev, L. 1924, 11: *Muzykalnaia kultura* 1/1924.

⁸⁸⁰ Cheliapov, N. 1933, 2: *Marksistsko-leninskoe muzykovedenie na novuiu stupen!* In *SM* 4/1933.

⁸⁸¹ Iokhelson, V. 1934, 17: *Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov k XVII siezdu partii*. In *SM* 1/1934.

⁸⁸² Jiri Smrz presents the case of Tchaikovskii, whose letters were edited in 1938 with an introduction by Asafiev. Asafiev presented Tchaikovskii in this new light, "from the present viewpoint," just as suggested. Smrz, Jiri 2003: *Symphonic Marxism: Sovietizing Pre-Revolutionary Russian Music Under Stalin*. In *Discourses in Music* 4(3), 2003.

⁸⁸³ Ermolaev, Herman 1997, 53: *Censorship in Soviet Literature: 1917–1991*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

While Brooks investigated how socialist realism was depicted in writings during the 1930s, his assumption was that what had been written differed from artists' actions. According to Brooks, socialist realism in the 1930s was a concept that was mainly highlighted by the press, especially *Pravda*.⁸⁸⁴ Brooks maintains that socialist realism was not purely a literary tradition but neither was it a pure tool of totalitarianism. It was a mechanism through which leaders and supporters of the Stalinist system broadened their intellectual area. According to their discourse, Soviet reality was to be perceived through something other than the large-scale problems and catastrophes of the time.⁸⁸⁵ In this sense, art helped to direct attention away from problems toward the future paradise. The winners, along with Party leadership, were those who supported the system. In music, there were obviously those who tried to use socialist realism to become more personally powerful, but there were also many who thought that socialist realism was merely a concept that belonged to official talks rather than to creative work.

Still, some composers made clumsy attempts at giving practical examples of socialist realism through their own work. Hungarian emigrant Ferenc Szabo wrote an article, *Through formalism towards socialist realism*, in which he described his past as a formalist and how he later abandoned this false position in favor of socialist realism. Szabo could not express this change very explicitly, although he did name three important features of socialist realism: First, he considered it to be based on Marxist-Leninist ideology. Second, there had to be immovable trust in the Party line. Third, a firm connection to working class and to its revolutionary ideology was necessary.⁸⁸⁶ All Szabo could do was to repeat musicological discussions. In short, this gave the impression that if a composer simply trusted the Party and made visits to a nearby kolkhoz, he could compose anything he liked. At least, no one could, if they ever wanted to, give specific definitions of socialist realist music.

Still, it was important to discuss socialist realism in principle. Gorodinskii, who started the public discussion about musical socialist realism, was even ahead of literature in raising the subject. He seems to have been sincere in his ambition to connect music with the objectives of the proletarian and socialist construction. He also denounced revolutionary romanticism in favor of realism.⁸⁸⁷ Yet, when he tried to carry his ideas about socialist realism further in the autumn of 1933 he complained that the question of socialist realism was rejected out of hand without any serious discussion. Gorodinskii added that the problems of musicology could not be solved empirically but only speculatively.⁸⁸⁸ It is unclear if he was trying to raise discussion or pave the way for a theoretical definition of socialist realism.

⁸⁸⁴ Brooks 1994, 974–975.

⁸⁸⁵ Brooks 1994, 991.

⁸⁸⁶ Sabo, F. 1934, 52: Cherez formalizm k socialisticheskomu realizmu. In *SM* 8/1934.

⁸⁸⁷ Gorodinskii, V. 1933, 6–18: K voprosu o sochialisticheskom realizme v muzyke. In *SM* 1/1933.

⁸⁸⁸ Gorodinskii, V. 1933, 2: Problema sodержaniia i obraznosti v muzike. In *SM* 5/1933.

Gorodinskii may have seen discussion on the socialist realism as one way to keep the socialist exterior standing. After all, the Party expected music to participate in socialist construction through concrete measures. Thus, a historical continuum was created, which allowed Soviet musicology to assess the contribution of contemporary musical work to socialist construction. Music also participated in socialist construction in many ways, although it was unable to proceed decisively with socialist realism. Perhaps music did enough for the Party not to intervene in the first place.

Down with Formalism

The only major practical conclusion of these early discussions about musical socialist realism was linked to the balance of content and form in a musical work. This had already been mentioned by Gorodinskii and Pshibyshevskii as the basis of socialist realist music. One concept connected with this dichotomy came to define Soviet musical life above all others: formalism.

Viktor Gorodinskii had considered that the concrete work inaugurated in kolkhozes and garrisons was a prerequisite for socialist realism. However, as approaches to socialist realist music became complicated, the concept of formalism became decisive. In music, formalism is usually remembered because of two official campaigns against formalism, the first in 1936 and the latter in 1948. Consequently, formalist accusations came to symbolize totalitarian rule over music in the Soviet Union.

Although the campaign in 1936 will be discussed in detail in the next part of this study, it is important to examine both its theoretical background and how formalism became the key concept for Soviet music. In short, formalism is a style of criticism that focuses on artistic techniques in themselves, regardless of a work's social and historical context. In the Soviet context, this was reduced to a dichotomy of form and content. The crucial question was the ability of musical work to transmit content other than purely musical forms. If music was essentially just music, it was unable to put socialist realism into effect. For formalists, music was important for music's sake, not because it could serve external needs. Thus, musical formalism became an accusation that was used against composers who strove to emphasize form instead of content. Although these accusations were often more grounded in mundane conflicts, in theory formalism remained the most important way of defining socialist realist music.

Cheliapov was one of those who drew direct influences from the speeches of the Writers' Congress. In the spring of 1935 he summarized a speech given by Andrei Zhdanov about literature and applied it directly to music.⁸⁸⁹ Quoting Zhdanov, he emphasized that Man was both the subject and object of Soviet art. In order to succeed in creating Soviet music, composers ought to study the life

⁸⁸⁹ Cheliapov, N. 1935, 3: Osnovnye voprosy sovetskogo muzykalnogo tvorchestva. In *SM 2/1935*. Speech Cheliapov was quoting can be found in: Zhdanov, A. A. 1990, 2–5: Rech sekretaria TsK VKP(b) A. A. Zhdanova. In Luppol, I. K. (eds), Rozental, M. M., Tretiakov, S. M., *Pervyi vsesoiuznii s'ezd sovetskikh pisatelei 1934. Stenograficheskie otchet*. Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel (speech originally published in 1934).

of Soviet people in kolkhozes, army garrisons, and factories. This was activity that the Composers' Union had already engaged in, but Cheliapov continued that the most important method would be in choosing a theme or a subject for a composition. He emphasized that formalism was approximately equivalent to the separation of form from content. A formalist was an artist who had turned his or her back on reality, Cheliapov maintained.⁸⁹⁰ He saw realism as the key for Soviet music. Music with a clear content was in Cheliapov's view better than music that only gave a hint of its intentions.

The struggle against formalism developed alongside socialist construction. Music was needed to support the objectives of society and therefore it was imperative for music in theory to carry external content. To a large extent, the change in Soviet cultural policy was part of the Party's objective to build a new society, to make "transition to Socialism" possible. Stalin presented the Soviet constitution in 1936 while the terror was growing. In 1937 when the terror reached its pinnacle, festivities for the realization of socialism took place.⁸⁹¹ The general guidelines of cultural policy were in this way connected to the building of Stalinist society on a large scale. Concrete mass musical work was a part of these aims. Although there seems to be a contradiction between socialist realism and modernism, as well as many avant-gardist ideals, there was also common ground. This perhaps made it easier for many composers to participate in the game, especially since the actual principles of socialist realism remained rather vague.

Even though it could not provide an absolute definition of socialist realist music, the Composers' Union had to present a plausible socialist exterior. This meant denouncing formalism. Thus, Gorodinskii was one of those who quite early accused Sollertinskii of harboring formalist conceptions. Sollertinskii was especially harmful because, according to Gorodinskii, he had lured Shostakovich into composing formalist works.⁸⁹² Thus, formalists became the bogeymen of the Soviet art world from the officials' point of view.

The answer lies in the past

Gorodinskii addressed the importance of the historical development of both music and musicology. He alleged that this made bourgeois musicology weak: it was unhistorical and unable to understand that music developed historically. In Gorodinskii's argument, music was product of a certain developmental phase and not of the will of an individual person. According to this definition, music was social rather than an individual product. The composer as an individual could affect only the form that a composition took. Gorodinskii stated that the bourgeois musicologist failed to see the dialectic-material nature of things. This was illustrated by the attempts of some bourgeois musicologists

⁸⁹⁰ Cheliapov, N. 1935, 4–7: Osnovnye voprosy sovetskogo muzykalnogo tvorchestva. In *SM* 2/1935.

⁸⁹¹ Vihavainen 2000, 228–234.

⁸⁹² Gorodinskii, V. 1933, 2: Muzykalnye itogi. Put k socialisticheskomu realizmu. In *SI* April 26, 1933.

to surpass ideological boundaries for sketching sociological constructions of music. Gorodinskii maintained that this merely resulted in “stupid forms of materialism,” as was the case in Arnold Schering’s work⁸⁹³. Gorodinskii argued that Schering had attempted to schematize music in the spirit of vulgar materialism and failed to do so because of bourgeois class boundaries. Lenin’s idealism was more rational for Gorodinskii.⁸⁹⁴

Most composers silently accepted these discussions, possibly viewing them as a compulsory part of their Union or because they could reiterate the role of the Party in defining socialist realism.⁸⁹⁵ It seemed that in the historical continuum socialist realist music was largely the successor of the Russian national romantic school of composition, and this was convenient since almost all composers had been educated in the Russian school. Boris Asafiev and Boleslav Iavorskii (1877–1942) became leading figures in musicology. They both represented “the third generation” of the Romantic national tradition in musicology, just as Miaskovskii and Gliere did as composers. The first generation had included Mikhail Glinka and Aleksandr Serov and the second included, for instance, the *Mighty Handful*, especially Rimskii-Korsakov, and Tchaikovskii. Connections to these predecessors were constantly sought during the 1930s. Khubov, for instance, illustrated how Serov had been critical of contemporary bourgeois art studies and sought genuine music from Russian folk songs.⁸⁹⁶ Other articles discussed the relationship of these past masters to folk songs of the nationalities of the Russian empire.⁸⁹⁷ Perhaps one of the single greatest examples of this search for roots was the centenary of Pushkin’s death in the spring of 1937. Hundreds of Soviet songs and romances based on Pushkin’s verses were produced at this time.⁸⁹⁸

Of the two foremost Soviet musicologists, Asafiev was more inclined toward historical musicology, while Iavorskii was more of a theorist. Iavorskii’s major work was *Modal Rhythm*, which confirmed him as one of the most important theorists of Soviet music, but like Asafiev he was also a composer. It is interesting that Iavorskii was strongly supported by the Party during the late 1930s. In 1937 Party representatives from the Committee on Artistic Affairs

⁸⁹³ Schwarz 1983, 91. Schering was one of the first musicologists to be translated into Russian in Soviet times. His *Tabellen zur Musikgeschichte* was translated in 1924.

⁸⁹⁴ Gorodinskii, V. 1933, 2: Problema soderzhaniia i obraznosti v muzike. In *SM* 5/1933.

⁸⁹⁵ Shaporin’s address was typical in that it emphasized the role of the Party in defining the framework of creative work in empty phrases usually imitated from other similar addresses. Shaporin, Iu. 1933, 127: Moi mysli o godovshchine 23 apreliia. In *SM* 3/1933.

⁸⁹⁶ Khubov, G. 1936, 10–15: O narodnoi pesne. In *SM* 10/1936. Khubov would later, in 1938, dedicate a very extensive article to Serov and further emphasize his work as exemplary for Soviet music critics, see Khubov, G. 1938, 23–47: A. Serov – klassik russkoi muzykalnoi kritiki. In *SM* 9/1938. The article’s second part was published in the next issue, see Khubov, G. 1938, 128–143: A. Serov – klassik russkoi muzykalnoi kritiki. Statia vtoraiia: Esteticheskie vozzreniia. In *SM* 10–11/1938.

⁸⁹⁷ For example Tsukkerman, V. 1938, 104–127: Rimskii-Korsakov i narodnaia pesnia. In *SM* 10–11/1938.

⁸⁹⁸ One third of *Sovetskaia Muzyka*’s third issue in 1937 was dedicated to analyzing Pushkin’s role in Russian music, especially in romances and opera, both pre-revolutionary and Soviet. See for example, Cheliapov, N. 1937, 15–18: Puhskin v romansovom tvorchestve sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 3/1937.

wrote to the Central Committee of the Party urging it to publish all theoretical writings of Iavorskii, "one of the greatest living musicologists."⁸⁹⁹ Letters of recommendation from several members of the Composers' Union about Iavorskii and his work were addressed straight to Stalin.⁹⁰⁰

Iavorskii's work also forms an interesting link to proletarian musicians. Besides representing a connection to the national romantic tradition, he was also greatly admired by proletarian musicians. Moreover Anatolii Lunacharskii, as Commissar on Enlightenment, had favored Iavorskii, who was invited to work in *Narkompros*, and helped him to establish the first musical college (*tekhnikum*) in Moscow. Iavorskii also became associated with Nataliia Briusova, a supporter of proletarian musicians, and with Iurii Keldysh, when invited to lecture at the Moscow Conservatory.⁹⁰¹ Later on, in 1938, he would become a professor at the Moscow Conservatory. Iavorskii's work on *Modal rhythm* had already received *RAPM's* blessing and was then said to represent dialectical materialism that would open new horizons for Marxist musicology. *RAPM* managed to order teaching on modal rhythm and to prepare cadres to teach Iavorskii's theories.⁹⁰² It seems that Iavorskii was appreciated by all the most influential parties in musical life. Thus, he was one of those important links that rooted Soviet musical life into its past and, yet, could give it fresh content.

It seems that instead of coherent theory on Soviet music or even socialist realism, certain works and personalities were taken as exemplary representatives.

Yet, Iavorskii died in 1942, six years before the Composers' Union was finally set up and its ideological framework squeezed a bit narrower. Asafiev's star, then again, had been rising from the beginning of the 1940s. What is more important, although seriously ill, he was still alive in 1948. Whether or not he genuinely supported the attacks on leading composers, some of who were his former personal friends, remains debatable in 1948⁹⁰³. Asafiev could not personally participate in the Composers' Congress during April of 1948, but a letter he had written was published in which he condemned the formalist cause for good. Within a few years of his death, he was elevated to a similar status as the great Russian musicologists, including Stasov, Serov, and Liadov. His compiled works were quickly published in five volumes between 1952 and 1957. In Asafiev, Soviet musical life eventually found the leading figure it had been looking for. Yet, this happened only in the latter half of the 1940s.

In the 1930s, the ideological framework for the work of Soviet composers and musicologists was subject to major changes but was still left open. There was an ongoing search for acceptable forms for musical life. This process,

⁸⁹⁹ Kerzhentsev's letter from the summer RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, ll. 32, 39. Shatilov's letter from the last days of 1937 RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, l. 27.

⁹⁰⁰ For example, the letter by professor Riazanov RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, ll. 33-34, musicologist Kulakovskii's letter in l. 35, others following in order.

⁹⁰¹ Edmunds 2000, 145.

⁹⁰² RGALI, f. 645, op. 1, d. 352, ll. 34-38ob.

⁹⁰³ Researcher of the Helsinki University, Meri Herralala, has examined surroundings of the "musical scandal" of 1948 in detail. Her PhD thesis is currently in the making and will be finished by the end of 2008.

however, was far from being well-defined or linear. From the outset, the Composers' Union committed itself to activities that were believed to support socialist construction. Composers visited kolkhozes, army garrisons, and factories in order to help build local musical life and to "draw influences"—a connection to people was regarded as ideologically important. Regardless of this and other forms of ideological work, theoretical discussions about Soviet music and especially about socialist realism were tangled. Little progress took place.

Perhaps the only major compromise was the decision to turn toward the Russian musical past. In the 1920s most visible attempts to find Soviet forms of musical life were in contradiction, but most agreed that the discarding of the pre-Revolutionary traditions was inevitable. During the 1930s, most composers were willing to abandon this view and instead accept pre-Revolutionary masters as valuable sources for Soviet music. Both composers and musicologists turned their attention to what they believed to be a distinctive Russian school of music and made it part of the Soviet heritage. Although theoretical and practical solutions of ideology in music were regarded as professional issues (especially by musicologists in the Composers' Union), in 1936 the Party leadership intervened in the musical world. This intervention came in the form of a number of *Pravda* editorials and, especially, through the establishment of a new superstructure for art administration. This administrative body was the Committee on Artistic Affairs, which carried with it a host of political implications that also had a major effect on the musical front. This will be the core theme of the last part of this book.

THE POLITICAL TURMOIL

The Concentration: New era, new structures?

The intensification of political ties between the music front and the Party began at the same time as the political struggle intensified in the party. The murder of the Leningrad Party boss Sergei Kirov in December of 1934 was a landmark after which political terror intensified and a political witch-hunt began on an unprecedented scale. After a year, this would have a major effect on the music front. However, Kirov's murder was covered on the front page of the Composers' Union own magazine, as it was in every Soviet magazine and newspaper. Cheliapov immediately reported that Kirov's murder had not been committed by an individual but that inquiries had revealed that a Trotskiite-Zinovite center had been to blame. Cheliapov swore death to enemies of the working class.⁹⁰⁴ A mere two-and-a-half years later, he himself was found to be an enemy of the people.

After Kirov was murdered, composers took part in the commemorations. Several songs and other compositions were published in a collection entitled *Songs for Kirov*. While evaluating this collection, Ostretsov also described Kirov using sentences such as "so ran the blood of one of the best of us when the bullet of an enemy took him from the proletarian" and "the wave of anger against the murderers that stand behind the back of the working class."⁹⁰⁵ The first meeting of the Supreme Soviet was celebrated on the third anniversary of Kirov's murder. Szabo, Belyi, and Genrikh Bruk had already published their songs of Kirov, a requiem had been composed by a certain Iudin, while Evgenii Slavinskii had written *In the Memory of S. M. Kirov*, and Vano Muradeli was working on a symphony dedicated to this "great soldier, fervent tribune of revolution."⁹⁰⁶ We have seen that, in the years following Kirov's murder, music

⁹⁰⁴ Cheliapov, N. 1935, 3-4: Dadim otpor vragam rabocheho klassa!. In *SM* 1/1935.

⁹⁰⁵ Ostretsov, A. "Kritika i bibliografiia. In *SM* 1/1935: 95.

⁹⁰⁶ Plamennii tribun revoliutsii. In *SM* 12/1937: 23-25. These works were merely mentioned in this article. Most of it was dedicated to an evaluation of how trotskist-

served ideological ends on an increasing number of occasions, and Kirov's glorification was just one of these early examples.

The murder of Kirov is an important turning point in Soviet history; after this, the political terror was turned within the Communist Party. Significantly, the atmosphere in the Writers' Union corroded further after Kirov's murder and the intensifying terror took its toll here as well. It is therefore important to consider what kind of changes, if any, took place in the Composers' Union: Did political control over music increase?

On the rare occasion of comparing different artistic unions, it has usually been expressed that the Writers' Union was the foremost union and, therefore, it was witness to the most bitter fights between different factions as well as the biggest misuses of its authority.⁹⁰⁷ The importance that the Party placed upon literature meant that it was soon brought under the auspices of the Communist Party. Because the Party sought to implement a uniform art policy – as the April Resolution of 1932 suggests – it is widely believed that music was similarly subjected to political control. Political personalities were rarely specialized in any of the arts and, because literature was hailed by many Party apparatchiks as the most important art, it is believed that the Party's policies toward the arts were defined through literature.

As has been suggested in the second part of this book, the future generation that would lead the Composers' Union for most of its existence took up notable positions in the Union during the latter half of the 1930s. This group represented the musical elite of the Stalinist era. They became the link between the Party leadership and the musical world. This is evident in the ways in which the position and standing of this musical elite in the Soviet Union began to change, especially in the second half of the 1930s.

Composers as elite

Another point that was to in part intensify the interaction between composers and the Party was the creation of the new elite, the new intelligentsia. The use of the word "intelligentsia" changed during the 1930s. In 1936, Stalin himself used the term to define the basic structure of socialist society. Stalin promulgated that society was divided into two classes: the peasantry and the proletariat. The intelligentsia, rather than being a separate class, formed an upper social layer of these classes. Despite egalitarian discourse, the intelligentsia soon emerged as a privileged group within Soviet society. Furthermore, intelligentsia would include not only the artistic and educational elite, but also the Party leadership and top bureaucrats. Intelligentsia was almost a synonym for elite in Soviet usage.⁹⁰⁸ This helps to explain the importance of the membership of the art unions – it was a way to achieve elite status.

bukharist spies were trying to turn back the revolution and destroy the achievements of the Stalinist constitution.

⁹⁰⁷ See especially: Nepomnyaschchy 1994, 143.

⁹⁰⁸ Fitzpatrick 1992, 15.

According to Sheila Fitzpatrick, the terror and the inner Party purges that took place between 1933 and 1938 were part of the plan to create a new intelligentsia. The old guard had become an obstacle and it was thus replaced with a new party intelligentsia of proletarian origin.⁹⁰⁹ New cadres rose primarily through technical education rather than through law studies, as most bureaucrats had prior to this. Fitzpatrick uses the concept of “social mobility” to describe the prevailing situation. The Stalinist administration had already supported the displacement of the old intelligentsia during the First Five-Year Plan, but instead of replacing them, the administration immediately inaugurated the education of new cadres.⁹¹⁰

The relationship between the art unions and the Party has often been seen as a one-way street. Russian historian Evgenii Gromov has examined the ambitions of the Stalinist administration toward the arts. According to him, artistic leadership had to be constructed internally, since non-artistic personnel could not provide effective leadership. The power of the Party was to be ensured through special Party cells, while artists would formally lead the “creative unions.”⁹¹¹ Although Gromov offers no sources to support this notion, there is a point that is worthy of attention. According to Gromov, the Party needed a loyal group that could take control of the Composers’ Union and replace its non-artistic leadership. Only then could the Composers’ Union be viewed as “completed.” In this part, we will see how the Composers’ Union operated after the mid-1930s and assess if Gromov’s conjecture was correct. At the very least, there was a bureaucratic struggle between composers and musical administration that certainly raged from 1936 onwards.

The links between composers and the Party are important for two different objectives: understanding how and when composers became an elite group and explaining the independence of the Composers’ Union from the Party. At first sight, it seems that there were only vague connections between the Party and the Composers’ Union. Only a few Union members held a Party card and the Union congress, which would have drawn the attention of the Party, had failed to materialize. Yet, as we have seen, the Composers’ Union engaged in many ideological and political campaigns that the Party held to be important. Congresses and speeches by Party leaders were also frequently mentioned in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*. For example, Cheliapov stated that the fight against Trotskiism and anti-Leninism also concerned the Composers’ Union.⁹¹² However, until 1936, deference to political speeches of the Party remained mainly a formality rather than something that was reflected in action. There were reasons other than just purely ideological concerns that underpinned the decision by composers to work in kolkhozes, submit to competitions, or discuss

⁹⁰⁹ Fitzpatrick 1992, 178–179; originally this article was published as Fitzpatrick, Sheila 1979: Stalin and the Making of the New Elite, 1928–1939. In *Slavic Review* 38(3), 1979, pp. 377–402.

⁹¹⁰ Fitzpatrick 1992, 180–181.

⁹¹¹ Gromov 1998, 149. Along with Gromov, Kondakov’s textbook should also be mentioned, see: Kondakov, I. V. 1997, 554–561: *Vvedenie v istoriiu russkoi kultury*. Moscow: Aspekt Press.

⁹¹² Cheliapov, N. 1933, 2: *Istoricheskaia godovshchina*. In *SM* 2/1933.

socialist realism. The Composers' Union strived to extend their authority across musical life and therefore sought to dominate all the necessary areas.

The connections between the Writers' Union and the Party were close. However, these connections were due to important personal connections as well as organizational proximity. Fitzpatrick has presented a case in which the secretary of the Writers' Union, Aleksandr Fadeev, worriedly wrote to Molotov about the lack of Stalin prizes earmarked for literature. This was rectified soon afterwards. Fadeev also complained to Molotov that the fees writers received were too small and that there were often problems with the payments.⁹¹³ This network of personal relations, in which appeals were made to guardians—or patrons, as Fitzpatrick calls them—was severely tested during the Stalinist terror (1936–38). During the Terror, a patron who was purged could bring his whole network down with him, as it was easy for the secret police of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) to obtain false confessions from its poor victims.⁹¹⁴ Writers did eventually suffer heavy losses during the years after the first Writers' Congress. Twenty years after the Congress, only fifty of the original seven hundred participants were still alive. Surely not all of them had died of old age or during the War. Of the thirty-seven members of the 1934 Presidium, only five were still alive in 1939.⁹¹⁵ The former connections of some writers with purged high-ranking Party officials lay behind some of these deaths. Thus, networks could also prove to be dangerous.

The network of personal relationships is typical of the Soviet Union and more generally Russia, and it is sometimes referred to as *blat*. *Blat* is essentially networking and informal exchange.⁹¹⁶ Because of the general shortage of almost everything, proper contacts were necessary in order to prosper. In practice, the new elite were under the protection of the Party leadership. The Soviet elite's connections have been described by Sheila Fitzpatrick, who believes in part that a lack in the protection of law forced people to seek protection from the "upper levels." Party officials with high standing thus became guardians for artists. Fitzpatrick has referred to these parties as clients and patrons. Patrons were usually approached for assistance through letters, while patrons who were willing to help used phones. These political guardians could help their clients in many ways—by acquiring better apartments, goods and holiday apartments. They could even protect those who fell into disgrace, although this became a very dangerous practice during the years of Stalinist terror. Patrons also became involved in professional matters, thus deepening the role of the Party and the state in artistic affairs.⁹¹⁷

⁹¹³ Fitzpatrick, Sheila 1999b, 112: *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press. Fitzpatrick refers to a letter of Fadeev from January of 1940.

⁹¹⁴ Volkogonov 1999, 314.

⁹¹⁵ Kemp-Welch 1990, 225–226.

⁹¹⁶ For a concise description of *blat*, see: Ledeneva, Alena 1998, 13: *Russia's Economy of Favors: Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁹¹⁷ Fitzpatrick 1999b, 111. Fitzpatrick handles the Patron-client-system especially well in her article "Intelligentsia and power, see: Fitzpatrick 1998.

In official documents it is hard to find references to this kind of relationship between composers and the Party. Yet, Leonid Maximenkov has described the relationship between Shostakovich and high-ranking Party officials in the 1940s in his magnificent article based on Soviet archives. He manages to show how Shostakovich was able to change apartments, acquire cars, and secure holiday apartments.⁹¹⁸ Toward the end of the 1930s, requests to Party officials by composers seem to have increased—these were much rarer during the first half of the 1930s. At first, the requests seem to have been directed to a Party member inside the Composers' Union. Levon Atovmian, Union secretary and first head of its financial sector, was not a high-ranking member of the Party, but he was able to channel extensive resources. Composers turned to him for all kinds of favors. For example, the prominent composer-professor Mikhail Gnesin approached him through a letter in which he requested stipends for a couple of Turkmen composers and one violinist.⁹¹⁹

Examples of much more prominent favors emerge in the second the half of the 1930s. Prokofiev's request for an apartment is interesting since its outcome illustrates both the shortcomings of the Soviet system and the status of the new elite. After Prokofiev had settled permanently in Moscow, he wrote to a high-ranking official in the Moscow Soviet who was responsible for distribution of living space. Prokofiev requested a four-room apartment with a study for his family of four members.⁹²⁰ There was an acute shortage of flats in Moscow, meaning that Prokofiev's request should have been rejected, as it eventually was. Prokofiev found himself without an apartment and he repeated his request to the Moscow Soviet many times before writing to Premier Viatcheslav Molotov.⁹²¹ Contacting a high-ranking Party member was the way to get things done. Prokofiev was the first composer to receive an apartment with five rooms in the Composers' House in 1937.⁹²² Instead of taking the normal routes, the elite exploited direct connections to ministries and high-ranking officials. Thus, in the autumn of 1936 Prokofiev submitted a request for a car from the Commissariat of Foreign Trade.⁹²³

Party structures for music administration

Outside the immediate sphere of music, several State and Party organizations were involved with music. Before 1936, even the primary organizations were numerous and caused many problems. Although Stalin and the Party leadership affected the course of events, the actual realization of their ideas was always the task of certain organizations. Especially in music, the bureaucracy

⁹¹⁸ Maximenkov 2004.

⁹¹⁹ GTsMMK, f. 238, d. 29, l. 1.

⁹²⁰ RGALI, f. 1929, op. 2, d. 323, l. 2.

⁹²¹ RGALI, f. 1929, op. 2, d. 323, ll. 3-5. Letter to Molotov, l. 6.

⁹²² RGALI, f. 1929, op. 1, d. 802, l. 12; Prokofiev had, however, requested a sixth-floor six-room apartment and a garage. RGALI, f. 1929, op. 2, d. 323, l. 10.

⁹²³ RGALI, f. 1929, op. 2, d. 323, l. 9.

and musical administrators played an important role and put into effect, or sometimes even disregarded, directions from above.

