Diverging Paths: Russian Music, the Arts and the October Revolution 1900 - 1929

BY

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Just as there is no iron-clad historical inevitability, there are always historical alternatives. History written without an exploration of lost or defeated alternatives is, therefore, neither a full account of the past nor a real explanation of what happened. It is merely a story of the outcome made to seem inevitable.

(Found in Stephen Cohen's *Rethinking the Soviet Experience: Politics and History Since 1917.* Oxford University Press: New York, 1985. p.71)

Only today can we see the promise that the revolution held for the development of Soviet Art, a promise that failed to materialise.

(Found in Alexander Ivashkin's 'Letter from Moscow. Post October Soviet Art: Canon and Symbol'. *Musical Quarterly*, 74, 1989:303-317. p.304.)

INTRODUCTION

Originally, the intention of this work was to look solely at the 'forgotten' Russian musical avant-garde of the 1920's. I had initially assumed that it would share the wildly experimental and provocative qualities found in the art and literature. What I gradually came to realize, after having both, played the music and begun my research, was that it in fact differed profoundly from the work of the artistic and literary avant-garde. Somewhat reluctantly I relinquished my preconceptions about this music and attempted to look at it in a more objective manner. What became immediately obvious was that, if I wanted to accurately assess the development of this music, I would have to set it in a broader context. In order to understand the music it was necessary to understand the forces that shaped it. Sabaneev noted in 1927, in his book, *Modern Russian Composers*, that many events of Russian musical life were bound up with other events of Russian life. Not only the artistic and political world of the 1920's would have to be considered, but I would have to go as far back as the 1860's to understand some of the important developments of this time. This paper attempts to trace the development of music from the turn of the century until the onset of Stalinism in 1929, demonstrating throughout, music's relationship with the other artistic fields and how, and to what extent, it was affected by socio-political events, in particular the October Revolution of 1917.

For many complex and diverse reasons the music of this fascinating historical period has been virtually ignored. While the newfound freedom of Glasnost and Perestroika is now allowing a renaissance of this hitherto proscribed Russian musical avant-garde, there is still a dearth of research in this area. Boris Schwarz covers this period in detail in his seminal work, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1981.* This book has been the main source for much of the musical content of this thesis. Specific study of this period was for a time restricted to a few world experts such as Detlef Gojowy, who covered this period in his 1965 Ph.D. dissertation, which was subsequently published in 1980 as the book, *Sowjetische Musik der*

20er Jahre and the Russian musicologist Irina Barsova, who has concentrated primarily on the music of Alexander Mosolov. Peter Deane Roberts, Stanley Krebs and James Bakst have also written Ph.D. dissertations on this area. The dissertations of the latter two have been published as monographs.

Apart from this handful of monographs, the remaining writings on this subject are found as brief articles in musicological journals. I have, therefore, drawn largely on primary documents when dealing with discussion of the music. In particular, the writings of Belaiev, Lourie and Sabaneev. There again, the broad context was needed to allow me to assess these writings. Much in these articles cannot be accepted at face value and the demands and expectations of the time in which they were written have to be considered when studying them. Often the assertions made in the writings are not necessarily reflected in the actual music itself. As the arts and politics are not the main focus of this work, secondary sources constitute the main source material for these areas. However, a selection of primary documents have been included as appendices to give the reader a better sense of the *Zeitgeist* .

The effects of Glasnost are already making themselves felt. There has been a noticeable upsurge of interest in this music as can be seen in recent appearances of recordings and concerts devoted to this music. Geoffrey Madge has recently released a recording of the Mosolov *Pianos Sonatas* with the Dante Recording Company and recording of Mosolov's Piano Concerto and a collection of his later choral works has been released by Melodiya and the compact disc *'Russian Songs of the 1920's, Prokofiev, Lourie, Mosolov, Scherbachov'.* produced by the company, CdM, Russian Season has come on the market. Other recordings by Accord, Philips, Olympia, Orfeo and Le Chant du Monde which include works by Mosolov, Roslavets, Scherbachev and Lourie have also recently appeared. The American pianist, Sarah Rothenberg, last year, gave a recital of these composers in Carnegie Hall and the publishing company, Schott, have just agreed to publish the works of Nikolai Roslavets. The Australian composer Larry Sitsky has also taken advantage of the new freedom in the former USSR and has recently completed his, as yet unpublished, book, *The Repressed Russian Avant-Garde 1900-1929* (Greenwood Press: 1993), which discusses in detail the work of hitherto unknown composers. We can see by these events that the interest in this music is growing, but articles, such as Irina Barsova's important compilation 'Iz neopublikovannikh arkhivov Mosolova' - From the Unpublished Archive of Mosolov (1989), show that there is

still an enormous amount of material lying in State Archives waiting to be uncovered.

To an extent the subject matter dictated the form which the thesis was to take. A division between the pre- and post-revolutionary generations was inescapable. The tremendous social and artistic upheaval brought about by the 1917 Revolution made it an obvious cut off point. The first chapter, therefore, covers the years up to the Revoution. It concentrates on: the emergence of Russian Symbolism and its relation to music, as seen in the composers Scriabin, Vyshnegradsky, Obukhov and Roslavets, and the rise of Futurism and its effect on musical life.

A substantial part of the second chapter is devoted to the changes brought about by the Revolution: an outline of the cultural policy of the Bolshevik government, the attitudes of the major Bolshevik leaders, Lenin, Trotsky and the Commissar for Enlightenment, Lunacharsky and a brief survey of the main artistic and literary movements. Owing to length limitations and also because the politics, art and literature of this period have been well documented, much of the extramusical discussion has taken the form of a general survey, against which to compare and contrast the lesser known musical history. The final chapter is devoted to the lives and work of the avant-garde composers, Arthur Lourie and Alexander Mosolov. They are true representatives of their respective generations and through them the differences and similarities between the pre- and post-revolutionary generations become clear.

The picture of the musical world which emerged during the course of this thesis was an unexpected one. Far from the the committed revolutionaries I expected to find, the composers of 'pure music' seemed more bewildered by the turn of events, however the passion and romanticism inherent in the Revolution captured their imagination. They rallied valiantly to the demands of the new society but their ties with musical tradition were too strong to embrace the radical iconoclasm found in Futurism and Constructivism. They were also impeded by the nature of their medium. They sought to express the revolution by the creation of a musical language revolutionary in content and form but this process had already begun well before 1917, most notably with the music of Alexander Scriabin. Many of the developments in the music of the twenties are a natural progression from Scriabin and his contemporaries. So, although the

Revolution radically changed the art and literature, its effect on the music was not so marked. It could be said that 'pure' music was, in many respects, left behind in the pre-revolutionary world of Scriabin and Symbolism. The 1920s, characterised by a startling optimism and an absolute faith in the future, saw a tremendous flowering of musical creativity but ultimately, the October Revolution had set in motion a sequence of events which were to wreak irreversible damage on the development of Russian music.

CHAPTER ONE

The Age of Silver

The years 1900 until 1917 stand as a period of enormous importance in the history of Russian culture. Many of the great names in Russian literature, art and music come from this time. The critical social and political upheaval and the accompanying feeling of uncertainty brought about this flowering of culture. The artistic world was spurred, by this "torrent of foreboding,"into a frenzy of activity as it sought to find its footing in the teetering world of prerevolutionary Russia.[1] As Elliot says, "[t]he social and political instability of these years was a fertile seedbed for experimental and innovatory art."[2] These years saw the rise and fall of Symbolism and the emergence of the movements, Futurism and Acmeism. In relation to music, and in particular the music of the twenties, Symbolism is the most important development of the prerevolutionary generation. The Symbolists seemed to envy music its very wordlessness. This is seen in the poet Chulkov's words:

> Music, as the *universalia ante rem*, as the objectification of what is innermost - this is the central theme of Symbolism, if we broaden the principle of music to include all the other arts and most of all poetry.[3]

The catchcry 'Art for art's sake' and the firm belief in the autonomy of the art object dominated this cultural scene. This alone distinguishes it from what came before and what was destined to follow. The advent of futurism was to radically change the role of the artist in society. The musical world found itself unable to adapt to this new position and so was alienated from the worlds of art and literature and left behind.

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[1] Blok, A. *The Spirit of Music.* Hyperion Press Inc.: Westport, Connecticut, 1976. p. 55 (reprint)

[2] Elliot, D. *New Worlds: Russian Art and Society 1900-1937.* Thames and Hudson Ltd.: London, 1986. p.9.

[3] Chulkov, G. 'The Veil of Isis'. (1908) Found in Ronald E. Peterson's *The Russian Symbolists: An Anthology of Critical and Theoretical Writings.* Ardis Publishers: Ann Arbor, 1986: 86-96, p.87.

In Russia the relationship between the artistic and socio-political events has always been intertwined. As with politics, the main artistic traits of the twenties all have their roots in the years before the revolution. Many of the arguments and divisions that dominate artistic and musical life in the twenties can be found, albeit in different forms, before the revolution and even before the turn of the century. The search for artistic renewal started alongside the revolutionary movement. In order to understand the artistic developments of this period and of the following one, it is vital to go back to the mid-nineteenth century; for the developments that occurred in these years have far reaching impact into the early decades of the twentieth century. As Bowlt says:

> ...Any survey of the achievements of the Russian avant-garde must be carried out not in isolation, but against the background of the key artistic attainments of the second half of the nineteenth century.[1]

The turn of the century was, for Tsarist Russia, a time of social decay and disintegration. The Empire was doomed. Feelings of discontent and protest were growing in all levels of society. The Tsarist regime was characterized by an inefficient, unwieldy bureaucracy and an extremely primitive and predominantly rural society. The regime had effectively committed suicide by way of initiating certain reforms while continuing many of its harsh repressive policies. It had created the climate for social change and then would not allow these changes to naturally evolve. This was to prove its undoing.

The first wave of reform occurred between the years 1861 to 1874 under Tsar Alexander the Second. It was sparked off by the loss of Sevastopol in the Crimean War and the resulting Paris Peace Treaty of 1855. The strong public cry for change brought about reforms to the judicial system and the army, the abolition of corporal punishment, changes in censorship laws, autonomy of the universities and most significantly the emancipation of the serfs. An immediate result of the emancipation was the large movement of people from the country to the cities. This intake was absorbed by the factories and these emancipated serfs came to form a significant part of the politically conscious working class: the proletariat, which

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[1] Bowlt,J. *The Documents of Twentieth Century Art*
Rusian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902 - 1934.
The Viking Press Inc.: New York, 1976. p.xix.

was to prove so vital to the success of the Bolshevik Revolution. These events saw rise of a phenomenon of prime importance to the arts, namely the Russian intelligentsia. Tomkins dates their emergence as coinciding with the events of 1855 [1] and the term first appeared in the 1860's.[2] The 'broad' intelligentsia, as a whole, defies a single definition. Initially it grew out of a strong opposition to Tsarism and autocracy and an interest in Western culture. Trotsky describes them in his work, Concerning the Intelligentsia, as the, "national antennae thrust into European culture". An *intelligent* was a professional, educated person or idealist activist with strong liberal and humanitarian principles and a sense of social responsibility.The intelligentsia saw themselves as the 'conscience' of the nation.

The newly evolved socio-utilitarian ideal fired the imagination of the artistic intelligentsia. The Wanderers, a group of painters, so named because of their self-assumed duty of taking art out to the people, are examples of this, as are the writers Chekhov, Turgenev and Dostoevsky. A trend of liberalism also appeared amongst musicians as a response against the autocratic Tsarist government with its repressive censorship laws. Movements demanding autonomy had arisen in the conservatories. Rimsky-Korsakov in St. Petersburg and Taneev in Moscow were among the main agitators.[3] They vent their dissatisfaction by taking satirical literature as librettos for their operas: Rimsky-Korsakov's *Coq d'Or* is based on Pushkin's satire of the decaying autocracy.

There were elements in the musical world, which felt a deep sympathy for much of the revolutionary ideology. Taneev, with the assistance of Gliere and the theoritician Yavorsky established The People's Conservatory in 1906 with an aim to diminishing elitism in music and making music education more available to the people. The enrolment reached two thousand and included factory workers and railway clerks. This venture, however, was not the first attempt of its kind. As far back as 1862, when the intelligentsia, as a distinct class, was still young, Balakirev, reflecting the populist liberalism of the

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[1] Tomkins, S.R. *The Russian Intelligentsia: THe Makers of the Revolutionary State.* University of Oklahoma Press: USA, 1957. p.vii.

[2] O'Connor, T.E. *The Politics of Soviet Culture: Anatolii Lunacharsky.* UMI Research Press: Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1983. p.29.

[3] This phenomenon can be seen as a precursor to the group of Red Professors that emerged in the conservatories during the twenties. Some of these liberal agitators did go on to join this group, for instance Gliere, who, significantly, was Aleksandr Mosolov's first composition teacher.

time, founded the Free Music School which ran until 1917. In 1907 further efforts were made to bring music to the working people with the series known as Historical Concerts. Vassilenko, who was later to join the proletarian group known as PROLETKULT, was the founder and chief conductor of this exercise.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the rise of the pan-Slav movement with its strong nationalistic leanings. The question of Russian nationalism versus Western culture has always been a highly divisive one in music and the arts in general. Before the extra dimension of Western modernism was introduced at the turn of the century, this struggle split the musical world into two camps: the traditionalists who advocated the Western classics and the group who came to be known as *Koochka* or The Mighty Handful. Born from the slavophile movement, The Five, as they are also known, rejected Western tradition, and sought to create a uniquely Russian culture. As Lourie says in his article 'The Russian School', they wanted "to free Russian music from its submission to German influences, with the object of creating a culture of its own, purely national and organically self-dependent."[1]

Much of The Five's platform can be found in later movements. Their break with tradition and their view that the classical heritage is dead[2] is central to the Futurist aesthetic, as was their belief in the necessity of creative freedom. Their interest in folk culture and orientalism was absorbed by many different movements such as Futurism, neo-primitivism and PROLETKULT. Ironically this nationalism, originally seen as progressive, is transformed into the overbearing Russian chauvinism that conquered the artistic scene at the end of the 1920's. Bowlt is correct in his observation that the years 1890 -1930 are "... essentially the culmination of a cultural evolution that found its genesis in the first radical movements of the 1850's."[3]

The rapid rise of industrialization at the turn of the century was accompanied by social change. It brought about the rise of a rich business class and also, a development of particular importance in regards to the arts, an influx of Western ideas. These were absorbed

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[1] Lourie, A. 'The Russian School'. *Musical Quarterly.* 18, October 1932: 519-529. p.520.

[2] Bakst, J. *A History of Russian-Soviet Music.* Dodd, Mead and Company: New York, 1966. p.96.

[3] Bowlt,J. p.xix.

with absolute enthusiasm. Symbolism, Post- Impressionism, Fauvism and Cubism were compressed into just over a decade. Most of this activity was centred in St. Petersburg. As Tjalsma says, in 1910 "Saint Petersburg was trying to become a Northern Paris."[1] The establishment of the artistic school *Mir Isskustva* - The World of Art, in 1898, is of great importance. It "represented the most advanced trends in Russian and Western arts and proclaimed the slogan *l'art pour l'art*".[2] Although its intention was to represent every current direction in art, both Western and Russian, it was, with its synthesist ethos, most closely associated with the Symbolist movement. Bowlt supports this claim with his words, "the aestheticism of the World of Art artists, their alienation from social and political reality (at least until 1905) and their flight to a subjective and individualist world linked them closely to the Symbolist literary movement..."[3] Led by Diaghilev and Benois, this school, with the publication of its own journals, lecture series and its exhibitions, served as a source of inspiration to the artists. Their exhibitions sparked off similar events throughout the country. Diaghilev sought to bring about an artistic transformation in Russia. This extraordinarily active man was, not only one of the main forces behind *Mir Isskustva* and all its wealth of achievements, but was also responsible for the enormous popularity of Russian music in Europe. He was a channel of communication between Russia and the West.

The introduction of contemporary musical trends from the West into Russia around 1900 adds another dimension to the dispute between the slavophile and the 'Westerners'. It was later, in the 1920's, to evolve into quite another struggle, namely the fight between 'art for art's sake' and proletarian art. Initially however, its appearance polarised the musical world into two camps: the nationalists advocating "Russianism" and the modernists who wished to revamp the musical language using progressive Western techniques. As Schwarz says, "[a]t the beginning of the twentieth century, Russian music stood at an important crossroad."[4] The ominous expression "Western decadence" can already be found in Rimsky-Korsakov's complaints about the small but active circle of

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[1] Gilbian,G. Tjalsma, H.W — *Russian Modernism: Culture and the Avante-Garde 1900 - 1930.* Cornell University Press: London, 1976. p.68.

[2] Schwarz, B. — *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1981.* (Enlarged Ed.) Indiana Press: Bloomington, 1972,1983.

[3] Bowlt, J. — p.xx.

[4] Schwarz, B. — p.6.

modernists. The young composers set up their concert series, Evenings of Contemporary Music, as an alternative to the traditionalist Belaiev Circle patronised by Mitrofan Belaiev and organized by Rimsky-Korsakov. Evenings of Contemporary Music was an offshoot of the artistic school, *Mir Isskustva*. They began in 1901 in St. Petersburg and in 1909 in Moscow. Concerts were given featuring works by controversial Russian and Western composers. First appearances of works by Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Miaskovsky appeared alongside works of Western composers such as Ravel, Schmitt and Strauss. Debussy, Reger and Schoenberg were invited to make personal appearances. It was in many respects the forerunner to the Association of Contemporary Music (ACM) which was established after the Revolution.