Stalin's own personal contribution to the arts has interested researchers. According to Dmitrii Volkogonov, Stalin, from the end of the 1920s, regularly watched movies and visited the theater.⁹²⁴ "Movie Theater of Kreml" was indeed central to the development of the Soviet film industry. Stalin and his closest associates oversaw practically all the films produced in the Soviet Union and guided production of the most important of these. This is well documented in the collection of documents about Soviet film industry during the Stalinist era.⁹²⁵ No other art form was subjected to such close scrutiny by the Party leadership as the film industry was during Stalin's reign, although Stalin also keenly followed contemporary literature.⁹²⁶

Stalin has also said to have been an ardent spectator of the *Bolshoi's* classic ballets, and Volkogonov remarks that Stalin saw Tchaikovskii's classical *Swan Lake* between twenty and thirty times. As an aside, he notes that Stalin was rarely seen since he arrived in his box only when lights were dimmed.⁹²⁷ This, however, runs counter to the fact that after 1936 Stalin helped to publicize certain forms of music through his public concert appearances, as we shall see in this section. Perhaps because Stalin made some public appearances, Tucker has emphasized that Stalin's personal taste was an important part of the Party's musical policy. Tucker noted that Stalin liked Russian patriotic operas such as Glinka's *Ruslan and Liudmila* and generally accessible melodic works. Yet, rather than being patriotic, *Ruslan* uses Russian folklore and folk songs alongside oriental influences that were in vogue during the latter half of the 1930s. Additionally, *Ruslan* was based on a fairy-tale-like poem by Pushkin, which further increased the opera's value in the Soviet Union. These kinds of works were in favor particularly after the campaign against formalism in 1936.⁹²⁸

A melodic nature and the use of folklore and folk songs were indeed connected with Soviet music of the 1930s, but it is hard to find evidence of personal involvement by Stalin in musical issues beyond a few disparate incidents. It is far more likely that in some cases Stalin might have given some general hints about how to handle musical issues, but that officials in the musical administration— who have quite often been left unnoticed in research— had the power to interpret these faint hints and expectations.

It can be argued that from the October Revolution onwards, the Bolshevik Party controlled the world of art and supervised the work of artists. There is a great difference, however, between the methods and extent of this control in the early Soviet and high Stalinist societies. In the early period, the Party largely

⁹²⁴ Volkogonov 1999, 148.

⁹²⁵ Maksimenkov, L. (eds), Anderson, K., Koshelev, L., Rogovaia, L. *Kremlevskii kinoteatr, 1928–1953. Dokumenty*. Moscow: Rosspen, 2005. See especially Maximenkov's introduction 5–78.

⁹²⁶ Volkogonov 1999, 127. See also Sebag Montefiore 2004, 115–123. Sebag Montefiore has asserted that Stalin was very interested in literature during the early 1930s and guided it very actively in the direction he regarded as necessary.

⁹²⁷ Volkogonov 1999, 148.

⁹²⁸ Tucker 1990, 554.

controlled the means of censorship and determined what could not be depicted in art. In the high Stalinist phase, however, the Party came close to defining what art was allowed to depict. The difference between the mere prohibition of particular subjects and controlling the creative mind is an enormous one. Absolute control was of course never achieved, but in literature, for example, by the 1930s the Party was already largely able to direct the attention and creativity of writers. The totalitarian state tried to impose its ideological decisions upon all aspects of society.⁹²⁹ Nineteen thirty-six is often perceived as a musically revolutionary year for this reason.⁹³⁰

The traditional organs concerned with Soviet art policy were numerous and overlapped with each other, making it hard to determine who was responsible for certain operations. First of all, there was censorship. Under *Glavlit*, which was the main organ of censorship, was *Glavrepertkom*, which was responsible for approving everything that was performed in any theater or concert hall. According to A. V. Blium (a specialist in Soviet censorship), *Glavlit* underwent major changes in 1934 when representatives of the old guard began to be replaced by a new generation. Moreover, the censorship of music – as well as that of the theater, radio, circus, and public shows – was taken over by the Main Administration for the Control of Spectacles and Repertory (*GURK*) in early 1934. This organization carried out both preliminary and subsequent censorship.⁹³¹ Many of the former censors were subjected to persecution a few years later.⁹³² In music, by 1930 proletarian musicians had managed to oust the most well-known figure in music censorship, Nikolai Roslavets, along with other supporters of modern and light music.⁹³³

Outside of censorship, the Department of Culture and Propaganda, *Kultprop*, was established in 1930 and operated under the control of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. In 1935, a separate Department for Cultural and Enlightenment work, *Kultpros*, was created to replace *Kultprop*. This organization was responsible for ensuring that Party regulations were followed in arts. In practice, *Kultpros* mainly monitored the Writers' Union, because it had been largely superseded by a more authoritative organization within a year. Perhaps *Kultpros* was crippled because over the course of two years it had four different leaders, all of whom perished during the Terror.⁹³⁴ The People's Commissariat of Enlightenment, *Narkompros*, which had been the most important arts and culture organization of the 1920s, suffered the lack of faith

⁹²⁹ Stalinist society strived for totalitarianism, strict control over people. Vihavainen 2000, 218.

⁹³⁰ See for example: Krebs, Stanley D. 1970, 52: *Soviet Composers and the Development of Soviet Music*, London: George Allen & Unwin.

⁹³¹ Ermolaev 1997, 54; Blium, A. V., 2000, 28: *Sovetskaia tsenzura v epohu totalnogo terrora 1929–1953*. Saint Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt; according to Gorjaeva 1997, 61–64, *GURK* operated under *Narkompros*.

⁹³² Blium 2000, 48.

⁹³³ Nelson 2000, 109.

⁹³⁴ Maksimenkov 1997, 55.

placed in it by the Party during the 1930s. *Narkompros* had made mistakes and its powers over the arts were given to another institution at the start of 1936.⁹³⁵

The highest leadership of the Bolshevik Party had also taken their share of the responsibilities, thus indicating how much importance they attached to this field. The secretariat of the *politbiuro* reallocated personal responsibilities, just a few months before the first Writers' Congress was held on June 4, 1934. Stalin took personal responsibility for the culture and propaganda sector.⁹³⁶ This change was reinforced on March 10, 1935: "The supervision of other areas of operation of the Central Committee is the responsibility of C[omrade] Stalin, especially on the culture and propaganda question." The supervision of culture was in Stalin's hands especially when it came to the Central Committee.⁹³⁷ In principle, cultural affairs were thus at the top of the agenda for Stalin during the mid-1930s, which helps to explain some of the administrative changes that the arts faced during those years.

Yet, Stalin's ability to concentrate on art affairs was limited. Andrei Bubnov from *Narkompros*, Aleksei Stetskii, the then head of *Kultprop*, and Aleksandr Shcherbakov, the head of the Writers' Union and *Kultpros* in 1935, fulfilled and popularized Stalin's ideas in practice before 1936. However, they apparently did not manage to carry out Stalin's wishes, since a bureaucratic struggle ensued.⁹³⁸ As a consequence, powers over the arts were taken away from these individuals.

The situation was ripe for the emergence of a new leading figure and organization. Stalin's ambitions for further centralization of the art administration gave birth to a new superstructure, the All-Union Committee on Artistic Affairs under the Soviet of National Commissariats, or simply the Committee on Artistic Affairs. It was initially headed by the chairman of the Radio Committee, Platon Kerzhentsev (Lebedev). Effectively, *Narkompros*, *Kultpros*, and their leaders were superseded by this new Committee.⁹³⁹ The Committee on Artistic Affairs represented the first major intervention in music by the Party since the April Resolution of 1932, through which the art unions were set up. Yet, Kerzhentsev's task was not solely to govern music—this was

⁹³⁵ The Commissariat, under Andrei Bubnov, approved several works as appropriate for the Soviet stage including Dmitri Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*. The Party had issued a resolution to ensure the rapid dissemination of important Soviet theatrical works. Such works were to be exempt from the usual censorship procedures. Shostakovich's opera was personally approved by Bubnov subject to minor changes of the libretto in May of 1933, enabling its success across the Soviet Union. See: Fay 2000, 74–76; see also Maksimenkov 1997, 44–45.

⁹³⁶ Postanovlenie Politbiuro o raspredelenii obiazannosti mezhdu sekretariami TsK, 4.6.1934. In Khlevniuk, O.V. (eds.), Kvashonkin, A.V., Kosheleva, L.P., Rogovaia, I.A. 1995: *Stalinskoe Politbiuro v 30-e gody. Sbornik dokumentov*. Moscow: "Airo - XX", p. 141.

⁹³⁷ Ibid, 143; see also Maksimenkov 1997, 53.

⁹³⁸ Fitzpatrick has described these bureaucratic struggles in Stalin's administration. See for example: Fitzpatrick, Sheila 1985, 145: Ordzhonikidze's Takeover of Vesenkha: A Case Study in Soviet Bureaucratic Politics. In *Soviet Studies* 37(2), 1985, pp. 153–172.

⁹³⁹ Maksimenkov 1997, 10, 54–55, 58–61.

only part of his duties. Nevertheless, in 1936 the Committee acquired powers of censorship and began to broaden its powers over the musical front as well.⁹⁴⁰

The Committee on Artistic Affairs, although a governmental, rather than Party organ, was the Party's response to the failures of other arts organizations. *Narkompros* could not keep up with political and ideological requirements. Commissar Bubnov had also personally accepted works such as Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth* in May of 1933, allowing it to be staged across the Soviet Union rapidly, something that later aroused aggravation in Party leadership.⁹⁴¹ While Kerzhentsev and his committee took charge of the arts, Bubnov was assigned to organizing elementary and intermediate education.⁹⁴²

The Committee was established on January 7, and officially announced by the government on January 17.⁹⁴³ Andrei Zhdanov as a secretary of the Party introduced the final plans for the establishment of the Committee for Stalin in December 1935. Plans indicate that large proportions of *Narkompros'* previous powers were transferred to Committee and *Narkompros* became responsible mostly for schools and general education.⁹⁴⁴ On February 2, 1936, the Committee was given further powers that had previously held by *Narkompros*, and organs of censorship, such as *GURK*.⁹⁴⁵ In practice, the Committee on Artistic Affairs now guarded all aspects of art including theater, movies, music, art, and sculpture, among many other things. The Committee was much more powerful than the Commissariat of Enlightenment had ever been. However, Kerzhentsev was not satisfied and gained even more of *Narkompros'* remaining powers during the spring of 1936.⁹⁴⁶ He also began to extend his organization's authority over numerous artistic organizations.

***Pravda* heralding the new era**

Stanley Krebs believes that a crucial change took place in the relationship between composers and the Party during 1936. The campaign against formalism made it clear to composers that arts and politics were inseparable.⁹⁴⁷ Society was heading towards totalitarianism. In the arts, this meant that the taste of the Party leadership was of more importance than artistic value.⁹⁴⁸ In 1936, this trend surfaced in music.

⁹⁴⁰ Maksimenkov 1997, 51.

⁹⁴¹ Fay 2000, 74–76; Maksimenkov 1997, 44–45.

⁹⁴² Maksimenkov 1997, 10, 54–55. See also Sjelocha and Mead 1967, 43; and Maksimenkov 1997, 58–61.

⁹⁴³ Ob obrazovanii Vsesoiuznogo Komiteta po delam iskusstv pri SNK Soiuza SSR. In *Pravda* January 18, 1936, p. 3.

⁹⁴⁴ RGASPI f. 77, op. 1, d. 824, ll. 14–16, in KA: Zhdanov, A. A. Fiche 330.

⁹⁴⁵ GARF, f. 2306, op. 60, d. 2201, l. 1. This document has also been published, see: Iz prikaza narkomprosa RSFSR No 53 o peredache vessoiznomu komitetu po delam iskusstva pri SNK SSSR riada upravlenii narkomprosa RSFSR, 2 fevralia 1936 g. In Gorიაieva, T. M. (ed.) 1997, p. 306: *Istoriia sovetskoi politicheskoi tsenzury. Dokumenty i kommentarii*. Moscow: Rosspen.

⁹⁴⁶ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 163, d. 1107, l. 168. Also referred at by Maksimenkov 1997, 70–71.

⁹⁴⁷ Krebs 1970, 52.

⁹⁴⁸ Vihavainen 2000, 218.

Two incidents coincided with the establishment of the Committee and they have practically overshadowed it in research. In most presentations of Soviet musical life during the 1930s, the Committee on Artistic Affairs is not even mentioned.⁹⁴⁹ Both of the incidents involved *Pravda*, opera, and the Party leadership. The first took place when Stalin and Molotov, the most significant representatives of the Party and the State, attended a performance of Ivan Dzerzhinskii's opera *Silent Don* at the *Bolshoi* theater and discussed Soviet opera with Samuil Samosud, producer at the Leningrad *Malyi* Theater. The *Malyi* was praised for hiring young Soviet composers and promoting Soviet opera.⁹⁵⁰ Ivan Sollertinskii had presented similar praise for Leningrad's *Malyi* only two months earlier.⁹⁵¹ Sollertinskii's praise was particularly directed toward the *Malyi*'s production of Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*, which was the source of the second incident. It was staged at the *Bolshoi* on January 26, with Stalin in attendance. Two days later, *Pravda* published an anonymous review *Muddle Instead of Music (Sumbur vmesto muzyki)* which condemned this opera.⁹⁵²

The remarks made by Molotov and Stalin on *Silent Don* were understood to signify approval from the highest authority. As a result, this opera became the prototype for the Soviet "song opera."⁹⁵³ Stalin was apparently extremely interested when the sequel to this opera, *Virgin Soil Upturned*, appeared less than two years later.⁹⁵⁴ Although Dzerzhinskii's next opera aroused great interest, he never managed to repeat the success of his first work, even though he composed eight operas over the course of the next twenty-four years.

Leonid Maximenkov discusses the background of the second of these articles published in *Pravda* in some depth, and he asserts that allegations that Stalin or Zhdanov wrote this article are without foundation. Stalin saw Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District* and was not satisfied with it. The article must have been written the next day. It is highly likely that Stalin ordered this article and even contributed some sentences to it, but there are no documents that suggest this was the case. Elisabeth Wilson and later Volkov have suggested that David Zaslavskii, an editor in *Pravda*, was the author. However, in 1936, Zaslavskii was a minor Party official and was not yet in a

⁹⁴⁹ The first major analysis of this organization was by Leonid Maximenkov, see Maksimenkov 1997.

⁹⁵⁰ Moisei Grinberg overtly stated that this production of Leningrad's *Malyi* Theater was a historical occasion and a landmark for Soviet opera because of the visit and remarks made by Stalin and Molotov. Grinberg, Moisei 1936, 3: Sekret uspekha. In *SI* January 22, 1936. This occasion and the events preceding it are described in detail in Maksimenkov 1997, 72–87.

⁹⁵¹ Sollertinskii, I. 1935, 78–79: Tvorcheskie profili muzykalnykh teatrov Leningrada. In *SM* 11/1935.

⁹⁵² Sumbur vmesto muzyki. In *Pravda* January 28, 1936, p. 3.

⁹⁵³ Schwarz 1983, 145.

⁹⁵⁴ Perhaps after a phone call or corridor discussion, the chairman of the Committee, Kerzhentsev, wrote to Stalin about details of the changes that had been made to the cast of *Virgin Soil Upturned*. Stalin had probably attended the opera with Kerzhentsev, or he had been curious to find a different cast, if he had seen the opera more than once. Yet, *Virgin Soil Upturned* was by no means as successful as its predecessor had been. See: RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 331, l. 64.

position to author such an article.⁹⁵⁵ The most likely candidates would have been those who were closer to the high organs of the Party, for example Viktor Gorodinskii. Maximenkov suggests that the author may have been Platon Kerzhentsev, who had been raised to the position of the highest cultural official in the Party.⁹⁵⁶ There are obvious similarities between Zhdanov's role in the musical scandal of 1948 and that of Kerzhentsev in 1936 and 1937.

Kerzhentsev received Shostakovich on February 7 and was then especially interested in knowing how Shostakovich had reacted to the article. Shostakovich had sought to get in touch with the highest-ranking Party officials. However, Stalin or Molotov refused to grant an audience and he was instead received by Kerzhentsev, who afterwards reported to Stalin and Molotov about the occasion and what Shostakovich had told him. Shostakovich said what Party officials wanted to hear: he had understood the message of the articles and that he would demonstrate his ideological improvement through his new ballet or opera. In fact, he never did, neither did he follow Kerzhentsev's advice that Shostakovich should seek inspiration from Soviet folklore for his compositions. Finally, Shostakovich asked Kerzhentsev to arrange a meeting between composers and Stalin.⁹⁵⁷ This last point is especially interesting. Stalin had met Gorkii and various Soviet writers in October 1932. Shostakovich perhaps thought that this kind of event would make it clearer to composers exactly what the Party expected from them. Such an event never took place and Kerzhentsev would act as a mediator between the Party leadership and music for almost two years.

These *Pravda* articles and their effects have been misconstrued by some authors, including Solomon Volkov in his *Testimony*. Volkov insisted that the *Pravda* article about Shostakovich's opera would have been significant news in the Soviet Union and that hundreds of articles would have followed from it. In truth, neither *Muddle Instead of Music* nor the following article, *False Ballet (Baletnaia falsh)*⁹⁵⁸, which condemned a staging of Shostakovich's ballet *Limpid Stream*, were ever published in *Izvestiia*, *Leningradskaiia Pravda*, or any other leading newspaper apart from *Pravda* and *Komsomolskaia Pravda*.⁹⁵⁹ The number of articles published during following spring around this topic numbered around twenty rather than in the hundreds.⁹⁶⁰ Yet, *Pravda's* articles have often been interpreted as a deliberate operation undertaken by against Shostakovich personally.

Reactions to *Pravda's* editorials were of course followed by the Party leadership. NKVD police officers reported to Genrikh Iagoda (Head of NKVD)

⁹⁵⁵ Wilson, Elizabeth 1994, 109, 505: *Shostakovich. A life remembered*. London: Faber and Faber; Volkov, S. 1995, 410: *St. Petersburg. A Cultural History*. New York: The Free Press.

⁹⁵⁶ Maksimenkov 1997, 88–112.

⁹⁵⁷ AP RF, f. 3, op. 35, d. 32, l. 42, published in Gorlaieva 1997, 480–481.

⁹⁵⁸ See: *Baletnaia falsh*. In *Pravda* February 6, 1936: 3.

⁹⁵⁹ Articles linked with the campaign against formalism, see especially: *Komsomolskaia Pravda* February 14, 15, 18 and March 3, 1936; *Pravda* February 13, 17 and March 4, 1936.

⁹⁶⁰ Maksimenkov 1997, 90–91; Volkov's estimation, see for example Volkov 1995, 410.

what was said about Shostakovich after the *Pravda* editorials were published. It is illuminating that of the thirty individuals whose comments were reported only six were associated with music—the rest were largely writers. Significantly, comments by writers dominated the report, as if their reaction to the case was much more important than that of Shostakovich or other composers.⁹⁶¹ The vice-director of *Kultpros*, Aleksei Angarov, did report to the secretariat (including Stalin) about discussions in the Composers' Union. In his summary of these discussions, Angarov mentioned formalists from Leningrad (Mikhail Druskin and Sollertinskii) and *RAPMists* from Moscow (Lebedinskii, Keldysh, and Boris Shteinpress). However, the central issue covered by the report was that *Kultpros* had urged branches of the Composers' Union to proceed more intensively to resolve the problem of socialist realism in music and to try to find solutions to it in concrete musical works.⁹⁶² Thus, it seems that the issue was followed by the Party leadership, but otherwise facts point out that it was the Committee that was responsible for taking action. It is likely that *Kultpros* would have been informed by Gorodinskii, rather than the Committee.

The fact is that the only immediate political change that followed from these articles, and discussions after them, was the reinforcement of the status of the Committee on Artistic Affairs. This suggests that the original purpose was not to attack Shostakovich. It would have been easy for Stalin to make every newspaper, as well as radio, repeat *Pravda's* message, but this never happened. It seems more likely that Kerzhentsev and the Committee used the situation as an "ad hoc" occasion to reinforce their own position at the expense of other organizations.

Shostakovich was never imprisoned⁹⁶³, even though many writers and theater personalities who found themselves in similar situations were purged, which supports the idea that he was not the target. He was even allowed to compose and publish, and the fuss about him died down for almost two years. He retained his membership of the Composers' Union and received commissions, just as before.⁹⁶⁴ Based on his archival findings, Leonid

⁹⁶¹ Spravka sekretno-politicheskogo otdela GUGB NKVD SSSR ob otklikakh literatorov i rabotnikov iskusstva na stati v gazete "Pravda" o kompozitore D. D. Shostakoviche. In Iakovlev, A. N. (eds.), Artizov, A., Naumov, op. 2002: *Vlast i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia. Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kulturnoi politike, 1917-1953 gg.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnii fond "demokratiia", pp. 290-295. Original: TsA FSB RF fond 3, op. 3, d. 121, l. 31-38. Composers reactions covered only some last few lines of the whole report.

⁹⁶² Dokladnaia zapiska zamestitelia zaveduiushchego otdelom kulturno-prosvetitelnoi raboty TsK VKP(b) A.I. Angarova sekretaiam TsK VKP(b) o diskussii sredi muzykantov po povodu statei v "Pravde" o formalizme v muzyke. In Iakovlev, A. N. (ed.), Artizov, A., Naumov, op. *Vlast i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia. Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kulturnoi politike. 1917-1953 gg.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnii fond "demokratiia," 2002, pp. 302-304. Original: AP RF, f. 3, op. 35, d. 32, ll. 44-48.

⁹⁶³ It is possible that Shostakovich was arrested for a while for interrogations in 1936, but this never lead to more serious measures.

⁹⁶⁴ Shostakovich continued to receive commissions for movies, which were the apple of Stalin's eye. For example, he was commissioned to provide a score for the *Maksim* trilogy (1936-38) and for *The Great Citizen* (1937-39). He received the Order of Lenin and the Red Banner of Labor for his work for these movies. Maximenkov, Leonid

Maximenkov has presented an interesting interpretation of the denunciation of Shostakovich's opera. He suggests that Stalin particularly liked Shostakovich's film music but found *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District* unapproachable. Stalin tried to direct Shostakovich toward composing film scores instead of operas.⁹⁶⁵ This is, in fact, what happened. After 1935, Shostakovich never again wrote a single opera or ballet, but instead a great deal of highly appreciated film music. Rather than Shostakovich, the target was the artistic front in general, not an individual composer, nor even music alone. Subsequent articles in *Pravda* and *Komsomolskaia Pravda* indicate that the message behind the original articles was extended to music in general and to the other arts as well.⁹⁶⁶

Subsequent criticism of Shostakovich in *Pravda* was in most cases not directed against him personally. For example, a recording of his music for the play *Hamlet* by Shakespeare was criticized. This criticism was published in connection with general criticism of the recording industry and its failures. *Hamlet* was considered to be "one of the weakest and most chaotic compositions of Shostakovich. It would be nice to know, who needs this kind of preposterous musical concoction?" The article stated that Tchaikovsky's music for *Hamlet* was satisfying and that it should be enough.⁹⁶⁷ Yet, the Party had nominated the council to improve the situation of the recording industry and had selected Shostakovich as a council member. Thus, it is no wonder that his *Hamlet* had been recorded. Apart from this incident, Shostakovich was not criticized in public again. Another popular belief is that Shostakovich was somehow abandoned by his fellows and no-one would have defended him, yet this allegation too is without ground.

After the initial *Pravda* article was published, composers realized that it would have political consequences. A meeting of the creative sector convened on January 31 was attended by many composers. At this meeting, leader Dmitrii Kabalevskii admitted that the sector had not worked properly. The magazine *Soviet Art* put forward the view that the Composers' Union was failing to exercise sufficient self-criticism.⁹⁶⁸ Several general meetings followed in both Leningrad and Moscow over the following months. Some composers also discussed the situation with each other outside these meetings.⁹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Shostakovich found some staunch defenders of his work. Heinrich Neuhaus, a celebrated piano pedagogue whose pupils included such

2004, 48–49: Stalin and Shostakovich: Letters to a "Friend". In Laurel L. Fay (ed.), *Shostakovich and his world*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁹⁶⁵ Maximenkov 2004, 44–49.

⁹⁶⁶ These articles extended the campaign to architecture, the applied arts, children's literature etc. See: *Komsomolskaia Pravda* February 14, 18 and March 4, 1936; *Pravda* February 13 and March 4, 1936.

⁹⁶⁷ Malinin, D. 1936, 4: Muzyka na patefonnoi plastinke. In *Pravda* 22.2.1936.

⁹⁶⁸ Za podlinnuiu samokritiku. In *SI* February 5, 1936: 3.

⁹⁶⁹ In some cases, the correspondence of the composers during the 1930s has not been included in the archives. However, Asafiev's correspondence with Roman Gruber shows how they were aware of the situation and discussed the role of the Party, *Narkompros*, and Shostakovich in Soviet music. Bolshevist self-criticism and the extent to which it should be practiced was discussed. See: GTsMMK, f. 285, d. 663, ll. 1–2. Correspondence continued in d. 664 and d. 866.

names as Sviatoslav Richter, wrote three weeks after *Pravda's* initial article that Shostakovich was one of the finest composers in the whole of Europe.⁹⁷⁰ Gnesin, then again, at one of the meetings of Leningrad Composers' Union, said that he had a hard time recognizing Shostakovich as he was described in these conversations. Features attached to his alleged style were not typical of his work.⁹⁷¹ Shostakovich was defended on many occasions before he returned to the limelight in November of 1937 with the premiere of his Fifth Symphony.

In general, composers conformed to the "line" and course of action presented to them. After these articles were published, the Composers' Union participated in socialist construction by gathering a host of compositions from its members on a single theme—Stalin. A great concert at which these songs about Stalin were performed was held on December 1, 1936.⁹⁷² Perhaps this was the kind of concrete self-criticism that was expected of Soviet composers. In any case, neither Shostakovich, nor any other composer, faced persecution in 1936 because of *Pravda's* articles. The articles were more in connection with the Committee on Artistic Affairs' attempt to secure hegemonic control of artistic organizations and artistic production.

The Committee's mission in music

In essence, the Committee on Artistic Affairs was a bureaucratic organization. But why was it established? One reason was expressed by *Sovetskaia Muzyka* merely months before the Committee came into existence. Opera theaters, it was lamented, still did not stage many Soviet works and those that were performed would inevitably be written by local composers. The actual propagation of Soviet music had not improved enough, despite the efforts of the Composers' Union.⁹⁷³ It was not able to act as a central organ that looked after the proper distribution of Soviet compositions. Currently theater repertoires consisted mainly of classics and local curiosities.⁹⁷⁴ This was undoubtedly one reason why Stalin and Molotov publicized the work of the Leningrad *Malyi* Theater in connection with the staging of *Silent Don* at the *Bolshoi*, in Moscow.

The chairman of the Committee on Artistic Affairs, Platon Kerzhentsev, wrote in *Soviet Art*, "The situation is bad. Ballets don't manage to depict the present, they are false and sickly-sweet." He continued that Soviet folk dances were world famous, but were not included in Soviet ballet. He believed that the *Pravda* articles had done well by eradicating all kinds of formalist works from theaters' repertoires. He also poured scorn on the *Bolshoi* theater for its inability

⁹⁷⁰ Neigauz, G. 1936: O prostote v iskusstve. In *SI* February 17, 1936: 1.

⁹⁷¹ Vystuplenie tov. Gnesina. In *SM* 5/1936: 56–57.

⁹⁷² RGALI, f. 1929, op. 1, d. 802, l. 8.

⁹⁷³ Propagation had been a central question from the start, see the third part of this book. From the composers' point of view, the problem was the lack of general attention paid to music. Musical problems were seldom presented in the media, making it hard to propagate Soviet music. See, Atovmian, L. 1933, 132: K plenumu SSK. God raboty Soiuzu sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 5/1933.

⁹⁷⁴ Shishov, Iv. 1935, 64–65: O repertuare nashikh opernykh teatrov. In *SM* 9/1935.

to stage Soviet opera. Kerzhentsev regarded it as outrageous that the first Lenin Prize given to an opera theater was awarded to Kiev and not to the *Bolshoi* theater.⁹⁷⁵ Kerzhentsev took it as his mission to guide Soviet opera and ballet. During subsequent years, the Committee would ensure that Soviet opera and ballet was included in the repertory of every Soviet opera theater and build many more theaters to stage these works. Thus, the Committee succeeded in ways that the Composers' Union could have only dreamed of thus far.

As an official, Platon Kerzhentsev did not emerge from nowhere. He had already been a prominent apparatchik before he was appointed as chairman of the Committee. Kerzhentsev had been a Bolshevik Party member since 1904. He had a prominent position in *Rabkrin*, the People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection—one of Lenin's pet organizations. While at *Rabkrin*, Kerzhentsev organized a Council for the Scientific Organization of Labor, which promoted Taylorian methods and the rationalization of work through time measurement at the beginning of the 1920s. He tried to promote efficiency and get rid of loitering in work places. Afterwards, he was appointed chairman of the Radio Committee (1933). In 1936, he managed to emerge as the triumphant chairman of the new Committee on Artistic Affairs, with hitherto unknown powers over the arts. His other achievements included writing a biography of Lenin in 1936. Furthermore, he was a university-trained historian.

The Committee on Artistic Affairs was a very active administrative body. It undertook very different kind of measures. In music, for example, it supported the appearance of young musicians on major concert platforms and generally championed Soviet music. However, it also took care of largely administrative measures, which were yet crucial for the whole musical field, such as acquiring instruments. From 1936 onwards, the Committee inundated different commissariats with requests for great sums of money, in order to buy high-class instruments from abroad, for example.⁹⁷⁶

The Committee was especially keen to disseminate the music of different nationalities, although it was very selective in shaping the official versions of this music for performance. The Committee also subjected other musical organizations to closer supervision than its predecessors had done. After a year, inspectors from the Committee's musical administration had undertaken eighty-nine missions to correct and instruct members of the musical community at various music institutions. The inspections of the foreign sections of the Moscow Philharmonia (*Mosfil*) and the former State Stage Company (*GOMETs*)

⁹⁷⁵ Kerzhentsev, P. M. 1936, 2: Problemy sovetskogo teatra. (Rech na teatralnoi diskussii). In *SI* April 5, 1936.