The last years of the Empire were years of extreme political instability, marked by industrial strikes and acts of political terrorism. These years saw the birth of the revolutionary political movements: the narodnik movement, the Social Revolutionary Party, KADET (the Constitutional Democratic Party) and in 1898 the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Worker's Party. The stagnant rural economy had not progressed since the emancipation of the serfs. The humiliating defeat suffered in the Russo-Japanese war severely damaged national morale. The tacit government support given to the Pogroms of the Black Hundreds in which the Jewish communities of cities such as Odessa were massacred added to the Empire's unpopularity. Bloody Sunday and the first unsuccessful Revolution of 1905 staged by the intelligentsia resulted in constitutional concessions such as the establishment of the Duma, which further weakened the Tsarist regime.[1] Russia's subsequent entry into the First World War, exacerbated the feelings of discontent to such a

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[1] Musicians joined the outcry and strong protest that followed the Blood Sunday massacre. Among the signatories of a protest letter published in *Nashi Dni* were Rimsky-Korsakov, Chaliapin, Rachmaninov, Gliere and Taneev. Their disillusionment with their government is unmistakeable in this excerpt:

> Only free art is vital, only free creativity is joyful...When in the land there is neither freedom of thought and conscience nor freedom of word or print....than the profession "free artist' becomes bitter irony. We are not free artists, but like all Russian citizens, disenfranchized victims of today's abnormal social conditions...In our opinion, there is only one solution: Russia must at last embark on a road of basic reform. (Found in Schwarz. *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1981*. p.4.)

pitch that the Tsar was forced to abdicate, and so, the stage for the Bolshevik takeover was set.

After the failure of the 1905 revolution the intelligentsia underwent a profound crisis. Many experienced a sense of spiritual exhaustion. Feeling unable to control their material existence they turned instead to abstract cerebral matters which they could control. Religious mysticism and occultism was seen as an escape from the all-pervading sense of hopelessness and imminent catastrophe. They could provide the key to bring about the 'world transformation' these artists so desperately sought.[1] Much of this sentiment is mirrored in the artistic circles of this time. The rise of the literary movement, Symbolism is, perhaps, a direct result of this 'escapism'.

Symbolism arose as a reaction to the realism and positivism which dominated the last half of the nineteenth century. Strongly influenced by French Symbolism, it freed art from civic duty and championed the autonomy of the art object. It was a movement transfused with decadence.[2] In the face of a crumbling society it fled into the irrational world of spirituality and mysticism. The essence of Symbolism can be found in Blok's 1910 article, 'On the Present Status of Russian Symbolism', with his constant evocation of dusk; of the rich, overripe colours of violet, purple and gold. The Symbolist poets, the most significant of them being Alexander Blok and Andrei Bely, began a search for transcendence.[3] They fought "the approach of the thunderstorm by taking a messianic view of the world; a belief in the divine or supernatural agency in human affairs. The future was a search for the "Collective Art of a Golden Age, the coming of a the Lady Beautiful, a new Revolution..." [4] More earthly concerns of the Symbolists were a search for new poetic innovations and an interest in synesthesia with particular regard to musical nuances, as seen in Bely's poems entitled *Symphonies*.[5]

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[1] This allowed figures from mystical sects (known as *klysty*) such as Rasputin to gain such prominent positions.

[2] Viacheslav Ivanov, in his article, 'Perepiska iz dvukh uglov' - Correspondence between Two Corners, sees this decadence as a "mood both oppressive and exalting,.... of being the last of a series." (Found in G. Gilbian and H.W. Tjalsma's *Russian Modernism*, p.66.)

[3] Blok, A. p.55.

[4] Gilbian, G. p.65.
Tjalsma, H.W.

[5] The musical qualities of Blok's poetry were, and continue to be, a constant source of inspiration to the composer. A plethora of songs set to his poems appeared in this time and also in later years. Bely actually used musical theory

The Symbolist credo was not restricted to literature alone. For many poets, such as Blok and Bely, it was greater than just an artistic platform. It was a world view. It was therefore able to find meaningful expression in both art and music. The group of Symbolist painters, The Blue Rose, saw art as a theurgic force through which they could transform reality. The bond between music and the symbolist aesthetic is obvious. "At issue is something every artist dreams about - to "express his heart without words...."": these words of Fet's define music itself.[1] Aleksandr Scriabin, is perhaps the quintessential musical Symbolist. Sabaneev says, "Scriabin is a reflection of the literary Russian symbolism in music."[2] This ecstatic visionary, with his obsessive interest in theosophy and occultism, wished to transform the world through his music. His unfinished work *Mysterium* was to lift the world onto another field of consciousness. Feelings of ecstasy and transcendence saturate his late compositions, in particular, the last five *Piano Sonatas,* the piano work *Vers la Flamme* and his orchestral work *Prometheus*. He attempted to establish an occult link between music and theosophy through his *Prometheus, Poeme d'Extase* and his 'mystical chord', which is based on quartal harmony.

Scriabin was indeed, as Lourie said, "the spiritual father of all of the younger generations of Russian composers."[3] He had a profound influence on composers such as Ivan Vyshnegradsky, Nikolai Obukhov and Arthur Lourie, not only in his musical language but in his entire philosophical and aesthetic outlook. Vyshnegradsky, like Scriabin, was prone to deep mystical experiences. He was obsessed with such obscure theories as 'cosmic consciousness', the 'sound continuum' and the cyclical conception of the sound universe. Obukhov was, quite simply, an insane religous maniac. He saw himself, not as a composer, but as a discoverer, whose works were 'gifts from heaven'. Both he and Lourie printed crucifixes on the

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to write his set of poems entitled *Symphonies*, a technique not dissimilar to Scriabin's use of colour charts.

[1] Blok, A. 'On the Present Status of Russian Symbolism' (1910) Found in Ronald E. Peterson's *The Russian Symbolists: An Anthology of Critical and Theoretical Writings.* Ardis Publishers: Ann Arbor, 1986. p.157.

[2] Sabaneev, L. *Modern Russian Composers.* Books for Libraries Press, Inc.: Freeport, New York, 1967. p.44.

[3] Gojowy, D. 'Futuriste Russe - Mosolov Piano Sonatas 1-5'. Accompanying text to Alexander Mosolov, 5 Piano Sonatas,(compact disc recording)Geoffrey Madge - pianist, Dante Recordings. PSG9118.

frontispieces of their sacred works. Obukhov's strange performing directions included whistling, sneezing, hissing, playing with the fist and the request that the performers cross themselves and then make the sign of the cross over the audience before commencing.[1] The ideal of the *Gesamtkunstwerk,* and its inherent powers of transformation, was one that preoccupied these composers. In 1916 Vyshnegradsky wrote his grand orchestral work,*Journee de l'Existence* and Obukhov began his life-long project based on a table of cultish symbols; his *Kniga Zhizni -The Book of Life.*

The musical world, like the artistic, was also concerned with innovation and the development of new techniques. As well as Scriabin's development of the *Synthetakkorde*, there was, before the turn of the century, a minor composer, Rebikov, who pre-empted Debussy by writing pieces comprised entirely of whole-tone scales, and building chords on fourths. Examples of this can be found in his works, *Esclavage et Liberte: Tableau Musical - Psychologique* and *Tabatiere a musique.* It is important to realize that Russia, by way of her geographical position, mid-way between East and West, was never dominated by the diatonic system. Cui and Rimsky- Korsakov from The Five were experimenting with new scales before the turn of the century. The influence of the Greco-Byzantine church can help to explain this phenomenon and the later interest in microtone music.

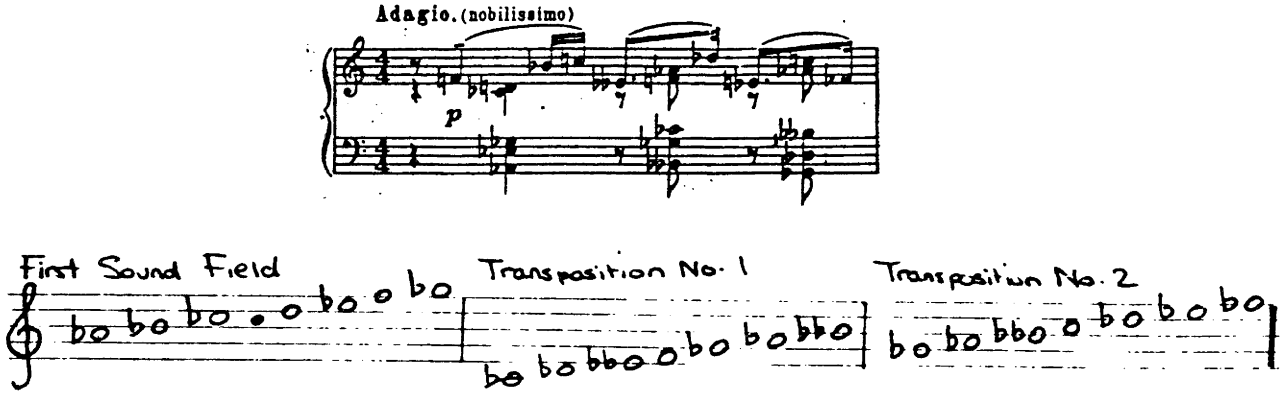
A strong interest in quarter tone music arose during these years. Lourie had experimented with quarter tones as early as 1910 in a string quartet and had published an article in the Futurist publication *Strelets* in 1915 entitled 'K muzyke vysshago khromatizma' - To Music of a Higher Chromaticism[2] It was Ivan Vyshnegradsky,however, who devoted his life to microtonality. He saw it as the musical symbol of 'cosmic consciousness'. After his emigration to Paris in 1920 he collaborated with other microtone composers such as Hába, Moellendorf and Mager. Interest in quarter tone music in the USSR was continued through the activities of Georgy Rimsky-Korsakov who founded the Society for Quarter Tone Music in 1923 and of Lev Termen, an acoustics engineer who, in 1920, invented the first electronic musical instrument named the Termenvox.

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[1] Sabaneev, L. p.240.

[2] Lourie, A. ‚K myzuke vysshago khromatizma'. *Strelets.* 1, St. Peterburg, 1915: 77-83. Translated from Russian into German by Detlef Gojowy and included in his *Neue Sowetische Musik der 20er Jahre.* Laaber Verlag: Regensburg, 1980. pp.446-447.

This quest for new systems, with which to replace the old, found another form of expression in the music of Nikolai Roslavets. His *Sonata No.1* written in 1913 is hailed as the first atonal work to appear in Russia.[1] This "Russian Schoenberg" with "his love for theorising and anticipating the musically creative process by some sort of reasoning or plan"[2] set about to conquer atonality, and in doing so arrived at a unique system of composition; one that bears many similarities with the twelve tone system of Schoenberg and with Scriabin's compositional technique, but which evolved independently and cannot be considered mere imitation. *Trois Compositions* for piano of 1913 utilizes this system, which he called 'sound fields' pre-dates Schoenberg's first twelve tone work. The system is easily seen in the opening bar of of the first of these three pieces. In this bar there are three sets of seven-tone rows: the second and third are transpositions of the first field. The entire piece adheres strictly to this process.
Musical Example1.

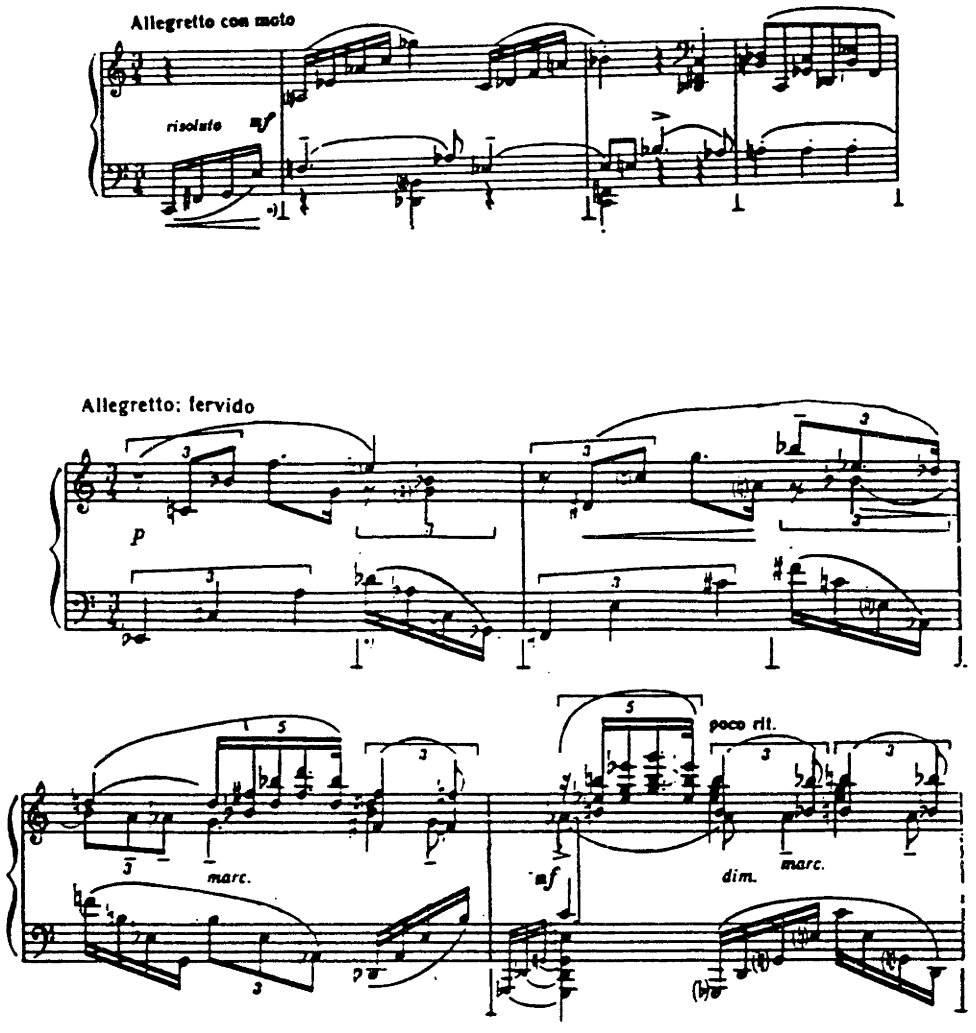


The result has been criticized as both doctrinaire"[3], and "cold, anti-emotional and formalist."[4] However, this criticism is dispelled on hearing these works performed. Although some of the later pieces such as *Sonata No. 5* are neoclassic and academic in style, the early miniatures such as the *Trois Compositions* (1913), *Five Preludes* (1919-1922) and *Deux Poemes* are beautiful, atmospheric pieces. The difference between these two styles is immediately obvious when the opening lines of the *Sonata* and the first *Poeme* are compared.

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[1] Schwarz, B. p.86.
[2] Sabeneev, L. p.202.
[3] Schwarz. B. p.86.
[4] Sabeneev, L. p.203.

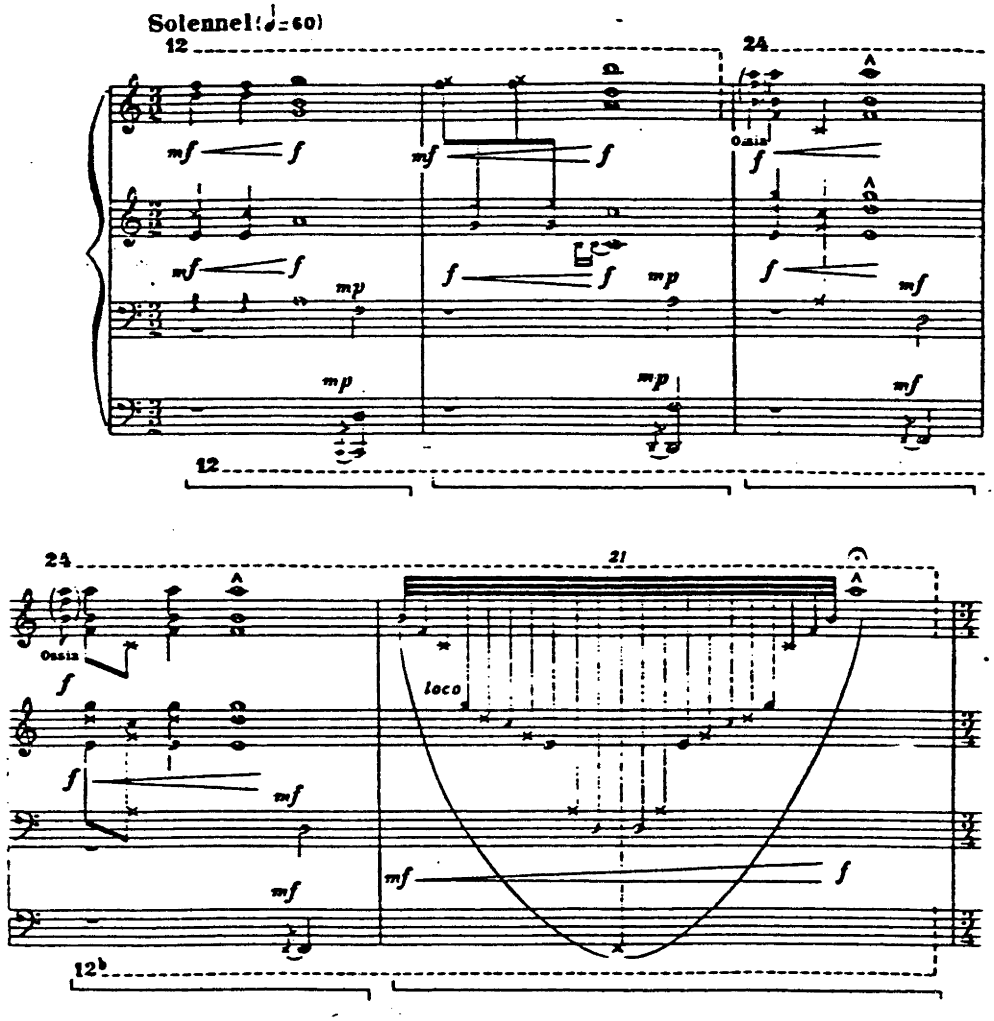
Musical Example 2.