⁹⁷⁶ RGALI, f. 962, op. 10, d. 11, l. 98. On December 17, 1936, Kerzhentsev protested to Molotov that Rudzutaks from the Commission of Foreign Currency had given him 75,000 rubles while he had requested 852,000 rubles in order to acquire nineteen high-class grand pianos, fifty violins, and different instruments for top musicians who could not use Soviet-made instruments. Without these, top musicians could not participate in foreign contests, for example. Most instruments were acquired from Germany, but some came from France and the United States, see l. 87. In one of his letters, Kerzhentsev called the material status of Soviet concert life "catastrophic," see l. 8.

had been singled out for particular mention.⁹⁷⁷ As the general fear of foreign spies spread across the Soviet Union, it was the Committee's task to supervise connections between cultural organizations, further emphasizing the role of the Committee as the highest cultural overseer.

The Committee also assumed responsibility for the ratification of nominations for administrators in musical institutions. All nominations to leading positions had to receive the blessing of the Committee on Artistic Affairs or the Central Committee of the Party. This meant, for example, that the leaders of the Moscow Conservatory, Leningrad Philharmonia, or Leningrad's Musicological Institute (*GIMN*) were nominated by the Committee.⁹⁷⁸ However, festivals of national music were undoubtedly the most visible series of musical events in spring of 1936.

Only days after *Pravda's* article criticizing *Lady Macbeth* was published, the Committee's magazine *Soviet Art* published a lengthy, anonymous editorial entitled *Classical music in the land of the Soviets*. This article concentrated on praising Soviet folklore and on encouraging composers to study it. Formalism and folklore were practically presented as counterpoints. Glinka, Musorgskii, and even Beethoven and Mozart were said to have based their music on folk creation. Sollertinskii and other music critics of Leningrad were blamed for following the line taken by the German expressionists. In this way, the Committee too was forcefully pressing for the acceptance of the Russian school of music. The article announced that Soviet heroes selected for Soviet operas and music should be like Chapaev,⁹⁷⁹ a popular Civil War hero. The article asserted that Stalin's and Molotov's output on *Silent Don* and *Pravda's* article about Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth* were the two most important messages for the world of art.⁹⁸⁰

The rise of the music of Soviet nationalities was a result of popularizing Stalin's famous remark about culture "national in form, socialist in content."⁹⁸¹ Moscow bureaucrats tried to control the subsequent rebirth of musical nationalism in Republics by imposing the model of nineteenth-century Russia upon the music of the nationalities. The role of opera was seen as central to the development of the musical culture of the nationalities.⁹⁸² Opera houses were

⁹⁷⁷ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, l. 50.

⁹⁷⁸ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, l. 50.

⁹⁷⁹ Vasilii Chapaev was a Soviet hero from the times of the Civil War. A film by the Vasiliev brothers in 1934 established Chapaev as a national hero.

⁹⁸⁰ Klassicheskaia Muzyka strany sovetov. In *SI* February 5, 1936: 1. It was repeatedly claimed that classical composers from Mozart to Glinka based their creations on folk themes, for example Chemberdzhii, N. 1936, 2: O chuvstve otvetstvennosti. In *SI* February 17, 1936.

⁹⁸¹ Stalin, I. V. 1939, 245–254: *Marksizm i natsionalno-kolonialnii vopros*. Leningrad: Gospolitizdat. Originally, the speech was held at the Sixteenth Party Congress in the summer of 1930. It was about the national question and against great-Russian chauvinism. Later on, Stalin's notion became famous in connection with socialist realism.

⁹⁸² Platon Kerzhentsev chaired a meeting about the work of the opera houses in March of 1936 to which the leadership of Russian and Ukrainian opera houses was invited, along with several important composers. At this meeting, Kerzhentsev underlined the importance of *Pravda's* articles and assured that the Committee would help them

built in each of the republics and composers were sent from Moscow to those republics that did not have enough sufficiently skilled composers to compose the basis of their national repertory. Kyrgyz, which received their national festival in Moscow in 1939, serves as a representative example.

Prior to the Revolution, folk artists, whose music lacked Western notation, dominated music life in the Kyrgyz Soviet Republic (split from Russian SFSR in 1936). Thus, Russian composers were needed in order to create a suitable repertory for the Kyrgyz Republic. Miaskovskii's student Vladimir Fere, and Vladimir Vlasov – who had formerly conducted the symphony orchestra of the House of the Red Army (*TsDKA*) before he undertook the construction of Kyrgyz music life in 1936 – were chosen to go to Kyrgyz. Over the following years, they began to produce a national repertory: the first musical drama *Altyn-Kyz, Golden Maid*, for a national epic was completed in 1938 and the first opera *Aichurek*, in 1939.⁹⁸³ This opera was based on melodies composed by Kyrgyz Abdylas Maldybaev – a musician and the chairman of the Kyrgyz Composers' Union, National Artist of the USSR, and Deputy of Supreme Soviet USSR, as well as a Party member from 1939. Even Maldybaev's output was only partly based on local folk songs – lots of it followed Russian or Western patterns, as he himself admitted.⁹⁸⁴ Naturally (sic!), Russians Fere and Vlasov both became national artists of the Kyrgyz SSR, and fathers of Kyrgyz opera and ballet, yet local Maldybaev was named the National Artist of USSR. In the future, they all would produce many operas and ballets based on national folklore. Simultaneously, Kyrgyz music became more accessible to the Western audience.

In the previous part we already saw how members of the Composers' Union were involved in this work even before 1936. The Committee, however, took this work to a completely new level. As Kyrgyz was promoted in 1936 to the status of a Soviet republic instead of being a mere autonomous republic in Russian SFSR, just like Kazakh SSR was, the character of their prevalent nationality was forcefully emphasized. This was especially true of music. However, while the indigenous cultural forms of these nationalities were brought to the fore, they were simultaneously westernized – especially through Western notation, but also by bringing Western forms of music to these republics. Opera houses were built and philharmonias were set up in great numbers. While the plan was to establish an opera in every Soviet republican capital, philharmonias were also established to support symphonic and chamber music – musical forms that were originally completely alien to many of these nationalities. In the spring, there were already sixteen philharmonias in the Soviet Union, but also plans to set up thirteen new orchestras by the end of 1937.⁹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, opera remains perhaps the most salient example of this new policy.

to stage Soviet opera with all possible means. See: Soveshchanie o sovetskoi opere. In *Pravda* 11.3.1936: 6.

⁹⁸³ Livshits, A. 1939, 33–47: Kirgizskaia opera. In *SM* 5/1939.

⁹⁸⁴ Maldybaev, A. 1939, 36–37: Moi tvorcheskii put. In *SM* 6/1939.

⁹⁸⁵ Na vysokom podieme (Muzykalnaia kultura Strany Sovetov). In *SM* 4/1937: 20.

In part, this side of the musical policy reflected the continuation of the Bolshevik policy of *korenizatsiia*, korenization, or indigenization. Formulated by Stalin in 1913, the policy of korenization meant promoting representatives of the nationalities of Soviet republics in all levels of administration, not excluding central administration. Although in the mid-1930s the hegemony of the Russian language was already obviously against the idea of korenization, republican musical cultures, their folklore, and indigenous features were strongly emphasized and brought to the fore in Moscow. While there had been strong ethnic consolidation in many of the Soviet republics, those that survived were named as republics in the constitution of 1936 and had their national identities recognized and strongly supported.⁹⁸⁶

Michael Rouland has studied in depth the question of Kazakh culture and its development during the early Soviet years, and he concludes that Kazakh musical culture particularly benefited from Soviet politics. He refuses to accept the idea—often suggested—that supporting national cultures was just about collecting ethnographic material and its further production in Moscow to national operas. Rouland points out that the Kazakh national festival held in Moscow in May of 1936 actually marked a peak in the rise of Kazakh musical culture and Kazakh musical figures. Kazakh State Musical-Drama Theater, which was so prominent during the Moscow festival of 1936, was established only a little more than two years earlier. Notably, it nurtured genuinely Kazakh forms of art. Although Evgenii Brusilovskii from Leningrad compiled the first two Kazakh operas, they closely corresponded to the original forms of Kazakh musical art. In fact, the western conception of opera could hardly apply to these works, since they did not contain arias, and the ensemble and the choir were used rather differently from usual. Instead, a great number of Kazakh instrumental works were included, the story was based on local folklore, and operas followed traditional Kazakh forms of expression.⁹⁸⁷

Even if the Committee had not intended to stress Kazakh national characteristics in order to benefit the Kazakh Republic, this was exactly what it managed to do. For the Kazakh government, the success was obvious and it hailed the opera as a major achievement.⁹⁸⁸ Kerzhentsev of course emphasized the simplicity, naturalness, and general accessibility of Kazakh art as an example for all Soviet art. He also underlined that while it had embraced European symphonic orchestra, Kazakh theater also preserved national instruments.⁹⁸⁹ It seems that Kazakh art embraced aspects of the European art forms, but still managed to preserve its traditional and genuine nature. In 1936, it was raised with the aid of the Committee to the status of a competent Soviet nation. For the Committee, operas were most important, although the Kazakh

⁹⁸⁶ Martin, Terry 2001, 172–181, 328–335, 432: *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

⁹⁸⁷ Rouland, Michael 2004, 181–208: Music and the 1936 Festival of Kazak Arts. In Edmunds, Neil (ed.), *Soviet Music and Society under Lenin and Stalin. The Baton and Sickle*, London: RoutledgeCurzon.

⁹⁸⁸ Kuznetsov, N. 1936, 53: Kazakhskii muzykalnii teatr v Moskve. In *SM* 7/1936.

⁹⁸⁹ Kerzhentsev, P. 1936, 4: Kazakhskoe iskusstvo. In *Pravda* 24.5.1936.

theater also preserved more national forms of art. Opera perhaps represented the greatest compromise between Oriental and Western forms of art.

National operas were expected to be either “heroic dramas of the people” or national epics. Similarities between these new operas and their Russian counterparts of the nineteenth century are quite obvious. Although national musical cultures were emphasized, at the same time Russian culture was seen as pre-eminent and local cultures were expected to acknowledge its superior nature. This was not even attempted to be concealed. Iarustovskii openly acknowledged that nineteenth-century Russian composers had drawn influences from Ukrainian, Georgian, and other local musical cultures. However, even more importantly, he said that Russian musical culture had helped and enabled these republican cultures to develop. He maintained that all the notable republican composers had been educated by Russian masters.⁹⁹⁰ His point was that republican cultures were naturally bonded to Russian culture. What he implied was that they were subordinate to it.

Yet, Russian musical culture also seemed to offer Soviet nationalities the possibility to distance themselves from Western musical culture, and this may be why there seems to have been little resistance to Russian music. The theoretical basis for this work was offered by Rimskii-Korsakov and his predecessors, who had believed in the distinctive nature of Russian music already in the nineteenth century. However, they had eventually admitted that distinctly Russian music was a mere fantasy since, whatever its distinct character was, it still was based on “pan-European harmony and melody.”⁹⁹¹ Nevertheless, Soviet cultural policy now revived the mythology of distinctively Russian music in order to use it as the ideological basis for Soviet music. It was asserted in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* that the late works of Wagner and those of early Richard Strauss were mystic and national-chauvinistic. Brahms’ and Bruckner’s styles were deemed academic when compared to the Russian masters whose music was close to the people and drew from folk motifs and folklore.⁹⁹²

The festival of Ukrainian art held in Moscow in March of 1936 reinforces this picture. For the first time in Soviet history, articles about music filled the main Soviet newspapers. For almost two weeks, *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* covers featured pictures from the Ukrainian festival and published several articles about the festival every day. Stalin was present at all of the major spectacles along with other major representatives of the Party. The major events of the festival included performances of both old and new Ukrainian opera classics and a spectacle of Ukrainian song and dance.⁹⁹³ The Composers’ Union had hoped for this level of publicity for music for years, but had been unable to make this happen. The Committee succeeded this easily with the support of the Party.

⁹⁹⁰ Iarustovskii, B. 1938, 86: Dekada russkoi klassicheskoi muzyki. In *SM* 4/1938.

⁹⁹¹ Frolova-Walker, Marina 1998, 339, 342: “National in Form, Socialist in Content”; Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics. In *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51(2), 1998.

⁹⁹² Alshvang, A. 1938, 7-8: Narodnost v russkoi klassicheskoi muzyke. In *SM* 5/1938.

⁹⁹³ See, for example, *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* from March 11 to March 24, 1936.

Only two months later, in May of 1936, a festival of Kazakh art in Moscow followed. As well as being a success for Kazakh art, it was marked a triumph for the Committee's musical policy. Again, music received major publicity. When Brusilovskii's opera based on Kazakh folklore and folk music, *The Silk Maiden, Kyz Jibek*, was staged at the *Bolshoi*, it received prolonged applause but not just for the spectacle: Stalin also received a standing ovation.⁹⁹⁴ Georgian and Uzbek festivals in 1937 followed the same pattern. Several pictures of Stalin, Molotov, and Beria sitting in their official box at the Georgian festival were published.⁹⁹⁵ Official support was natural as it was in line with the Party's aim to underline "friendship of the peoples." Stalin emphasized in 1936 that mutual distrust had been replaced with real fraternal cooperation between Soviet peoples. While Russian national culture was being rehabilitated, the cultures of other Soviet republics were emphasized in order to point out the success of Soviet nationality politics.⁹⁹⁶ Still, such official support for any kind of musical activity was unprecedented.

The new music policy was a success story for the Committee for Artistic Affairs and for Kerzhentsev personally. After the initial Ukrainian festival Kerzhentsev wrote a piece in *Pravda*, in which he argued that musical works based on folk themes and folk songs were an example to formalists of how to create works of good quality. He scorned the wasteful policies of the *Bolshoi* theater compared to the authentic staging by Ukrainian theater and stated that pomposity as such was not wrong, but it should be "explicit and strong like the parade in Red Square or in the Mayday Parade."⁹⁹⁷ Such were the instructions of the most prominent cultural official of Soviet opera and ballet.

Some of these selected works were the products of local cultures, in some cases Russian composers created operas from local folklore. However, simultaneously with this cultivation of selected local culture, Russian classics were continuously sent to these newly established concert stages. For example, in the spring of 1938 a festival of pre-Revolutionary Russian music was organized simultaneously in twenty-three cities across the Soviet Union. Russian classical music was introduced to the audiences at more than two hundred concerts.⁹⁹⁸ Thus, Russian classics became the core of Soviet musical repertory along with national exemplars and music by Soviet composers.

An example of how the Committee managed to change the scale of musical activities is also offered by the festivities for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution, for which an unprecedented amount of Soviet music was composed and performed; this occasion was arranged jointly with the Composers' Union. Forty-seven concerts were in Moscow and numerous others in provincial cities; three hundred works from over a hundred Soviet

⁹⁹⁴ Spektakli Kazakhskogo muzykalnogo teatra prokhodiat s bolshim uspekham. Na spektakle "Kyz-Zhibek" prisutstvovali tovarishch STALIN, rukovoditeli partii i pravitelstva. In *SI* May 23, 1936: 1.

⁹⁹⁵ Slava artistam gruzinskogo naroda! In *SI* January 11, 1937: 1.

⁹⁹⁶ Martin 2001, 440-443.

⁹⁹⁷ Kerzhentsev, Platon 1936, 4: Itogi ukrainskoi dekadny. In *Pravda* March 22, 1936.

⁹⁹⁸ Iarustovskii, B. 1938, 84-89: Dekada russkoi klassicheskoi muzyki. In *SM* 4/1938.

composers were played during the festivities.⁹⁹⁹ In contrast, when the festivities to commemorate the Fifteenth Anniversary in 1932 were planned, the Moscow City Committee of the Party had called for seven symphonic concerts to be staged in Moscow. The Composers' Union had had no available funds and had been forced to beg. *Muzgiz* and *Mosfil* both gave 5000 rubles and *Narkompros* had already refused to contribute, and so there was a funding shortfall of another 5000 rubles.¹⁰⁰⁰

The level of publicity that festivals of national music attracted made it obvious to artists that the government was wholeheartedly supporting folk-related art. Yet, the Composers' Union was not, at first, directly involved in the festivals. *Sovetskaia Muzyka* barely mentioned the Ukrainian festival¹⁰⁰¹ and the Kazakh festival went unmentioned, but during the Georgian festival (January 1937), when the political climate in the Composers' Union was already changing, there was a report of eight pages.¹⁰⁰² When the Uzbek festival was held in mid-1937, the Composers' Union reacted afterwards, although with several articles.¹⁰⁰³ The changing attitude of the Union toward national musical cultures was in line with the political atmosphere that was developing in the Union.

The Composers' Union from the outset had collected folklore and established music institutes in distant areas, but this work intensified towards the end of 1936 when the Committee became more active toward the Union. This growth in interest was reflected in the number of articles about national musical cultures that were published in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*. To mark the festival of Azerbaijani music that was held in the spring of 1938, two medium-length articles were published and afterwards almost half of the magazine was devoted to Azerbaijani music.¹⁰⁰⁴ Yet, composers and musicologists were not willing to give all the glory to the Committee. Lev Kulakovskii, when summing up the achievements of Soviet musicology, argued that musicologists had done a great deal to enable the growth of national musical cultures.¹⁰⁰⁵

Kerzhentsev actively reminded everyone of the importance of the new role of national art. After the Choir Olympiads in the summer of 1936, Kerzhentsev met representatives of nineteen different Soviet nationalities and choir leaders. At this meeting, he stated that the full weight of the music world should be put behind working with new and old folklore.¹⁰⁰⁶ To support his words, the Committee's plan for 1938 included ever more money for existing musical collectives and the establishment of eighty-eight new ones.¹⁰⁰⁷

⁹⁹⁹ See for example Kerzhentsev's report to Stalin from December 19, 1937: RGALI, f. 962, op. 10, d. 21, ll. 176-178.

¹⁰⁰⁰ GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1848, ll. 20-21.

¹⁰⁰¹ After the festival, a brief report of the main concerts was included on page 99 in *SM* 5/1937.

¹⁰⁰² *Narodnost i masterstvo* (Muzyka gruzinskogo naroda). In *SM* 1/1937: 9-16.

¹⁰⁰³ Khubov, G. 1937, 6-14: *Muzykalnoe iskusstvo Uzbekistana*. In *SM* 6/1937; Beliaev, V. 1937, 15-19: *Uzbekskii muzyk. teatr v Moskve*. In *SM* 6/1937.

¹⁰⁰⁴ See *SM* 4/1938: 68-85 and *SM* 5/1938: 5-46.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Kulakovskii, L. 1937, 119-120: *Sovetskoe muzykoznanie*. In *SM* 10-11/1937.

¹⁰⁰⁶ *V komitete po delam iskusstv*. In *SI* July 11, 1936: 4.

¹⁰⁰⁷ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, ll. 48-49.

Kerzhentsev the Patron

Besides his work in his capacity as chairman of the Committee, it seems that Kerzhentsev decided to become a patron of the arts. While he cleared the way for the supremacy of his Committee, he simultaneously began to advise composer to write on certain themes. The first, yet unsuccessful, attempt was made when Shostakovich and Kerzhentsev met in February of 1936, and has been described by Tatiana Gorიაieva.¹⁰⁰⁸ Later on, he would suggest several themes for an opera to Ivan Dzerzhinskii. First, he had suggested the 18th Century Cossack rebel Emelian Pugachev and then *Storm* after the play by Aleksandr Ostrovskii¹⁰⁰⁹, but Kerzhentsev himself said that his idea was not supported. Perhaps Kerzhentsev received his instructions from the upper level of the Party, since he wrote about not receiving support and continued that “concrete mention was made about following theme: the Vasiliev brothers’ new movie, *Days of Volochaev*, about defending the frontiers from the Japanese.” He also advised Dzerzhinskii to consider whether the Vasilievs could write a libretto for his next opera, on an everyday theme, such as new men, cities, or kolkhozes.¹⁰¹⁰ This advice was given in early December 1937. At this time, Kerzhentsev was already experiencing some problems, and he was perhaps thus forced to seek Stalin’s support when he suggested themes to important composers. *Days of Volochaev*, *Volochaevskie Dni* was actually realized and was being composed in the autumn of 1938.¹⁰¹¹

In most cases, Kerzhentsev did not have to seek out composers; they often turned to him for assistance and advice. The Composers’ Union was unable to offer protection to its members in the way the Committee was. For example, Dmitrii Shostakovich was shocked when his patron, Marshall Mikhail Tukhachevskii, was arrested and soon after shot. Losing a patron during the Stalinist Terror more than once spelled destruction for their clients. Therefore, Shostakovich reported to Kerzhentsev that he had known Marshall for only eight years and written at most four to five letters to him. Marshall had written to Shostakovich ten times. Shostakovich claimed that he was in a very difficult position and apparently asked for help in a lengthy letter.¹⁰¹² Kerzhentsev calmed Shostakovich’s fears a few days later and reassured the composer that his political reputation was largely defined by his creative productions—by their character, trend, and quality. Kerzhentsev urged Shostakovich to focus his

¹⁰⁰⁸ See Gorიაieva 1997, 480–481 quoting AP RF, f. 3, op. 35, d. 32, l. 42.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Dzerzhinskii was not the only composer to whom Kerzhentsev suggested writing a composition based on Ostrovskii’s work. Boris Asafiev, who was in close contact with Kerzhentsev, announced in the spring of 1938 that he would begin work on an opera *Bespridannitsa* (*Maiden Without a Dowry*) and that it would contain a great deal of folklore. See, Opera “bespridannitsa”. In *SM* 5/1938: 88. However, I have found no evidence that this opera was ever completed by Asafiev.

¹⁰¹⁰ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 331, l. 68.

¹⁰¹¹ See for example: Velikaia godovshchina. In *SM* 10–11/1938: 9; Dzerzhinskii, I. 1938, 21–23: Mysli ob opera. In *SM* 10–11/1938. An excerpt from this opera (the choir of partisans) was presented as an appendix in the same magazine, see: Khor partizan iz opery “Volochaevskie dni”. In *SM* 10–11/1938: 165–176.

¹⁰¹² RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 331, ll. 83–85.

attention on creative output.¹⁰¹³ Months later, when Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony was already being celebrated, the composer wrote to Kerzhentsev and told him about his work in the Conservatory, hoping that Kerzhentsev could offer some help for some his students.¹⁰¹⁴ The Committee's chairman was a man to stay on good terms with.

Others, including Boris Asafiev, had much closer dealings with Kerzhentsev. The relationship between Asafiev and Kerzhentsev is all the more interesting because of the role that Asafiev would later adopt on the music front. The men were in close correspondence in 1937, Kerzhentsev giving a great deal of advice and support to Asafiev. The opera that was most discussed was Asafiev's *Minin and Pozharshky*—with a libretto written by Mikhail Bulgakov.¹⁰¹⁵ The theme of the opera was next to perfect: historical, patriotic and about defending the country against foreign oppressors. Asafiev described how the project of *Minin* had been long delayed because of his other projects. He also discredited his earlier ballets. In return, Kerzhentsev regarded Asafiev as the leading Soviet composer and praised his ballets. Then he raised the issue of *Minin and Pozharskii*.¹⁰¹⁶ Two months later, Kerzhentsev had given him detailed advice about incorporating certain features into the opera: a political and heroic aria to Minin about freedom from oppression and two or three folk themes, perhaps one against Poles and one against Boiars (nobles). Kerzhentsev mentioned that he had read Bulgakov's libretto once again, and stated that it was not bad but was rather schematic and required a lot of re-working. Throughout, Kerzhentsev made comparisons to *Ivan Susanin*.¹⁰¹⁷

¹⁰¹³ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 331, l. 82.

¹⁰¹⁴ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 331, ll. 85b–86.

¹⁰¹⁵ Bulgakov and Asafiev had written the opera already in 1936. Bulgakov was at the time librettist of the *Bolshoi* theater and his was also on close terms with Asafiev, who was one of his regular guests at home. Natov 1996, 183–184. According to Natov, the opera would have been finished on December 25, but Asafiev's telegram indicates that it was finished already on October 16, 1936. See Telegram of Boris Asafiev to Mikhail Bulgakov October 17, 1936. Wright reports the opera to have been accepted for production and that problems arose only in the summer of 1937 when *Ivan Susanin*, an opera on the same theme was brought forward. Therefore, the choice had to be made between these two operas. Wright, A. Colin 1978, 226: *Mikhail Bulgakov: life and interpretations*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Whatever the reason, *Ivan Susanin* reached the stage while *Minin i Pozharskii* did not.

¹⁰¹⁶ Asafiev's letter was dated September 22, 1937, see: RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 331, ll. 98–109. Kerzhentsev's reply from October 7, 1937, see: RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 331, ll. 94–96. Asafiev immediately replied with a short letter two days later and complimented Kerzhentsev. Originally, Kerzhentsev had written to Asafiev about this opera in March of 1937 and advised him that Asafiev's opera needed more clarity, something Dzerzhinskii's operas *Silent Don* and *Virgin Soil Upturned* possessed. In Kerzhentsev's view, this opera should absolutely be a heroic one, l. 112.

¹⁰¹⁷ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 331, ll. 110–111. These comparisons further suggest that the main reason to withdraw *Minin* would have been in giving *Ivan Susanin* the chance to stand alone in the limelight as a historical opera about the war with Poland in 1609–1612. Wright has assessed that *Minin* was really rather schematic and its sole driving force would have been fierce patriotism. See: Wright 1978, 227. Bulgakov himself remarked in the spring that increasing talks about *Ivan Susanin* were suggesting that it was going to be either *Susanin* or *Minin*, there was no room for both. Letter of Mikhail Bulgakov to Boris Asafiev May 10, 1937.

Bulgakov's and Asafiev's own correspondence about *Minin and Pozharskii* reveals that Bulgakov had, like Asafiev, been in close contact with Kerzhentsev and sent excerpts to be evaluated by him. Bulgakov was distressed, since Kerzhentsev demanded a lot of changes and Bulgakov saw no way out. He was facing a dead-end. But he was not alone; it seems that Asafiev was at least equally tormented¹⁰¹⁸. Asafiev apparently felt that his compositions were shunned and Bulgakov would have been urged to dissociate himself from Asafiev, as if Asafiev was going to be denounced. Yet, Bulgakov was unwilling to abandon Asafiev and tried to calm him. By December of 1937 Bulgakov was already calling Asafiev to come to Moscow so that the production of *Minin* would be saved.¹⁰¹⁹

Still, in the course of the following months, during the spring of 1938, Bulgakov sent several excerpts from the libretto for Asafiev to look through. Bulgakov addressed Asafiev in a friendly manner and sent greetings from his wife as well.¹⁰²⁰ Bulgakov's and Asafiev's friendship seemed durable enough to carry on despite the turmoil of the years. This, however, was not enough to save the opera. The revising of the opera was finally completed in 1938 and it was to be premiered the next year, which it apparently never was, but merely broadcast in the end of 1938. Another joint project of Asafiev and Bulgakov, *Peter the First*, was also cancelled prior to its premiere.¹⁰²¹ Personally, Asafiev seems to have had serious doubt about his composing skills. He bemoaned having fought 53 years to get recognition as a composer and implied that he

¹⁰¹⁸ In fact, when several Bulgakov's manuscripts had been denied publishing and production, Asafiev tried to comfort him and said that he had similar experiences and that he was also a lone wolf, not respected by other composers and not even by musicologists. See: Letter of Boris Asafiev to Mikhail Bulgakov, July 23, 1936.

¹⁰¹⁹ Letter of Boris Asafiev to Mikhail Bulgakov, December 15, 1937; Letter of Mikhail Bulgakov to Boris Asafiev, December 18, 1937; Letter of Boris Asafiev to Mikhail Bulgakov, December 19, 1937; Letter of Mikhail Bulgakov to Boris Asafiev, December 25, 1937. In Curtis, J. A. E. 1991, 293–295: Käsikirjoitukset eivät pala! Mikhail Bulgakovin elämä kirjeiden ja päiväkirjojen valossa. Translated from English by Jaakkola, Marja-Leena. Helsinki: WSOY; Asafiev's arrival in Moscow, see: Curtis 1991, 295. After Bulgakov and Asafiev had changed both desperate letters and telegrams, Asafiev eventually arrived at Moscow weeks later, in January 16, 1938, but *Minin's* fate was not even then finally resolved.

¹⁰²⁰ RGALI, f. 2658, op. 1, d. 503, ll. 1–10ob. Letters are dated from October 2, 1937 to April 20, 1938.