Obukhov also involved himself in this type of experimentation. 1914 saw his first attempt to treat all twelve notes as equal and the creation of his original notation system.[1] His strange, enigmatic piano piece, *Le Temple est Mesure, L'esprit est Incarne* utilizes both these devices.

[1] This system does away with sharps and flats and, instead, signifies a black key with the use of a cross.

Musical Example 3.



His more concrete experiment was the creation of his instrument, the *Croix Sonore*, an early version of the Onde Martenot, but in the shape of the cross.

A fundamental difference between music and the other arts has come to light in the course of this chapter. Discussion about the plastic arts and literature has centred around schools and movements, but, when writing about the music, it has been necessary, for the most part, to treat the composers as individuals. In this time, renowned for its manifestoes and fierce factionalization, musicians worked alone.There were friendships and affiliations with other musicians and artists but no real sign of interest in the factionalizing, that was dominating the artistic and literary scene,is evident in the musical world. Perhaps the intrinsically abstract

nature of pure music means that musicians are not so given to this kind of political activity.

The decadent romanticism of Symbolism, born as the Empire was dying, sparked reaction from many directions. These reactions solidified into two distinct camps: Acmeism and Futurism. The Acmeist poets, the most famous of them being Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelshtam and Nikolai Gumilev rejected the hidden meanings and complexities of Symbolist poetry and called for concrete imagery, simple language and a return to a palpable reality[1]. This movement was essentially neoclassic. It revived interest in classicism and hellenism. In music, this turning away from Symbolism and the music of Scriabin, can be seen in the work of Prokoviev, Stravinsky and the lesser known composer, A.V. Stanchinsky, with their interest in rhythm and clarity. This can be seen in No. 5 of Stanchinsky's set of twelve miniatures, *Esquisses Op.1.*
Musical Example 4.



The complex and diverse movement Futurism came to embrace all the extreme directions in literature and art: Cubo-Futurism, Ego-Futurism, Centrifuge, Intuitivism, Rayonnism, Neo-primitivism, Constructivism, Suprematism, the painting groups Jack of Diamonds and the Donkey's Tail.

The years from 1910 until the outbreak of the Revolution saw a profusion of groups and sub-groups which were ever disintegrating

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[1] Elliot,D. p.11.

and fragmenting in the effort to find an artistic solution. As David Elliot says:

> From 1910 until 1917 the avant-garde in both Saint Petersburg and Moscow was in ferment. In manifestoes, cabarets, groups and counter-groups young artists struggled to express a new energy and vitality against the darkening twilight of the decaying Empire.[1]

The religious mysticism and occultism of Symbolism was countered with a new-found interest in folklore, an interest in indigenous traditions and orientalism, urbanity the mentality of children, as seen in the paintings of Goncharova and Larionov, and the development of *skaz* and *zaum* - synthetic languages created by writers.

The whole period was infused with iconoclasm; an "attitude... of antagonism to authority and convention and of nihilism in relation to established culture."[2] The first Futurist manifesto, *A Slap in the Face of Good Taste* embodies the arrogance and absurdity that was typical of the young movement. As Dorothy Eberlein says, it is the first of their many "ridiculous, egotistical utterances."[3] (See Appendices 1 and 2.) The young Futurists, especially Mayakovsky and Khlebnikov rejected past tradition and authority completely. They saw themselves as prophets and saviours of humanity. Their political ideas consisted of utopian dreams of universal harmony and solidarity. The integration of the artist in society became one of the major goals of the movement; the fusion of Life and Art. They wished "to make him (the artist) an active and leading participant in the events of his time."[4] The Futurists seeing themselves as the artists of the future embraced the Revolution and so became a bridge between the neurasthenic and mystical twilight of the Empire and the brave new world of glass and steel.

'Art for art's sake' was the governing belief of the years after 1900. Until 1910, and the Futurist takeover from Symbolism, musical

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1 Elliot, D. p.13.

2 Gilbian,G. Tjalsma, H. W. p.11.

3 Eberlein, D, *Russische Musikanschauung um 1900 von neun russischen Komponisten from Studien zur Musikgeschichte des neunzehn Jahrhunderts.* Band 52. Gustav Bosse Verlag: Regensburg, 1978. p.131.

4 Barooshian, V.D. p.113.

history had run a parallel course with the rest of the arts. It had not remained immune to its surrounding environment. However,in 1910, the introduction of utilitarian art by the Futurists with their slogan 'Art in Life' foreshadowed a crisis in the musical avant-garde that was to reach its zenith in the next decade. Until the advent of Futurism, the musical world was able to find a meaningful musical response to the contemporary artistic trends The nationalism of the nineteenth century and the spirit of Symbolism could be expressed in pure music. Much in the Futurist credo could and did find a musical counterpart. However,their demand for the 'useful' artist confronted many professional musicians with an agonizing dilemma. Were they willing or even able to place their music at the service of their political convictions? The sacrifice demanded was great because of the intrinsically abstract nature of music Stravinsky was aware of this as seen in his words from the *The Poetics of Music* "music cannot express anything but itself". Sabaneev also understood the problem:

> Music as we know it, is an art without an object or idea, and whereas it is difficult for the literary man or artist to refrain from expressing his political convictions, for the musician it is a far easier matter. On the other hand it is much more difficult to display the political symbol of a creed. Pure music, we may as well say at once , is simply incapable of it.[1]

This astonishing spate of experimentation and innovation was brought about by the social and political ferment of the period. As the importance of artistic events of this period are inversely proportionate to the harsh criticism they later received from the Communists, the great significance of this period can, therfore, be seen in this vehement denouncement of Maxim Gorky. In the 1930's, he saw the period as"the most shameful and talentless ... in the history of the Russian intelligentsia". Zhdanov, the Cultural Commissar under Stalin saw it in a similar light; as a time which extolled "reactionary mysticism and pornography [and which upheld]

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[1] Sabeneev, L. 'Music and Musicians in the U.S.S.R.'. *Music and Letters.* 15, 1932:55-60. pp.55-56.
Perhaps this can help to explain why political apathy is a trait so often found in musicians. Aleksandr Blok makes special note of the musical world's disinterest in the revolution in his article,'Intelligentsia i Revolutsia' from *The Spirit of Music.* pp.7-20.

as its banner its lack of ideas [Ideenlosigkeit]"[1] The uncertainty that was felt by the artists forced a reappraisal of their situation and a recognition that change was inevitable. Dorothee Eberlein's description of the predicament is true of the society as a whole:" One could sense the underlying deep existential uncertainty, that seized almost all the artists and which forced from them the recognition of the need for a new artistic language."[2] In the beginning the artistic revolution and the political revolution evolved side by side. They were comrades fighting against the common enemy. It was after the revolution of 1917 that a change occurred in this relationship, which was to have a profound effect on the cultural life. When the political revolutionaries assumed power, they assumed the new and very different role of state leaders. They were now the leaders in cultural affairs. Although they initially assumed a benevolent attitude, the apparatus was now in place to allow the later tragic events to unfold.

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1 Shaverdjan, A.I. 'Puti razvitija sovetskoj muzyki'. Moscow, Leningrad, 1948
Translated from Russian into German by Detlef Gojowy and included in his *Neue Sowetische Musik der 20er Jahre.* Laaber Verlag: Regensburg, 1980. p.352.

2 Eberlein, D. p.134.

CHAPTER TWO

Music and the Cultural Revolution

The October Revolution created enormous and profound change in the artistic life of Russia. The revolutionary decade of the twenties saw a frenetic and often confused outburst of activity as the artists sought to define their position in relation to the political events. Artistic society became deeply divided in its response to the Bolshevik takeover. The wave of emigration to the West, which occurred soon after the October coup, included those in the intelligentsia and the arts, who felt themselves to be irreconcilably at odds with the new regime. It must be remembered that many of the intelligentsia, who had supported the need for radical change were, however, actively hostile to the Bolshevik takeover. Two distinct groups emerged amongst the artists who stayed in Soviet Russia. There were those who came to be known as *paputchiki* or Fellow Travellers, so-named because, while they did not identify with the Bolsheviks, they did not overtly oppose them and there were the leftist artists, who embraced the revolution and its ideology with great enthusiasm and were committed to creating a new revolutionary art which would reflect, perpetuate and, most importantly, serve the new society.

The elements in pre-revolutionary Russia which had rejected the Symbolist credo for the ideal of Art in Life were now given, by way of the revolution, a new direction; a definite purpose for their art. The Futurists, Constructivists and members of the group Proletkult threw themselves wholeheartedly into this self-appointed task. The machine, urbanity and industrialization became the new heroes for these artists. The machine would be Russia's salvation. It would pull Russia out of her backward, primitive state and transform her into the 'palace of glass and steel' of their Utopian dreams. The main concern of the artistic left was to serve the revolution. The main question that dominated their circles was, how this was to be done. The left was divided into two movements : those who saw the new art as revolutionary in content and form and the others who wished to create an artistic revolutionary in intent. For these artists communication with the proletariat was paramount: therefore, accessibility and simplicity were the main features of their work.

For these people the notions of 'pure art' and 'art for art's sake' were ananathema. Proletarian movements sprang up in every field. The twenties saw the struggle between proletarian art and pure art intensify to an incredible level and the ultimate demise of 'art for art's sake' was inextricably interwoven with the current political events.

Many in musical society found themselves in a difficult situation during this decade; they were caught out, and to some degree alienated, by the new necessity to express ideology. The fundamental differences between music and the other artistic fields made it more difficult for composers of pure music to respond to the revolution in a similar fashion. These fundamental differences helped to shape the development of music of this period in quite a different way to literature and art. This will be seen when a comparison is made between the musical body, the Association of Contemporary Music (ACM) and its many counterparts in literature and art. It will become apparent that the 'progressive' movement in music did not experience, to the same extent, the radical changes which occurred in the avant-garde of the other fields. They did not reject outright the Symbolist aesthetic. Indeed Scriabin, who embodies the spirit of Symbolism, seems to have been the predominant influence on the music of this decade and the stylistic changes evident in the music of the younger generation came about under the influence of Stravinsky and Prokofiev and the West. In terms of musical language and form, music of the twenties can be seen as progressing naturally from what came before in the pre-revolutionary era.

The outburst of creative activity amongst the avant-garde of this era is even more extraordinary when it is remembered that Russia was going through a period of terrible impoverishment and hardship. Between the years 1917 and 1921 Russia experienced the end of her involvement with the First World War, two revolutions and Civil War. The October Revolution was preceded by a revolution eight months earlier in February. This first revolution was more of a collapse than a takeover. The "cumbrous autocratically misruled Empire...undermined by two and a half years of fighting in World War One... and eroded by decades of revolutionary propoganda"finally caved in.[1] Tsar Nicholas the Second abdicated in March and a Provisional Government was established, based on the

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[1] Hingley, R. *Russian Writers and Soviet Society 1917-1978.* Methuen and Co. Ltd: London, 1979. p.4.

authority of the Duma. Like the1905 Revolution this one was hybrid in character; it included representatives of all the existing parties. The Bolshevik Party was still a minor player although this turn of events allowed the return of the exiled Bolshevik leaders, namely Lenin, Trotsky, Kamenev and Stalin. A great sense of relief was felt by all with the removal of the tsarist regime. Carr writes that a "wave of immense enthusiam and Utopian visions of the emancipation of mankind from the shackles of a remote and despotic power"[1] swept over the populus and was reflected in movements such as Futurism and Constructivism. This revolution, however, had no great effect on musical life. Schwarz states that the musicians were generally politically indifferent. They were later criticized by the Bolsheviks for this apathy.[2]

After their surprise takeover in October, the Bolsheviks dissolved the Provisional Government, ousted all existing parties and consolidated their power. In March, 1918 they signed the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty with Germany and moved the capital from Petrograd to Moscow. Russia's withdrawal from the Great War and the ensuing repudiation of their foreign debt, nationalization of all foreign ownership and the announcement of international socialism as their main aim destroyed their relations with the West and brought Russia to a state of complete isolation. Despite this, and the cruel repressive measures that the Bolsheviks exerted over their many adversaries, there were many in the artistic world who welcomed 1917 enthusiastically.[3]

The Civil War, which broke out in earnest in the summer of 1918 and the accompanying policies of War Communism, wreaked devastation on the country. By 1921 Russia was crippled, the economy was in chaos, industry was at a standstill (it is ironic to think that the machines, worshipped by so many revolutionary artists, were not functioning), there was no food or fuel for the civilians and the major cities were seriously depopulated due to the

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[1] Carr, E.H. *The Russian Revolution from Lenin to Stalin 1917-1929.* Macmillan Press Ltd.: London, 1979. p.3.

[2] Schwarz, B. *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1981.* Enlarged Edition. Indiana University Press: Bloomington,1983. p.9.

[3] These repressive measures included the murder of the Tsar and his family in Yekaterinaburg in July, 1918 and the persecution and arrests of hundreds of the intelligentsia, in particular the anarchist and liberal elements and also the execution of counter revolutionaries. Nikolai Gumilev, the Acmeist poet and husband of Anna Akhmatova was included amongst these. He was shot in 1921. The secret police Cheka, the precursor to what we know as the KGB was founded as early as December, 1917.

mass exodus to the country in the search for food.[1] It has been estimated that, by the end of the Civil War, thirteen million lives had been lost through war and accompanying disease and famine. This number was greatly magnified by the Volga Famine of 1921 which affected thirty six million people.

The survival of the arts is extraordinary considering this terrible situation. Despite the living conditions many artists retained this fervent and complete faith in the new wonderful future that lay before them. The artistic community felt a strong sense of responsibility to the people. Artistic energies were channelled into mass activities: street decorations, designs for mass dramatization and agit-transport. Little 'pure' art was produced between the years 1918 and 1920. There was a great response to the appeal in Pravda issued on December1,1917,

> We ask all comrades - painters, musicians and artists - who wish to work towards the rapprochement of the broad, popular masses with art in all its aspects....to report to the office of the Commissar of Public Enlightenment in the Winter Palace.[2]

A multitude of activities in the form of concerts, lectures and publications were organized to introduce the masses to music. The venues were often workers clubs, factories and suburban centres. Music brigades were sent to the front and also to the villages as entertainment. As conditions worsened, hunger as well as idealism became a driving force behind these activities. Often the conditions were almost impossible. It was not uncommon to hear tales of musicians being paid in food or wood, performers playing in greatcoats or pianists suffering from frostbite.

After the Civil War had ended in 1921, the Bolshevik leaders saw that the harsh demands of War Communism were no longer tenable

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[1] At the end of the Civil War the national income was one third of what it had been in 1913; industry was producing one fifth; the coal mines - one tenth; the iron foundries - one fortieth. Moscow lost 44.5% of her population and Petrograd lost a staggering 57.5% of hers. Belaiev attributed the introduction of music to the rural area by this movement out of the cities in his article "Making the Best of Two Worlds' in the *Christian Science Monitor.* 12 June 1926.

[2] anon. 'Istoriya Muzyki Narodov'. Moscow: 5 volumes. 1966-1974. p.49. Found in Schwarz. p.13.

nor could they be justified to the Russian people. Lenin, himself, admitted:

> We are paupers. There is no paper. The workers are hungry and cold and have no clothing or shoes. The machines are worn out. The buildings are collapsing.[1]

The proletariat, for whom this tremendous upheaval had been engineered was greatly diminished, the rouble was worthless, illiteracy was widespread, the health care system was virtually non-existent, there were few roads and little electricity. Social discontent appeared in the forms of strikes and events such as the Kronstadt Uprising of 1921. It is no wonder that the artists clung so desperately to their Utopian dreams. The need for change was undeniable. A compromise between ideology and the stark reality had to be reached. This came in the form of the New Economic Policy (NEP). Under NEP grain acquisitioning was stopped, the peasants were allowed to sell their grain surpluses, small scale private enterprise was permitted, the wage system was restored and foreign investment was again encouraged. Although NEP was reviled by hard line militant communists, it was welcomed by most people, and between the years 1921 and 1928 Russian society regained some normality.