¹⁰²¹ *Peter the First* was suggested to Bulgakov by Asafiev. In the spring of 1937 another composer, one Petunin had asked Bulgakov to write him a libretto on the theme, but Asafiev firmly claimed his right for *Peter the First*. Apparently, Samosud, the director of *Bolshoi* did not want Asafiev to compose the music and Kerzhentsev once again was requiring so many changes to the libretto, that Bulgakov was utterly distressed. Sokolov, Boris 1996: Petr Velikii. In *Entsiklopediia Bulgakova*. Moscow: Lokid-Mif, pp. 371–376. Marina Frolova-Walker has alleged that there was a Stalinist Soviet opera project from the mid-1930s until 1945. This project would have aimed at genuinely Soviet opera and produced a host of operas. The project was, however, abandoned due to criticism and too many demands. The requirements were set so high that such an opera could not be produced. See: Frolova-Walker, Marina 2006: The Soviet opera project: Ivan Dzerzhinsky vs. Ivan Susanin. In *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18(2), 2006, pp. 181–216. This seems to be in line with the fate of Asafiev's and Bulgakov's *Minin and Pozharskii*, which was the target of many demands and was perhaps thus never staged, although its theme was perfect from the current Soviet point of view.

was still being ignored and *Bolshoi* rather gave offers to other, younger composers.¹⁰²² Opera seems to have been the arena of the most political struggle and Asafiev and Bulgakov got their share of it.¹⁰²³

Perhaps at least partly the political turmoil in opera was due to interests of the Committee and Kerzhentsev, personally. Therefore, it is quite surprising that certain themes and text were absent for so long. For example, the first opera composed after Gorkii's texts, Zhelobinskii's *Mother*, was finished only in 1939. While the rapid growth in the number of Soviet operas being composed started in 1936, many did not have original themes but were either based on novels or recently made films, like *Days of Volochaev* by Dzerzhinskii, *Battleship Potemkin* by Oles (Aleksandr) Chishko, or *Chapaev* by Boris Mokrousov.¹⁰²⁴ *Mother* was of course supported by the Committee before and after its premiere. The first broader review of the work was published in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* and was written by Moisei Grinberg, head of the Committee's music administration. He emphasized that the *Bolshoi*, which premiered the work, had not fully grasped the importance of this opera, but neither had Zhelobinskii managed to present the deepest idea of Gorkii's *Mother* (although Grinberg did not elaborate on what this might have been, either) in his music. Yet, *Mother* was regarded as an important point in the development of Soviet opera.¹⁰²⁵ The Committee felt this task was its own.

The Confrontation: Committee vs. Composers' Union

The quarrelsome Composers' Union

The articles in *Pravda* and the establishment of the Committee on Artistic Affairs threw the Composers' Union into disarray. The problems, however, had started sometime earlier. The atmosphere in Moscow had deteriorated. This is illustrated by a letter from Vissarion Shebalin published in the magazine *Soviet Art* almost simultaneously with *Pravda's* article on *Lady Macbeth*.

Shebalin questioned the approach adopted by the Composers' Union in Moscow in almost every way. According to him, contracts arranged by the Union caused inequality among composers, because certain individuals were favored. He felt that his own symphonic poem *Lenin* had been disregarded by

¹⁰²² Letter of Boris Asafiev to Mikhail Bulgakov December 19, 1937.

¹⁰²³ Bulgakov wrote to Asafiev in the autumn of 1937 that Kerzhentsev had demanded impossible things from his libretto for *Peter the First*. While Bulgakov had finished it-already, it should have been started all over again. Yet, Bulgakov wished that Asafiev would be the one to compose it, if it ever was to be rewritten. Letter of Mikhail Bulgakov to Asafiev October 2, 1937.

¹⁰²⁴ Philip Ross Bullock suggests that discussion on Soviet opera in the 1930s was by far a discussion on librettos. One of the most important sources for Stalinist Soviet opera, according to him, could be found in the Socialist Realist novel. See especially: Bullock, Philip Ross 2006: Staging Stalinism: the Search for Soviet opera in the 1930s. In *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18(1), 2006, pp. 83-108.

¹⁰²⁵ Grinberg, M. 1939, 9-19: Opera "Mat" – V. Zhelobinskogo. In *SM* 5/1939.

the Union for three years. Currently, Shebalin had no contract at all. He considered that the Union was neglecting work with Soviet symphony, opera, and chamber music. He also declared that Moscow was doing nothing to effectively promote the work of young composers and the propagation of Soviet music. He also felt that the Union did not support Soviet composers, which should be the foremost task of the Union. He also criticized the State Musical Publisher, *Muzgiz*. Generally, Shebalin urged the Moscow Union to reorganize its work and follow the good example set by the Leningrad branch.¹⁰²⁶

Shebalin's letter triggered a series of events due to the timing of its publication, as he practically denounced everything the Union was expected to do. Shebalin perhaps never wished for any such events to follow his words, since he could not know about the campaign against formalism that was about to take place. Shebalin's letter scorned the Composers' Union, its atmosphere and operations. Kerzhentsev was alert to the opportunity to use it against the Composers' Union. However, before the Committee and Kerzhentsev became involved, several members of the Composers' Union replied to the letter, pointing out the successes of their organization and accusing Shebalin of "deliberate sabotage."¹⁰²⁷ Under the prevailing circumstances, Shebalin's comrades were not happy to receive public criticism. However, the harm was already done and Kerzhentsev would use Shebalin's statement as an excuse to get involved in affairs of the Composers' Union: "It is not normal that a composer cannot work in a creative union." Kerzhentsev would call the situation "abnormal."¹⁰²⁸ Shebalin was in practice left outside the Union, although not expelled, and could only return after its leadership changed. Yet, his fellow composers never abandoned him; he was still in correspondence with Shostakovich, for example.¹⁰²⁹

Shebalin was not alone in causing quarrels and trouble for the Composers' Union. The only instance of a composer being expelled from the Union (at least in the 1930s) took place in early 1936, as well. Yet, it reflected new moral codes rather than political climate. This "scandal" concerned Aleksandr Mosolov, famous for his *Iron Foundry*. The latest of incidents caused by him took place in the restaurant *Press House*, where he had apparently been caught up in a drunken brawl at the end of January 1936. This was but one of numerous incidents caused by him. A general meeting of the Composers' Union ruled that Mosolov was unworthy to be a Soviet artist and expelled him. Cheliapov regarded the implications of this resolution to be far reaching: moral corruption would result in expulsion.¹⁰³⁰

¹⁰²⁶ Shebalin, V. 1936, 3: O soiuzе kompozitorov. In *SI* January 29, 1936.

¹⁰²⁷ O soiuzе kompozitorov. In *SI* February 5, 1936: 3. The letter was signed by composers Khachaturian, Kabalevskii, Nechaev, Belyi, and Chemberdzhi among others.

¹⁰²⁸ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 65–69.

¹⁰²⁹ Shostakovich's letter to Shebalin was dated April 17, 1936. See: Razheva, V. I. (ed.) 2003, 225–226: V. Ia. Shebalin. *Zhizn i tvorchestvo*. Moscow: Molodoia gvardiia.

¹⁰³⁰ Cheliapov, N. 1936, 4: O nedostoinom postupke kompozitora Mosolova. In *SI* February 11, 1936; also Vaks, K. 1936, 104: Kompozitor Mosolov iskliuchen iz SSK. In *SM* 3/1936; these were also mentioned by Hakobian 1998, 55 and Brooke 2002, 409.

The tradition of bohemianism and hooliganism that had long been seen as part of the life of the intelligentsia could not be part of the life of the Soviet intelligentsia in Cheliapov's view. Drinking problems among composers hardly disappeared, yet Mosolov's case became an example. Almost a year later, in December of 1936, Mosolov was reported to be in Turkmen SSR collecting folk songs in order to rehabilitate himself.¹⁰³¹ This however, did not save Mosolov, who in the autumn of 1937 received a sentence of eight years in the camps. However, his teachers Miaskovskii and Glier managed to save him with their appeal in the spring of 1938, and he was only denied the right to live and work in Moscow, Leningrad, or Kiev for five years.¹⁰³² Even after composers were expelled and sentenced, they took care of their colleagues.

Interestingly, no other composer was expelled no matter how severe the accusations of formalism or other ideological mistakes. Yet, the difficult atmosphere in the Composers' Union can be verified in many other sources. Prokofiev's letter to Cheliapov in the autumn of 1936 is another illustrative case. Prokofiev complained that rumors were being spread about him in the Union. He was accused of not subscribing to a circular that was concerned with the situation in Spain. Prokofiev asserted that he was definitely not against helping democratic Spain in the Civil War.¹⁰³³ The circular expressed sympathy for the socialist cause in Spain and revealed that composers had sent a selection of the best mass songs to help in the struggle. They also organized a fund to help families of the revolutionary guards. Prokofiev was not mentioned among donors.¹⁰³⁴ Although the occasion is largely amusing, it gives an impression that rumors poisoning the atmosphere were already common in the Union.

The situation led to a search for scapegoats. Instead of criticized formalists, former members of the Association for Proletarian Musicians, *RAPM*, and especially its leader, Lev Lebedinskii, became targets. Lebedinskii, the leader of the mass music sector of the Union in 1936, came under harsh criticism at a three-day general meeting of the Moscow Composers' Union in February of 1936.¹⁰³⁵ However, he escaped most of the criticism without consequences. Lebedinskii even managed to defend himself and his background as a proletarian musician. Yet, this would backfire before a year had passed. It was becoming clear that instead of being a uniform institution, the Composers' Union was full of contradictions, which started to surface in 1936.

While inner controversies caused some trouble for the Composers' Union in 1936, it found itself at odds with external adversaries. For example, *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, the organ of the Union confronted *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo*, the organ of the Committee on Artistic Affairs. Certain Grigoriev had criticized several

¹⁰³¹ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, l. 8.

¹⁰³² Hakobian 1998, 55. Hakobian, however, never mentions that Mosolov had drinking problems. Instead, he sees professional disputes behind Mosolov's arrest. Mosolov's sentence, see: Barsova, I. 1989: Iz neopublikovannogo arkhiva A. V. Mosolova. In *SM* 7/1989, pp. 80-92 and 8/1989, pp. 69-75, Mosolov's sentence at pp. 70-72.

¹⁰³³ RGALI, f. 1929, op. 2, d. 331, l. 1.

¹⁰³⁴ Na pomoshch ispanskomu narodu! In *SM* 11/1936: 80.

¹⁰³⁵ Diskussiiia v soiuze kompozitorov. In *SI* February 17, 1936: 3.

composers for being passive or because their recent work was of poor quality. At least the names of Shekhter, Shaporin, and Nechaev were mentioned.¹⁰³⁶ The presidium of the Composers' Union ruled that the accusations were unfounded, and it accused Grigoriev of making several mistakes in his statement. Furthermore, *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* had not published the presidium's reply.¹⁰³⁷ It seems as though the Union was being tested, since the real attacks began at the end of the year.

The first blow

Although formally the Committee on Artistic Affairs was superior to the Composers' Union, in practice the Composers' Union had quite far-reaching autonomy. This is illustrated by the ensuing struggle between these two organizations. The power struggle surfaced the day after the concert of songs for Stalin (December 2, 1936). The Moscow Composers' Union was called to a meeting with the Committee about the shortcomings in the Union's work. Kerzhentsev and Moisei Grinberg of the Committee's musical administration were the main speakers at the meeting.

Cheliapov gave the first address. In it he summarized the successes of the Composers' Union and was clearly defending the autonomous status of the Union. He believed that during 1936 many composers started to work on folk themes, following the publication of *Pravda's* articles. He boasted that 155 visits had been made to 25 kolkhozes across the Moscow region in recent years.¹⁰³⁸ Cheliapov also presented a long and rather schematic list of symphonic and chamber works composed by members of the Union. After Cheliapov had finished his defense, Moisei Grinberg began the attack on the shortcomings of the Union.

Moisei Grinberg became a prominent figure in following years. He was Kerzhentsev's right-hand man in music and later on became notorious for his role in the music scandal of 1948. He was also a musicologist by training, and perhaps this was why he was so important to Kerzhentsev. He became the first director of the renamed Musical Department of the Committee on Artistic Affairs (1938–39), having already served as the vice-leader of the Committee's music administration in 1936. In February of 1936, Kerzhentsev had also been appointed as the leader of *Muzgiz*. He succeeded Cheliapov as Chief Editor of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* (1937–39), and thus he held a very prominent position in the Soviet musical administration. Later, he would be appointed as the leader of musical radio broadcasts (1941–49) and, from 1953 until 1969, he was appointed the artistic director of Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra. He had become a Party-member in 1930.

In his past, Grinberg also had a very interesting connection with another influential Party-member and musicologist, namely Gorodinskii. They had both

¹⁰³⁶ Grigoriev, B. 1936, 3: Nebrosovetsnye obvineniia. In *SI* August 29, 1936.

¹⁰³⁷ Presidium Soiuzu sovetskikh kompozitorov: Nedobrosovetsnye obvineniia. In *SM* 11/1936: 100.

¹⁰³⁸ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 1–11.

sat on the presidium of *Rabis's* Central Committee in the early 1930s.¹⁰³⁹ Boleslav Pshibyshevskii and Mikhail Arkadiev, both prominent personalities in *Narkompros* and in the early Composers' Union, had also been members of the Central Committee of *Rabis*. Furthermore, *Rabis's* municipal committee (*gorkom*) for composers in Moscow was headed, and represented in *Rabis's* meetings, by Levon Atovmian, and Leningrad *Rabis's* officials included Iokhelson (1904–41). This not only testifies to the fact that some people moved from organization to the other, but also that there were only a few administrators who specialized in music, at least at the beginning of the 1930s, and that most of them knew each other quite well.

In December of 1936, Grinberg was already the Committee's man. At the meeting with the Composers' Union, he began his address by rebutting Cheliapov's arguments. He claimed that discussion on formalism had not been as successful as Cheliapov had claimed. According to Grinberg, the list of compositions that Cheliapov claimed had been written as a result of the discussions included works that were completed before 1936. Grinberg also poured scorn on Cheliapov for giving detailed numbers of unfinished operas but being unable to name even one of these. He believed that the presidium of the Union was passive and pointed out that it had held no plenums for years. Ideological leadership was also disregarded. Grinberg himself had carried out an inspection of the Union but had found no members of the leadership present. He was told that it was a time for a monthly break. Grinberg then claimed that the "over-worked" Cheliapov was in his office only every sixth day. The Union's bureaucracy was also extremely burdensome. There were a great number of sectors in comparison to the number of members. Many important composers, such as Daniil and Dmitrii Pokrass or Matvei Blanter, were, according to Grinberg, still outside the Union.¹⁰⁴⁰

Grinberg's final accusation was the bad atmosphere illustrated by Shebalin's letter. As a result, he argued, the Union was unable to represent the whole musical life of the Soviet Union. In conclusion, Grinberg stated that the work of the Union was unsatisfying.¹⁰⁴¹ In the general discussion, Cheliapov was already on the defensive. Composers, like Leonid Shvarts, complained that their Union had for example delayed discussions of cliquishness. Cheliapov tried to repel this criticism by shouting that the Composers' Union discussed the matter earlier than any other art union.¹⁰⁴² Cheliapov tried several times to defend himself in this way. One of the Union's long-standing Party-members and its first but already ex-secretary Gorodinskii also turned against the leadership of the Union. He criticized it over many points—about creative discussions as well as its administration.¹⁰⁴³

¹⁰³⁹ See for example GARF, f. 5508, op. 1, d. 1718, l. 18 (Presidium meeting on May 27, 1932).

¹⁰⁴⁰ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 11–16ob.

¹⁰⁴¹ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 16ob–18.

¹⁰⁴² RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, l. 22.

¹⁰⁴³ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 32ob–39.

The atmosphere in the Union was generally criticized in the meeting as well as the lack of adequate creative discussion. Goldenveizer touched upon cliquishness when he claimed that, while composers complained about soloists not playing Soviet music, composers never visited the soloists section.¹⁰⁴⁴ Composers were especially worried about small number of creative reviews and the amount of bureaucracy. Nikolai Chemberdzhii stated that his symphonic works had not aroused attention for the last two years. Additionally, Knipper's work was deteriorating and his recent fifth and sixth symphonies had been among the worst, but he was not helped by the Union. Chemberdzhii suggested that bureaucracy should be reduced and the post of an organizational secretary should be established.¹⁰⁴⁵ Along with Chemberdzhii, Khachaturian also made very concrete remarks about how to correct the work of the Union.¹⁰⁴⁶ Aleksandr Vepruk agreed that the atmosphere had worsened and he maintained that issues were discussed behind the back of the subject rather than face-to-face. Vepruk implied that harmful rumors were being spread around the Union.¹⁰⁴⁷ Belyi gave his warning about not slandering comrades.¹⁰⁴⁸ A host of other composers addressed the meeting and gave similar accounts. Most composers were critical of the leadership; few were willing to defend it openly.

Shatilov, another of Kerzhentsev's subordinates, believed that composers needed leaders in the vein of army leaders and argued that the Union should be divided into sections with its own commanders. He called upon the presidium to act like a headquarters. Because of the small number of composers, the leadership in Moscow should know every composition that members were working on. In response to composers' requests for a club where recreational activities and creative meetings could take place, Shatilov answered that composers had to be patient. Shatilov tried to rein in requests that required financial support.¹⁰⁴⁹ Cheliapov later on continued that the Committee had paid no attention to the pleas made by the Composers' Union. All the points the Union's leadership was accused of were presented to the Committee earlier by him. Cheliapov also maintained that the Composers' Union had succeeded in several areas.¹⁰⁵⁰

Kerzhentsev gave the final address. He went on to blame the Moscow Union for not keeping in contact with other branches such as Leningrad, Ukraine, and Georgia. The lack of an all-Union organization meant that Moscow should have acted as one. Thus far, Kerzhentsev maintained, the Union had done nothing to propagate music from the Republics. Furthermore, the Committee had tried to activate the Union, because it should have led the musical activity of the Soviet Union. The Committee was active towards the

¹⁰⁴⁴ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 30–30ob.

¹⁰⁴⁵ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 23–25ob.

¹⁰⁴⁶ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 41–43.

¹⁰⁴⁷ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, l. 57ob.

¹⁰⁴⁸ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, l. 51.

¹⁰⁴⁹ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 45–50ob.

¹⁰⁵⁰ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 61–61ob.

Philharmonia; it established new orchestras and set up choirs, because the Composers' Union did nothing. Kerzhentsev also blamed the Union for not helping the conservatories to produce new musicologists.¹⁰⁵¹ Furthermore, Kerzhentsev mentioned that Stalin had referred to Soviet opera as the most important musical task, but still the Union disregarded this work. Several composers wrote operas, but the Union failed to help them. He mentioned his personal meeting with Shostakovich and maintained that they had overcome previous mistakes together and Shostakovich was writing again.¹⁰⁵² Although Shostakovich's compositional activity was surely not due to Kerzhentsev, this was something Kerzhentsev could use as an argument because it should have been the Union's task to tighten up creativity.

Kerzhentsev believed that because it was accessible to even wider population, music had the potential to become even more important than literature. In order to achieve this, the Union had to be reconstructed. Kerzhentsev obviously desired for a powerful Composers' Union, which would operate under the guidance of the Committee. He referred to the fact that the Composers' Union had disregarded the Committee's work on folk songs and festivals and claimed: "We want the Composers' Union to be like the Writers' Union." A commission, which included Shatilov, Kerzhentsev, Chemberdzhi, and Cheliapov among others, was appointed to work out a path for the Union.¹⁰⁵³ The Writers' Union was not under Kerzhentsev's direct authority and perhaps thus he hoped that the Composers' Union would become a similarly powerful organization that could serve the aims of his Committee. In any case, he stubbornly continued with his attempts to direct the work of the Union.

Eradication of *RAPMist* remnants

Unfortunately, there are no surviving details of the work carried out by the commission set up by Kerzhentsev to restructure the Composers' Union. It is possible that no work was actually done, since the struggle between the Committee and the Union continued into the spring of 1937. The months after the December meeting did not heal the Union's atmosphere; on the contrary, events took a turn for the worse. The Party had held its plenary session in March of 1937 when Stalin gave his speech about "Deficiencies in the Party work and actions for liquidating Trotskiites and other double-dealers." Kerzhentsev was obviously behind an anonymous editorial in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* that stated that this was an issue for Soviet music life. The self-criticism called for by Stalin was hardly visible in the Composers' Union. It had descended into bureaucratic dabbling rather than leading the creative work of composers.¹⁰⁵⁴

¹⁰⁵¹ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 61ob-64.

¹⁰⁵² RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 65-66.

¹⁰⁵³ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 107, ll. 65-69.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Velikii dokument epokhi. Sovetskie muzykanty dolzhny ovladet bolshevizmom. In *SM* 4/1937: 5

A new joint meeting was called in April, but it was largely unfruitful. At the start of the meeting, someone declared, “this is not a kindergarten but a Party organization.” Meetings seem to have been anything but orderly Party proceedings. Kerzhentsev opened the meeting with the announcement that the Party expected works to have political content. He lamented that many composers wrote operas about the Civil War, although there were several other topics—youth, children, science, shock workers, and physical culture—that were calling out for an opera to be written about them. The Civil War was a “safe theme” that had been discovered and addressed by many. Understandably, the other topics mentioned by Kerzhentsev did not sound all that promising for a large-scale work. The kolkhoz-ballet *Limpid Stream* (staging of which was attacked by *Pravda* in February of 1936) by Shostakovich was an example that these themes offered no guarantee that work would not be subjected to close scrutiny. Kerzhentsev also lashed out at musicologists, alleging that they did not write enough. He referred to the fact that more books about Tchaikovskii were published in English than in Russian.¹⁰⁵⁵ However, as the Committee’s meeting with the Composers’ Union produced few results, the Committee changed its strategy, causing disarray among composers.

According to Grinberg, *Pravda*’s articles had aroused composers to battle formalist tendencies. Khrennikov’s First Symphony was a brilliant example of this struggle, according to Grinberg. In his praise for the work, Grinberg only forgot to mention that this symphony had premiered in October of 1935. He went on to imply that Gavriil Popov from Leningrad was obviously a formalist and furthermore passive, since he had not composed anything lately. This argument aroused shouts from the audience: “[v]iolin concert” and “[m]usic for a film.” The Committee’s new carrot and stick approach toward composers still met with resistance and composers were unwilling to abandon their comrades. However, the carrot was tempting: Grinberg concluded by stating that the greatest problem was the lack of a working musical center of the Soviet Union. He hinted for the possibility to establish the all-Union Composers’ Union with the help of the Committee on Artistic Affairs. The Composers’ Union needed a different atmosphere, principles, and system.¹⁰⁵⁶

It is starting to become clear that the Committee’s main objective was to change the leadership of the Composers’ Union. The Leningrad Union, like the Moscow branch, was also said to be experiencing serious difficulties. A report from a ten-day meeting of the Leningrad branch made it clear that organization was operating badly. The chairman Boris Fingert had been absent for practically five years due to illness, and apparently Vladimir Shcherbachev had replaced him. His deputies Asafiev and Shaporin were said to be rather passive as well. The meeting referred to the board of the Leningrad Union as a “fictive one.” In practice, the leadership was in hands of the secretary Iokhelson.¹⁰⁵⁷ In both branches, the Committee’s target was the non-composer leadership rather than

¹⁰⁵⁵ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 268, ll. 1-27.

¹⁰⁵⁶ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 270, ll. 27-34.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Valerianov, B. 1937, 47-48: V sojuzze Leningradskikh kompozitorov. In *Rabochii i teatr* 8/1937.

composers. Kerzhentsev's aim was to eliminate other Party bureaucrats in his way. Either he did not see composers as a threat or he was not allowed to touch them.

The last attempt to confuse composers was also introduced at the meeting. During the previous spring, Lebedinskii and other former proletarian musicians were the targets of some accusations connected to the campaign against formalism. However, it did not escalate, but rather remained an internal matter for the Union. However, in the spring of 1937, the former leadership of *RAPP* was attacked in the Writers' Union. Perhaps the Committee saw a chance to cause even more disarray, and launched a simultaneous attack against former proletarian musicians in the Composers' Union. Moisei Grinberg attacked Lebedinskii and his policy as the leader of the proletarian musical movement. This must have scared Lebedinskii badly.¹⁰⁵⁸ Grinberg had grounded his attack in *Soviet Art* a few days earlier by calling all the remnants of *RAPM* to be eradicated. Iurii Keldysh was accused of presenting *RAPMist* points of views in his latest articles. Grinberg called Keldysh, Lebedinskii, and others *RAPMist* recidivists.¹⁰⁵⁹

A few days after this meeting the Composers' Union had an internal assembly. There Viktor Gorodinskii attacked Lebedinskii and Vinogradov for being against music. He gave a serious warning about cliquishness in the music community.¹⁰⁶⁰ A few weeks later an editorial in *Soviet Art* accused Kaltat and Rabinovich for maintaining *RAPMist* ideology long after the April Resolution.¹⁰⁶¹ The Committee used the situation to point out that the Composers' Union was not working efficiently and that composers were incapable of handling the situation on their own. Gorodinskii's involvement indicates that the Party was generally interested in eradicating remnants of these proletarian organizations, as he was associated with the Central Committee of the Party rather than the Committee on Artistic Affairs. Yet, it seems likely that, because proletarian musicians were hardly a genuine threat in musical life, Kerzhentsev merely used the occasion to further his personal aims.

The campaign against *RAPM* reached its pinnacle in a few weeks. At the end of May, the Party group of the Composers' Union arranged a five-day-meeting. An article titled "The final eradication of *RAPM*" reported that Gorodinskii had drawn parallels between proletarian literature and music. The writer Leopold Averbakh, who had already been convicted as an "enemy of the people" was named and linked to Lebedinskii, Shteinpress, Keldysh, Belyi, and Rabinovich. *RAPM* was said to have been the child of *RAPP*. In an interesting turn of events, Cheliapov was said to have protected former *RAPMists* and was accused of allowing them to invade and hinder the operation of the Party cell. It

¹⁰⁵⁸ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 268, l. 22.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Grinberg, M. 1937, 4: *RAPM*ovskie perepevy. In *SI* May 5, 1937. In the next issue of *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* the criticism of *RAPM* continued. *RAPM* was blamed for the ill-status of the work on Russian folklore. Russian folk music was rejected by *RAPM* and therefore, it was argued, the development of Russian musical history was delayed. See: Groman, A. 1937, 3: *Istoriia russkoi muzyki i RAPM*. In *SI* May 11, 1937.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Gorodinskii, V. 1937, 5: *O RAPM*... In *SI* May 17, 1937.

¹⁰⁶¹ *Plokhiaia gazeta*. In *SI* May 23, 1937: 5.

was alleged that proletarian musicians had arranged commemorative evenings of the “good *RAPMist* days.” The actions of Nadezhda Briusova, who had protected proletarian musicians in the Conservatory as a dean between 1929 and 1931, were being investigated.¹⁰⁶²

Gorodinskii seems to have led the attack against *RAPM*, since his speech in the Composers’ Union was approved by a general meeting. In it, he once more emphasized how the Soviet music had been able to flourish after the eradication of *RAPM*. Additionally, the accusation that proletarian musicians had shown disregard for the musical past was renewed. The fact that Gorodinskii named Lebedinskii and Belyi in his accusations suggests that they were in genuine danger. In the musicological section, the work of Keldysh, Daniil Zhitomirskii, and A. Groman-Solovtsev, all of whom had been quite active, was denounced.¹⁰⁶³ While Gorodinskii may have been genuine when he attacked former proletarian musicians (just as proletarian writers were attacked in the Writers’ Union), the Committee had other aims. This was illustrated when Gorodinskii turned against the Committee and scorned the way Grinberg lead *Muzgiz*. Grinberg repudiated all the accusations angrily, especially the influence of *RAPMist* remnants in its administration.¹⁰⁶⁴

The fact that Cheliapov was now being connected with *RAPM* reveals the true nature of the Committee’s stance. Rather than Lebedinskii or other former proletarian musicians, Cheliapov was its main target. The Committee merely aimed to cause confusion and make the Composers’ Union more vulnerable. This view is supported by the fact that the hunt for former *RAPMists* quickly fizzled out. While Averbakh was actually shot and the campaign against *RAPPists* was a bloody one, nothing like this followed in music. Although the issue of *RAPM* occasionally resurfaced, this seems to have been more ritualistic than genuine. In the spring of 1938, during the sixth anniversary of the April Resolution, Lev Khristiansen went through *RAPM*’s history and all its mistakes. He ritualistically repeated every point that was mentioned over the course of six years. He urged the new board to take the initiative with regard to “the *RAPMist* remnants.”¹⁰⁶⁵ Yet, *RAPM* was no more a subject to take action over.

In November of 1937, when the Composers’ Union was holding a meeting, someone mentioned *RAPM*. This prompted Aleksandr Gedike, previously a member of *ASM*, to stand up and say that the hunt for former proletarian musicians had to stop, and that the Union should concentrate on more topical

¹⁰⁶² Kut, A. 1937, 4: Do kontsa vykorchevat RAPMovshchinu. In *SI* May 29, 1937. This content can be found in the anonymously published article, see: Likvidirovat ostatki RAPMovshchiny. In *SM* 5/1937: 10-15; as well as in: Protiv RAPMovshchiny i formalizma (Rezoliutsiia obshchego sobraniia Mosk. Soiuz sov. kompozitorov). In *SM* 7/1937: 5-8.

¹⁰⁶³ Protiv RAPMovshchiny i formalizma (Rezoliutsiia obshchego sobraniia Mosk. Soiuz sov. kompozitorov). In *SM* 7/1937: 5-8.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Gorodinskii alleged that it was impossible to reach Grinberg from *Muzgiz*’s offices, that he was hardly ever present there, see: RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, l. 24ob; Grinberg’s reply in l. 29ob.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Khristiansen, L. 1938, 9-14: Pokonchit s perezhitkami RAPMovshchiny. In *SM* 5/1938.

matters.¹⁰⁶⁶ In fact, many former members of *RAPM* acquired notable positions in the Composers' Union. Keldysh, Belyi, Lebedinskii, and Koval all had quite bright futures on the music front in general. For Kerzhentsev, there only one obstacle that stood between him and supremacy over Soviet music: Cheliapov.

“Happy anniversary, Revolution” – the final strike

At the same time as it was causing disarray among composers, the Committee arranged yet another meeting, which would introduce the Committee's new strategy. This meeting in early May of 1937 should originally have been about the festivities of the Twentieth Anniversary of October Revolution. The meeting was conducted over several days, from May 8 to May 12, and it illustrates how the Committee was responsible for coordinating the festivities for the Twentieth Anniversary of October Revolution. It was the superstructure for the artistic world and, while the Composers' Union was an important organization in arranging musical activities for the festival, it was overseen by the Committee. The meeting is made especially interesting by the fact that it gathered together representatives from different republics, making it more authoritative than any previous meeting on the music front. The meeting was also arranged symbolically on the fifth anniversary of *RAPM*'s closure. The main topic, suggested by Moisei Grinberg's keynote speech, was formalism and ideology in music.

In his opening remarks, Kerzhentsev mentioned the failures of proletarian musicians and the need for socialist realist music. The meeting, however, was headed by Shatilov, who stated that the main reason for the meeting was to arrange the preparations of music for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution.¹⁰⁶⁷ Yet, the meeting was actually a panorama of the political situation faced by the music front in 1937 and was, furthermore, a well-planned event by the Committee.

Moisei Grinberg mentioned in his keynote speech the “great development and growth” of Soviet music and gave a series of examples of this. Yet, he underlined that formalism was still influencing Soviet music and that there were wreckers within the music world, both of which meant that more party-mindedness in music was required. After that, Grinberg started to recite a lengthy list of compositions being prepared for the October festivities in Leningrad and Moscow.¹⁰⁶⁸ Grinberg's list was not the only one—several other speakers read out similar lists from different parts of the country. While one of these lists was being read, somebody shouted out the suggestion that a copy of the lists should be given to participants beforehand in order to save time for more important matters.¹⁰⁶⁹ One notable change to previous years was that the

¹⁰⁶⁶ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, l. 15.

¹⁰⁶⁷ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 270, ll. 1–4.

¹⁰⁶⁸ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 270, ll. 5–18. The list is truly extensive. Interestingly, although more or less all of the other important composers were on the list, Shostakovich was never mentioned.

¹⁰⁶⁹ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 270, l. 57. The author was not stated.

works of light-genre composers – such as Isaak Dunaevskii, Matvei Blanter, and Dmitrii Pokrass – were included in these lists and their work was said to be important for the political education of masses.¹⁰⁷⁰

Another interesting feature of this meeting was that composers' solidarity was still intact. Several composers criticized the Committee and its representatives. Ivan Dzerzhinskii, for example, made a stinging remark about Moisei Grinberg, who had written two articles about *Silent Don* – one before Stalin had made his remarks and one after it. These two articles contradicted each other.¹⁰⁷¹ On the second day of the meeting, Grinberg, who was then chairing the assembly, was mocked even further. Grinberg had made accusations about a composition without even hearing it. Composer Vano Muradeli maintained that "one shouldn't talk of compositions he hasn't even heard." Grinberg countered by saying that "I didn't say why I haven't heard it" to which Muradeli answered, "so, that's why you heard Belyi writing about it?" There was general applause for Muradeli's remark. Belyi had written a review, which Grinberg had then presented as his own opinion. Solidarity among composers was still robust enough to turn criticism into mockery.¹⁰⁷²

Of course, laughter was one way to escape the harsh reality. The speech by Khadzhanadov was actually highly humorous. He was able to bring humor to everything he discussed: the Soviet thematic, Dzerzhinskii's operas, and the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution. It is no wonder that his speech, which ended the second day of the meeting, was hailed with prolonged applause and general laughter, both at the end and during his speech.

At this meeting, Shostakovich was defended by other composers. While Grinberg omitted Shostakovich from his list, Kushnarev from Leningrad mentioned that Shostakovich was an active member of the Union and was working with on opera and ballet.¹⁰⁷³ Although Shostakovich never completed, if indeed he ever started these works¹⁰⁷⁴, it is notable that he was brought forward by his fellows. Later on, Tikhon Khrennikov mentioned that Shostakovich was very active and that he had heard the first movement of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, which was brilliant.¹⁰⁷⁵ Even before his Fifth Symphony, which has been said to have rehabilitated him, was premiered, Shostakovich had been elected to the presidium of the Leningrad Composers' Union.¹⁰⁷⁶

¹⁰⁷⁰ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 270, l. 23.

¹⁰⁷¹ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 271, l. 12.

¹⁰⁷² RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 271, l. 29.

¹⁰⁷³ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 270, ll. 35–43.

¹⁰⁷⁴ The opera Kushnarev refers to is presumably music for the play after Nikolai Ostrovskii's *How the Steel Was Tempered*. According to Fay 2000, 114, Shostakovich was awarded a contract to compose this incidental music, but he later on opted out of it.

¹⁰⁷⁵ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 271, l. 38.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Dunaevskii, I. 1938, 64–66: Kak rabotaet Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 9/1938. In this report, Dunaevskii mentioned the elections held in the summer of 1937 and all the members of the presidium. In his article, Dunaevskii evaluated the work that had been accomplished during the first year after the leadership of the Leningrad branch had been changed.

However, not all composers followed the same line. Nikolai Chemberdzhi gave his speech on formalism. He accused the Union's leadership of failing in its struggle against formalism. He also accused composers of discrediting the search for *narodnost*. Chemberdzhi considered Prokofiev as too eclectic and argued that his music should be examined in detail—in particular, his ballet suite *Romeo and Juliet*.¹⁰⁷⁷ Both Chemberdzhi and Belyi after him heaped lavish praise on Dzerzhinskii's *Virgin Soil Upturned*. Chemberdzhi even considered that this opera, which would be premiered only half a year later, would solve the problem of Soviet operatic style.¹⁰⁷⁸ There are some interesting points here. Firstly, Chemberdzhi's views were surely noticed by the Committee, since he was soon to succeed Cheliapov as the chairman of the Composers' Union. Secondly, although *Virgin soil upturned* was not actually a great success—in fact, it rather rode on the back of its predecessor's success—these comments surely persuaded Kerzhentsev that *Virgin Soil Upturned* would be a success story, as his later comments illustrate.

Yet, it was republican representatives who made this meeting so special. Their presence also reveals the Committee's true plans. The speech by Ukrainian representative Kozitskii was the first in a series of quite similar speeches by republican representatives. Kozitskii stated that Ukrainian Composers' Union had been led for years by a certain Karpov, a Party-member, who eventually was found to be a Trotskiite. Kozitskii considered the situation in Ukraine to be difficult and this was due to poor leadership. He concluded by calling for the establishment of a union-wide Composers' Union to help the co-ordination of the music front.¹⁰⁷⁹ For the first time after the Writers' Congress, the all-union structure of the Composers' Union was openly mentioned in an official context. It is all the more significant that this notion was not left alone.

A Byelorussian representative mentioned that the situation in Byelorussia was similar to that in Ukraine. The Byelorussian Union's leader was arrested because of his anti-Party work.¹⁰⁸⁰ Following the example of Kozitskii, his Byelorussian colleague called for a union-wide Composers' Union. Practically every republican speaker repeated the necessity for an all-union organ. This also applied to the last speaker of the first day, the representative from Voronezh. He also blamed Moscow for not taking the periphery into account.¹⁰⁸¹

The third day of the meeting opened with another speech that accused Moscow of maintaining poor connections even to the Russian branches of the Composers' Union. This made it hard to distribute Soviet music and to get

¹⁰⁷⁷ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 272, ll. 14–17. Prokofiev was scorned by another composer as well. Boris Shekhter, a previous proletarian musician, believed that Prokofiev's speeches and music differed from each other. He stated: "There is a big gap between his music and his speeches about it." He was in lines with Moisei Grinberg in this matter, see: RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 273, l. 37.

¹⁰⁷⁸ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 272, ll. 16, 22.

¹⁰⁷⁹ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 270, ll. 47–57.

¹⁰⁸⁰ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 270, l. 59.

¹⁰⁸¹ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 270, ll. 70–73

compositions from outside Moscow performed at any venue in the capital.¹⁰⁸² This was not completely accurate, as the Moscow branch had activated some contacts. In March of 1937, for example, Moscow Union members visited Minsk in Byelorussia, where they arranged concerts and consulted local composers. As a result, a host of compositions by Byelorussian composers were to be performed in Moscow.¹⁰⁸³

The most interesting speech of this May congress was given by an Armenian representative, Musheg Agaian (1883–1966), the son of a famous Armenian writer. Agaian gave a ten-point list of the ways in which the problems faced by the Union could be resolved. This list included establishing the composers' organizational committee (which the Party had denied the Union in 1932); setting up a union-wide Composers' Union; the need to incorporate all the best musicians and scientific workers into the Union; and finally organizing the musical fund, *muzfond*.¹⁰⁸⁴ In essence, this list detailed all the necessary steps that would have made the Composers' Union comparable to the Writers' Union in scope and extent. Furthermore, the suggestions included in this list were, in practice, enforced over the course of the next two years.

The Committee and Kerzhentsev were obviously behind this list and had arranged the speeches by republican representatives beforehand. This is illustrated by the lack of prominent composers at the meeting. Miaskovskii, Shebalin, Prokofiev, and Shostakovich for example were all missing. The conference might, of course, have been poorly arranged, but it is more likely that the Committee did not want to risk having too many unpredictable composers present. Additionally, the fact that republican representatives gave such similar speeches supports the hypothesis that the Committee had arranged the event, as well as displacing their previous chairmen. The Committee probably thought that the proposal to establish the Union would sound more plausible when put forward by some loyal (even if poorly known) composer from a distant republic than it would if some apparatchik from the Committee had suggested it. Furthermore, one representative called the assembly "the first all-union meeting of Soviet musicians."¹⁰⁸⁵

After this meeting was held, the pace of events accelerated. Already by April, less than a month before the aforementioned meeting, the atmosphere at the Moscow branch was beginning to sour and turn against Cheliapov. The Moscow branch held a meeting on April 10 at which the entire leadership was criticized – largely in the same words as those Kerzhentsev had used. The Party organization of the Composers' Union was most heavily criticized this time, but also the *Rabis's gorkom* of composers came under criticism. New elections were called (but were eventually postponed for almost a year) and the branch was

¹⁰⁸² RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 272, ll. 1–5.

¹⁰⁸³ Khronika. In *SM* 5/1937: 106.

¹⁰⁸⁴ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 273, l. 7.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Vsesoiuznoe soveshchanie kompozitorov. In *SI* 23.5.1937: 6.

also going to cross-check its membership base.¹⁰⁸⁶ These measures would have been quite drastic, had they been enforced.

The chairman vanishes

A counterpart of the meeting held in May about the October festivities was held six months later, in November of 1937. It should have been about the results of the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution. This time, the Committee had invited notable composers but no representatives from the Republics attended the meeting. Kerzhentsev opened with some general accusations of formalism to keep everybody on their toes. This time, the composer accused of formalism was Vladimir Enke, Shebalin's student who taught at the Moscow Conservatory.¹⁰⁸⁷ Kerzhentsev now mentioned the possibility of an all-union structure for composers and explained that the establishment of all-union organs would be much easier if the Moscow branch reorganized its work.¹⁰⁸⁸ Composers were perhaps growing weary because no concrete progress seemed to have been made toward establishing the musical fund in six months. However, this period had witnessed other changes: the chairmen of the Moscow and Leningrad branches had been replaced.

Considering the situation in late 1937—the Terror was threatening society and the atmosphere in the Composers' Union was less than convivial—one might expect that several composers would have been arrested and possibly shot. All of the prerequisites for such a purge seem to be there. Caroline Brooke has presented the first detailed research about the Great Terror and Soviet music life. In her valuable article, Brooke suggests that there were no high profile musical victims of the Terror. This does not mean that there were no victims of the Terror at all in the music world. Brooke is able to name one dead—the musicologist Nikolai Zhiliaev (1881–1938) who had been associated with Marshal Tukhachevskii—and several others who lost their posts.¹⁰⁸⁹ I agree with Brooke that Soviet music life escaped this brutal period with surprisingly minor injuries. The situation requires closer examination.

Those from the music front who fell during the Terror were practically all administrators, apart from Zhiliaev. Most of the victims with connections to the music world, including Commissar of Enlightenment, Andrei Bubnov, were purged for reasons other than music. Bubnov was responsible for the dissemination of Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth*, but he was also a rival of Kerzhentsev. Thus, he was arrested in October of 1937 and was shot a year

¹⁰⁸⁶ Rezoliutsiia aktiva Soiuza sovetskikh kompozitorov (10 apreliia 1937). In *SM* 5/1937, p. 106. Elections were also mentioned by Kesselman at a meeting of the Union, see: RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 273, ll. 45–46. The reason for postponing the elections was either that Cheliapov did not allow them to take place or that the Committee prevented them, fearing that Cheliapov and his possible supporters would be elected anew.

¹⁰⁸⁷ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, l. 42.

¹⁰⁸⁸ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, l. 44.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Brooke 2002, 402–408. About the Zhiliaev-case in 408, first mentioned in Vinokurova, Irina 1996: Trizhdy rasstrel'ianii muzykant. In *Muzykalnaia Akademiia* 1/1996, pp. 79–84. Zhiliaev's shooting is dated to January 20, 1938. He was a professor of composition in Moscow Conservatory between 1933 and 1937.

later.¹⁰⁹⁰ The tragic fate of Bubnov is perhaps not particularly relevant to what happened in the musical front. Much more pertinent is the fate of the chairman of the Moscow Composers' Union and Chief Editor of *Sovetskaia Muzyka* Nikolai Cheliapov.

Brooke has told part of the story of what happened to Cheliapov. In her article, she cites a dubious letter sent to Molotov in October, in which Cheliapov's leadership of the Composers' Union is condemned. The letter itself was poorly written and full of misspellings. The letter was not signed; instead, "from composers and musical figures" was inserted at the end. Curiously enough, the letter is located in the personal file of Mikhail Gnesin.¹⁰⁹¹ In Molotov's fond there are no signs of this letter-whatsoever.

The story of this letter is, however, interesting. It was circulated to prominent composers. Matvei Blanter has described how composers were approached by an unknown pair who gave them the letter and in a grave voice asked them to sign it. When questioned, they simply answered that the most prominent composers had already signed.¹⁰⁹² Blanter did not sign the letter, but Aleksandr Goldenveizer did, although he was not aware of the initiator of the letter, either. Two individuals unknown to him had brought the letter, in the middle of his class. One of them turned out to be named Ris. The letter was badly written but contained important facts during that time, Goldenveizer stated. It pointed out the abnormal situation that was prevailing in the Union and problems of atmosphere, although Goldenveizer acknowledged that this took the form of a dirty squabble.¹⁰⁹³ Blanter, however, hinted that the musicologist Ogolevets was the initiator of the letter, yet no one ever commented on this allegation.¹⁰⁹⁴

Blanter's suggestion of Ogolevets is not completely unfounded. Kiril Tomoff has described in detail the affair that took place in 1947, when Ogolevets attacked the leadership of the Composers' Union. Ogolevets was in Tomoff's estimation a highly independent, even fiery character with strong ambitions.¹⁰⁹⁵ Thus, he might have been behind the letter of 1937, as well. Ogolevets had been in the police forces during his youth and worked for *Pravda*, so he was also a man with connections.

Moisei Grinberg from the Committee made a speech in which he hinted about the actual source of this letter. He tried to restrain talk about the letter

¹⁰⁹⁰ He was heard by court only in July 26, 1938, while his case was first postponed from November 1, 1937 and once again in April 19, 1938. See: AP RF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 412, l. 122, quoted in <http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/spiski/pg04122.htm>; AP RF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 416, l. 30, quoted in <http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/spiski/pg08030.htm>; AP RF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 417, l. 213 quoted in <http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/spiski/pg09213.htm>. It is a bit unsure when he was actually shot. In the following memo it is suggested that in August 1, 1938 and that he was arrested in October 17, 1937. See: <http://www.memo.ru/memory/communarka/chapt10.htm>.

¹⁰⁹¹ RGALI, f. 2954, op. 1, d. 885, ll. 16-16ob. See also, Brooke 2002, 401.

¹⁰⁹² RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, l. 12ob.

¹⁰⁹³ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, ll. 16-17ob.

¹⁰⁹⁴ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, l. 12ob.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Tomoff 2006, 106-119.

and maintained that what mattered was the content of the letter rather than its author or signatories.¹⁰⁹⁶ Furthermore, Cheliapov had disappeared only weeks before this letter appeared. It was important for the Committee to have the composers' blessing and therefore it seems likely that it was behind the letter. The way in which signatures were collected hardly suggests that this was the composers' own initiative.

Little more than two months after this letter, Cheliapov was shot.¹⁰⁹⁷ His sentence was signed by Zhdanov, Kliment Voroshilov, Molotov, and Lazar Kaganovich on January 3, 1938. Cheliapov was marked as first category, indicating immediate execution.¹⁰⁹⁸ Cheliapov was not the only victim, yet his death was the only one directly connected to the Composers' Union. Other victims included musicologist Boleslav Pshibyshevskii, who was rector of the Moscow Conservatory between 1929 and 1932 and one of the first to write about socialist realist music. Apparently, he was arrested in March of 1937, but was shot only in August.¹⁰⁹⁹ In this case, Pshibyshevskii's German origins (he was born in Berlin) might have been the reason why he was shot; Germans along with Poles and Finns were named as enemy nations. He was expelled from the Party in 1933 and was apparently expelled to Karelia in 1934. In 1934, he was organizing theatrical and musical activity at the White Sea Baltic Theater (BBK) in Medvezhegorsk, which was part of the NKVD's camp-system.¹¹⁰⁰

Mikhail Arkadiev, a *Narkompros* official and the first Chairman of Moscow Composers' Union, albeit only for a few months, was also a victim of the Terror. In 1937, he was the director of Moscow Art Theater (*MKhAT*), which was more likely to have been the cause of conviction than the few months he spent in the Composers' Union as a chairman five years earlier. Arkadiev was arrested in June of 1937 and was shot three months later in September of 1937.¹¹⁰¹ A similar fate was experienced by Vladimir Mutnykh, director of the *Bolshoi* theater¹¹⁰², arrested on April 20, 1937. Yet, Mutnykh was associated with the army and the Central House of the Red Army (*TsDKA*), being also a brigade commander and

¹⁰⁹⁶ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, l. 27ob.

¹⁰⁹⁷ These dates are uncertain, but they would fit in with other events: he was arrested on August 14, 1937, and shot on January 8, 1938, the indictment being a membership in a terrorist group. See: <http://www.memo.ru/memory/communarka/chapter3.htm>

¹⁰⁹⁸ AP RF, f. 3, op.24, d. 414, l. 188.

¹⁰⁹⁹ AP RF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 410, l. 228. Quoted in <http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/spiski/pg02228.htm>. See also: <http://www.memo.ru/memory/donskoe/d37-8.htm>. Pshibyshevskii was apparently arrested on March 1, 1937, but he was convicted only on August 21, 1937 and was shot immediately afterwards.

¹¹⁰⁰ GTsMMK, f. 285, d. 1030, l. 1. (Pshibyshevskii to Gruber on March 30, 1934)

¹¹⁰¹ See: AP RF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 411, l. 88. Quoted in <http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/spiski/pg03088.htm>. See also: <http://www.memo.ru/history/arkiv/op1004.htm>. Arkadiev's arrest was preceded by the Politburo's resolution to fire him from his post as the director of *MKhAT* and a grave warning issued on June 5, 1937. See RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 987, l. 120, quoted in Iakovlev, A. N. (eds.), Artizov, A., Naumov, O., *Vlast i khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia. Dokumenty TsK RKP(b)-VKP(b), VChK-OGPU-NKVD o kulturnoi politike. 1917-1953 gg.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnii fond "demokratia", 2002, p. 378.

¹¹⁰² Mutnykh had been arranging production of Asafiev's and Bulgakov's *Minin i Pozharskii* in the spring of 1937. See, Curtis 1991, 276.

Party member from 1918.¹¹⁰³ On August 25, 1937, the death warrant for Aleksandr Belokopytov was signed by Stalin and Molotov. Belokopytov was a Ukrainian Party member, who had worked in the Ukrainian *Narkompros* after 1932, and as musical editor of the Radio from 1934. The interesting thing is that Belokopytov had led the Association of Proletarian Musicians of Ukraine until it was dissolved in 1932. However, he was shot because he was a representative of the Ukrainian *NKVD*, the secret police, rather than for musical reasons.¹¹⁰⁴

Dmitrii Gachev, who Neil Edmunds and Levon Hakobian associate with *RAPM*, was also targeted. According to both, Dmitrii Gachev was Bulgarian and because of this, he was arrested. He was also a musicologist and a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party. Yet, I have been unable to find dates for his persecution.¹¹⁰⁵ However, like Pshibyshevskii, he was a foreigner and thus in special danger during the Great Terror. Of the further victims, Amy Nelson mentions that Mikhail Kvadri would have been executed along Zhiliaev for being too close to Tukhachevskii.¹¹⁰⁶ However, this cannot possibly have been the case. Kvadri died in 1929; he was most probably shot because of his Italian origins.¹¹⁰⁷ Along with these individuals, Hakobian mentions that musicologist Pavel Vulfius and music critic Viktor Delson (who was writing to *Sovetskaia Muzyka* still in late autumn of 1937¹¹⁰⁸) would have received camp sentences, but survived.¹¹⁰⁹ Both died in the 1970s.

I have found no information about other composers or musicologists who would have perished in the Terror. Some of the individual victims mentioned were more closely connected with the administration than creative work. Of course, many more musicians perished during the Terror. In Karelia, for example, a large part of the local symphonic orchestra was deported.¹¹¹⁰ However, rather than poor performance, the probable cause of their deportation was that they were Canadian Finns who had come to the Soviet Union to work at the beginning of the 1930s, and were thus viewed as suspicious. Therefore, it

¹¹⁰³ Mutnykh was shot on November 25, 1937, although his name appeared in the death warrant lists already on September 15, 1937. See: AP RF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 411, l. 90. Quoted in: <http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/spiski/pg03090.htm>; AP RF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 412, l. 129. Quoted in: <http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/spiski/pg04129.htm>.

¹¹⁰⁴ See: AP RF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 410, l. 284. Quoted in <http://stalin.memo.ru/spiski/pg02284.htm>.

¹¹⁰⁵ Hakobian 1998, 173; Edmunds 2000, 299. Hakobian mentions that Gachev died in the GULAG in 1945.

¹¹⁰⁶ Nelson 2004, 243.

¹¹⁰⁷ At least, this is the only mention of Kvadri's death that I have been able to find. The Russian Human Rights Society Memorial, which has listed victims of the purges, has data about Kvadri that states that he had been arrested already on October 31, 1928 and shot on July 12, 1929, four days after his trial. See: <http://www.memo.ru/memory/vagankovo/1929.htm>.

¹¹⁰⁸ See Delson, V. 1937, 98-103: Genrikh Neigauz. In *SM 10-11/1937*. This issue was published early in December 1937.

¹¹⁰⁹ Hakobian 1998, 173.

¹¹¹⁰ Suutari, Pekka 2004, 170: Going beyond the border: national cultural policy and the development of musical life in Soviet Karelia, 1920-1940. In Edmunds, Neil (ed.), *Soviet Music and Society under Lenin and Stalin. The Baton and Sickle*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.

is important how notable composers and musicologists evaded purges, despite some brave attacks on the Committee. For example, Viktor Gorodinskii was one of the possible victims. He was on the losing side in 1936 when the Committee emerged. He had also been an anarcho-syndicalist in 1917, before becoming a Communist Party-member, making him even more probable a target in the Terror. Yet, he managed to rise time and again to leading positions on the musical front, the last one being Chief Editor of *Muzgiz* in 1946–48.¹¹¹¹

One possible explanation is that the Composers' Union calmed down. Soon after Cheliapov's resignation, composers' attacks on each other diminished. Perhaps Cheliapov's fate discouraged further accusations. At least, at a meeting held in November of 1937, Chemberdzhi, the acting chairman, was defended by Gorodinskii on the grounds that the Composers' Union had already been in trouble when he was appointed chairman and thus should not be blamed for the faults of the previous leadership.¹¹¹² Cheliapov was not mentioned by name, but rather, in connection with the propagation of Soviet music in the end of 1937, it was said that that "the previous leadership" of the Composers' Union had managed to squander the potential of Soviet music.¹¹¹³ One of the new secretaries, Vano Muradeli, alluded to Cheliapov stating: "[a]s is well known, an influential enemy was for long in the ranks of the Composers' Union..."¹¹¹⁴

Although the Composers' Union was not particularly haunted after Cheliapov was arrested, the Committee was involved in purges of other musical organizations. After all, the Committee was responsible for overseeing all musical activity and thus, purges in the music world came under its remit. Most of these incidents have already been discussed by Caroline Brooke or Levon Hakobian; I simply connect them to specific points.

Rather than Kerzhentsev, it seems that his deputy Shatilov was most active in finding scapegoats.¹¹¹⁵ During 1937, Shatilov sent Kerzhentsev lists of people who had "failed" in musical administration and suggested that they be replaced with individuals who were more loyal. Shatilov, for example, wrote to Kerzhentsev that the work of Moscow Stage was "highly unsuccessful." In other words, a change of personnel was required. Shatilov proposed that fifteen to twenty Communists should be appointed to its administration and a new

¹¹¹¹ Maximenkov 1997, 72-75.

¹¹¹² RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, l. 24.

¹¹¹³ Khubov, G. 1937, 27: Smotr sovetskoi muzyki. Tvorcheskie itogi dekady sovetskoi muzyki v Moskve. In *SM* 12/1937.

¹¹¹⁴ Muradeli, V. 1937, 67: Moskovskii Soiuz kompozitorov na putiakh perestroiki. In *SM* 9/1937.

¹¹¹⁵ Iurii Ielagin, an emigrant violinist, recalls that Shatilov was formerly a NKVD officer, see: Jelagin, Juri 1951: *Taming of the Arts*. New York: E.P.Dutton. See also Makanowitzky, Barbara 1965, 270: Music to Serve the State. In *Russian Review* 24(3), 1965, pp. 266-277. Although there is no direct evidence, this might have been the case in relation to Shatilov's actions in the Committee. The planting of NKVD officials in other organizations was common, especially during the Great Terror. S. S. Shatilov was not acquainted with music, but he did use a lot of army vocabulary.

leader selected. Kerzhentsev's decision followed Shatilov's proposal, as it practically always did.¹¹¹⁶

Shatilov insisted on changes in the leadership of different philharmonias, as well as in other musical organizations. Shatilov was especially active in the autumn of 1937. He also wrote to Kerzhentsev about magazine articles, when they concerned works that Shatilov regarded important.¹¹¹⁷ Brooke describes the events that took place in the Moscow Philharmonia and Conservatory.¹¹¹⁸ In the case of the Moscow Philharmonia, its leader, Nikolai Kuliabko, was one of the targets of the Committee. His work was deemed unsatisfying by Kerzhentsev in the summer of 1937, but he was also linked to Marshal Tukhachevskii, on whose personal guarantee Kuliabko had been able to reclaim his membership of the Party, after being dismissed in "the exchange of the Party cards".¹¹¹⁹ He was dismissed, but what happened to him next is unknown—although his name was included in one of the lists of the "enemies of the people" in the arts.¹¹²⁰ I have not found his name in any of the lists of those who were convicted or shot, unlike several other administrators. However, nothing is found of him after 1937 and it is possible that he was shot or at least exiled.

However, the case of Moscow Conservatory perhaps offers even more insight into the effect of the Terror on musical life. Throughout the 1920s, conservatories had evaded many of the changes that took place in other institutes of higher education. After 1932, representatives of conservatories safeguarded their autonomy. Shteinberg, for instance, emphasized that the autonomy of conservatories made it possible for them to participate in social construction.¹¹²¹ Yet, the Committee wanted to expand its authority and bring conservatories in line. One of the first individual targets in the Moscow Conservatory was professor of composition and composer Genrikh Litinskii, who was persecuted in the autumn of 1937.¹¹²² The persecution of Litinskii did not simply emerge overnight. He had already been accused of formalism in 1934 and those accusations were repeated in 1936.¹¹²³ The situation only became critical during the Terror. In January of 1938, Kseniia Dorliak, the future

¹¹¹⁶ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, ll.1-4. Kerzhentsev's decision following Shatilov's letters, l. 5.

¹¹¹⁷ The actual case was Iudin's *Heroic Oratorio*, which had been attacked in the magazine *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* and was accused of being inartistic and false. Shatilov was going to ask for re-instructing for future productions of the work and also arrange a closed performance of this work for a commission made up of selected individuals (the name of Mekhlis was mentioned but, unfortunately, the document does not reveal if this was Lev Mekhlis, Stalin's secretary and political leader of the Red Army). RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, l. 18.

¹¹¹⁸ Brooke 2002, 402-404; see RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, l. 6.

¹¹¹⁹ RGALI, f. 962, op. 10s, d. 21, ll. 1-3; Zverina, R. "Direktor Kuliabko". In *SI* July 23, 1937, 5. See also Brooke 2002, 424-408.

¹¹²⁰ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 190, ll. 47-50.

¹¹²¹ Shteinberg, M. 1933, 124-125: Slushateliu – sovetskuiu muzyku. In *SM* 3/1933.

¹¹²² Chuzhaki v Konservatorii. In *SI* September 23, 1937: 3.