Culturally, the era of NEP is of great importance. It saw the birth of a new social order with a new culture and national identity. Representing the first period of peace, it allowed the new leaders to assess and assimilate the inherent complexities of the society they had inherited. As William G. Rosenberg says:

> NEP was a period in which those in power were forced somehow to come to terms with complex social and cultural residues of pre-revolutionary Russia implicitly at odds with ongoing goals of building a socialist or communist order.[2]

The clash between the old and new mark these years. In contrast to the authoritarianism that arose within the Party, its attitude to culture is one of accommodation and, to a certain degree, non-

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[1] Ehrenburg, I. 'People and Life 1891-1921'. New York, 1962: 381 (translated by A. Bostock and Y. Happ) Found in Schwarz's *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia.* p.41.

[2] Fitzpatrick, S. Rabinowitch,A. Stites, R *Russia in the Era of NEP Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture.* Indiana Press: Bloomington, 1991. p.3.

interference.Accordingly the cultural life under this policy of self-determination during NEP is distinguished by its pluralism and diversity.[1] The rapprochement with the West once again opened Russia to Western ideas and there was much cultural exchange in these years, particularly in the musical world.

The freedom in the arts was made possible by the liberal and tolerant attitudes of the Bolshevik leaders in relation to culture, in particular those of Lenin, Trotsky and the Commissar of Enlightenment, Lunacharsky. Cultural policy was not codified in the Marxist doctrine, so it was largely up to these people to formulate their own. The result is imbued with their personal artistic preferences. Moderation, and in the case of Lenin, an unexpected traditionalism, colour their attitudes to culture.[2] These three men came from the bourgeois intelligentsia and represent many of the virtues of this class. Trotsky and Lunacharsky were highly sophisticated and cultured men. Both were talented writers and orators. Lunacharsky wrote plays and poetry as well as countless articles on a wide range of subjects, including many on music, He was known as "an *intelligent* amongst the Bolsheviks".[3] Deutscher says that, Trotsky's famous book *Literature and Revolution* "stands as an advance denunciation of the stifling of creation by Stalin."[4]

Both Lenin and Trotsky believed that politics should not play a major role in the realm of the arts. This attitude of non-interference is seen in Trotsky's words:

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1 While the leaders were allowing this freedom in the arts, they had concurrently imposed a ban on inner party factionalization at the Tenth Congress of 1921 and in the same year initiated the Party's first purge: two hundred thousand members were expelled. Lenin and Trotsky's liberalism had strict parameters. They both, at all times, spoke of the need to quash any overt counter-revolutionary activity. This period should not be thought of as a time without censorship, but instead, as a time with lessened restrictions.

2 Lenin declared his attitude to modernism clearly, "I however make bold to declare myself a 'barbarian'. I am unable to consider the productions of expressionism, futurism, Cubism and other 'isms' the highest manifestations of artistic genius. I do not understand them. I experience no joy from them." (From Polonsky's article 'Lenin's Views on Art and Culture'. Found in Max Eastman's *Artists in Uniform.* Alfred. A. Knopf: New York, 1934. p.228.)

3 O'Connor, T.E. *The Politics of Soviet Culture Anatolii Lunaharskii.* UMI Research Press: Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1983. p.45.

4 Deutscher, I. *The Prophet Unarmed Trotsky: 1921 - 1929.* Oxford University Press: London, 1959. p.180.

> There are domains in which the Party leads, directly and imperatively. There are domains in which it only cooperates. there are finally domains in which it only orients itself. The domain of art is not one which the Party is called upon to command. It can and must protect and help it but it can only lead it indirectly.[1]

These words help to explain the strong opposition both these men expressed towards the notion of a proletarian culture. Both vehemently disagreed with the theories of the Proletkult movement.[2] They believed that the new culture could only be born on the foundation of the already existing bourgeois culture. The preservation of the Russian cultural heritage was considered to be of the utmost importance. Lenin expressed this clearly in an address to the workers:

> It is absolutely essential to make all efforts in order to prevent the pillars of our culture from crumbling to pieces - if this were to happen, the proletariat would never forgive us.[3]

The iconoclasm and 'pseudo-revolutionary conceit' of the young movements were seen as disagreeable and the demands of the proletarian and futurist schools for monopoly in the art world were met only with hostility from the political leaders. Trotsky found it "baneful to approach the cultural heritage of the past with nihilistic contempt."[4] (See Appendices 3 and 4.)

Lunacharsky was more progressive in his approach to the young avant-garde movements, for him talent was the main criterion, regardless of ideology. As Commissar for Enlightenment, a post he

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[1] O'Connor, T. E. p.69.

[2] Lenin found the idea of a proletariat culture laughable. In 1921 the illiteracy figure stood at one hundred and fifty million. Neither he nor Trotsky believed the proletariat could establish a culture until they had been educated. Lenin said, "The proletarian culture is not something that jumps up from from nobody knows where. It is not a thought-up scheme of some people who call themselves specialists in proletarian culture." (From Polonsky's article 'Lenin's Views on Art and Culture'. Found in Max Eastman's *Artists in Uniform.* p.243.) Furthermore Trotsky did not believe a proletarian culture was possible because in Marxist theory the dictatorship of the proletariat was only a transient stage on the way to communism, a stage that would be too short to produce any real alternative culture. Bukharin and Lunacharsky did however believe in proletarian culture as they envisaged this stage as being much longer.

[3] Deutscher, T. *Not By Politics Alone.....*
The Other Lenin.
George Allen and Unwin Ltd.: London, 1973 p.196.

[4] Deutscher, I. p.170.

had assumed in December, 1917, Lunacharsky was in charge of the entire cultural and educational apparatus known as the 'Commissariat of Enlightenment' or Narkompros. His encouragement and support contributed greatly to the flourishing of the arts during these years. He confronted head on the burning issues of this decade: the function of art, proletarian culture and the new role of the intelligentsia. His was the difficult task of finding a balance between the old and the new; salvaging the past, assisting the young artists and the wooing and assimilation of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia, many of whom were hostile to the new regime. The old intelligentsia were of vital importance. Their education was needed. They were to be "agents for cultural enlightenment".[1] Unlike Lenin and Trotsky, he was not opposed to the ideas of Proletkult or Futurism. The survival of the arts during the terrible years before NEP is largely due to Lunacharsky. (See Appendix 5)

Under Lunacharsky's direction the arts underwent a massive programme of reorganization. Narkompros now controlled artistic affairs. All existing institutions were nationalized: the theatres, universities, conservatoriums and publishing houses. The first state orchestras were established as were many new artistic and musical institutions. The three main subdivisions of Narkompros were: MUZO (music), IZO (fine art) and TEO (theatre). Initially these departments were dominated by the leftist element in the arts. Lunacharsky recruited major avant-garde figures in these fields to manage these departments. Chagall and Kandinsky became Commissars for art, Lourie led the music department and Blok and Meyerhold headed the theatre divisions. Pedagogical departments, were established in the universities and conservatories in response to the new demand to provide education for the masses. The working class was to form part of the annual intake into educational institutions. This provoked a strong reaction from many academics who were worried about a drop in standards.

> To be sure the revolution's objectives in the spiritual realm were far more complex than the simplistic motto "art belongs to the people". What was the art that belonged to the people?[2]

No matter the concrete events of the revolution, the abstract notion of what the revolution represented fascinated, even

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[1] O'Connor, T.E. p.102.

[2] Ivashkin, A. 'Letter from Moscow Post October Soviet Art: Canon and Symbol'. *Musical Quarterly*. 74, 1989: 303-317. p.305.

hypnotized, much of the art world. The avant-garde were ,however, deeply divided in their approach to the creation of a new revolutionary art. Was it to be revolutionary in substance or revolutionary in intent? This question was to lead to an dramatic split in the leftist ranks. Amongst those who embraced the latter were: Proletkult and the later proletarian movements, the artistic movement, Constructivism and the contributors to the literary futurist journals, LEF and REF. Although there were inherent differences in their approach, these groups did share similarities. The tendency towards iconoclasm which appeared in 1910 with the rise of Futurism became even more pronounced. The works of Pushkin and Raphael were to be burnt. The museums were to be dynamited. Pure art was contemptuously rejected as bourgeois decadence and functionalism instead became the catch cry of leftist art.[1] The 'artist' was replaced with the 'art-engineer' - individualism with collectivism. These sentiments are found in Mayakovsky's words:

> We do not need a dead mausoleum of art where dead works are worshipped, but a living factory of the human spirit in the streets, in the tramways, in the factories, workshops and worker's home.[2]

There was a strong sense of duty to the masses. These artists saw it as their responsibility not only to make art accessible to the people, but also in the case of Proletkult, to educate and actively involve them in the creative process.

Proletkult - an acronym for the Organization for Proletarian Culture - was founded in 1906 by the Marxist revolutionary, Bogdanov.[3] Its doctrine was based on a militant brand of Marxism, its aim - to create a proletarian culture:

> Art is a social product, conditioned by the social environment. It is also a means of creating labour... The Proletariat must have its own

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[1] In 1920 the Institute of Artstic Culture (Inkhuk) voted 'pure art ' as being no longer valid.

[2] anon. 'Meeting ob isskustve'. *Iskusstvo Kommuni*, No.1, 7 December, 1918. Found in Camilla Gray's *The Russian Experiment in Art 1863-1922*. Thames and Hudson: London, 1962. p.219.

[3] It is interesting to note that Lunacharsky and Bogdanov had met while studying in Switzerland and had formed a partnership in the formation of their 'god-building' theory and the synthesis of Marxism amd empiro-crticism. Krebs goes so far as to say that Proletkult was a 'brainchild' of Lunacharsky as well as Bogdanov. (Found in Stanley Krebs's *Soviet Composers and the Development of Soviet Music*. George Allen and Unwin Ltd.: London, 1970. p.40.)

"class" art in order to organize its forces in the struggle for socialism.[1] (See Appendix 6.)

Bogdanov and Lenin argued over Bogdanov's assertion that, "Art was the most powerful weapon for the organisation of collective forces."[2] and the view that art should retain autonomy and reject Party control. Proletkult came into its own after 1917 and set about putting its theories into practice. In August 1918 the 'Art-Production sub-section' was established under the direction of Olga Rosanova and by 1920 eighty thousand people were training in Proletkult's studios. Many politically committed artists, writers and musicians identified with the aspirations of Proletkult, particularly those in the constructivist and futurist groups. The composers: Kastalsky, Vasiliev-Buglai and Kalinnikov were included amongst these enthusiasts.

Proletkult's defiantly autonomous stance was met with increasing disfavour by the Party. In 1920 it was brought under the control of Narkompros and in 1923 it was forcibly disbanded. Many proletarian movements rose up in its place. Art was put at the service of propaganda and agitation. In music there was RAPM and APM; in literature - RAPP, LAPP (Leningrad), MAPP (Moscow), VAPP and VOAPP and their equivalents in the fine arts. An examination of RAPM - the Russian Organization of Proletarian Music - will reveal the basic characteristics underpinning all of these organizations.

RAPM's goal was the "extension of the hegemony of the proletariat to the music field".[3] Its platform was a distortion of Marxist-Leninist cultural ideas. In its desire to communicate to the masses it rejected complexity in musical language and form and reverted to an extreme simplicity of style. Its speciality was the mass song. Modernist music was condemned as the decadent product of the bourgeoisie. A vituperative smear campaign began in journals such as *Muzyka i Revolutsia* and *Proletarskaya Muzyka* against the 'enemy' - the ACM. RAPM was not only anti-modern, but was also harsh in its denouncements of the West, jazz and even classical music. As the decade progressed sub-groups emerged, (this phenomenon was not peculiar to music.[4]) ORKIMD - a group of agit-composers and a

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[1] Sidorov. (Editor) *1863-* *Literaturniye manifesti.* Found in Camilla Gray's *The Russian Experiment in Art 1922.* p.244.

[2] Elliot, D. p.18.

[3] Schwarz, E pp.55-56.

[4] In the field of literature the groups Kuznitsa (The Smithy) and Kozmisist (The Cosmicist) appeared as offshoots of RAPP.

student group PROKOLL appeared within the Moscow Conservatory. These student-composers wanted to reflect the Soviet reality. Many of the proletarian movements' platform were later absorbed into the Socialist Realism of the 1930's.

Apart from the composers Kastalsky and Kalinnikov, the majority of the RAPM were hack musicians; unskilled and clumsy. Even at the time the worth of their music was questioned. As Schwarz says, "[t]he artificial folksiness of the mass song pleased no one not even the masses who preferred their own urban ditties, the *'chatushki'* "[1] Lourie declared it as having "no artistic value"[2] Lunacharsky even questioned the very foundations of the RAPM ideology:

> What are class tendencies in music? An imperialist march can just as well serve the revolution while the Marseillaise with a changed text could become a monarchist hymn.[3]

This paucity of artistic value in the output of RAPM is not reflected, to the same extent, in its artistic and literary counterparts. The fact that Constructivism and Futurism gained the backing of the proletarian movements supports this claim. The work of many of these artists such as Tatlin, Rodchenko, Popova and Exter is still held in the highest esteem.

Perhaps the most important link between these movements was their deification of the machine. This vision of the machine lay behind the total faith the leftist artists had in the new Bolshevik regime - "a regime which promised a new world, a new society transformed by the machine, by industrialization. This romanticisation of the machine lies at the basis of all these 'isms' in art and literature which identified with the Revolution and in particular in the aesthetic of Constructivism."[4] This preoccupation with industrialization had appeared in the years before the revolution with the birth of Constructivism in 1913 and can be seen in the titles of Goncharova's paintings: *The Factory*, *The Electrical Ornament* and *The Machine's Engine*. Mechanistic and technological obsessions grew to dominate this decade. The Constructivist term 'production art' was coined. Industry provided the subject matter:

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[1] Schwarz, B. p.61.
[2] Lourie, A. p.527.
[3] Scharz, B. p.55.
[4] Grey, C. p.200.

pig iron, blast furnaces and basic slag. The factory was raised to the level of the church. Gladkov, a member of *Kuznitsa*, wrote his novel entitled *Cement*. Lines such as "She was only a pipewelder's daughter" were not uncommon.[1] The cybernetics of Frederick W. Taylor were welcomed with interest. It inspired the robot-like movements found in Meyerhold's plays and informed his theory of Biomechanics. In music, Deshevov shows the influence of industry in his piano work, *Rails* and his opera, *The Red Whirlwind*. A factory siren features in Shostakovitch's *Second Symphony* and the young Alexander Mosolov gained international recognition with his wild aural painting of a factory entitled *Zavod* or The *Iron Foundry*. This was intended as an interlude in his lost ballet, *Steel* . He has subsequently come to be known as the Constructivist in music.

Holding the banner of 'Art in Life' high, the Constructivists, led by Tatlin and Rodchenko, charged over the bridge between pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary Russia. "The revolution gave a reality to their activity and a long-sought direction to their energies"[2] True to their name they turned away from easel painting and channelled their creative energies in the fields of architecture, industrial design and photography. Unsentimental rationalism and technical science were the order of the day. It was with pride that the death of art was announced. In his book *Constructivism*, the designer and polemicist Alexei Gan wrote:

> Art is dead!....Art is as dangerous as religion as an escapist activity...Let us cease our speculative activity (painting pictures) and take over the healthy bases of art....in to the field of reality, of practical construction.[3] (See Appendix 7.)

Vkhutemas - The Higher State Art and Technical Studios - were established. Within these studios anything seen as functional was designed. These included: ceramics, furniture, stoves, buildings, worker's clothing, emblems, stamps and posters. More elaborate and far-fetched enterprises were planned such as the building of skyscrapers and rockets. The aesthetic of Constructivism was not restricted to the field of art alone. The important Futurist writers such as Mayakovsky, Brik and Tretyakov ceased their outrageous, bohemian behaviour which characterised the pre-revolutionary Futurists and also involved themselves in the construction of the the

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[1] Hingley, R. p.191.
[2] Gray, C. p.219.
[3] Gray, C. p.256.

new proletarian culture. Their contributions were to be found mainly in the journal LEF.

Alternatives to this credo of utilitarianism existed even in the avant-garde circles. Both, Suprematism headed by Malevich and Kandinsky the futurist group Company 41, who followed the path of trans-reason pioneered by Khlebnikov and Kruchenikh, showed a strong reluctance to reject the idea of 'art for art's sake'. In response to Tatlin's assertion that "the artist must be a technician" Malevich maintained that, "In becoming useful art ceases to exist."[1] This is not to say that these artists were not political. They too, were inspired by the revolution. They also rejected the past. However, their artistic response was fundamentally different. These lines from Pavel Filonov's unpublished 'The Ideology of Analytical Art' may help to explain this difference:

> A proletarian artist not only must create things that meet current needs, but also must blaze a trail for intellect to follow into the distant future.[2]

Because of their desire to make cultural and moral values available to the masses these artists assumed a different stance to the constructivists: they offered the proletariat spiritual leadership rather than social service. Their art was 'futurist' in the true sense of the word. Their goal was "to reflect the transformed realities of the future."[3] Their views on art were steeped in a metaphysical idealism. Khlebnikov nurtured improbable philosophies of a universal spiritual world while Malevich concerned himself with utopian plans of world development and ideas on the fourth dimension. The three dimensional space age structures he designed were intended for the new communist cities of the future. The approach of these artists differed to that of the Constructivists by its subjectivity and emotionalism.

There remained, in post-revolutionary Russia, a significant segment of the artistic world, who, while not being committed to the revolutionary cause, were also not hostile to it. Writers formed the majority of this politically neutral group who were known as

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[1] Gray, C. pp.246-247.
[2] Ivashkin, A. p.305.
[3] Elliot, D. p.21.

paputchiki or 'fellow travellers'.[1] The writer-intelligent was an important figure in the 1920's. The term 'fellow traveller' was coined by Trotsky and he was their staunchest defender. Unfortunately , their fates were, therefore tied to Trotsky's. As O'Connor says, "since culture and politics were interwoven during NEP, the fortunes of the fellow travellers rose and fell with Trotsky's and Bukharin's fate."[2] After Trotsky's downfall these authors came under increasing attack from the proletarian movements. The term 'fellow traveller' does not signify an organised group but it applies to several literary schools. Interestingly, they were mostly situated in Leningrad not having joined the artistic left in their move to the new capital. Formalism - a school in literary theory and criticism - lead by Viktor Shklovsky rejected the idea of Party control as did the Serapion Brothers, a group, also founded by Shklovsky, which included the renowned writers, Zamyatin and Zoschenko. These writers were fervent believers in political neutrality and artistic freedom. The strange group, *Oberiu* (The Union of Realist Art)[3], *Pereval* (Mountain Pass) and the pre-revolutionary Acmeists were also fellow travellers.

Alternatives to the avant-garde existed in the sphere of fine art. From 1920 onwards, groups of easel painters emerged. These groups cannot, however, be regarded as 'fellow travellers'. In many cases they were former 'leftists' who rejected futurism for realism,which they came to regard as an alternative better suited to serve the revolution. The New Society of Painters (Nozh), the Society of Easel Painters (OST) and The Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia (AKhRR) were conservative and anti-constructivist. All three were proponents of realism. (See Appendix 8.) After 1925 these groups were to increase in popularity as realism became the preferred style and non-realist art came under increasingly harsh criticism. It is important to remember that this tradition of realistic painting had continued on from The Wanderers school of the mid-1800s and could be found in the art schools throughout these years. Ilya Repin, the famous 'Wanderer" painter taught during these years. The roots of Socialist Realism, the new Soviet art formally announced in 1932, can be found in the socio-utilitarian art of the 1860's. Lourie notes this in his article 'The Approach to the Masses':

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[1] Ronald Hingley defines 'fellow traveller' as "a vague term, principally used in the 1920's to describe most of the most important authors who were neither of proletarian origin nor closely identified with official policies" (Found in his *Russian Writers and Soviet Society* 1917-1978. p.193.)

[2] O'Connor, T.E. p.83.

[3] Despite the name this group of writers were anything but realistic, rather the writing was chaotic and absurdist.

> Such a movement existed there from the 1860's to the 1880's; engulfed by symbolism, it was reborn on a new foundation after the revolution.[1]

The musical world of the twenties is in certain respects less complex than the worlds of either literature or art. In stark contrast to the everchanging and fragmented nature of the other artistic fields, there was only one main musical organization apart from the proletarian RAPM, this was the Association of Contemporary Music (ACM) which was a natural progression from the pre-revolutionary association Evenings of Contemporary Music. In 1925 Belaiev, a founding member, proudly announced its existence in Boston's Christian Science Monitor with the words, " [t]he most important of the the Russian musical societies is the Association of Contemporary Music."[2] Founded in November, 1923, as part of Moscow's Academy for the Arts, the ACM came to include ninety percent of practising musicians. This fact alone highlights a profound difference between the musicians & other artists. The ACM was an umbrella organization which covered a wide range of styles and directions with the broad aim: "to stay abreast of current events in music."[3] It was, as Krebs says, "a forum for all kinds of new music."[4] The peaceful cohabitation between the extreme left and the traditional composers, which existed within the ACM, would be inconceivable to the many avant-garde literary and artistic groups each of them clinging so desperately to their individual manifestoes. The musicians showed no inclination to the sort of factionalization which was a hallmark of the artistic and literary avante-garde. As Krebs says:

> Far from fervent factionalists, the musicians found themselves flotsam on the waves of revolutionary fury.[5]

Under the pressure to affiliated with an organized group and filled with a sense of bewilderment at the incredible societal change brought on by the revolution, many in the musical world would have

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[1] Lourie, A. 'The Approach to the Masses'. *Modern Music.* 21, May-June 1944:203=207. p.206.

[2] Belaiev, V. 'Russian Music Since the Revolution'. *Christian Science Monitor.* 7 .Feb., 1925.

[3] This aim was stated in the journal *K novim beregam* - Towards New Shores. Found in Krebs. *Soviet Composers and the Development of Soviet Music.* p.49.

[4] Krebs, S. p.101.

[5] Krebs, S. p.43.

seen the ACM as a secure haven. In 1925 Abramsky, in his article 'Moscow Composers', admitted to the difficulty of categorizing the new musical currents. He did not think that they could not be defined in terms of 'isms' as in the other arts. He maintained that the composers were individualistic and each sought to reflect the new reality in their own way.[1] This is not to say that there were no informal meetings of composers. The houses of Pavel Lamm and Vladimir Derzhanowsky were meeting places where composers shared their ideas and performed their works. In her article, 'Im Kreise der Moskauer Musiker', Dr Fannina Halle describes a gathering at Derzhanowsky's house where Miakovsky, Feinberg, Roslavets, Polovinkin and Shenshin were amongst those present.[2]

There is evidence to suggest that there were discernible groups within the ACM. Gojowy sees three main divisions within the association: the old traditionalists such as Glazunov, Liadov, Ippolitov-Ivanov and Gliere, the middle generation known as the 'late romantics' who found their inspiration in the music and philosophy of Scriabin and finally, there was the younger 'linear' generation, who to a certain extent rejected the Scriabinesque emotionalism of the late romantics and turned to the music of Prokofiev and Stravinsky and to the new music of the West.[3] Within the ACM there were varying degrees of modernity and detectable influences of virtually every existing musical style,therefore any division, including the three that have just been made, is dangerously simplistic and potentially misleading.

The 'late romantics' with their emotional Symbolist aesthetic were the main driving force in the association. The founding members of the organization are to be found in this group, as are the main contributors to the ACM journal, *Sovremennaya Muzyka*.[4] An examination of this group of composers will uncover further profound differences between the ACM and its artistic and literary counterparts. Gojowy sees the 'late romantics' as consisting of the following composers: Abramsky, An. Alexandrov, Evseev, Feinberg,

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[1] Abramsky, A. 'Moskauer Komponisten'. *Musikblaetter des Anbruch. Sonderheft Russland.* March 1925: 168-171. p.169.

[2] Halle, F. 'Im Kreise der Moskauer Musiker'. *ibid.:* 174-176. p.174.

[3] Gojowy, D. p.78.

[4] The founding members of the association: Alexandrov, Derzhanovsky, Pavel Lamm, Miaskovsky, Sabaneev, Saradschev, Feinberg and Belaiev and also at the founders of the Leningrad ACM: Asafiev and Scherbachev are all proponents of the 'late romantic' style.

Gnesin, A. Krein, Liatoshinsky, Melkikh, Miakovsky, Shaporin, Shenshin, Shirinsky, Vasilenko, Veprik, Zhitomirsky, Drozdov and Polovinkin.[1] Here the abovementioned dangers are realized, for the inclusion of Leonid Polovinkin in this group of composers is incorrect, as is the inclusion of Scherbachev in the group of 'linear modernists'.[2] These composers are unashamedly romantic. Deep emotionalism and subjectivity are their predominant features. Belaiev in his article 'Making the Best of Two Worlds' speaks of the innate Russian romanticism standing resolute in the face of the anti-romantic objectivity and linearity of the West and of how the revolution, itself, intensified this romanticism.[3]

The music and outlook of these composers is steeped in the spirit of Scriabin. It is strange that, at a time when the futurist, constructivist and proletarian movements were not only rejecting the notion of 'pure art' but also demanding the destruction of the past, the musical 'avant-garde' were holding up as their spiritual father, a composer who embodied Symbolism Attempts were made at the time to justify this somewhat 'reactionary' phenomenon. Lunacharsky interpreted Scriabin's music as prophesying the revolution and conveniently ignored all aspects of Scriabin (of which there were many) that opposed the communist ideology, he wrote "[t]he great Scriabin has long since been restored in favour and adopted as it were by the revolutionary epoch"[4] In *V mire muzyki* :

> [Scriabin] is the culmination in music bearing the imprint of the premonition of our Revolution...despite his individualism [he] passed from the representation of the revolution on to its prophecy. He was the musical prophet, and therein lies his significance...The music of

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[1] Gojowy, D. p.218.

[2] Polovinkin's music places him indisutably in the later 'linear' movement and indeed Belaiev and later Barsova refer to him in the company of composers such as Deshevov, Mosolov and Popov. (Belaiev's supplement to Abramsky's article 'Moskauer Komponisten' in *Anbruch.* p.173. and Barsova's "Das Fruehwerk von Aleksandr Mosolov'. *Peters Jahrbuch.* 1979: 117-169. p.118.) Scherbachev is harder to categorize. The music is harmonically less complex than that of the 'late romantics', however it is of such a fully fledged romantic nature that one cannot see him in the same light as the later 'linear' composers. The language in his *Second Sonata* for piano harks back to the more conservative language of Glazunov's generation However his *Nonet* for eight instruments and voice, with its wordless vocal part and accompanying light show is representative of the mystical, Scriabinesque vein of composition.

[3] Belaiev,V. 'Making the Best of Two Worlds'. *Christian Science Monitor.* 12 June 1926.

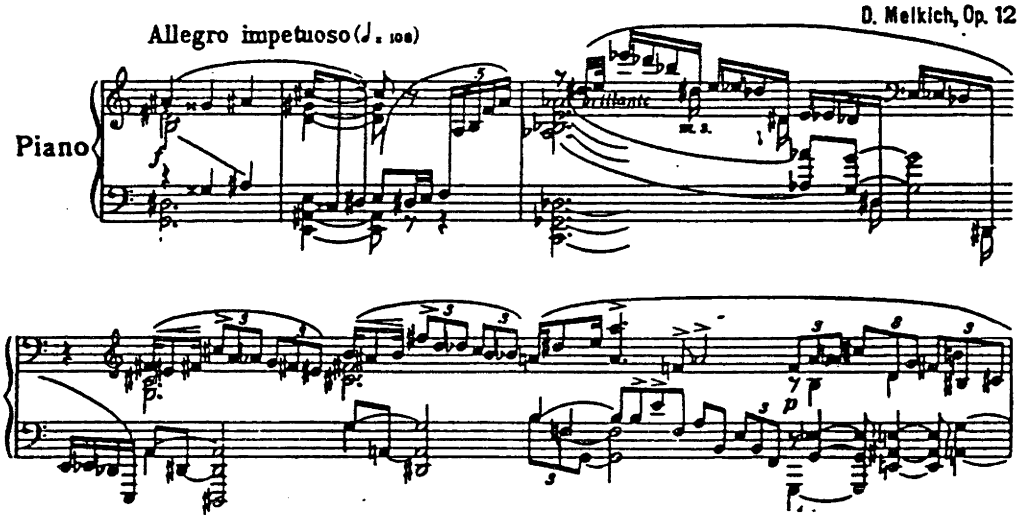
[4] Lunacharsky, A. *On Literature and Art.* Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965, (1925). p.137.

> Scriabin is the supreme expression of the musical romanticism of the Revolution.[1]

Sabaneev acknowledges the enormous influence Scriabin has had over himself and his colleagues by prefacing his *Piano Sonata* with a quotation from Scriabin's work *Mysterium* and a poem also by Scriabin. (See Appendix 9.) He was seen at the time to be the "originator of the Scriabin doctrine".[2]

Scriabin's influence is instantly recognizable in the music of these composers. They share his full,voluptuous sound world; his love of sonorities *[Klanglichkeit].* The rhythm is rhapsodic and free, often almost metreless; a great deal of rubato is required in the performance of works by these 'late romantics'. This can be seen in the opening lines of Melkikh's *Third Piano Sonata.*

Musical Example 1.



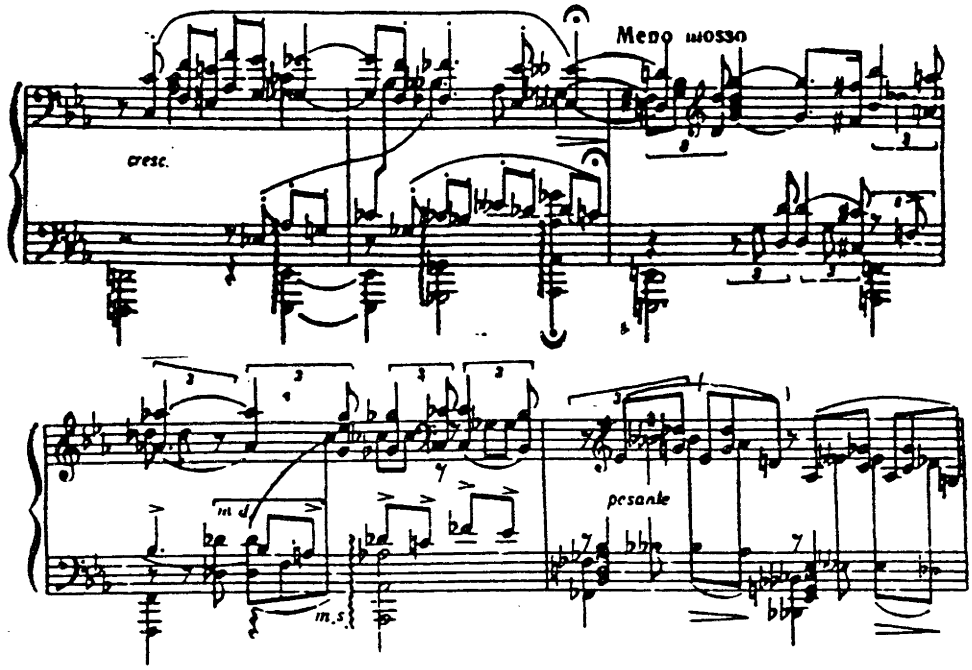
Like Scriabin they write contrapuntally, interweaving the thematic material creating the foreground/background effect so typical of Scriabin's work. The music of Feinberg is full of this complicated passage work.

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1 Schwarz, B. p.62.

2 Saminsky, L. 'Russian Composers in Review.' *Modern Music.* November 1927: 36-38. p.37.

Musical Example 2.



The forms are often of an 'organic' nature based on the Lisztian model of continuous thematic variation. They tend towards the large-scale and grandiose. However, it is in the field of harmony that Scriabin's influence is most pronounced. Scriabin's theories of quartal harmony and chord building had a great impact on these composers. Although in many cases the harmony of these 'lesser' composers is not as refined. The result is a harmonic language vertical in conception and based on 'altered' chords and extreme chromaticism. This is obvious in the last two musical examples. The late romantics were captivated by the essence of Scriabin; his very emotionalism. Gojowy is correct in saying that, Scriabin is a composer "whose influence on the late romantic composers can hardly be overstated."[1]

A fact, which is becoming increasingly clear, is that these musicians did not share the iconoclasm so prevalent in the literary and artistic avant-garde circles. This point is further supported by the emergence of musicology as a recognized science. These musicians didn't want to destroy the past,instead they wished to preserve and scientifically study it. Boris Asafiev and Victor Belaiev

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[1] Gojowy,D. p.239.

were two of the earliest and most famous Russian musicologists.[1] They were instrumental in the establishment of the Russian Institute of Arts History, founded in Leningrad and the Moscow State Instituite for Musical Science . Ostensibly the new 'science' was to be approached in the rational and logical manner expected of the new 'Bolshevik' artist. However, when the actual writings are considered, it becomes obvious that the language is imbued with the prerevolutionary ethos. Words such as "inner pathos", tragedy, deep human feeling depth, passion and integrity" scatter the page.[2] A comparison between Sabaneev's article "The Destinies of Musical Romanticism', in which he holds up romanticism and beauty as age-old elements of music[3] and Aleksei Gan's *Constructivism* and his cry'

> Death to art! .... MARXISTS MUST WORK IN ORDER TO ELUCIDATE ITS DEATH SCIENTIFICALLY AND TO FORMULATE NEW PHENOMENA OF ARTISTIC LABOUR WITHIN THE NEW HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OF OUR TIME.[4]

proves that many in the ACM seem to be in a different world: the Symbolist world of prerevolutionary Russia.

The interest the musicians showed in a reinterpretation of the past was yet another development which would have been an anathema to the committed 'leftist' avant-garde artists and writers. Reevaluations, along Marxist guidelines, of the great composers of the past such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms appeared frequently in *Sovremennaya Muzyka*.A fact that, in the 1922-1923 season Scriabin was the most often performed composer behind Tchaikovsky and Beethoven.[5] supports this idea of the relative 'backwardness' of the musical world. This fact not only further underlines Scriabin's popularity but also raises the question: Why, in

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[1] Boris Asafiev's book,*Russian Music: From the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*. J.W. Edwards, Pub.: Ann Arbor, 1953. Translated by Alfred J. Swan. First published by "Academia Press, Moscow - Leningrad, USSR, 1930. Written under the pseudonym Igor Glebov, is, according to Swan, the first attempt to use a more scientific and analytical approach to the history of Russian music rather than the continuous historical narrative of earlier writers. pp.vii-viii.