¹¹²³ See: Ostretsov, A. 1934, 6: Protiv formalizma v muzyke (O tvorchestve G. Litinskogo). In *SM* 6/1934; Protiv formalizma i falshi. Tvorcheskaia diskussiiia v Moskovskom Soiuze sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 3/1936: 44, 53. It was Ryzhkin and Muradeli who were accusing Litinskii. See also Hakobian 1998, 133-134.

mother-in-law of Sviatoslav Richter, was scorned.¹¹²⁴ In this event, however, she was only forced to resign from her post as a dean.¹¹²⁵

Political turmoil in the Conservatory did not end there. Professor of singing, one Turovskaia, was accused of spoiling the voice of one *Komsomolian* girl and several others. Turovskaia had desperately tried to present herself as “a non-Party Bolshevik” at a meeting arranged after the accusations. One aggravating circumstance was that she had not broken up with her recently arrested husband.¹¹²⁶ The Terror had caused a situation in which students were attacked vulnerable teachers they did not like. Other similar cases also emerged. Professor Vadim Borisovskii was accused of having published a book together with German “fascists.” Professor Dmitrii Aspelund had not managed to name a single example of wrecking by Turovskaia.¹¹²⁷ The Party meeting at the Conservatory on January 9, 1938, found many of the professors politically “illiterate.” Shatilov represented the Committee on Artistic Affairs in the meeting.¹¹²⁸

The Moscow Conservatory was generally attacked from many directions, but these attacks also had predecessors. For several years, but especially after the Committee had been established, the leadership of the Conservatory was accused of being too liberal. The conservatories were considered crucial to producing future generations of artists and so it was reasoned that it was vital to root out formalist tendencies in these institutions. In the summer of 1936, the leadership of the Conservatory and its leader Neuhaus were said to be too gentle, especially in regard to professors who represented formalism. Litinskii and Shebalin were named, both professor of composition. They were said to have been reinstated soon after discussions on formalism faded, although neither had done anything to correct their views and had in fact skipped all the meetings. It was also asserted that the Conservatory familiarized students with music of formalists, namely Shostakovich, Paul Hindemith, and Alban Berg. Additionally, the national musical cultures were disregarded by the Conservatory.¹¹²⁹

In some cases, students themselves called for intervention. Four students of conducting from the Moscow Conservatory accused the faculty of disinterest in and negligence toward students.¹¹³⁰ Thus, the Conservatory ceased to be the apolitical haven, which it had been, with the exception of the years between 1929 and 1931. Moscow Conservatory was not alone, but for example in

¹¹²⁴ See Brooke 2002, 402–403; RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, l. 19. Dorliak was of noble origin, one of her brothers had been shot as a White officer in 1918, another brother was exiled to Astrakhan after Kirov’s murder, and her sister’s husband was arrested in 1937 as the enemy of the people. Thus, there were plenty of reasons for her to be purged, according to the logic of the Terror.

¹¹²⁵ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, l. 20.

¹¹²⁶ Zverina, R. 1937, 6: Chuzhaki v moskovskoi konservatorii. In *SI* December 29, 1937.

¹¹²⁷ Zverina, R. 1937, 6: Chuzhaki v moskovskoi konservatorii. In *SI* December 29, 1937.

¹¹²⁸ Zverina R. 1938, 4: Na partiinom sobranii s moskovskoi konservatorii. In *SI* January 12, 1938.

¹¹²⁹ V.-I. 1936, 14–17: Kak boriutsia s formalizmom v MGK. In *SM* 7/1936. The Conservatory was criticized in *SM* at least in issues 5, 7 and 11 of 1936.

¹¹³⁰ V redaktsiiu zhurnala “Sovetskaia muzyka”. In *SM* 1/1937: 110.

Leningrad the leader of the Conservatory was found to be an “enemy of the people”.¹¹³¹

In the years to come, at least *Pravda*, *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo*, and *Sovetskaia Muzyka* all published critical articles on the leadership of the Conservatory. It was criticized for several things, but almost all of the accusations were directed toward the leadership and the organization.¹¹³² Once again, rather than focusing on individuals, the apex of the assault was directed toward the organization itself. Thus, the outcome is not that surprising. None of these accused persons were arrested or even exiled. According to Brooke, Litinskii was reinstated in 1939 and Dorliak never lost her professorship.¹¹³³ Although the Moscow Philharmonia was not without its victims, it seems that even there the organization and its preferences were the target rather than any individuals. At least, the Philharmonia was continuously criticized for not acting correctly and disregarding its responsibilities toward propagation.¹¹³⁴

Although the Committee on Artistic Affairs brought the Terror to musical life, the extent and scope of this terror was very different from that experienced by many other spheres of Soviet life. A memorandum of the Committee entitled “About the measures to liquidate the consequences of wrecking in musical institutions of the [Soviet] Union” is in itself enough to make one shiver. Supposedly, Shatilov was behind this memorandum. Enemies of the people were found both in the administration of the Committee itself, especially in local offices, and in other musical organizations. Along with Arkadiev, Cheliapov, and Pshibyshevskii, many other names were mentioned. However, the fate of these individuals is unclear. Yet, as they were mentioned as spies, and not just wreckers, it is likely that most of them perished.¹¹³⁵ Yet, the list gives only a few examples, and “etc.” is added at the end. It is also noteworthy that all of these individuals were administrators, not musical experts.

Still, the archives contain many sad incidents and fates, one of which may serve as an example. The widow of composer Ilia Sats (1875–1912) was granted a pension of 200 rubles per month in 1933. In 1937, her daughter Nataliia Sats was arrested and exiled. On September 14, 1938, the Committee on Artistic Affairs received a letter from the Commissariat of Social Security that the pension paid to Sats’s widow had to be suppressed because she supported an enemy of the people, her daughter. This decision was implemented and

¹¹³¹ Kremlev, Iurii 1938, 143: Leningradskaia gosudarstvennaia konservatoriia, 1862-1937. Moscow: Muzgiz. V. S. Bukhshtein had been the leader of the Conservatory apparently in 1935-1936.

¹¹³² An article in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* in the spring of 1938 summarized these different accusations. See Grigoriev, A. 1938, 92-95: Dela Moskovskoi konservatorii. In *SM* 3/1938.

¹¹³³ Brooke 2002, 403. Dorliak also received a honorary title of “Merited Worker of Art” in 1944, year before she died. All along she had been teaching at the Conservatory.

¹¹³⁴ For example, Martynov, I. 1938, 78-84: O rabote Moskovskoi filarmonii. In *SM* 6/1938. Martynov considered that the administration of the Philharmonia ought to finally go through an exhaustive restructuring in order to work correctly. This applied especially to its leadership.

¹¹³⁵ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, l. 47.

pension suppressed.¹¹³⁶ Luckily for Nataliia Sats, she survived the camps and went on to become a National Artist of USSR.

The list compiled by the Committee about enemies of the people in art carried on some interesting general accusations. Some were accused of discrediting the propaganda of Soviet music, heroic classical music, or music on folk themes. Additionally, some were accused of not hiring talented young soloists. Some had sabotaged the use of folklore and folk themes in the creative work of composers. Hindering the work of Shostakovich and Prokofiev was also mentioned in this context.¹¹³⁷ This is revealing. In the Committee's account, something was wrong with Shostakovich's and Prokofiev's music, but instead of accusing them, it accused the musical administration.

Another interesting part of the accusations was the misuse and loss of government funds. Several hundreds of thousands of rubles were said to have been wasted by different institutions in republics as a result of poor leadership and other forms of wrecking. Enemies of the people also managed to prevent the establishment of fifty-nine musical collectives planned for 1937 in the Russian republic. In Ukraine, the number was nineteen and so on.¹¹³⁸ In Leningrad, wreckers were said to have hindered the expansion of the repertory, because there were too few premieres.¹¹³⁹ Yet, despite the frequency of attacks on musical institutions, the number of victims remained surprisingly low.

The chink in the Committee's armor

Although it seems that the Committee was triumphant and that Kerzhentsev emerged as a winner, he was not without thorns in his side. He tried, of course, to claim credit for every success the musical front experienced, but not everyone was willing to allow him this satisfaction. Some even attacked Kerzhentsev's policy, including a group of young musicians who in the late 1930s had been triumphant in several competitions across the world. This group consisted of Iakov Zak, Iakov Flier, Iurii Briuskov, Aleksandr Iokheles, and several others. They used their hard-earned fame to attack the Committee's policies in its own magazine, *Soviet Art*. The Composers' Union and the Philharmonia also received their share of criticism for neglecting the issue of Soviet soloists. The Philharmonia never awarded contracts to any of the young triumphant musicians, the Committee tried only to benefit from their successes, and the Composers' Union did very little whatsoever to rectify the situation, young soloists claimed.¹¹⁴⁰

¹¹³⁶ RGALI, f. 962, op. 10, d. 28, ll. 46–48. Suppression was done based on the rule that pension was personal and thus currently abused.

¹¹³⁷ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, ll. 47–48.

¹¹³⁸ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, l. 48.

¹¹³⁹ O leningradskom balete. In *SI* December 23, 1937: 5.

¹¹⁴⁰ A meeting to express criticism of the Philharmonic was held in the quarters of *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo*. Young soloists expressed their opinions, and some were very critical towards the Committee as well. Bruskov, S. 1937, 4: O kontsertnykh organizatsiakh. Soveshchanie v "Sovetskom iskusstve". In *SI* April 5, 1937.

Kerzhentsev and Shatilov were said to only take the glory from young soloists and were accused of otherwise neglecting their needs. They should “look at the circumstances where [musicians] work instead of arranging banquets.”¹¹⁴¹ The Committee on Artistic Affairs indeed actively arranged honorary medals for winning artists and especially their teachers at the Conservatory. Following the successes, the Committee managed to inaugurate a massive construction project for new training and living spaces for students and artists of the Conservatory.¹¹⁴² Yet, musicians went on accusing the Composers’ Union and its “wise ones” of not understanding the potential that soloists could have for the propaganda of Soviet music. Therefore, the young soloists ended their lengthy letter, with a call for the establishment of a Soviet Musicians’ Union. They reasoned that the Writers’ Union was not called the Prosaists’ Union; therefore, instead of Composers’ Union, the Party had surely meant for a Musicians’ Union to exist.¹¹⁴³

These young soloists were important to the Soviet Union and thus their claim was not unfounded. Triumphant young musicians were a brilliant way to demonstrate to the rest of the world the superiority of the Soviet system. The Soviet system was truly great at producing a series of world-famous pianists, violinists, and other musicians, who could compete in the major international competitions of the twentieth century. While music itself rarely made headline news in the Soviet Union, these triumphant musicians had their faces on the covers of several magazines.¹¹⁴⁴ The Committee, of course, quickly reacted to the situation. In a speech about musical culture, given a few months after international competitions in Vienna, Brussels, and Warsaw at which Soviet musicians had been triumphant, the Committee boasted that the foreign press was pondering how such consistent success by Soviet musicians was possible. The answer, of course, was the superiority of the Soviet system. While bourgeois musicians concentrated solely on the formal side and technique, Soviet musicians, it was argued, understood how realistic material and careful choice of pieces was important. Soviet musicians had the advantage of optimism, joy, and liveliness. It was also argued that Soviet pedagogues allowed individuals to develop according to their own abilities.¹¹⁴⁵

¹¹⁴¹ Bruskov, S. 1937, 4: O kontsertnykh organizatsiakh. Soveshchanie v “Sovetskom iskusstve”. In *SI* April 5, 1937.

¹¹⁴² RGALI, f. 962, op. 10, d. 21, ll. 53–54. Fourteen professors from the Moscow Conservatory were awarded the *Order of the Red Banner of Labor* and a host of others the *Order of the Badge of Honor*, also given for victorious musicians. In l. 57 Kerzhentsev wrote to Stalin and Molotov (April 4, 1937) pleading for awards to be given to contestants and their institutes. In l. 56 was the Politburo’s decision to give three million rubles toward building living spaces for professors and top musicians and their families. Also, the salaries of teaching staff were raised, new rehearsing spaces were to be built, and other new buildings erected for conservatories.

¹¹⁴³ The letter by leading soloists (Ia[kov] Zak; Ia[kov] Flier; M[ariia] Grinberg; Iu[rii] Briushkov; A[leksandr] Iokheles; A[bram] Shatskes; G[eorgii] Zdelman; T. Gutman; E. Grossman; N. Perelman; P. Serebriakov; V. Razumovskaia; A. Kamenskii.) See: *Sozdat soiuz sovetskikh muzykantov*. In *SI* April 11, 1937: 2.

¹¹⁴⁴ For example in the magazine *Sovetskoe iskusstvo* April 5, 1937 the front page was devoted to big pictures of victorious young musicians.

¹¹⁴⁵ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 241, l. 6.

After these victories, the Committee kept an even closer eye on international competitions and their participants. Brussels, where Oistrakh had been victorious in 1937, arranged the next year's piano competition. In December of 1937, the Soviet ambassador to Belgium described how the Belgians began to get restless, since the Committee refused to announce its competitors. Kerzhentsev merely replied that they had to wait until the All-union piano competition in January was over and that candidates would be selected from among the winners. It was only on February 4, 1938, that the travel currency reserves of the five candidates were finally sanctified by the Committee.¹¹⁴⁶ Soviet Emil Gilels then won the event. Thus, these young musicians understood their prestige, started to demand their share of the success, and were extremely critical of administrators.

Young soloists were of such high value for the politically isolated Soviet Union that punishing them would not have been easy, even if there had been a wish to do so. Just as Shostakovich and other composers were saved, soloists too escaped, despite their views. Furthermore, soloists had no organization that could have been punished by the Committee instead of individuals. Thus, several prominent members of the Composers' Union evaluated in *Soviet Art* the suggestion of a new kind of Union that would comprise important soloists as well. In this way, the influence of young musicians was acknowledged. Goldenveizer, the most influential piano professor greeted this suggestion with delight. Then again, professor Lev Oborin believed that the atmosphere of the Composers' Union should be improved in order to allow this kind of work to take place within existing confines without the need for restructuring.¹¹⁴⁷ The celebrations for internationally victorious Soviet musicians were stretched in order to emphasize the role of musical education in the Soviet society in general. It seemed that top musicians and especially their teachers were so important that their Union would be ensured.¹¹⁴⁸

However, soloists did not eventually receive the Union they had wished for. Their proposition was rejected. As Kiril Tomoff has reported, soloists made

¹¹⁴⁶ RGALI, f. 962, op. 10., d. 28, ll. 5-9. In several turns the Belgian representative urged the ambassador in Belgium that the Committee would finally give its answer.

¹¹⁴⁷ Sozdadim soiuz sovetkikh muzykantov. Muzykalnye deiateli obsuzhdaiut predlozhenie "sovetskogo iskusstvo". In *SI* April 17, 1937: 2.

¹¹⁴⁸ For example, on the eve of the 20th Anniversary of October, leading professors of piano were celebrated and glorified (pictures included, hardly a commonplace in this journal) in the journal of the Composers' Union. These articles seemed to underline the value of these young musicians and their meaning for Soviet musical culture in general. See especially: Neigauz, G. 1937, 89-93: *Nasha pianisticheskaia kultura*. In *SM* 10-11/1937; Goldenveizer, A. 1937, 93-95: *Iunye talanty Sovetskoi Strany*. In *SM* 10-11/1937; Delson, V. 1937, 98-103: *Genrikh Neigauz*. In *SM* 10-11/1937; Iakov Flier. In *SM* 10-11/1937: 103-105. At the following anniversary this same trend continued and a series of articles about different professors and their schools was even inaugurated, see for example: Alshvang, A. 1938, 91-103: *Sovetskie shkoly pianizma. Ocherk pervyi: K. N. Igumnov i ego shkola*. In *SM* 10-11/1938; Alshvang, A. 1938, 61-72: *Sovetskie shkoly pianizma. Ocherk vtoroi: Genrikh Neigauz i ego shkola*. In *SM* 12/1938; Livshits, A. 1939, 44-54: *P. S. Stoliarskii i ego shkola*. In *SM* 2/1939; Alshvang, A. 1939, 103-108: *Sovetskie shkoly pianizma. Ocherk tretii: A. B. Goldenveizer i ego shkola*. In *SM* 3/1939. Professors and their pupils were introduced in depth, even with pictures.

another similar attempt in the 1940s, but they would fail then as well.¹¹⁴⁹ For example, famous pianist and conductor Maksim Shostakovich, son of Dmitrii, was never a member of the Composers' Union, although his father was the chair of its Russian branch.¹¹⁵⁰ While the leading professors of piano were already members of the Composers' Union (Goldenveizer, Shteinberg, Neuhaus, and Konstantin Igumnov), they were not necessarily highly motivated to broaden the membership base of the Union. Generally, composers and musicologists wanted to keep Union membership exclusive so as not to broadly disperse precious resources. They managed to accomplish exactly this, even if Kerzhentsev would have wanted otherwise.

Kerzhentsev was also dependant on the expertise of composers in delicate musical matters and certain composers and musicologists appear to have been able to guide his decisions. This is illustrated by the case of Dzerzhinskii's second opera, *Virgin Soil Upturned*. It was premiered during the October festivities but, even before it was finished, it received great publicity and praise. Before its premiere, *Sovetskaia Muzyka* praised the opera as Dzerzhinskii's new victory, which had splendid material for a powerful realistic spectacle. It was also hailed as the first opera about collectivization.¹¹⁵¹ Parts of it were also included in a series of festive recordings announced to extend to 10 million exemplars and published prior to the premiere of the opera.¹¹⁵²

Afterwards, Kerzhentsev was not satisfied. He said to Gorodinskii that articles "about *Virgin soil upturned* should be written in more critical voice." The reason was that Kerzhentsev had heard from composers who attended the premiere (October 23, 1937) that this work was not as good as *Silent Don*. This was something he openly stated at the general meeting of composers. He even continued by wondering why the shortcomings of *Virgin soil upturned* had not been discussed earlier.¹¹⁵³ Yet, Kerzhentsev was the one who had encouraged official approval of this work before it had been completed. Kerzhentsev was not the only one who relied on musical experts. Mykola Lysenko (1842–1912) had composed an opera *Taras Bulba*, which the Soviet Ukraine of course adopted as part of its national repertory. A revised edition was being prepared in the autumn of 1937 by the Ukrainian National Opera and it had been approved by Stanislav Kosior, the Ukrainian Party boss. Yet, the opera received scathing criticism from Khubov and two other critics.¹¹⁵⁴ In the end, Khubov's opinion proved more authoritative than that of Kosior.¹¹⁵⁵

¹¹⁴⁹ Tomoff 2006, 31–33.

¹¹⁵⁰ Based on my interview with Maksim Shostakovich in Kuopio, October 12, 2005.

¹¹⁵¹ Budiakovskii, A. 1937, 44–53: Iv. Dzerzhinskii i ego opera "Podniataia tselina". In *SM* 10-11/1937.

¹¹⁵² Grammofonnye plastinki. In *SM* 10–11/1937: 158.

¹¹⁵³ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, ll. 39ob–40.

¹¹⁵⁴ RGALI, f. 962, op. 10, d. 21, ll. 130–138. Lev Mekhlis, Stalin's close associate, described Khubov and the situation to Stalin, Molotov, and Ezhov on October 22, 1937 (see l. 137). Khubov (see ll. 133–137) maintained that composers Revutskii and Liatoshinskii were by no means guilty for the fiasco, but rather it was the direction that had made it a "false spectacle that was against the people."

¹¹⁵⁵ Although this event has most likely nothing to do with it, Kosior was arrested half a year later and was shot in the end (in February of 1939).

The Committee was dependant on the artistic knowledge and advice of musical specialists. Already in the summer of 1936 it organized an artistic council for its musical administration consisting first of 44 and then 49 members. It included Shostakovich, Asafiev, Prokofiev, Goldenveizer, Shatilov, Kuliabko, Belyi, Grinberg, Gorodinskii, Glier, Samuil Samosud, but also Kseniia Dorliak and Nikolai Kuliabko, who were among the few musical figures to be purged.¹¹⁵⁶ Thus, it seems that, as an administrator, Kerzhentsev was not the all-powerful figure towering over cultural affairs, which he would have liked to be. Although he was not the only one in the need of musical expertise, he was the one most involved in artistic issues. He soon found out that for the system, music and creative personalities mattered more than those supporting it through administrative work did.

In some cases, calls for expertise led to confrontations between different experts and schools. Just before the Belgian piano competition of the spring of 1938, Andrei Zhdanov received a letter from eight professors of Leningrad Conservatory demanding that one Nilsen be included among the participants of the competition. He had been awarded the second prize in the All-union competition held before the Belgian competition. The previous year, he had not been sent to the Warsaw competition either, although he had mastered the piano. Some days later, the writer Aleksei Tolstoi send a letter to Zhdanov in support of Nilsen's case. Zhdanov forwarded the case to the Committee on Artistic Affairs.¹¹⁵⁷ What ensued was a clash between the Moscow and Leningrad schools. Shatilov reported that he had consulted five leading musicians, who all stated that Nilsen was not on the technical nor expressive level of the five candidates selected for the Belgian competition. What Shatilov failed to mention, however, was that all these experts were from Moscow.¹¹⁵⁸ Nilsen was not sent to Belgium.

Because of its need for musical experts, the Committee tended to favor some composers and musicologists. This was especially true of Shatilov, who was very eager to introduce his candidates to Kerzhentsev. One of these was Piotr Riazanov, a musicologist and professor. Riazanov had spoken against modernism from the April Resolution onwards and continued to do so in connection with the campaign against formalism.¹¹⁵⁹ Perhaps he was seeking

¹¹⁵⁶ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 40, l. 41ob-42; d. 40, l. 56. The council was set up in August and after a month, five members (four professors and one administrator from Ukraine) were added to its ranks.

¹¹⁵⁷ RGALI, f. 962, op. 10, d. 28, ll. 19-22.

¹¹⁵⁸ RGALI, f. 962, op. 10, d. 28, ll. 22-23. These experts were Neuhaus, Goldenveizer, Feinberg and Gilels, all associated with the Moscow Conservatory, and Gorodinskii, also from Moscow. In l. 23 Khubov, another Moscow-based member, was mentioned as yet another expert who expressed a negative view of Nilsen.

¹¹⁵⁹ Riazanov, P. B. 1933, 20-21: K novomu etapu. In *Itogi pervoi godovshchiny postanovleniia TsK VKP(b) o perestroike literaturno-khudozhestvennykh organizatsii. Sbornik statei leningradskogo soiuzs sovetskikh kompozitorov*. Leningrad: Lenmuzgiz. Following the campaign against formalism, he was one of the few to speak openly on behalf of stricter measures on compositional work. Furthermore, his suggestions of the broader use of folklore in Soviet compositions was corollary to the demands of the Committee. See: Riazanov, P. 1936, 16-23: Zadachi sovetskogo kompozitora. In *SM 5/1936*.

for a settlement in the autumn of 1937, when he sent a letter to Shatilov requesting a couple of extra rooms. Shatilov asked Kerzhentsev to fulfill Riazanov's request. Shatilov also remarked that Riazanov had done well in discussions about formalism and thus would be an excellent candidate even for the leadership of the Union.¹¹⁶⁰ Shatilov's requests to Kerzhentsev were usually fulfilled without question.¹¹⁶¹ Mutual favors were expected in the Committee, of course. When Shatilov and Kerzhentsev were trying to secure the Party's blessing for making Iavorskii the leading musicologist of the Soviet Union, Riazanov wrote a very supportive assessment of Iavorskii.¹¹⁶²

The Committee's dependence on musical organizations is also illustrated by the fact that it received lists of recommended works for different festivals from them. At least, Riazanov's comment reveals that the Moscow branch and *Muzgiz* had failed to provide such lists.¹¹⁶³ The Committee needed the musical expertise that the Composers' Union was able to provide. This was apparently the reason why the Committee and Kerzhentsev were so eager to control the Union.

Despite this criticism, the Committee and its chairman, Platon Kerzhentsev, were in a position to control the musical front. Yet, there were problems controlling individual composers. This is illustrated by a meeting held in the autumn of 1937 at which Kerzhentsev called for evaluation of the musical results of the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution. He tried to steer the discussion toward ideological matters in music, for the creative work of composers, the development of Soviet opera, etc. These matters were hardly discussed in this meeting, since composers stubbornly turned the discussion to the issue of their material needs.¹¹⁶⁴

The Conclusion: How composers learned to navigate

At the bottom of it all – economy?

The Committee on Artistic Affairs was eager to broaden its powers and obviously had the Party's blessing to do so. The Party had straightforward motives for wanting to strengthen its position on the cultural front. It needed musical works for specific political and ideological events and required loyal artists. However, it did not acquire loyalty merely using the stick: it also offered a carrot. Economic factors had a crucial role in this process. As we have already seen, during its early years, the Composers' Union started to act as a broker and acquired contracts for composers, while later increasing its capability of

¹¹⁶⁰ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, ll. 10-13.

¹¹⁶¹ RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, ll. 1-22. In these examples, Kerzhentsev's decisions followed the proposals of Shatilov even down to their form.

¹¹⁶² RGALI, f. 962, o.3, d. 190, ll. 33-34.

¹¹⁶³ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, l. 33.

¹¹⁶⁴ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, l. 35.

distributing large sums of money itself. However, while the Union's atmosphere eroded, it also faced a serious economic crisis. This crisis was perhaps due to policies of the Committee on Artistic Affairs.

Money and personal economy have too often been ignored in the Soviet context simply because, according to Soviet ideology, these were not of concern to a socialist society. However, personal economy seems to have been a crucial part of the making of the new intelligentsia. This can also be seen in what composers regarded as the most important tasks of their Union during its early years. Financial matters were always of the utmost importance and this was not only the case in Moscow. The Ukrainian republican branch in Kiev and the regional branches in Kharkov and Odessa were all accused of avoiding ideological and political work and concentrating instead on arranging the well-being of its members. Financial matters took up most of the Ukrainian organizational committee's time.¹¹⁶⁵

Leonid Maximenkov, using strong archival evidence, claims that in the musical scandal of 1948 economic factors might have been a crucial factor. While it seems that composers were once again attacked for ideological factors, formalism, cosmopolitanism, and such, there were more mundane issues behind such accusations. Maximenkov points out that the benefits received by the elite of the Composers' Union were in the end quite significant. Shostakovich wrote on May 27, 1946, to Stalin to thank him for a dacha, a five-room apartment and 60,000 rubles.¹¹⁶⁶ The sum was quite notable as the average monthly salary then was around 400 and 500 rubles. This and many other letters received by Stalin testify how composers became part of the elite and in fact received noteworthy benefits. Composers also knew who to thank for their good fortune. Shostakovich presented his gratitude to Stalin some months later and stated that he would "justify . . . the attention you have shown me."¹¹⁶⁷

As we have already seen, there was no concrete and functioning Party structure for composers during much of the 1930s. The Composers' Union finally received its all-union structure in 1939. During the next four years, several notable composers would receive a Party card: Belyi, Kabalevskii, Koval, Chemberdzhii, and Khachaturian all between 1939 and 1944. All of them became prominent figures in the Union's administration. All the more significant is that in 1939 the Union received its budgetary structure, *muzfond*, which after the war would be headed by Khachaturian, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Kabalevskii, and Popov. All of them, perhaps with the exception of Kabalevskii, were targets of the main accusations in 1948.

Another person who was connected with finances was Vano Muradeli, whose opera sparked the scandal of 1948. Then there was, of course, Levon Atovmian, who had been active in the Union's finances for almost sixteen years. Andrei Zhdanov accused Atovmian of distributing 13,190,000 rubles over seven

¹¹⁶⁵ Khubov, G. 1938, 79–80: O rabote Soiuzov sovetskikh kompozitorov Ukrainy. In *SM* 8/1938.

¹¹⁶⁶ Maximenkov 2004, 43. Maximenkov carried out his remarkable findings in the RGASPI.

¹¹⁶⁷ Maximenkov 2004, 44.

years to composers and musicologists. Prokofiev already had an uncanceled debt of 182,000 rubles, Khachaturian of 24,000, and so forth. In 1947 alone, Atovmian had distributed 2,000,000 rubles, mostly to accused formalists, according to Zhdanov's confidential report commissioned before the Composers' Congress.¹¹⁶⁸

The most severe example of a "waste of government money and funds" was, according to Zhdanov, Muradeli's opera *The Great Friendship*. Millions were spent on its staging and particularly its crowd scenes in 1947. Productions were planned for twenty different theaters across the Soviet Union. According to Maximenkov, Stalin must have seen this opera as the epitome of financial mismanagement at a time when he was trying to implement massive changes to the country's economy. In this climate, it was inevitable that Zhdanov would have examined the budgetary activities of the Composers' Union. Zhdanov headed an investigation team that scrutinized composers' financial transactions and concluded that they had distributed millions of rubles to themselves and their friends.¹¹⁶⁹ Yet, this was not the first time that the finances of the Composers' Union came under scrutiny. A similar audit took place during 1936 and 1937.

An article titled "Union or Broker office?" heavily criticized the massive and costly administration of the Composers' Union:

Slowly and peacefully glide the days in the Union of Soviet Composers. In a small quarter of *Sobachia ploshchad* there are no composers present. . . . Only half a year ago presidium had bitterly lamented that great amount of their energy and strength went to organizational matters . . . and therefore they were unable to take care of creative ones.¹¹⁷⁰

It was reported that the Union had about two hundred members, but fifty of them were involved in administration. This drained a lot of the organization's money. Contracts received special criticism in the article. The article claimed that applications were approved no matter how bad they were. The author mentioned examples of applications that were discovered to be artistically poor, simple, or even bad but which were nevertheless approved. The lack of control within the Union was said to make composers indifferent.¹¹⁷¹

The system of contracts that had been so important for the early Composers' Union was liquidated during 1937. The union, therefore, lost the main instrument by which it could control compositional work. It was claimed that although *Muzgiz* functioned badly, the Composers' Union did not work at all.¹¹⁷² It seems that suddenly the Composers' Union ceased functioning, after five years of operation. The Union was practically brought to a halt in the summer of 1937—all of its financial resources were taken away and the

¹¹⁶⁸ Quoted in Maximenkov 2004, 51–52.

¹¹⁶⁹ Maximenkov 2004, 52–53.

¹¹⁷⁰ Volozhenin, A. 1937, 4: Soiuz ili posrednicheskaja kontora? In *SI* February 17, 1937.

¹¹⁷¹ Volozhenin, A. 1937, 4: Soiuz ili posrednicheskaja kontora? In *SI* February 17, 1937.

¹¹⁷² RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, l. 28.

atmosphere was far from conducive for the creative work it had so far practiced.

The Committee directly accused the leadership of the Union of mismanaging its finances. Such accusations were not without basis. Right from the start, the Union's sector of finance had complained about the poor state of the Union's accounting procedures.¹¹⁷³ There were problems of excessive loans being given to composers and there were already attempts to try to restrict the practice in the autumn of 1933. Loan-giving had been completely out of control.¹¹⁷⁴ At the beginning of 1936, the report of the Union's audit included complaints that the final statement of account had not been received.¹¹⁷⁵ Money seems to have been moved rather quickly to composers. One of the main objectives of the Committee for Artistic Affairs seems to have been to exercise more strict control over government funds and stop financial mismanagement. This is also supported by the fact that the branch accounts already for 1935 were transferred to the Committee, although these had originally been sent to the Commissariat of Finances, *Narkomfin*.¹¹⁷⁶

In 1937 the Composers' Union faced a financial crisis, most probably because of the actions of the Committee. In May, the Committee had urged *Narkomfin* to conduct a financial inspection of the Moscow branch of the Union. In the end, *Narkomfin* found the financial situation very unsatisfying and suggested that the Committee should take over responsibility for composers' needs.¹¹⁷⁷ Most probably the Committee used financing as the final weapon against the Union's leadership. Kerzhentsev knew that if the Union lost its financial capability, Cheliapov would be unarmed and composers would abandon him. Already in the spring, when Kerzhentsev had anonymously claimed that Stalin's message about the need to liquidate Trotskiites from the Party had relevance for the Composers' Union, several composers and musicians had expressed their belief in the need to change Union's leadership.¹¹⁷⁸ But even then, for example Khachaturian defiantly stated that

some leaders in the musical front encircle inside a circle of flatterers not wanting to know about rank-and-file art workers. The Committee on Artistic Affairs did not lead the Composers' Union and we, composers, did not know its art policy.¹¹⁷⁹

¹¹⁷³ Osnovnye materialy iz doklada finansovo-pravovogo sektora na prezidiume SSK. In *BSSK* 1/1933, p. 5.

¹¹⁷⁴ Postanovlenie prezidiuma Soiuzs Sovetskikh kompozitorov s aktivom ot 25/X 1933 g. po dokladu orgsektora (t. Atovmian). In *BSSK* 3-4/1933, p. 4-5.

¹¹⁷⁵ RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 4, l. 2.

¹¹⁷⁶ RGALI, f. 2077, op. 1, d. 4, l. 1, 7.

¹¹⁷⁷ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 188, l. 1.

¹¹⁷⁸ Kabalevskii for example stated that the leadership should have given more weight to self-criticism. See: Kabalevskii, D. 1937, 7: Velikii dokument epokhi. In *SM* 4/1937.

¹¹⁷⁹ Khachaturian, A. 1937, 8-9: Velikii dokument epokhi. In *SM* 4/1937. Yet, Khachaturian was most likely referring to Cheliapov as well as Kerzhentsev. He only implied this and did not name any specific administrators. Muradeli was more precise and referred to the leadership of the Composers' Union for disregarding the needs of composers. Muradeli, V. 1937, 9-10: Velikii dokument epokhi. In *SM* 4/1937. Yet, Khrennikov was the first to mention Cheliapov along with the leader of the Party group Danenberg as culprits. Khrennikov, T. 1937, 6: Velikii dokument epokhi. In *SM* 5/1937. No other names from the Composers' Union were mentioned.

As the Composers' Union did not take any action concerning its leadership but merely kept discussions open, Kerzhentsev had to resort to exerting financial pressure.

The plan actually worked. Cheliapov was driven to pleading for extra funding from *SNK*, Council of People's Commissars, in a letter dated June 14, 1937. Cheliapov tried to reason that the Union's economy could be saved if it received copyrights for the works of Beethoven, Glinka, Brahms, and other deceased composers played in the Soviet Union. Currently the Composers' Union lost a potential three quarters of a million rubles annually because no copyrights were paid on these composers' works. Cheliapov was apparently not answered. He wrote again to another member of *SNK* and stated that, without extra funding, all of the Union's activities would cease within a month and a half.¹¹⁸⁰

It was interesting that Cheliapov never suggested establishing musical fund for the Composers' Union, neither did he propose setting up an all-union structure. All he wanted was to secure extra funding for the Moscow branch. The composers' musical fund, *muzfond*, was first mentioned in official documents by the Committee's Kerzhentsev. While *Narkomfin* had suggested that the Committee should take over responsibility for composers' financing, the Committee suggested to *SNK* that the composers' musical fund ought to be organized along similar lines as the funds of the Writers' and Architects' unions. Furthermore, this was actually approved by Molotov, president of *SNK*, in the autumn of 1937.¹¹⁸¹

The idea that finance was used as a way of getting composers to abandon Cheliapov and side with the Committee is also supported by another fact. After the work in the Union had practically ceased, composers were still of course active. In November of 1937, shortly after the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution, there should have been a meeting about the development of Soviet music arranged for composers by the Committee.¹¹⁸² However, composers largely petitioned the Committee about improving their living conditions. Several participants stated that some composers were even living on the streets.¹¹⁸³ Composers were now asking for their share of their success. Better financing was promised after the leadership had been changed. When this happened, composers were waiting, united. Even the quarrelsome musicologists seemed at the end of 1937 to be more united than ever before. Sollertinskii, who was blamed for many ill-advised writings by other musicologists, was mentioned by Kulakovskii as one of the most important music historians.¹¹⁸⁴

¹¹⁸⁰ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 188, ll. 9, 9ob, 10. The actual amount the Moscow and Leningrad branches needed was, according to the calculations of the Composers' Union, more than 1.5 million rubles, l. 18.

¹¹⁸¹ RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 188, ll. 3-4. Molotov's approval of the l. 5.

¹¹⁸² It seems that composers were not sure of the meeting's aims. One attendant who addressed Kerzhentsev had thought that the purpose of the meeting was to re-election the union. RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, l. 14ob.

¹¹⁸³ See for example RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, d. 310, ll. 6, 9, 13ob.

¹¹⁸⁴ Kulakovskii, L. 1937, 122: *Sovetskoe muzykoznanie*. In *SM* 10-11/1937.

When the Committee became more and more involved in matters that had previously been taken care of by the Composers' Union, composers understood that they could make greater demands. The festival of Soviet Music in 1937 was the composers' contribution to the Anniversary of the October Revolution. Yet, it was arranged together with the State Philharmonia (controlled by the Committee) and Committee's musical administration. Thus, when Khubov analyzed the festival afterwards in the magazine of the Composers' Union, he criticized the Committee about the propagation of the festival. The Committee should give more weight to the proper introduction of new music and to the preparation of the audience. Khubov was surely not aware that Kerzhentsev reported to Stalin and Molotov in detail about the festival.¹¹⁸⁵ Khubov concluded his article by stating that propagation had been neglected and that the full potential of these concerts had not been utilized.¹¹⁸⁶ The Composers' Union expressed the same criticism of the Committee in connection with the second festival a year later.¹¹⁸⁷

Sovetskoe Iskusstvo, still the organ of the Committee, was once again at odds with *Sovetskaia Muzyka*—this time over music criticism. The very daring, but descriptive, choice of title for the article by Khubov was *Sumbur vmesto kritiki*, *Muddle Instead of Reviews*, referring to *Pravda's* famous editorials about formalism. In his article, Khubov blamed the editorial board of the *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* for bad reviews and even ignorance with regard to music.¹¹⁸⁸ Although Khubov was sometimes quite harsh on composers and often demanded more politically-minded creative work from them, he still championed composers and musicologists against the bureaucrats. *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* was simultaneously attacked by others, including Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov¹¹⁸⁹ (in Russian: Uzeir Gadzhibekov), who regarded that the magazine ignored operas from the national republics, even though this was precisely the kind of work the Committee had originally supported. Hajibeyov even quoted remarks that Stalin had made to him personally about the importance of folk creation and national musical cultures. He was implying that *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* was overlooking work that was personally supported by

¹¹⁸⁵ RGALI, f. 962, op. 10, d. 21, ll. 176-178. Kerzhentsev listed all the main venues and concerts as well as the purpose of the whole event. Naturally, he took the credit for arranging the festival, instead of the Composers' Union, which had planned the event for more than a year.

¹¹⁸⁶ Khubov, G. 1937, 34: Smotr sovetskoi muzyki. Tvorcheskie itogi dekadyy sovetskoi muzyki v Moskve. In *SM* 12/1937.

¹¹⁸⁷ Solodukho, I. 1939, 75: Kontserty dekadyy sovetskoi muzyki. In *SM* 1/1939.

¹¹⁸⁸ Khubov, G. 1939, 114-117: Sumbur vmesto kritiki. In *SM* 3/1939. The reviews most heavily criticized by Khubov were published anonymously in *SI* February 20, 1939.

¹¹⁸⁹ Hajibeyov was already in 1939 a deputy for the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and he was given the honor of becoming a National Artist of the USSR. This award was given only to a select few in the 1930s and afterwards. It is also significant that the Festival of Azeri Art had already been held in Moscow in 1938, which was a triumph for Hajibeyov, composer of the first Azeri opera (in 1908). Thus, he had already been raised upon a pedestal. About Hajibeyov in detail, see O'Brien, Matthew 2004, 209-227: Uzeir Hajibeyov and music in Azerbaidzhan. In Edmonds, Neil (ed.), *Soviet Music and Society under Lenin and Stalin. The Baton and Sickle*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.

Stalin.¹¹⁹⁰ Composers seem to have found a common adversary in the Committee and formed a united front.

Kerzhentsev falls. Enter the new Union

Although Molotov approved the establishment of a musical fund, it took still another one and a half years until it was finally ready. The most obvious explanation for this delay was that the Committee faced a cataclysm and Kerzhentsev had to resign. Therefore, the Composers' Union was also left in an ambivalent condition. The work in Moscow started again at the beginning of 1938. The new board held its first meeting on February 18, 1938.¹¹⁹¹ Fifteen members—a wide selection of notable composers, both young and old—sat on the board, including Khachaturian, Kabalevskii, Belyi and Aleksandr Aleksandrov. Glier became the Chairman and secretaries were Chemberdzhii, Muradeli, and Grinberg. The board also included Shebalin, signaling that the inner turmoil in the Composers' Union would relent.¹¹⁹² However, in Leningrad the change had actually taken place already in the summer of 1937. Away from Moscow, the Leningrad branch seems to have taken quite an autonomous line. Its work continued largely uninterrupted, while the Moscow branch underwent great changes. Problems that had earlier interfered with work in Leningrad seem to have been overcome to some extent after 1937.¹¹⁹³ Muradeli also later emphasized that the Moscow and Leningrad branches were completely stranded from each other, although he viewed this as being the result of the actions of wreckers in the former leadership.¹¹⁹⁴

However, the crisis in Moscow was prolonged, as the Union tried to restore former means of work. In the summer of 1938, the Composers' Union approached its members with an apology. *Narkomfin* had prohibited the Composers' Union from agreeing on contracts on its own. As a creative organization, the Composers' Union had no right to give material assistance or draw up contracts on its own; this task belonged to publishers and concert organizations. Therefore, Glier had to send an apology and end all contracts that had been agreed after August 16, 1937.¹¹⁹⁵ The status of the Composers' Union was insecure and it had to adopt a low profile.

This situation made some composers impatient. Sergei Prokofiev tried throughout 1938 to obtain what he believed to be his money from the Composers' Union. He was convinced that the Composers' Union owed him several thousands of rubles for commissioned compositions.¹¹⁹⁶ However, the

¹¹⁹⁰ Gadzhibekov, U. 1939, 20–22: Puti sovetskoi opery. In *SM* 5/1939.

¹¹⁹¹ RGALI, f. 1929, op 1, d. 802, l. 2. The letter Prokofiev received for this meeting was sent on February 16.

¹¹⁹² V Soiuzze sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 4/1938: 90.

¹¹⁹³ Dunaevskii, I. 1938, 64–66: Kak rabotaet Leningradskii Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 9/1938.

¹¹⁹⁴ Muradeli, V. 1938, 67: Moskovskii Soiuz kompozitorov na putiakh perestroiki. In *SM* 9/1938.

¹¹⁹⁵ RGALI, f. 1929, op 1, d. 802, l. 22.

¹¹⁹⁶ RGALI, f. 1929, op. 2, d. 331, l. 4 and letter written months later l. 5. Obviously, the Composers' Union could not pay Prokofiev.

Composers' Union was unable to pay him. These financial problems would fade away only when the Union received its musical fund. Perhaps it was because of this that Muradeli, the then secretary of the Moscow branch, emphasized how the Composers' Union had managed to achieve strict financial discipline and to grow away from "economism."¹¹⁹⁷ Only *muzfond* would revive the Composers' Union in full. In his criticism in 1937 Kerzhentsev had argued that for five years the Composers' Union had been primarily a financial institution, rather than a creative one. He was at least partially right.

The atmosphere in Moscow did not improve instantly. The new secretary Vano Muradeli implied that there was a lot of cliquishness in the Composers' Union, although he did not expand on this concept. Instead he described how certain leaders of different groups and musical genres avoided seeing each other and evaluating each others' work. Muradeli specifically mentioned that composers who worked with the "main musical forms" underestimated mass songs and popular music.¹¹⁹⁸ Reports in *Sovetskaia Muzyka* about the work in Moscow waned during 1938 and early 1939. It seems that spirits in Moscow sagged for a while.

In the end, the crisis in the Composers' Union would lead to changes in its leadership. Eventually, its organizational committee would be set up and the musical fund would resolve its financial problems. However, the interference of the Party in musical matters would also increase.

A decisive victory?

The first hints that Kerzhentsev was falling into disfavor could be found as early as the spring of 1937. During the Terror every administrative unit was being purged and enemies of the people were being found at every level. However, there was always a risk that, when enough subordinates were arrested, someone would drag their boss down with them. In the spring of 1937, Platon Kerzhentsev chose to present self-criticism of his actions in the Committee. He stated that it had been a mistake to adopt the basis of *Narkompros*, since this had meant the inclusion of many Trotskiites and enemies of the people. Kerzhentsev also believed that they had paid too much attention to art at the expense of politics. More attention should have been paid to the fight against the formalism, he continued. Kerzhentsev mentioned several examples. In conclusion, he asserted that he would politicize the future work of the committee.¹¹⁹⁹

Perhaps Kerzhentsev's self criticism was not sufficient to distance him from the guilt because in the end he was forced to resign. In January of 1938, the first session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR was a nightmare for him. Andrei

¹¹⁹⁷ Muradeli, V. 1938, 66–68: Moskovskii Soiuz kompozitorov na putiakh perestroiki. In *SM* 9/1938.

¹¹⁹⁸ Muradeli, V. 1938, 67: Moskovskii Soiuz kompozitorov na putiakh perestroiki. In *SM* 9/1938.

¹¹⁹⁹ Doklad tov. P. M. Kerzhentseva (Na sobranii aktiva rabotnikov iskusstv Moskvy). In *SI* March 29, 1937, p. 4.

Zhdanov was allowed to cruelly attack Kerzhentsev's policies in the Committee. Zhdanov called Kerzhentsev's leadership "invisible." Zhdanov also stated that he was guilty of great political mistakes. He had, on one occasion, refused to allow some talented young musicians to participate in piano competition "on the basis of some distant relatives . . . some of them dead for long time already." "This is a parody of leadership," Zhdanov mocked, "Is he a chairman or a traveling salesman?" Kerzhentsev was totally humiliated. Zhdanov's speech aroused laughter and his creepy condemnation attracted shouts of "right" and much applause.¹²⁰⁰

Later in the session, Molotov appointed Aleksei Nazarov as the new chairman of the Committee on Artistic Affairs and argued that, although the failures of Kerzhentsev and the Committee had been mentioned earlier, this had been done only to the minimum extent.¹²⁰¹ Yet, even though Kerzhentsev was totally humiliated and was obviously at risk, he never was arrested nor was he shot. He was simply displaced and he was allowed to continue as the Chief Editor of Soviet Encyclopedia.

It is obvious that, under Kerzhentsev's reign, the Committee attempted to invade the Composers' Union. Kerzhentsev wanted composers under his command, but he also sought to strengthen their organization, so that the Committee would control a powerful art union. Yet, composers were seeking financial and material benefits. They had built the Composers' Union to suit their needs, which now collided with Committee's ambitions. So, who won?

After Cheliapov vanished in August of 1937, the Composers' Union was never again led by a non-composer. First, he was followed by composer Nikolai Chemberdzhii and soon after by Reingold Gliere, a long-standing composer and professor, a pupil of Sergei Taneev, and one of the first teachers of Prokofiev and Miaskovskii. In 1938, Aram Khachaturian was appointed Gliere's deputy. In Leningrad, Vladimir Shcherbachev was chairman from 1935, and in 1937, probably the best known and the most popular composer of the Soviet Union, Isaak Dunaevskii took charge of the Union.¹²⁰² Composers now controlled their own Union.

Kerzhentsev's dismissal and replacement with Nazarov apparently caused a change in the Committee's strategy. The status of the Composers' Union remained unclear as did its financial capabilities. Yet, in the spring of 1938 the formation of the Composers' Union was taken further by the Committee, but things happened only gradually. On March 8, 1938, the Committee and the Composers' Union put forward a joint proposition for the Composers' Congress to be held in 1939 and requested permission to organize an organizational committee. Yet, it was only in the summer that SNK started to deal the proposition and the first draft for the committee's composition was drafted by

¹²⁰⁰ Rech deputata A. A. Zhdanova. (1. sessiia Verhovnogo soveta SSSR 1-go sozyva). In *SI* January 18, 1938, p. 2; RGALI, f. 962, op. 10s, d. 31, ll. 1-3.

¹²⁰¹ Rech Molotova. In *SI* January 20, 1938, p. 3.

¹²⁰² See: *Muzyka* September 16, 1937; *SI* April 10, 1938; *SI* April 12, 1938.

Molotov's administration.¹²⁰³ Before the organizational committee started its work, its membership base experienced changes that require explanation.

The original draft named an organizational committee of composers with twenty-five members. Glier was named the chairman. In all, there would have been three Party members, of whom Belyi was still a candidate member. The actual Party members were, not surprisingly, Moisei Grinberg and Viktor Gorodinskii. It took almost a year until things proceeded to a decisive phase. In the meantime, the Composers' Union was under some pressure following the publication of several articles that called for changes in its policies. An anonymous article in *Sovetskaia Muzyka*, for example, announced that the Moscow Union engaged in conversations but deliberately neglected practical implementation. The Union was also accused of elitism and disregarding the needs of non-professionals.¹²⁰⁴ Yet, these attacks were somewhat half-hearted. Accusations were mostly printed in the latter half of the magazine and nothing concrete changed as a result of them. Rather, it seems that the Union led its normal life much as before, perhaps excluding its previous financial activity: discussing mass musical works, Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, new songs on an army thematic, and new chamber music in the early spring of 1938.¹²⁰⁵

The Committee on Artistic Affairs was also undergoing restructuring after Kerzhentsev was ousted. Aleksei Nazarov, who had been an editor of *Pravda* for several years, replaced Kerzhentsev. He was young (only thirty-two) and it is said that he was uncreative and turned easily to Molotov or other high-ranking Party members.¹²⁰⁶ A year later, he would be succeeded by the more dynamic Mikhail Khrapchenko, who would be the longest serving chair of Committee, holding the post until 1948. But in 1938 the Committee experienced another change, as quite resolute representative of the Committee, head of its musical administration, Shatilov, was succeeded by Moisei Grinberg in April of 1938¹²⁰⁷. Instead of a career administrator, the head of musical affairs was now much more acquainted with music than his predecessor.

Khrapchenko, who was already a vice-chairman of the Committee under Nazarov, took care of its restructuring. He mentioned that one of the Committee's problems was that the extent of its authority had never been specified clearly. All throughout 1938 the Committee's structure was discussed in *SNK*. Eventually, the Committee's responsibilities were expressed as being the principle guidance of the whole Soviet artistic front. However, the Writers' Union remained outside its authority, although theaters were controlled by the Committee, as before. Otherwise, however, almost all the artistic life was supposed to be under the control of the Committee.¹²⁰⁸ While its authority was

¹²⁰³ RGALI, f. 962, op. 10s, d. 28, ll. 36-39, 45. (April to November 1938).

¹²⁰⁴ Navesti bolshevistskii poriadok v muzykalnykh organizatsiakh. In *SM* 2/1938: 73-74.

¹²⁰⁵ V Soiuz sovetskikh kompozitorov. In *SM* 2/1938: 96.

¹²⁰⁶ For example Maksimenkov 1997, 284, 299-300.

¹²⁰⁷ V komitete po delam iskusstv. In *SI* 24.4.1938: 4.

¹²⁰⁸ GARF, f. 5446, op. 23, d. 1833, ll. 60-130. Yet, the final decision on the structure of the Committee was made only on September 25, 1939, when Khrapchenko was already the Committee's chair. It was emphasized that the Committee had too much work

defined, it became a more bureaucratic organization with less capacity to undertake *ad hoc* operations. Thus, the new leaders of the Composers' Union—Glier, Khachaturian, and Dunaevskii—hardly had to alter the aims of their predecessors. The autonomous Composers' Union and its musical fund were still in their sights. It seems that the new leadership was good at manipulating the Committee, as they managed to receive what they asked for.

Composers also managed to make the Committee appeal to Molotov in order to restart the exhausted flow of international artists into the Soviet Union. First, in the summer of 1938 Nazarov wrote to Molotov that international concert tours in the Soviet Union had ceased in 1936 due to policy changes. Obviously, his letter was never answered, as in the autumn of 1938 Khrapchenko approached Molotov with a plea to allow concert tours of several world-class artists in the Soviet Union. He mentioned violinists Yehudi Menuhin, Fritz Kreisler, and Jozsef Szigeti; pianists Arthur Rubinstein and Egon Petri; conductors Arturo Toscanini, Otto Klemperer, and Bruno Walter; and the black American singer Marian Anderson, among others. The request was made on behalf of young musicians. Khrapchenko reasoned that they would not develop to their full potential unless they could see world-class artists perform. He also stated that Rubinstein, Walter, and several others of these artists were openly opposed to fascism.¹²⁰⁹

Composers seem to have accomplished a decisive victory behind the scenes. In March of 1939 Nazarov confirmed to Molotov and Andrei Andreev that everything was ready for setting up the all-union structure for the Composers' Union. Although the list of names for the organizational committee largely corresponded to the draft a year earlier, Gorodinskii and Grinberg were now both excluded, as was Sergei Prokofiev. The original draft had still been intact on October 13, 1938 when vice-chair of the Committee, Khrapchenko proposed the nomination of the organization committee to Molotov and Andreev in *SNK*.¹²¹⁰ No musicians and only a few musicologists were included in the redrafted list. However, republican composers were now well represented—Ukrainian Boris Liatoshinskii, Georgian Vano Gokeli, Azeri Hajibeyov, Byelorussian Semion Bogatyrev, Armenian Aro Stepanian, Uzbeks Abdylas Maldybaev (regarded as Kyrgyz) and Talib Sadykov (possibly regarded as Tadzhik)—as were both young and old leading composers including Shostakovich, Kabalevskii, Shteinberg, Miaskovskii, and two light-genre composers Dmitrii Pokrass and Isaak Dunaevskii (also a vice-chairman along with young Khachaturian). The only Party-member included in the revised list was Viktor Belyi.¹²¹¹

that could be done in the Administration on Artistic Affairs of RSFSR, which was the Russian equivalent of the Committee's republican branches. They took care of very routine administration of the arts.

¹²⁰⁹ GARF, f. 5446, op. 23, d. 1818, ll. 1–6. Appeals were made on September 15 and November 26, 1938.

¹²¹⁰ RGALI, f. 962, op. 10, d. 28, l. 40.

¹²¹¹ GARF, f. 5446, op. 23, d. 1836, ll. 1–4, first mentioned by Tomoff 2006, 24. Compare also to RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1009, l. 23 where there is an identical list of representatives.

Composers managed to organize a leading organ for their Union that included only leading composers from Moscow, Leningrad and republican branches, with no representatives from the Party or from the Committee. The leading musicians were also excluded from the administrative corpus. Tomoff has observed that the events that followed the approval of the composers' organizational committee took place quite rapidly.¹²¹² These events do seem to have taken place quickly if we keep in mind that the organizational committee had first been discussed seven years ago and that the charters and the establishment of the musical fund were first approved five and two years earlier respectively. At the same time as the all-union organizational committee was established, Ukraine held its first composers' congress.¹²¹³ Although composers managed to secure the administration they wanted, they still had to push for what they really desired. Establishment of the *muzfond* was not axiomatic.

Molotov had approved the musical fund already in the autumn of 1937, but it was not established simultaneously with the organizational committee. The issue was attached to the question of the organizational committee by Molotov first in March and again in October of 1938.¹²¹⁴ Yet, more than two months after the organizational committee had already been established, Union chairman Glier and a group of composers from the organizational committee appealed to Molotov that the musical fund should be finally established and argued that its absence seriously hampered creative work. Composers managed to add some momentum to the process since the musical fund was set up within two months. It was active from October 1, 1939.¹²¹⁵ Composers' cornucopia was finally operational and their Union had achieved the status they had strived for throughout the 1930s.

¹²¹² Tomoff 2006, 24–26.

¹²¹³ Po soiuzu. In *SM* 5/1939: 79.

¹²¹⁴ RGALI, f. 962, op. 10, d. 28, ll. 34–35, 39.

¹²¹⁵ GARF, f. 5446, op. 23, d. 1852, ll. 12–31. Vyshinskii signed the resolution about the musical fund on September 20, 1939.

PROFESSIONALIZING MUSIC UNDER THE PRESSURE OF IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS

Music is said to have become “regimented” during the 1930s—subjected to the control of the Communist Party and Stalin in person. In most cases, when the changes following the resolution of the Party in April 1932 about restructuring artistic organizations are discussed, the growing political control is emphasized. This, however, was not the foremost and not even the most immediate change experienced by musical experts. A more direct consequence was the professionalization of creative musical work. One of the most dramatic changes from previous decades was the surge in the number of full-time composers. When the Composers’ Union was set up in 1932, most of its members were still employed in other professions, some of them unconnected to music. Toward the end of the decade, the situation was already very different. At the same time, the amount of new compositions rose notably as more composers were able to commit themselves to creative work.

The April Resolution of 1932 suggested that political control over the arts would be tightened and this indeed was what happened in literature. However, in music, archival documents as well as the practical work of the Composers’ Union indicate that music escaped most of the political repercussions that were faced by writers. Instead of becoming an instrument of the Party, the Composers’ Union was used by composers to realize their financial ambitions. Composers managed to improve their paychecks, royalties, and recreational facilities, and they even gained access to special apartments, closed restaurants, and closed goods distribution points. The overall status of composers in the Soviet Union improved markedly and they became a privileged group, an elite. The decisive turn in their financial and material well-being was achieved in 1939 when the Composers’ Union received its own funding organ, *muzfond*.

Yet, even if material concerns were among composers’ main priorities and the most important thing they sought from the Composers’ Union, the musical world in general faced many other changes during the 1930s. One of these changes was a return to traditions, which meant abandoning some of the modern techniques and musical forms. The Russian school of music was

revived and the compositions of the *Mighty Handful* (Balakirev, Cui, Musorgskii, Rimskii-Korsakov and Borodin), and Mikhail Glinka, in particular, but also those of Piotr Tchaikovskii were set upon a pedestal. At times, Soviet composers even found it difficult to get their own music published and performed because pre-revolutionary music dominated the scene. Throughout the 1930s, the music that had been despised by most of the leading musical proponents during the previous decade grew in importance and was set up as an exemplar for Soviet music as well. In fact, the Russian school of music was deemed the logical predecessor of Soviet music—a change that was approved by both the Party and the musical elite.

This concept of Soviet music was also one of the important themes of the 1930s. There were several lengthy discussions on the subject, but nothing well-defined was not achieved as a result. Before 1936, it seemed as though no kind of compromise could be achieved over what Soviet music was, much less over the definition of socialist realism. Furthermore, it is interesting that socialist realism in music was something composers and musicologists were discussing in private. The Party distanced itself from this issue and made no attempts to intervene before the mid-1930s. In spring 1936, however, the Party newspaper *Pravda*, which had practically omitted music in its pages this far, started to publish articles about music that were both praising and condemnatory. Western-orientated modernism was condemned along with music that generally undermined content in favor of form. These hazy guidelines, given anonymously in *Pravda*, were not exactly clear directives for composers. What became more obvious was that foreign influences were not welcomed and that composers should concentrate instead on the themes of socialist construction and the techniques of Russian pre-Revolutionary masters.

Even before 1936, composers and musicologists had undertaken projects that embraced socialist construction. They had drawn influence from their visits to kolkhozes, army garrisons, and factories, where they also established amateur collectives. Thus, the Composers' Union adopted modes of work that had been previously undertaken by the Association of Proletarian Musicians, *RAPM*, from whose heritage the Union had officially dissociated itself. Although many composers hardly conducted this work out of ideological commitment, such visits became one of the Union's standard forms of work in the 1930s. More visibly ideological viewpoints, however, were present during theoretical discussions in the Union. These discussions are of interest not only because of the absence of the Party leadership, but also because it was believed that musicologists had a responsibility to lead discussions about the relationship between ideology and music.

Musicologists were, however, not particularly interested in this task at first. Later on, however, the musicological section of the Union activated and also started to work toward increasing the control the Union could exert over music criticism. It seemed that overseeing ideological viewpoints in music should have rested with musicologists, yet only in 1948 was Boris Asafiev eventually given this dubious honor.