[2] A selection from *Musikblaetter des Anbruch. Sonderheft Russland.* March 1925.

[3] Sabaneev, L. 'The Destinies of Musical Romanticism'. *Musical Times.* February 1928: 113-115, p.115.

[4] Gan, A. *Constructivism.* (extracts) Found in John E. Bowlt's *The Documents of 20th-Century Art, Russian Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902 - 1934.* The Viking Press: NewYork, 1976: 214 -225.

[5] Schwarz, B. p.32.

this iconoclastic age, were the works of Beethoven and Tchaikovsky still the most often performed? There was a general feeling, especially amongst the young composers, that musicians were lagging behind the writers and painters in meeting the new demands of the revolution. Like all other post-revolutionary artistic movements, the ACM found its origins in a prerevolutionary group, but unlike the Futurists and the Constructivists, the musical world did not undergo the same degree of change after 1917.

The ACM, like its precursor the Evenings of Contemporary Music, had a close and very important relationship with the West. The ACM became a "window to the West."[1] The musicians keenly felt the isolation inflicted upon them after 1917 and welcomed the resumption of contact with the West in 1921 after the introduction of NEP. From the very outset the ACM was closely linked with the West. Initially it was to have been a branch of the ISCM (International Society of Contemporary Music). However the Russians wished to remain autonomous and so formed their own separate association. The ensuing collaboration between the two groups was extensive. Not only did it serve to make Soviet music fashionable in the West, it also had an enormous influence on the work of the young composers. This collaboration took many forms. Soviet music was performed at ISCM festivals. Universal and Gosizdat (Soviet State Publishers) had a publishing arrangement. Russian musicologists such as Belaiev and Sabaneev contributed to Western music journals and newspapers such as the ISCM journal *Musikblaetter des Anbruch* and the Boston's *Christian Science Monitor*. And perhaps, most importantly, there was a constant flow of Western music and musicians entering the Soviet Union. Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer and Pierre Monteaux were amongst the conductors who visited, performing premiers of Mahler, Bruckner, Krenek and Honegger. Touring performers included Szigeti, Petri, Backhaus and Schnabel. Casella, Hindemith, Milhaud and Schrecker were amongst those who came and performed their own works. The most recent Western music was performed. Concert programs contained works by Hindemith, Bartok, Satie, Ravel, Szymanowski, Honegger, Kodaly, Milhaud and Poulenc.

This cultural interchange provided a source of great stimulation to the young composers. The new trends emerging from the West, combined with the desire to mirror the new Bolshevik reality, resulted in a reaction against the emotionalism and mysticism of the 'late romantics'. The ACM was to some extent divided; Sabaneev despaired of the new 'degenerate' musical direction; he complained

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[1] Schwarz, B. p.53.

of the brutality, the "barbaric simplicity", the "crude rhythms", "harsh harmonies" and "iconoclastic tendencies" of the new professionals. He said " this art is purely formal, ornamental without content or psychology... [it is] devoid of thought and essentially anti-poetic..."[1] Proponents of this 'new' style included: Deshevov, Kabalevsky, Knipper, Korchmarev, Mosolov, Popov, Prokoviev, Schillinger, Shebalin and Shostakovitch. Interestingly, it is Abramsky who writes of the need to break with the new ideology and express modern concerns and subjects in a 'new' language.[2] However his work places him in the ranks of the 'late romantics'. Thich proves that often in the musical world the deed did not fulfil the written expectation.

In the 'new" language the influence of Scriabin has been combined with the rude masculinity of Prokofiev, the rhythmic innovation of Stravinsky and Bartok, the neoclassicism of composers such as Honneger and Hindemith. The younger composers eagerly absorbed the new music, finding in it much that both satisfied their interest in technology and appeased their fear of provincialism. The 1926 Moscow performance of Honegger's *Pacific 231* was as instrumental to the writing of Mosolov's 'constructivist' masterpiece *Zavod,* and to the general fad of constructivist writings that arose during the late twenties, as any Russian constructivist influence. Clarity is the main feature of the 'new' style; a formal, rhythmic and harmonic clarity which contrasts sharply with the style of the 'late romantics'. This language is as much a reaction against its immediate predecessor as it is a conscious response to the demands of the new society. The harmonic movement is horizontal rather than vertical. Saturated chromaticism was replaced by a newly evolved diatonicism featuring polytonality and dissonance; irony and the grotesque took over from romanticism; satire, parody and the everyday were favoured over the poetic. Gojowy sees this as a *Sturm und Drang* movement[3] whereas others have used the terms 'barbarism' and 'constructivism'.[4]

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[1] Sabaneev, L. p.113.

[2] Abramsky, A. p.168.

[3] Gojowy, D. p.258.

[4] Barsova, I. 'Mosolov'. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.* Macmillan Publishers Ltd.: London, 1980. Edited by Stanley Sadie. Volume12: 611-612. p.612.

The search for a revolutionary language and form was central to the ACM's aesthetic. The ACM's and RAPM's radically different interpretation of the role of the artist in Bolshevik society caused an everwidening rift between the two organizations. The stance taken by the ACM was by far the more difficult. The intangibility of music made it very hard for the composers to reflect the new reality in any easily recognizable fashion. However, composers, such as Roslavets, found the RAPM's platform unacceptable, Roslavets, himself a committed Marxist said, "music is music not ideology"[1] He showed his contempt for his proletarian critics with the following words,

> Of course I am not a proletarian composer in the sense that I do not write commonplace music 'for the masses', On the contrary I am so much 'bourgeois' that I consider the proletariat the rightful heir of all previous culture, worthy of the best in music.[2]

Often members of the ACM did resort to easier means of communicating their political sentiments. The most common of these was their choice of title. In 1924 Gliere produced the ballet, 'Comintern Holiday' and the band music entitled 'March of the Red Army'. Schillinger and Roslavets both produced large-scale works called "October". The most extreme example of this, which supports Sabaneev's claim that, ".....the various political labels affixed to musical compositions at times appear to have little justification."[3], is Krein's *Symphonic Dithyrambs*. This work is subtitled, 'The USSR - The Shock Brigade of the World Proletariat' and contains excerpts of Stalin's speech, "On the Tasks of Economists'. Another method of 'politicization' was the rewriting of pre-existing operas; *Tosca* turned to *Battle for the Commune, Les Huguenots* to the *The Decembrists* and *A Life for the Tsar* became*'Hammer and Sickle'*. Music seemed to be comparatively ill-suited to its new political duty, Lourie offers his explanation as to why this may be so:

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[1] Schwarz, B. p.54.

[2] Roslavets, N. 'Roslavets o sebe i svoyom tvorchestve'. *Sovremennaya Muzyka*. 5, 1924: 137-138. Translated from Russian into German by Detlef Gojowy and included in his *Sowjetische Musik der 20er Jahre*:: 395-400.

[3] Sabaneev, L. 'Music and Musicians in the USSR'. *Music and Leters*. 15, 1932: 55-60. p.57.

> The fact that composers are politically more conservative than other artists does not by any means account for this, the explanation must be sought in the nature of the material of these arts which can be more easily and speedily adapted to external purposes and worked up for the express benefit of the ideology connected with any new movement, In music, alteration of the formal methods themselves is far more difficult and complicated, and the attachments of superficial labels, or of literary programmes and explanations hurriedly tacked on, makes no difference to the nature of music itself, which undergoes no modification just because it is coupled with a capitalist or a communist subject.[1]

Communism did not provide the musical world with the solution to the artist's isolation in society as it did, to a greater extent, the other artistic spheres. It was also coming to lay greater demands on the musicians and the artist in general. As Lourie said, musical creation could no longer remain untouched by politics, as it could in the early years after 1917. The position of 'art for art's sake' was becoming a thing of the past.[2] During the late twenties the ACM came under pressure to comply with the increasingly militant cultural policy. As the ACM rose with NEP in 1921 so it died with NEP in 1927.

In all fields the proletarian groups gained ascendancy and intensified their vituperative campaign against the decadent, 'bourgeois' elements in art. Accusations of 'formalism', cosmopolitanism and anti-revolutionary activities abounded. In 1928, the ACM changed its name to the All-Russian Association for Contemporary Music and included in its new agenda a statute, in which it recognized the need to encourage, "...the introduction of the wide, proletarian masses to contemporary music."[3] This gesture was not enough. The journal *Sovremennaya Muzyka* ceased publication in 1929. Later on in the same year the RAPM acquired the monopoly of power at the All Russian Musical Congress and the ACM was dissolved. However, the absorption of many former ACM members into the ranks of RAPM changed the nature of the movement. In 1931 it was criticized for ignoring folk music and its independent stance. Other proletarian groups were experiencing similar criticism

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1 Lourie, A. 'The Russian School'. *Musical Quarterly.* 18, 1932: 519-529. p.525.

2 Lourie,A. p.524.

3 anon. 'Novi ustav Associacii Sovremennoy Muzyki'. *Sovremennaya Muzyka.* 32, March 1929: pp.5-7. p.7. Translated from Russian into German by Detlef Gojowy and included in his *Sowjetische Musik der 20er Jahre*: 346-348. p.347.

and on the 23rd of April, 1932 the Central Committee dissolved all proletarian bodies and passed the resolution 'On the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations'. (See Appendix 10.) This event heralded the introduction of Social Realism and an entirely different chapter in Soviet history began. As Eastman says "by 1932 RAPP [and its many counterparts] had converted Russian arts and letters ...into a mirthless desert waste inhabited by a few sincere fanatics and horde of unexampled experts in bootlick, blackmail and blatherskite."[1]

Stalin, who from the outset had opposed NEP, had, by 1928, consolidated power in all spheres, brought NEP to an end and had initiated the first Five Year Plan. What occurred in the following years is one of the greatest tragedies of the twentieth century. The inhuman brutality of Stalin and his henchmen in their dealings with the arts mirrors the fate of Soviet society in its entirety. It is thought now that as many as sixty million lives were lost during the Stalinist dictatorship. The profound change in the Soviet psyche deepens this tragedy. The spirit of the Revolution was broken. The idealism, the romanticism and the religious-like faith that coloured the early Bolshevik regime were crushed and replaced by the corruption, dishonesty, paranoia and the glorification of mediocrity that epitomized Soviet life during Stalin's reign of terror. As Elliot says, "The idealism and energy of the revolutionary avant-garde were tragically still-born; the visionary new world which they themselves had helped to build now stood in ruins; their dreams of the future had mutated from Utopia into a nightmare."[2]

With Lenin dead, Bukharin discredited, Trotsky exiled and Lunacharsky removed from office the artistic avant-garde had lost their protectors and champions. Russia was to experience yet another cultural revolution. This one, however, was the antithesis to its predecessor. It was a revolution of reaction, isolationism and chauvinism. The cultural and social plurality of the NEP era was suffocated. Cultural policy did an about-turn from that advocated by Lenin and Trotsky. Art was brought into Party line. It was to be the weapon in the class struggle. As Eastman says, by 1932 Stalin had reduced the artistic world "to cliqueism, 'left' vulgarization and time serving."[3] (See Appendix 11.) That this was done in the name of

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1 Eastman,M. p.35.
2 Elliot, D. p.26.
3 Eastman, M. p.35.

Lenin highlights the evil genius of Stalin. The cult of Leninism was engineered by Stalin after his rise to power to give greater credibility to his position. It was a gross distortion of Leninist thought. Lenin's ideas on art were taken out of context and deliberately misinterpreted so as to give credence to the new directions. In the name of Lenin professionalism was decimated by 'accessibility'; Rachmaninov, Scriabin, Bach, Beethoven and Liszt were seen as alien to the proletariat. The extent to which this anti-intellectualism went can be seen when a non-musician was appointed as the director of the Leningrad Conservatorium. Lourie was right in his forecast:

> It is most likely that the old professional principles will be completely dissolved in the proletarianizing process.[1]

The impact of Stalinism on the avant-garde was horrendous and absolute. Mayakovsky, the darling of the Revolution, committed suicide. Meyerhold and the playwright Tretyakov were shot. The actress Zinaida Raikh, Meyerhold's wife was brutally murdered. Osip Mandelshtam, Isaac Babel and Boris Pilnyak died in the gulags. The composers Mosolov and Veprik were sent to concentration camps. These facts only give an inkling of the wider truth. Those who were not physically stopped from creating either assumed the Party line or were subjected to denouncement and humiliation. Public apologies were common: Shostakovitch and the incident with his opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mzensk* incident and the ensuing *Fifth Symphony* is a case in point, as is Yuri Olesha's novel *The Necessity of [Self] Reconstruction is Obvious to Me.* In effect, an entire artistic generation was silenced. And once it was silenced the rewriting of history began.[2]

What has become clear, throughout this discussion, is that the 'avant-garde' music of the twenties was significantly different in character

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[1] Lourie, A. p.529.

[2] In books such as Rena Moisenco's *Realist Music.* (Meridian Books Ltd.: London, 1949.) and Lyudmila's Polyakova's *Soviet Music.* (Foreign Languages Publishing House: Moscow, no date given.) the flagrant distortion of this history is verging on farcical. Many composers are simply excluded or if they are mentioned, as in the case of Mosolov, Polovinkin and Roslavets, it is only to hold them up as examples of unacceptable and anti-Soviet elements in music. It is common for the decade of the twenties to be missing entirely in composers' biographies or it is otherwise covered by a passing reference about the 'unhealthy' influences of the ACM.

to either the literature or the art. The investigation into new musical forms and language, which began in earnest before the revolution, if anything abated during the twenties. Freeman observed in 1930 that, "the younger composers were characterized by their moderation in musical experiments."[1] The perceived 'backwardness' of the musical world was a result of several factors: the intimate relationship that music has always had with the cultured and privileged classes which were decimated by the Bolsheviks, the importance of tradition and the past in music with the resulting lack of iconoclastic tendencies, the innate romanticism and relative 'conservatism' of the main core of the ACM and the difficulty, experienced even by committed Marxists, of responding musically to the Revolution without rejecting the path of 'pure music'.

The musical avant-garde that grew up with, and was inspired by, the revolutionary movement was left behind by the the actual Revolution itself. As Machlitt says," In direct opposition to their many of their colleagues in literature, art, theatre and film, the majority of the professional Russian composers, traditionalists and modernists alike, wrote in the years after the revolution much as they did in those before."[2] The freedom created by the liberal cultural policy of NEP allowed the development of 'pure' music to progress naturally from what came before. It was this freedom that allowed the development of a unique school of composers. Ironically, this school did not occur because of, but almost in spite of the revolution. It was not the radical, pioneering movement that many experts in this field have sought so desperately to uncover, but instead one that grew naturally out of late nineteenth century romanticism. The 'Scriabin' school has no real Western equivalent. A comparison could be made with the Second Viennese School, however, they differ fundamentally in spirit. The rhapsodic poetry and unique brand of romanticism of this music cannot be found in the West. It colours even the work of the younger generation despite the strong Western influence. It is the Russian character with its eastern mysticism and acute sense of spirituality that sets this music apart. That this generation of composers were stopped by external

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1 Freeman, J. 'Soviet Music'.
Found in *Voices of October* by Joseph Freeman, Joshua Kunitz and Louis Lozowick. The Vanguard Press: New York, 1930. p.300.

2 Machlitt, M. 'Der unterbrochene Marsch: Arthur Lourie und Nikolai Roslavets zwei Avantgardisten der fruehen sowjetische Musik'.
Musik und Gesellschaft. 37, 1987: 517-522. p.519.

forces from realizing its full potential is our loss. The reason for this tragedy is found in these words by Jacques Maritain:

> Less bound to the universe of human ideas and human values than he who creates with the vocables of the language of men, less bound than the painter or the sculptor to the forms and images of things, less bound than the architect to the conditions for the use of the thing created, it is in the composer that are verified in the most limpid fashion the metaphysical exigencies of poetry.[1]

It is music's ability to express without words or images that has caused philosophers to deem it the highest art form. It also ultimately precipitated the demise of 'pure' music in Soviet Russia and brought to an end one of the most interesting phases in Russian musical history.

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[1] Maritain, J. *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry.* Pantheon Books Ltd.: New York, 1953. p.141.

CHAPTER THREE

Lourie and Mosolov: Silver and Red

To look at history from the inside out can reveal illuminating perspectives and insights which add to the main picture. The preceding dicourse has offered a broad overview of this complex and diverse period, this chapter will retell the story, but this time by focussing on the individual, will draw the general to the specific and portray a more vivid picture of the Russian artistic life of the early decades of this century. An examination of the lives and work of the composers Arthur Lourie and Alexander Mosolov and of the circles in which they moved will allow us to view the artistic avante-garde of early twentieth century Russia as if under a magnifying glass.

Lourie and Mosolov were, and are still, considered to be among the most extreme of the musical avant-garde. They encapsculate many of the important directions and tendencies that existed during those years and, although, only eight years separate the two men, the generations they represent proved to be worlds apart. Born in 1892, Lourie reached adulthood before the Revolution, his personality and artistic outlook were tempered in that special and highly characteristic atmosphere of prerevolutionary St. Petersburg. Mosolov, born in 1900, and a Muscovite, belongs indisputably to the first generation born under the influence of incipient Revolution. Therefore a comparison between the aesthetics, lives and work of these two very different men is essentially a comparison between the prerevolutionary and postrevolutionary generations. An examination of these composers' music proves that the influence of Alexander Scriabin is indeed a major issue in the music of this period. The pictures which have been presented in much of the writing, both past and present, of Lourie as the radical Futurist and Mosolov as the musical Constructivist, are misleading. However, while these labels have some validity, the allegations of both Lourie's and Mosolov's experimentation in twelve tone composition are merely untrue. There is a need to resist the dangerous temptation towards simplistic generalizations and myth-building. The lives and creative output of these two composers are fascinating enough without having to resort to sensationalism.

Lourie was a prolific writer particularly in his later life. His articles offer a goldmine of information which reveals his personality and philisophical views on music, art, politics and humanity. They also posit possible explanations for his reactions to earlier events in his life such as his sudden departure from Russia in 1921. Mosolov's few writings, however, restrict themselves to pure musical discussion and more can be ascertained of his character from his actions and his work rather than the scant information gleaned from his literary contributions.[1]

Through his involvement with the Futurist movement and his subsequent appointment within the Bolshevik government Lourie has come to be seen as a proponent of the most exteme left currents in music. However, his aesthetic is more in line with the religio-mystical outlook of the Symbolists. In many respects he is a kindred spirit to the composers Nikolai Obukhov and Ivan Vyshnegradsky. Davenson is correct to say that, "Lourie was an old-fashioned Russian intellectual, with all that this implies: a universal curiousity, a philisophic sense of art [and] a mystical cultural orientation."[2] Like many in the St. Petersburg intelligentsia Lourie showed an all-consuming passion for philosophy and religion. Waldmann says,"[t]he religious element can be seen as being strongly in the spirit of Russian Symbolism."[3] The sentiment and even the language which is found in Lourie's late writings bear an unmistakeable kinship to that expressed by a theosophic society, known as The Golden Ship, which existed in St. Peterburg in 1908 :

> God is the Spirit. His garments are beauty. His prayer - creation, his temple - art...individual creation in art should be merely preparation for a form of ritual; only the latter fused with religion, will regenerate man and bring him closer to the light of heaven.[4]

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[1] Mosolov contributed to the ACM journal, *Sovremennaya Muzyka.* His articles include the first Russian piece about Hindemith and short essays on the music of Tcherepnin,Abramsky and his teacher Miaskovsky.

[2] Davenson, H. 'Arthur Lourie 1892 - 1966'. *Perspectives of New Music.* 5, Spring-Summer 1967:166-169. p.169.

[3] Waldmann, G. 'Lourie'. *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart.* Baerenreiter: Kassel, 1961. p.1239.

[4] Bowlt, J. *The Documents of Twentieth Century Art Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902-1934,* The Viking Press Inc.: New York, 1976. p.185.

After his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1913, at twenty years of age, religion came to dominate Lourie's thinking. It permeated every aspect of his life. Music became the medium through which he tried to express his deep religious beliefs. He saw music as fundamentally mysterious and mystical and linked directly with religion. The power of music was equated with the power of God; it was linked with cosmic forces and celestial spheres. With an almost desperate fanaticism he came to see the state of humanity as totally dependent on the state of music. This is evident with his words,"[f]or until now, and notably during the recent crises in our civilization, whereever there has been a break with Christianity, there has immediately and infallibly occurred a breakdown in music."[1] In his article, *Musings on Music* he says:

> The pathos of music is the very pathos of life...Among the conditions necessary for the development of a musical style, spiritual experience is always included and not the material aquisitions of the epoch. Since style is the very soul of every art work, how can there be style when there is no soul?[2]

The Symbolist theme of transfiguration figures frequently in his late writings:

> "Just as to love life does not signify the love of caviar and central heating, so to be in communion with music does not consist in an inclination to enjoy music, but in that true transfiguration which music produces in the soul."[3]

In his article *The De-Humanization of Music* he claims that spiritual transfiguration can be achieved "when music becomes saturated with spiritual energy and emanates Light, Beauty and Love."[4]
After his emigration to Paris this 'avante-garde' composer came to view modernism as degenerate. He believed that music had lost contact with God. Melody, God's musical mouthpiece had been rejected.[5] He attributes the moral decay and 'evil-mindedness' of

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[1] Lourie, A. p.239.

[2] Lourie, A. 'Musings on Music'. *Musical Quarterly.* 27, April 1941: 235-42. p.236.

[3] Lourie, A. p.237.

[4] Lourie, A. 'The De-Humanization of Music'. *Ramparts.* 5, January-February 1965: 39-41. p.41.

[5] He wrote that even at the time, (1914-1916) he had realized that atonality lead to an emotional void due to objectivity and abstract thinking. (Found in Camajani's 'The Music of Lourie'. Ramparts. January-February 1965: 35-38. p.35)

modern society to the paucity of melody in contemporary music. Melody was the 'soul' of music, the 'liberator' of the spirit. It alone could reveal the truth and save humanity. He writes:

> Our melodic gift is in direct ratio to our capacity for good, not in the sentimental but in the religious sense. An evil melody can have no existence at all. An evil melody is a nonsense....Melody itself is a primary good, a sort of purification through repentance.[1]

'Purity was an ideal to which Lourie clung fiercely, it is a common theme in his later writings. He speaks of the "purity of inner hearing" as being the highest musical domain. (This sentiment is strongly reminiscent of a theory put forward by Roslavets.) One can wonder if his preoccupation with the 'purity of art' was encouraged by his experiences in Russia. It could be seen as a type of mental flagellation to atone for his past 'sins', ie. his early forays into 'degenerate' styles such as microtonality and atonality.

Lourie's initial reaction to the Revolution was similar to many of his generation. He welcomed it with open arms. He saw the possibilities of regeneration that it offered. His enthusiastic response was not driven, however, by political convictions but by the realization of the freedoms which accompanied the new regime. He explains in the following lines the attraction the Revolution held for him and his comrades:

> Like my friends, the young avant-garde - artists and poets - I believed in the October Revolution and joined it immediately. Thanks to the support of the October Revolution we were, the young forward-striving artists and eccentrics, taken seriously. First of all we were called lads and dreamers (*Phantasen*), we could realize our dreams, and not only did the fine arts experience no political pressure, but, most importantly, also no violence. We were given complete freedom to do anything that we desired; such a an opportunity had never before arisen in history.Never before, on the face of this world, had anything such as this happened. In return for this trust' that had placed in us, we leant ourselves without question to the Revolution....The futurist escapades were hindered by no one... the time was fantastic and impossible, and Futurism, was the purest of everything I had ever known....[2]

Because of his appointment as Commissar of Music under the Bolsheviks, it has often been assumed that Lourie was therefore a

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[1] Lourie, A. 'An inquiry into Melody'. *Modern Music*. 7/1, December-January 1929: 3-9. p.7.

[2] Gojowy, D. *Neue sowjetische Musik der 20er Jahre*. Laaber Berlag: Regensburg, 1980. p.99.

committed communist. Davenson's description of him as an 'idealistic fellow traveller' is closer to the truth. It is likely that Lourie was part of Lunacharsky's initiative to include members of the avante-garde in the new government and Lourie, due his affiliation with the Futurists, seemed the obvious choice. It is likely that Lourie initially saw the Revolution as a new spiritual beginning but, in time, he became, as did many of his colleagues, disillusioned with the Revolution and, perhaps earlier than most, recognized the terrible potential inherent in the new regime. In 1928, six years after leaving Russia, he proclaimed, "Revolution inevitably leads to anarchy." He then went on to speak of"...the audacities of the radicals which began in revolution and ended in anarchical destruction..."[1] His American librettist, Irina Graham maintains, however, that the respect and admiration he felt for Lenin, Lunacharsky, Krupskaya and others never waned, but that Bolshevism as an ideology had always remained alien to him.[2] Lourie was neither a conservative nor a radical; he was a humanist who came to despair of the inhumane extremism which was to pursue him his entire life and force upon him two emigrations.

Pessimism and bitterness colour much of his later writing. He came to reiterate, albeit belatedly, the apocalyptic view of the world that permeated Russian intellectual life at the turn of the century. He said,"[a]t the dawn of the Russian Revolution, we were in humanism's last stages."[3] He was a sharp critic of the proletarian movements in Russia. He maintains in his article, 'The Approach to the Masses', that 'turbulent periods' of history result in the "debasement and impoverishment of culture" and that the marriage of art and ideology interferes with the creative process:[4] "The artist must preserve his integrity through any historical event whatsoever."[5] In spite of Lourie's strong and frequent assertions that ideology and music do not mix, it was ironically his own ultimate artistic goal. Religion is, as communism is, an ideology. A parallel can be drawn between Lourie's fanatic obsession with the marriage of religion and music and the aims of the proletarian movements of Soviet Russia. No

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[1] Lourie, A. 'Neogothic and Neoclassic'. *Modern Music.* 5/3, March-April 1928: 3-8. p.5.

[2] Machlitt, M. 'Der Unterbrochene Marsch'. *Musik und Gesellschaft.* 37, 1987: 517-522. p.519.

[3] Lourie, A. 'Notes on the 'New Order". *Modern Music.* 19, November-December 1941: 3-9. p.5.

[4] Lourie, A. 'The Approach to the Masses'. ibid. 21, May-June 1944:203-207. p.205.

[5] Lourie, A. p.207.

matter if we share Lourie's extreme beliefs, he, nontheless, remains "one of the most original, versatile and paradoxical figures in the Russian avant-garde."[1]

Alexander Mosolov is, in comparison to Lourie, a much more straightforward personality. Mosolov was, first and foremost, a composer. He was not given to philosophising, nor was he overtly political. Music was his all-consuming passion. As Neef says:

> Mosolov had never involved himself verbally in the heated dispute concerning the future path of 'revolutionary' music of the twenties, he uttered no verdicts or other such judgements.[2]

Despite his reticence in the area of polemics he is known as one of the most radical figures of the 1920's; a destroyer of the fundamentals in music; a rebel and pioneer of new paths. He was an unrestrained and impetuous character. This comes through strongly in his dramatic piano music which gives testimony to a dark and brooding side to his nature. The song cycles *Newspaper Announcements* and *Three Chilren's Scenes* reveal an astute sense of humour and a remarkable ability for parody and caricature. We can gain further insights to his personality through his treatment of his manuscripts. Once Mosolov had finished a piece, he promptly forgot about it and began on another, with the result that many are now missing, believed to have been lost in a 'yellow suitcase'. The only evidence of their existence lies in concert programmes and posters.

Although Mosolov never subordinated music to politics, he was still very much a child of his time. As Barsova says:

> With every fibre of his heart, with every thought, Mosolov strove to belong to his time.[3]

Many of the main artistic trends are reflected in Mosolov's music. A popular topic for satire during the twenties was the newly emerged

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[1] anon. Accompanying text to *'Russian Songs of the 1920's, Prokofiev, Lourie, Mosolov, Scherbachov'*. (compact disc recording). Natalia Gerassimova - soprano, Vladimir Skanavi - piano. Russian Season 288025.

[2] Neef, S. 'Alexander Mosolov; zwischen Phantastik und Realitatsbezug'. *Musik und Gesellschaft.* 36, 1986: 532-534. p.532.

[3] Barsova, I. 'Das Fruehwerk von Aleksandr Mosolov'. *Jahrbuch Peters.* 1979: 117-69. p.122.

Nepmanski; the petty bourgeoisie of the NEP era. The Nepmanski were reviled by the young idealists. They were perceived as vulgar philistines, who, by their very existence, impeded the path to true communism. The portraits presented in *Newspaper Announcements* are brilliant and irreverent caricatures which capture the essence of this social phenomenon. We can sense Mosolov's love of the absurd. His choice of text for both this work and his *Three Children's Scenes* reveals the newfound interest in the 'everyday'; the colloquial has replaced the poetic. With his work the *Anti-Religious Symphony*, Mosolov represents the atheism of his generation; a work which is the antithesis of all that Lourie believed in.

Mosolov is best known as the musical Constructivist. In 1928 Uglov states this simply, "Mosolov is a musical Constructivist."[1] Industrialization and the machine captured the imagination of an entire generation and no one depicted it so brilliantly in sound as Mosolov did in his symphonic poem, *Zavod*. This piece is largely responsible for the 'constructivist' label. There is, however, no further evidence to suggest that Mosolov ever considered himself in this light. He shared no other similarities with the Constructivists; his work is not anti-emotional, nor 'scientific' (although writers such as Barsova and Gojowy have said otherwise) and most importantly he never attempted to write 'socially useful' music. His graduation piece *Sphinx*, for large orchestra, choir and solo tenor on a text by Oscar Wilde was hardly the work of a 'Constructivist' nor were his songs setting of Pushkin and Blok. Neef posits an interesting theory: she writes of Mosolov's ambivalence towards industry. His opera *The Dam* is cited as an example where industry is portrayed both as a modernizing and destructive influence. *Zavod* is not just 'the mighty hymn to the machine', Neef detects in it "an ambivalence... an ambiguity and an inseperable feeling of admiration and rejection."[2] This assertion is supported by Belaiev, who wrote in 1926 that, "the main theme of Mosolov is the city and its contemporary, existential tragedy...the tragedy of loneliness of mankind and the tragedy of the fantastic in reality."[3] Mosolov was open to all the currents of his time, but there was no single dominating influence. He never sacrificed his creative independence to any one creed.

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[1] Uglov 'Das erste Konzert der Sofil-Konzertgesellschaft'. Isvestiya, 1928 (Found in Barsova's 'Das Fruehwerk von Aleksandr Mosolov'. p.135.)

[2] Neef, S. p.534.

[3] From *Sovremennaya Muzyka*. 13-14. p.85. (Found in Sigrid Neef's article, 'Alexander Mosolov; zwischen Phantastik und Realitatsbezug'. p.534.)

Both Mosolov and Lourie came from affluent middle class backgrounds. Mosolov, in particular, was raised in a special artistic atmosphere. He was born in Kiev, in 1900. His father was a lawyer and his mother, Nina Alexandrovna, was a singer who had studied piano and worked in the Bolshoi Theatre. The family moved to Moscow in 1903. Mosolov's father died when he was still young and his mother remarried to a Ukrainian composer, Podgorezki. This marriage ended quickly and her next husband was to play an important role in Mosolov's artistic development. Mikhail Leblan was a recognized painter, active in the Moscow artistic scene. His studio became a popular meeting place for students of the Moscow Art School. The young Mosolov was exposed to the latest developments in Cubism, Futurism, Suprematism and Naturalism. Through the constant stream of artists, doctors, lawyers and musicians that visited the Leblan household, Mosolov came into contact, not only with his first piano teacher, the composer Shenshin but also, Gliere, whose later involvement in the Mosolov's life was to be of an importance that the young boy could never have imagined. Leblan was a strong personality, he was a sharp opponent to academicism in art and while demanding technique, never encouraged imitation nor suppressed individuality. During the 1920's Leblan was to work in IZO; the artistic division of the Comissariat of Education.

Mosolov grew up in that cosmopolitan atmosphere so typical of Russia's privileged classes. He spoke German and French and before 1917 had travelled to the West with his mother and lived in Paris, Berlin and London. His family were politically progressive and welcomed the October Revolution. Mosolov showed his impetuous character early on, when, at the age of sixteen he ran away from school to join the front. He was found and returned. In 1917 Mosolov served in the Sekretariat of the People's Commissars and was reported to have given parcels three times to Lenin in person. This experience was to stay with him his entire life. When Civil War broke out in 1918, Mosolov again proved his convictions through action and joined the Red Army. He fought in the First Soviet Cavalry Regiment. In 1920, after being wounded twice he was discharged and served in the Moscow security troops until the end of the war. During his military service Mosolov was twice decorated with the Order of the Red Banner

So, it was at the late age of 21 that Mosolov began his formal musical education. The speed of his development is astounding. In the space of four years Mosolov went from writing in whole notes without barlines to producing works that are of such maturity and

finish that they were later published by Gosizdat and Universal. The sheer talent is breathtaking. Because of his late start, Mosolov was to suffer occasionally from an 'amateur complex' and experience bouts of depression. In 1921 Mosolov joined the Department of Free Music Creation at the Moscow Conservatory where he studied piano with G. Prokoviev and K. Igumnov and composition with Gliere, changing to Miaskovsky's class in 1924. Amongst his older comrades were Abramsky, Polovinkin, Shebalin, Davidenko and Shekhter, who at this time represented one creative standpoint. The latter two later became prominent proletarian composers. Shebalin includes this amusing tale in his memoirs:

> ...My pupils who studied with Shekter bring me three-four bars of some clumsy melody. Then the discussion arises as to whether these three-four clumsy bars reflect the experience of the proletariat at the time of the Kronstadt uprising. This is simply an idiotic excercise in semantics.[1]

During the years of Mosolov's student life the university system was undergoing profound change. (It is interesting to note that much of this change was initiated by Lourie.) The 'democratization' process entailed: the revision of curriculums, the politicization of students and the development of new teacher/student relationships.There was an increased enrolment of the working class. Komsomol agitation was increasing. Much of this agitation came from the student group PROKOLL- The Production Collective of Student Composers, which came about in 1924. As Schwarz says, "the issue of 'modernism' and proletarianism reached disturbingly into the life of the conservatories."[2] Mosolov angered these 'leftist' students by his concentration on 'pure' music and his failure to perform in worker's clubs. He was expelled from the Conservatory in 1924. Gliere, Konyus and Miaskovsky, recognizing his rare talent, came to his rescue and had him re-enrolled.