One of the composers' overall aims for their Union, which had very little to do with the Party, was to gain a hegemonic position in the musical world. As it tried to distribute its members' music, the Composers' Union struggled to gain supremacy over music publishing and numerous concert organizations. However, it had a hard time achieving these aims because its organizational structure was incomplete. The Union did not enjoy national status—it lacked the national-level organs that would have enabled better control over other musical organizations. Until 1939, the Composers' Union was made up of local branches in Moscow and Leningrad as well as in several smaller cities and in non-Russian republics. Yet, an even bigger challenge to both the autonomous status of the Composers' Union and its hegemonic ambitions was posed by the Committee on Artistic Affairs in 1936.

This Committee was an overarching governmental organ that was set up to supervise the entire Soviet artistic world. Previously the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment (*Narkompros*) had supervised the arts and in the early Soviet-years had been quite favorably disposed toward music. However, the Committee was a much powerful organ than *Narkompros* had ever been. In music, it managed to achieve several things the Composers' Union had been pressing for. In spring 1936, music received the kind of major publicity that had hitherto proved so elusive through its participation in festivals of national art in Moscow, which were organized by this Committee. These festivals formed part of the Soviet nationality politics in stressing and enforcing the titular nationalities of Soviet republics. On several issues, the Committee acted as the middle piece of the Party toward the world of Soviet art. These festivals particularly emphasized music and were an interesting combination, as well as compromise, of local musical cultures and Western forms of art. Although they were part of the official festival culture visibly supported by Stalin, they were also a precious chance for local cultures to bring forward their national arts and get official support for local issues. Indeed, Republican musical theatres and educational institutes were established and were heavily subsidized throughout the Soviet period as a result of the festivals.

However, even if the Committee fulfilled some of the composers' aims, it also found itself at odds with the Composers' Union. After several confrontations in 1936 and 1937, the Committee seemed triumphant: the leadership of almost all branches of the Composers' Union had changed. The foremost of these was Moscow, whose chairman, Nikolai Cheliapov, perished in the Terror. Composers, however, were not as easily overcome as Party bureaucrats like Cheliapov were. Somewhat surprisingly, and despite some internal conflicts, composers managed to preserve their internal loyalty and evade the worst of the Terror. Only one notable member of the Union was killed in the Terror and three others were sentenced to the camps. The musical world seems almost to have been a miraculous haven in the midst of the Terror, while Soviet literature suffered heavily. One possible explanation for this could lie in music's looser connection to politics. Yet, the Committee on Artistic Affairs certainly had the means by which to wreak devastation upon

individuals, as the cases of Cheliapov and other administrators suggest. Still, even former proletarian musicians, who for a moment seemed to be targeted, managed to escape uninjured.

When Cheliapov, who was apparently abandoned by composers, vanished and the Committee seemed triumphant, composers started to reclaim Committee's pledges. The Committee had been using a "carrot and stick" approach and one of the carrots had been the establishment of central organs for the Composers' Union, *muzfond* included. Another possible incentive was that the Union would be administrated only by professionals instead of Party bureaucrats. The Committee and its chairman Platon Kerzhentsev had most likely wished to complete the establishment of the Composers' Union and set up a nation-wide Composers' Union under the Committee's auspices. However, Kerzhentsev was ousted in January 1938. Changes within the Committee on Artistic Affairs enabled the Composers' Union to extend its authority when its first national organ was finally nominated in spring 1939. Although all nominees to this organizational committee had to be given the Party leadership's blessing, composers still managed to exclude all representatives of the Party from its ranks. The musicologists Viktor Gorodinskii and Moisei Grinberg—the first of whom was associated with the Central Committee and the latter with the Committee on Artistic Affairs—were omitted from the final list of nominees, although they were present in the original lists that dated from 1938.

The musical world in 1939 was, although much closer to the Party and the State than at the beginning of 1930s, was firmly in the hands of musical professionals. After 1932, the professional status of composers was officially sanctioned and amateur music submitted to professionals' hands. In the meantime, those in charge were not allowed to undermine the Soviet cause in any way, although the Party membership was not required. However, they had to adhere to new principles, which presumed that modernist tendencies would be abandoned and that composers would embrace Russian traditions as well as the national cultures of the Soviet Republics. This is well illustrated in the musical world, where national musical cultures occupied a major role alongside Russian musical traditions and the music of Soviet composers. Ideologically, an important attempt was made to distinguish Soviet music from its Western counterparts, although this objective was only partially successful.

The ability of the Union to adapt to surroundings is also illustrated by the ritualistic repetition of certain issues and Party speeches connected to music. In research, this has been viewed as though music was tied to Party politics, although mere rhetoric can hardly justify such an assumption. These rituals included almost compulsive rejection and criticism of *RAPM* and its heritage. Even though forms of work that had been undertaken by *RAPM* were adopted by the Composers' Union and former *RAPM* members occupied notable positions in the Union, the influence of proletarian music was fiercely denied. One form of rhetoric that eventually found an analogy in reality was the indexes of exemplary works that were presented in official occasions. Some

works were set upon a pedestal by officials, such as Ivan Dzerzhinskii's opera *Silent Don*, and some, like Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, by musical experts. Yet, the Composers' Union already in the 1930s had some power to choose which works would receive official status, as it did to a greater extent with the Stalin prize committee of the 1940s.

Was there ever a consistent musical policy in the 1930s? If musical policy is considered as something carefully planned and overseen by some governmental institution, only the Committee for Artistic Affairs would have been able to achieve something like this. However, the Committee was a bureaucratic organization dependant on the artistic expertise of organizations like the Composers' Union. Particularly before 1936, the Composers' Union along with other musical organizations had plenty of room to maneuver and could disregard at least some of the official demands. But even after 1936 when the exigencies started to become more explicit, the situation was vague enough to allow a degree of autonomous decision making to a professional organization like the Composers' Union. The Union could even arrange concert evenings of the most modern Western music, which was officially condemned, as well as acquire these works in the form of sheet music for their library. The Composers' Union was hardly an instrument of Party policy in this regard.

It is also notable that in the 1930s Soviet composers were able to produce several masterworks that were received favorably overseas. Additionally, composers wrote extremely successful film scores and genuinely popular and beloved popular songs that are well known even today. The Soviet Union could also produce a host of triumphant musicians, who took international competitions by storm and brought the Soviet Union an international reputation for excellence in music. Yet, changing ideological demands also took their toll: although Soviet operas were composed by the dozens during the 1930s, very few outlasted the decade and many were never even staged. The demands of the Committee were set too high to be fulfilled. Instead of staging Soviet operatic works, most leading opera houses adopted a pre-Revolutionary repertory.

The general trends of embracing national musical cultures and pre-Revolutionary musical traditions and abandoning the most modern Western experiments were accepted by most composers and musicologists, even without such methods being imposed. For some, such as Dmitrii Shostakovich or Genrikh Litinskii, this entailed a focal, but successful, reorientation of their previous preferences; for most, the change was easier. Only a few, including Aleksandr Mosolov, faced ruination and utter oblivion.

Yet, whether all this was part of a consistent musical policy is highly questionable. It seems more likely that certain trends were accepted by the Party as part of official cultural policy, while others were discarded. Yet, the organization most familiar with the changes in policies toward music was the Composers' Union. It managed to create a position from which it could define the course of musical policy, although always within certain ideological limitations. The Party also reserved the right to intervene in musical life and it

did not hesitate to do so at times. The most forceful Party intervention took place in 1948: the first Composers' Congress was finally held, but the most notable composers were denounced. Still, already in the 1930s the Composers' Union managed to fulfill large parts of its mission of to professionalize the work of composers and musicologists, create material well-being for its members, and control Soviet musical life.

YHTEENVETO (FINNISH SUMMARY)

Valtion säveltäjiä ja punaisia hoviherroja. Musiikki, ideologia ja politiikka 1930-luvun Neuvostoliitossa.

Tämä tutkimus käsittelee taiteen ja politiikan vuorovaikutusta, sekä sen eri ilmenemismuotoja 1930-luvun Neuvostoliiton kautta. Tarkasteltavana olevalla vuosikymmenellä Stalinin lähipiirin valta maan johdossa vahvistui ennennäkemättömällä tavalla. Vuosikymmenen alussa käynnistyi valtava teollistuminen ja maa alkoi ottaa teollisuustuotannossa kiinni teollistuneita länsimaita. Samaan aikaan maa kuitenkin kärsi myös valtavasta nälänhädästä. Tämän kriisin jälkeen vuosikymmenen toisella puoliskolla seurasi kaikkien yhteiskunnan kerrosten läpi pyyhkinyt terrorin aalto, joka saattoi yhteiskunnan uudestaan sekasortoiseen tilaan. Kaiken tämän sekasorron keskellä neuvostomusiikin ja säveltäjien asemat kuitenkin vahvistuivat luoden tehden molemmista Neuvostoliitossa yhteiskunnallisesti keskeisiä ja tunnustettuja.

Huolimatta siitä, että älymystön ja eliitin asemaa Stalinin aikaisessa Neuvostoliitossa on tutkittu, on tutkimus keskittynyt lähes täysin kirjailijoihin. Säveltäjät ovatkin sikäli kiinnostava älymystön ryhmä, että heidän yhteiskunnallisesti keskeinen asemansa luotiin 1930-luvun aikana, jolloin ryhmä myös nostettiin osaksi neuvostoliittia. Tutkimuksen tarkoitus onkin paitsi tuottaa tietoa säveltäjien asemasta ja toiminnasta Neuvostoliitossa, myös arvioida vallitsevaa käsitystä älymystön yhtenäisestä kohtelusta.

Tutkimus pohjaa pääasiassa Moskovasta ja Pietarista kerättyyn alkuperäisaineistoon. Historiantutkimus on Neuvostoliiton osalta varsin usein karttanut musiikin tarkastelua, pitäen sitä musiikkitieteen tehtävänä. Musiikkitiede on kuitenkin ollut kiinnostunut lähinnä yksittäisistä säveltäjistä ja näiden teoksista, eikä niinkään musiikin asemasta neuvostoyhteiskunnassa tai edes neuvostosäveltäjistä kokonaisuudessaan, yleisesityksiä lukuunottamatta. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus onkin paikata tätä aukkoa 1930-luvun osalta, sillä juuri tällä vuosikymmenellä sekä musiikin että säveltäjien asema Neuvostoliitossa muuttui radikaalisti.

Menneisyydenhallintaa

Eräs keskeisistä muutoksista Neuvostoliiton musiikkielämässä 1930-luvulla koski suhtautumista Lokakuun vallankumousta (1917) edeltäneeseen aikaan. Vallankumouksesta aina ensimmäisen viisivuotissuunnitelman (1928-1932) päättymiseen asti venäläinen musiikkiperintö oli ahtaalla. Konservatoriot olivat kyllä saaneet poikkeuksellisesti toimia ensimmäiset kymmenen vuotta lähes täysin vallankumousta edeltävällä pohjalla ja ne joutuivat poliittisen ahdistelun kohteeksi varsinaisesti vasta ensimmäisen viisivuotissuunnitelman aikana. Sen sijaan sekä proletaarimusikot että modernismiin suuntautuneet säveltäjät painostivat konserttiorganisaatioita.

Säveltäjaliiton perustamisen (1932) ja samalla tapahtuneen proletaarimuusikoiden yhdistyksen (*RAPM*) lakkauttamisen myötä venäläinen musiikkiperintö kuitenkin nousi ennen näkemättömään kukoistukseen. Säveltäjät valtiovallan tukemina nostivat Mihail Glinkan, Modest Musorgskin, Nikolai Rimski-Korsakovin ja jopa periporvarillisena pidetyn Pjotr Tšaikovskin musiikin esikuvalliseen asemaan. Näiden säveltäjien musiikkia ryhdyttiin korostamaan joka käänteessä ja oopperatalot alkoivat kilvan tuottaa vanhoista venäläisistä klassikoista uusia, joskin useimmiten varsin vahvasti perinteeseen nojaavia näyttämöllepanoja. Esimerkiksi Moskovan filharmonisen orkesterin ohjelmistossa eräällä kaudella soitettiin yhtä Schoenbergin teosta kohden 190 Rimski-Korsakovin sävellystä.

Samaan aikaan, kun venäläinen musiikkiperinne nostettiin jalustalle, myös konservatoriossa sen asemaa korostettiin merkittävästi. Professoreita, joita vielä muutama vuosi aiemmin oli uhattu erottamisella, palkittiin nyt kunniamerkein ja valtionpalkinnoilla. Proletaarimuusikoiden perintö ja asema neuvostomusiikkielämässä sen sijaan torjuttiin jyrkästi. Vaikka tässä tutkimuksessa osoitetaankin säveltäjaliiton omaksuneen huomattavan määrän käytänteitä ja jopa ideologisia lähtökohtia proletaarimuusikoiden yhdistykseltä, tämä itsepäisesti kiistettiin virallisissa yhteyksissä. Samalla aiemmin proletaarimuusikoiksi tunnustautuneet silti hyväksyttiin säveltäjaliiton täysivaltaisiksi jäseniksi. Heitä ei myöskään vainottu, kuten esimerkiksi kirjailijaliitossa tapahtui.

Proletaarimuusikoiden harjoittaman musiikin politisoimisen tultua tuomituksi kohtasi myös toinen venäläistä musiikkiperinnettä kaihtanut suuntaus vastustusta. Nykymusiikin yhdistys (*ASM*), joka 1920-luvulla pyrki sekä Neuvostoliitossa tehdyn uuden musiikin, että länsimaisen modernin musiikin levittämiseen, ei sekään saanut ideologiaansa edistettyä enää 1930-luvulla. Valtiovallan, sekä useiden säveltäjien taholta tuomittiin länsimaisen huippumoderenin musiikin oikeus tulla soitetuksi Neuvostoliiton konserttisaleissa.

Ajoittain 1930-luvun kuluessa näitä modernisteina pidettyjä säveltäjiä – mutta aivan erityisesti heidän teoksiaan vastaan – käytiin myös poliittisia kampanjoita. Silti nekin harvat modernistit, jotka eivät muuttaneet sävellystyylilään 1930-luvun kuluessa, saivat pitää jäsenyytensä säveltäjaliitossa ja vaikeuksista huolimatta saivat samat edut kuin liiton muutkin jäsenet. Merkittävää on sekin, että vaikka 1930-luvun loppupuolella modernistisena pidetty uusi Länsi-Eurooppalainen musiikki virallisesti tuomittiin, saattoi säveltäjaliitto edelleen hankkia näitä nuotteja kirjastoonsa ja jopa järjestää konsertteja, joissa tätä musiikkia soitettiin. Se, mikä tavalliselta kansalta kiellettiin, saattoi edelleen säilyä eliitin etuisuutena.

Säveltäjistä neuvostoeliittiä

Säveltäjien asema ylipäätään muuttui varsin merkittävästi 1930-luvun Neuvostoliitossa. Vaikka vuosikymmen muistetaankin etupäässä nälänhädästä, joukkoterrorista ja monista muista negatiivisista ilmiöistä, säveltäjien työ ammattimaistui, säveltäjät nostettiin eliitin asemaan ja heidän elintonsa koheni huomattavasti. Säveltäjille järjestettiin etuisuuksia, joihin tavallisella kansalai-

sella ei ollut pääsyä. Heille järjestyi pääsy hyviin ravintoloihin, sekä suljettuihin kaappoihin, joissa oli avoimia kauppoja paremmin tuotteita, mutta myös halvemmat hinnat.

Myös asumisen osalta säveltäjistä oli tullut eliittiä. Stalinin ajan huomattavan asuntopulan vallitessa pahimmilla alueilla – kuten Moskova – asukasta kohti liikenä vaivoin 4 neliometriä asuinpinta-alaa. Säveltäjille, kuten muullekin eliitille ryhdyttiin kuitenkin rakentamaan omia asuintaloja. Johtaville säveltäjille, kuten Sergei Prokofieville, järjestyi jopa viiden huoneen asuntoja autotalleineen. Vaikka elintaso olikin jopa parhaiten elävän neuvostoeliitin keskuudessa paljon heikompi kuin se, mihin esimerkiksi tuon ajan Yhdysvalloissa oli yleisesti totuttu, muodostui ero tavalliseen kansaan todella merkittäväksi.

Säveltäjät lähtivät itse organisoimaan näitä etuisuuksia 1932 perustetun säveltäjäliiton kautta. Vaikka puolueen päätöslauselmalla perustetun säveltäjäliitosta olisi pitänyt muodostua ennen kaikkea Neuvostoliiton musiikkielämän ideologinen ja poliittinen keskus, poliittisen kontrollin puuttuessa säveltäjät alkoivat käyttää sitä taloudellisten etujensa ajamiseen. Niinpä liiton kautta ryhdyttiin järjestämään sen jäsenille myös loma-asuntoja, parempia tekijänoikeuksia, sekä parempaa palkkaa. Säveltäjäliitosta ei tullutkaan 1930-luvulla kirjailijaliiton tapaan puolueen käsikassaraa, vaan ennemminkin säveltäjien etujärjestö, jota säveltäjät käyttivät taloudellisten etujen järjestämiseen ja oman asemansa parantamiseen.

Sosialistinen realismi ja politisoituminen

Säveltäjien pääasiallinen huomio säveltäjäliiton osalta keskittyi etuisuuksien haalimiseen ja elinolojen parantamiseen, mutta liitossa tapahtui silti paljon muutakin. Vaikka puolueen poliittinen kontrolli – ainakin kirjailijaliittoon verrattuna – loisti poissaolollaan vuosikymmenen ensimmäisellä puoliskolla, kävivät säveltäjät käsiksi myös poliittisiin ongelmiin. Säveltäjät pyrkivätkin aktiivisesti muun muassa tekemään liitostaan Neuvostoliiton musiikkielämän johtavan organisaation.

Tässä työssä säveltäjäliitto kuitenkin kohtasi merkittäviä ongelmia, sillä muut musiikin kanssa tekemisissä olleet organisaatiot eivät tahtoneet taipua liiton tahtoon, eikä liitolla itsellään riittänyt auktoriteettia tahtonsa saattamiseksi käytäntöön. Siitä huolimatta liitto teki aktiivista ideologista työtä muun muassa järjestämällä säveltäjien vierailuja kolhooseille, tehtaisiin, armeijan joukko-osastoihin ja jopa kaivoksille. Ideologisena taustana tälle toiminnalle oli tuoda musiikkia lähemmäs kansaa ja säveltää neuvostoelämän kannalta keskeisistä asioista. Käytännössä syyt kuitenkin löytyvät ennemmin neuvostomusiikin tehokkaasta levittämistyöstä ja sen tekemisestä tunnetuksi, kuin puolueen ideologisista päämääristä. Tavallinen kansa nimittäin tunsu tuohon aikaan klassikokteokset huomattavasti neuvostosävellyksiä paremmin ja harrastajapiireissäkin soitettiin mieluummin klassikoita kuin neuvostomusiikkia. Tähän säveltäjät kuitenkin onnistuivat saamaan muutoksen 1930-luvun kuluessa.

Sosialistista realismia ei sitäkään silti unohdettu. Säveltäjien ja erityisesti musiikkiteeilijöiden joukosta löytyi henkilöitä, jotka aidosti halusivat tuoda

musiikin lähemmäksi puolueen tavoitteita. Vaikka puolueelta ei tullutkaan käytännössä minkäänlaisia ohjeita sosialistisen realismin soveltamisesta musiikkiin, muutamat musiikkitieteilijät ottivat haasteen vastaan ja pohtivat kysymystä niin kokouksissa, kuin eri lehtien sivuilla.

Joidenkin musiikkitieteilijöiden pyrkimyksenä näyttää myös olleen osoittaa puolueelle, että musiikin ammattilaiset kykenivät hoitamaan asian ilman että puolueen tarvitsi puuttua asiaan. Osa koki myös tärkeäksi osoittaa, miten musiikki oli yhteiskunnallisesti merkittävä taidemuoto, jolla oli huomattava vaikutus ihmisiin. Tällöin musiikin yhteiskunnallisen aseman nostaminen myös tulisi tarpeelliseksi ja tekisin säveltäjien työstä arvokkaampaa. Tässä he myös ilmeisesti onnistuivat, koska vuosikymmenen jälkipuoliskolta lähtien musiikki oli yksi keskeisimpiä ja arvostetuimpia taidemuotoja Neuvostoliitossa.

Sosialistinen realismi kuitenkin pysyi musiikin osalta vähintäänkin epäselvänä ohjenuorana. Keskustelussa ei pystytty löytämään selkeitä ohjeita joita olisi voitu soveltaa käytäntöön. Ainoaksi selkeäksi linjaksi muodostui formalismin välttäminen. Formalismi, josta tuli suoranainen kirosana Neuvostoliiton taide-elämässä, käsitettiin sisällön väheksymiseksi muodon kustannuksella. Teoksen sisältö, todellinen tai kuviteltu, oli avain sosialistiseen realismiin. Kuinka teos olisikaan voinut olla yhteiskunnallisesti vaikuttava, jos se oli vain ”taidetta taiteen vuoksi”, erkaantui arkielämästä ja pyrki keskittymään vain muotokieleen.

Seurauksena olikin eräänlainen kompromissi. Esimerkiksi valtaisan suosion saavuttaneet populaarimusiikin säveltäjät, kuten Isaak Dunajevski, Matvei Blanter tai Dimitri Pokrass eivät juuri muuttaneet jazzia, Hollywood-klassikoita ja muuta kevyttä musiikkia lainailevaa sävellystyyliliään. Sen sijaan heidän laulujensa sanat ja tarinat muuttuivat. Ne alkoivat 1930-luvun kuluessa tulla sosialistista rakentamista ja puolueen tavoitteita tukenutta sanomaa, jopa suoraa Stalinin ylistystä. Musiikki itsessään muuttui silti vain vähän.

Huomattavasti vähemmän kirjallista ilmaisua sisältäneen klassisen musiikin osalta muutos oli huomattavasti vaikeampi. Oopperoissa muutos oli vielä sängen helppo toteuttaa sellaisten paljon käsiteltyjen aiheiden kuten Venäjän sisällissota, tai suosittujen historiallisten tapahtumien kuvaamisen kautta. Sen sijaan orkesterimusiikin osalta jouduttiin turvautumaan esimerkiksi teosten lisänimien (kuten *Tarkka-ampujatar*, *Puna-armeijan sinfonia*, tai *Komsomol-sotilas*) käyttämiseen. Myös erilaiset ulkomusiikilliset keinot, kuten lehtiartikkelit, ohjelmalehtiset ja luennot olivat suosittuja menetelmiä. Radion tulo mahdollisti myös sen, että ennen teoksen esittämistä kuuluttaja saattoi selittää teokseen liittyvän poliittisen tai ideologisen sisällön.

Varsinaisia tapoja toteuttaa sosialistista realismia itse musiikissa ei kyetty löytämään. Selkeimpänä ohjeena olikin välttää Länsi-Eurooppalaista modernismia ja pitää teokset mahdollisimman lähestyttävänä ja ymmärrettävänä.

Puoluekuri ja säveltäjät

Vuoden 1936 alusta toimintansa aloittanut taideasioiden komitea muutti myös Neuvostoliiton musiikkielämää merkittäväällä tavalla. Aiemmin eri organisaatioille hajautettu taide-elämän kontrolli siirrettiin yhdelle isolle organisaatiolle, joka alkoikin käyttää aktiivisesti valtaansa myös säveltäjien kohdalla. Varsin itsenäisesti toiminut säveltäjaliitto, ja erityisesti sen virkamiesjohto, oli seuraavien kahden vuoden aikana toistuvasti komitean silmätikkuna.

Vuosi 1936 muistetaan usein tammikuussa käynnistyneestä hyökkäyksestä säveltäjä Dimitri Shostakovitshia vastaan. Shostakovitshin on väitetty joutuneen täydelliseen epäsuosioon, jopa kuolemanvaaraan ennen kuin hänen maineensa palauttanut viides sinfonia esitettiin marraskuussa 1937. Tämä tutkimus kuitenkin osoittaa, että *Pravdassa* käynnistynyt hyökkäys oli osa laajempaa tapahtumaketjua, jossa Shostakovitsh ei itse asiassa edes ollut pääkohteena. Häntä ei myöskään missään vaiheessa hylätty, saatika vangittu.

Pravdan artikkelit liittyivät valtaeliitin sisäiseen kamppailuun, jossa taideasioiden komitea otti ylivallan taidehallinnossa. Samalla se kuitenkin pyrki palauttamaan taiteilijat ja autonomisesti toimineet organisaatiot takaisin ruotuun. Seuranneessa valtakamppailussa sisäisistä erimielisyyksistä kärsinyt säveltäjaliitto näytti olevan todellisessa vaarassa muuttua vuosina 1936-38 raivonneen terrorin veriseksi näyttämöksi. Tässä suhteessa tutkimuksen tulos tarjoaakin yllätyksen: yhtäkään merkittävää säveltäjää ei kyseisten vuosien aikana teloitettu. Toisin kuin esimerkiksi pahasti kärsinyt kirjallisuus, musiikki välttyi merkittävilta tuhoilta.

Sen sijaan säveltäjät ja musiikkielämä tuotiin entistä voimakkaammin palvelemaan puolueen omia tavoitteita. Erityisen voimakkaasti komitea tuki kansanmusiikin asemaa, jonka avokätisellä tuella pyrittiin osoittamaan Neuvostoliiton kansallisuuspolitiikan ylivertaisuus. Vaikka puolueen pyrkimykset eivät olleetkaan pyyteettömiä ja tuloksena syntyneet kansalliset musiikkikulttuurit olivat osittain keinotekoisia luomuksia, osa kansallisuuksista hyötyi tästä politiikasta merkittävästi. Säveltäjiä taas osaltaan kannustettiin kansanmusiikin keräystyöhön ja tukemaan kansallisten musiikkikulttuurien nousua.

Byrokratia vainojen uhrina

Säveltäjien ja hallinnon välisen yhteenoton uhrit olivat lähes poikkeuksetta byrokraatteja. Luovan työn tekijöiden sijasta uhreiksi joutuivat puolueeseen kuuluneet hallintomiehet. Säveltäjaliittoa johti ensimmäiset viisi vuotta ammatti-byrokraatti Nikolai Tsheljapov, jolla oli hyvin vähän tekemistä musiikin kanssa. Hänestä tulikin taideasioiden komitean johtajan Pavel Kerzhentsevin pääkohde. Vaikka säveltäjaliiton aiempi johto yhteenoton seurauksena syrjäytettiin, säveltäjät hyötyivät muutoksesta: säveltäjaliiton jäseniksi otettiin jatkossa ainoastaan aitoja säveltäjiä ja musiikkiteiteilijöitä. Liiton nokkamiehet 1930-luvun jälkipuoliskolla eivät itse asiassa edes kuuluneet puolueeseen, vaan olivat yksinomaan arvostettuja säveltäjiä.

Näyttää ilmeiseltä, että säveltäjät taipuivat hyväksymään riittävän määrän puolueen edellyttämiä muutoksia, koska heidän sallittiin asettua oman liittonsa johtoon puoluebyrokraattien asemesta. Liiton asemaa vielä huomattavasti vahvistettiin vuonna 1939. Vaikka muutosten seurauksena vielä 1920-luvulla vallinnut musiikillinen monimuotoisuus ei hävinnytkään, siitä tuli nyt tiukemmin hyväksytyihin muotoihin sidottua. Taiteellista vapautta suvaittiin vain niin kauan, kun se ei sotinut puolueen tärkeimpiä pyrkimyksiä ja periaatteita vastaan. Vastalahjaksi säveltäjille myönnettiin merkittäviä taloudellisia etuisuuksia ja heidän liitostaan tuli musiikkielämän johtava organisaatio.

Nämä musiikilliset uudistukset eivät tapahtuneetkaan yksinomaan puolueen toimesta ja säveltäjien vastustuksen ylitse. Vaikka osa säveltäjistä oli suuntautunut moderniin eurooppalaiseen musiikkiin, lähes kaikki oli kuitenkin koulutettu Rimski-Korsakovin viitoittamalla venäläiskansallisella tiellä. Käännös, joka 1930-luvulla tapahtui kohti venäläiskansallista ja muodoiltaan perinteistä tyyliä oli sinänsä varsin looginen. On kuitenkin huomattava, että kun tähän vielä kytkettiin modernin musiikin vastainen kampanjointi ja ulkomaisten yhteyksien vaikeuttaminen, vaikuttaa ero 1920-lukuun varsin huomattavalta. Osana tätä muutosta myös eri musiikkityylien väliset erot alkoivat hämärtyä valtion tukiessa aktiivisesti eri musiikkityylien ja -traditioiden sotkeutumista keskenään.

Tämän tutkimuksen valossa näyttäisikin selvältä, ettei 1930-luvun musiikkielämässä tapahtuneissa muutoksissa ollut kyse vain Stalinin valta nousua seuranneesta politiikan ulottamisesta yhteiskunnan kaikkiin kerroksiin. Muutokset, joita musiikkielämässä, ja yhteiskunnassa laajemmin tapahtui saivat myös laajaa tukea säveltäjiltä ja musiikkielämän vaikuttajilta. Erityisesti sävellystyön ammattimaistaminen ja musiikin uusi, yhteiskunnallisesti merkittävä asema nauttivat laajaa kannatusta. Säveltäjät olivat osaltaan vaikuttamassa siihen, millaiseksi Neuvostoliiton kulttuuripolitiikka 1930-luvun aikana muodostui. He eivät olleet yksinomaan uhreja, vaan myös merkittäviä vaikuttajia, jotka ainakin osittain onnistuivat usein nuorallatanssia muistuttavista manöövereistä stalinistiseksi muuttuvassa yhteiskunnassa.

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