It is illuminating to understand what kind of people these men were, who were so central to the education of Mosolov. They believed in the new regime. All three of Mosolov's professors, Gliere, Igumnov and Miaskovsky, were members of the Red Professors Group founded in 1924. These musicians were committed to the Revolution and saw a need to renew the educational methods.

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[1] Schwarz, B. *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia.* 1917-1981, Enlarged Edition Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1983. p.58.

[2] Schwarz, B. p.100.

Miaskovsky, whose relationship with Mosolov was perhaps the most important, showed a sincere desire to cooperate with the communists He, like Mosolov, fought in the Civil War. He organized the Composers Collective (1919-1923) and assisted at MUZO. Miaskovsky, along with Prokoviev and Katchaturian and so many thousands of others was purged in 1948.

Mosolov graduated in 1925. He joined the ACM and became one of its most active members, entering the circle of some of Russia's most influential musicians. An article on him had already appeared in *Sovremennaya Muzyka* in 1924, while he was still a student.[1] His work was supported by three of the ACM's founding members: Belaiev, Derzhanowski and Saradshev. Tcherepnin sang praises about his *Legende* for Cello and Piano and there is correspondence between Asafiev, the conductor Malko and Mosolov in relation to his piano concerto.[2] He lead the ACM chamber music section, involved himself in musical criticism, organized concerts of foreign music and in 1927 became the Secretary of the Russian division of the ISCM. From 1925 to 1929 Mosolov was also editor for music radio.

Mosolov was becoming well known as a pianist and composer. His works were often performed in ACM concert series. His fame was not restricted to Russia. His String Quartet was performed at the ISCM Festival in Frankfurt. It was *Zavod* that gained Mosolov international acclaim, it was performed in many major centres around the world, a performance was even staged at the Hollywood Bowl in 1932. Schwarz sees this work as establishing Mosolov as an international celebrity. He says, "Mosolov was accepted as a musical representative of the new Russia."[3] On September 29th, 1924 the first Mosolov Concert took place, Among the performers were his wife, mother and himself.

His prolificity during this time is extraordinary. From 1924-1928 he produced thirty works which included fifty songs, five Piano Sonatas, the opera *'Hero'*, the ballet, *'Steel'* , a symphony and a piano concerto. In 1929, Mosolov, in collaboration with Polovinkin, Aleksandrov and Shostakovitch, was working on a project called *The Four Moscows*. The work was never completed. Between 1927 and 1931 'left' music was coming under increasingly harsh criticism from its arch rival the RAPM. Mosolov came unde heavy fire. Early signs of

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1 anon. 'A.V. Mosolov'. *Sovremennaya Muzyka.* 4, 1924:114.

2 Rimsky, L. 'Perepiska A.V. Mosolova'. *Iz proshlovo sovetskoy muzkalnoy kulturi.* 3, Moscow, 1982.

3 Schwarz, B. p.86.

trouble appeared when he could not get his opera *The Dam* staged. Zavod transformed from the "mighty hymn to the machine" into a "grossly formalistic perversion of a contemporary topic."[1] After 1930 Mosolov's work was no longer heard nor published. Mosolov too, became a master of the 'genre of silence' which Isaac Babel had spoken of at the 1932 Writers Congress. In 1936, Mosolov was expelled from the Composers Union, allegedly for drunken brawling. The actual events, till this day, remain a mystery.

Arthur Lourie is an enigma - the very antithesis of the straightforward Mosolov. His life is made of seemingly irreconcilable paradoxes and puzzles. It raises many unanswered questions: How could Lourie have been a radical Futurist and at the same time harboured such an extreme, but nontheless conventional, religious faith? What prompted a Jew to convert to Roman Catholicism? How could the avante garde works *Syntheses* and *Forms in the Air* appear alongside his *Ave Maria* and his *Salve Regina*? What prompted him to abandon his important post in the communist administration for the scant appeal of being an unknown emigre in Paris? In an attempt to offer possible explanations we must often resort to the use of conjecture.

Sabaneev describes Lourie as "that restless musician whose biography is almost more interesting than his compositions." He lived during a fascinating period of history and was at all times on the cutting edge. And it is by an examination of the world of prerevolutionary St. Petersburg that we can better understand Lourie. The picture that emerges is of an educated and erudite intellectual; "an exquisite aesthete, a highly cultured and extremely clever man".[2] The texts Lourie chose reveal his eclectic nature and his wide education. In his work are found settings of Blok's 'In the temples of the Golden Dream', Pushkin, Sologub, Verlaine, and Sappho, to name but a few. The directions in his work reveal Lourie as a Francophile. Extravagant and often obscure instructions abound: *pame* - swooning, *toujours croissant* -always growing, *avec un murmure passione, fondu* -molten, melting, *essore* - torn or ripped. There was a precious and affected side to Lourie that did not endear

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[1] Roberts, P.D. 'Mosolov'. *Biographical Dictionary of Russian/Soviet Composers.* Greenwood Press: Westport, Conneticut, 1989: 356. Editors in Chief: Dmitry Feofanov and Allan Ho. p.356

[2] Sabaneev, L. 'Three Rusian Composers in Paris'. *Musical Times.* 68, Ocober 1927: 882-883. p.882.

him to all of his fellow artists. The account, given by Irina Odoevtseva in her memoirs, *Na beregakh Nevi*, reinforces this picture of Lourie. She paints him as an aloof, self-important person, whose word, according to Odoevtseva, could make or break women's reputations.[1] Photographs show him to be a slim, elegant, almost effete individual. Sabaneev said somewhat disparagingly that, "[i]n him there is a perpetual pose, a calculating quality: in his quest or perhaps grimaces he always goes farther than the others."[2]

So where did this complex and perplexing individual come from? The information on his childhood and family is sparse. He was born in May, 1892. His father was a Jewish engineer who ran a wood factory. Like Vyshnegradsky he studied philosophy at University. He entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he was seen to be amongst the cream of pianistic talent, along with Sergei Prokofiev. Here he studied piano with Barinova, a past pupil of Busoni and composition with Glazunov.[3] However,he found himself unable to see eye to eye with the compositional methods of Glazunov and left before completing his degree. Lourie became an autodidact; demonstrating, at an early stage, his refusal to compromise. One of the crucial events in Lourie's life was his conversion to Catholicism in 1913. Thich is even more bizarre when one remembers his Jewish background and the atheist futurist circles in which he was moving.

Lourie said of himself that he is, "an artist who differs from other musicians by the elaboration of esthetical experience in poetry and plastic arts."[4] Indeed, Lourie was friends with members of every prerevolutionary school: he was Akhmatova's lover, he knew Blok and Mandelshtam personally and lectured on their poetry, he wrote incidental music to a Khlebnikov play[5], dedicated a work to Nikolai Kulbin, contributed to the futurist journal *Strelets*.[6] and was aquainted with leading artists such as Malevich and Tatlin. He, himself, held an important position in this world. Elliot says,

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[1] Odoevtseva, I. *Na beregakh Nevi.* Kamkin Publishers: Washington, 1967. p.497.

[2] Sabaneev, L. p.882.

[3] This connection with Busoni possibly inspired his later meeting with the composer in the mid-1920's.

[4] Camajani, G. 'The Music of Lourie'. *Ramparts*. January-February., 1965: 35-38, p.35.

[5] Lourie wrote incidental music to Khlebnikov's play, *Lady Death's Mistake*, it was never finished and remains unpublished.

[6] The article, 'K muzykye vishavo khromatisma'. (*Strelets*. 1, 1915: 79-83), is a brief one on quarter tone music. It can be found in German in Gojowy's, *Neue sowjetische Musik der 20er Jahre*. pp. 446-447.

> In St. Petersburg, Futurism coalesced around round the Ego-Futurism of Igor Severyanin, the free-wheeling ambience of the Stray Dog Cafe and the music of Arthur Lourie.[1]

The myth which has arisen of Lourie as 'the Futurist' is based on his close connection with many in the Futurist movement. He was, in fact, the only musician of any lasting fame to have been associated with this movement. While the experimentation in some of his early music was undoubtedly influenced by the Futurists, there is no real concept of Futurism in music. There is no existing 'manifesto' describing what Futurist music is and it is dubious as to whether Lourie ever thought of himself as a Futurist composer. The famous Futurist Livshits supports this theory. He made this harsh observation, "[Lourie is] a provincial snob, who cared little for the Futurists, associated with them, but never called himself a Futurist out of foppishness."[2]

Whether or not Lourie considered himself a Futurist does not diminish the profound affect which this movement had on his creative development. Futurism was a world-wide movement; the most significant being the Italian Futurists lead by Marinetti. Russian Futurism was founded by a group of poets and painters in St Petersburg around 1908. Its beginnings were strongly Western. It is impossible to clearly define this complex historical and literary phenomenon. Futurism covered a wide and diverse range of directions in both literature and art. In general, Futurists tended towards pacifism and atheism, they were strongly anti-bourgeois, interested in archaism and orientalism and firmly believed in the autonomy of art. Many were strongly iconoclastic; they rejected tradition and the past. The creation of new effects and techniques was a major concern of theirs. This concern found expression also in the early work of Lourie.

There were many divisions within the Futurist movement. The nature of Russian Futurism was varied and contradictory. Russian Futurism consisted of: Cubo-Futurism, the Mezzanine of Poetry, Ego-Futurism, Centrifuge and Intuitivism. Of these, the last three are significant in regards to Lourie, and demand some attention. Markov says the differences between futurism and symbolism should not be

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[1] Elliot, D — *New Worlds: Russian Art and Society 1900-1937.* Thames and Hudson Ltd.: London, 1986. p.14.

[2] Markov, V. — *Russian Futurism: a history.* MacGibbon and Kee: London, 1967. p.264

exaggerated.[1] "Contrary to Western Futurism, Russian Futurism always maintained a messianic and religious element."[2] This helps to explain why Lourie, essentially a Symbolist, could assimilate so well into Futurist circles. Ego-Futurism was marked by a certain preciousness and dandyism which was also present in Lourie. Severyanin, the leader of the movement, produced poems with such extravagant titles as *Ice Cream Of Lilacs* and *Pineapples in Champagne*. This is a far cry from the rugged, urban outlook of the Cubo-Futurists lead by Mayakovsky. The influences of the 'decadents' and Western Symbolism are obvious. Individualism, intuitivism, madness, pseudo-mysticism and lyricism are all present in this strange and eccentric group.

Centrifuge was the last Futurist offshoot before the Revolution. It contained Boris Pasternak and Nikolai Aseev who are poets of real worth. The leader, Sergei Bobrov and Lourie have much in common and, although there is no supporting evidence, It is possible that they might have known each other. Like many Symbolists and few Futurists, Bobrov had an excellent education. He was a man of vast erudition with a huge knowledge of European literature, in particular French poetry. This perhaps could be the key to unlock the mystery as to how Lourie, in early twentieth century Russia, had set music to the poems of the mediaeval poet, Christine de Pisane, whose treatise on feminism, *The City of Ladies* has only recently been rescued by the women's movement. Bobrov's ideal of the lyric as being "nothing less than the spiritual essence of poetry." bears strong similarity to Lourie's later ideas on the importance of melody. Unlike many Futurists, Bobrov saw the vulgarisation and iconoclasm so prevalent amongst these artists as petty and meaningless.

In 1913 Lourie wrote a piano work called *Masques*. The piece was never published and is held in manuscript form in the Lourie Archive in the Lincoln Centre in New York. On the opening page there is a dedication in Lourie's delicate handwriting: *"a mon cher ami, Dr Nikolai Koulbin"*. In David Elliot's book, *New Worlds* there is a photograph of Kulbin and Lourie with others in Kulbin's studio.[3] Who then was this Kulbin, the 'crazy doctor', who Khlebnikov described as

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[1] Markov, V. *The Longer Poems of Vladimir Khlebnikov.* Universtiy of California: Berkely, LA, 1962. p.4

[2] Gojowy, D. 'Futuriste Russe - Mosolov Piano Sonatas 1-5'. Accompanying text to Alexander Mosolov, *Piano Sonatas.* (compact disc recording). Geoffrey Madge - pianist. Dante Recordings. PSG9118.

[3] Elliot, D. p.13.

that 'madman and scoundrel'?[1] Apart from having been a military doctor, Kulbin was the leader of the Intuitivists; a group which lead on from the spiritual decadence of the Symbolists. Intuitivism wanted to liberate art, literature and music from conventional patterns and replace them with so-called intuitive prnciple.[2] This approach obviously struck a deep chord in Lourie, and once in Paris he was to gravitate towards people of similar dispositions. The philosopher Jaques Maritain was such a person and it is interesting to find mention of Lourie's 'poetic intuition' in Maritain's book, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*.[3] Kulbin's aesthetic was essentially synthesist and in 1914 Lourie wrote a piano work called *Syntheses*. Kulbin, with his cosmic transcendental view of art and his subjective, spiritual approach to art bears an uncanny resemblance to Lourie. (See Appendix 12.)

Kulbin was also the material and spiritual patron of the artistic organization, the Union of Youth which was established in 1909. This active and influential organization included poets, painter and musicians. The UOY's activies were many and varied. They organized exhibitions, public debates and lectures (perhaps it was here that Lourie gave his lectures on Blok and Mandelshtam), they had their own journal, they subsidized theatre, sponsored foreign visitors and represented Western art. Although its official alliance was with the Cubo-Futurists, it also encouraged cross-fertilization between all existing trends. As Bowlt says,

> UOY wanted to unite the talents of young writers, painters and musicians and critics under the umbrella of a single cultural organization. Indeed this aspiration toward synthesism emphasized the Janus-like physiognomy of the Union, because although born between the twilight of Symbolism and the dawn of Futurism,it maintained a direct link with the Symbolist concentration of complete art with the Futurist efforts to demolish the barriers of separate art disciplines.[4]

Many futurists were social exiles who lived in isolation and poverty. These conditions fed the rebellious urges and the desire to transform reality. Anarchist rebellion and outlandish behaviour abounded in the Futurist circles. It was not an uncommon sight to see

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[1] Lawton, A. *Russian Futurism through Its Manifestoes, 1912-1928.* Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 1988. p.19.

[2] Bowlt, J. p.17.

[3] Maritain,J. *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry.* Pantheon Books Inc.:New York, 1953. p.141.

[4] Bowlt, J. p.168.

Popova and her friends wandering the streets with their faces painted blue, heads shaved, draped in long, flowing clothes or with psychadaelic waistcoats and radishes or soup spoons in their buttonholes. (This was a deliberate parody of the Wildean custom of wearing a carnation.) The desire to shock the bourgeoisie was overwhelming. Lourie joined in this self conscious behaviour, Sabaneev describes him somewhat contemptuously as "wandering about in a sort of Pierrot costume, with an exquisitely weary air and seemingly exhausted by an excess of culture."[1] There was a strong element in the Futurist movement that was pretentious, vulgar, arrogant and pompous. A tendency towards charlatanism was ever present.

The scandalous atmosphere of Futurists meetings were a constant source of fascination and curiousity. They aroused great excitement. Physical abuse was not uncommon. Brawls occurred frequently and Livshits recounts an incident where Kruchenikh deliberately spilt hot tea on the audience. Much of this wild and bohemian behaviour was centred around two venues. The *Brodyachaia Sobaka* or Stray Dog Cafe was one of these. Here the Futurists would meet and discuss their art far into the night. As Sabaneev says in his usual elaborate manner, the Wandering Dog Cafe was where "the supreme attainments of culture were blended with the most degraded manifestations of human nature."[2] Lourie played the piano at the cafe rather like Erik Satie at the*Chat Noir* in Paris. The Comedian's Halt was another legendary meeting place of the Futurists, as was the 'Tower'; the house of the Symbolist poet, Vyacheslav Ivanov. Lourie could have met Lunacharsky at any of these venues, as the two men regularly attended literary meetings.

The October Revolution irreversibly changed this extraordinary situation in St. Petersburg. It brought the artistic world back to earth with a thump. In 1918 Lourie shed his Pierrot costume and became Commissar for Music in Narkompros. He was now responsible for orchestras, programming, the nationalization of publishing housesand the restructuring of the musical institutions.[3] During his time as Commissar, Lourie organized hundreds of free concerts for soldiers, peasants and workers. Lourie did much to preserve musical values

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[1] Sabaneev, L. p.882.

[2] Sabaneev, L. ibid.

[3] Lourie was on the selection committee of the State Publishing House which decided what was to be published. This may explain how Lourie was able to have his early sacred works published in a period which was characterised by militant atheism.

and defend left wing art. But in doing this, he alienated many musicians with his agressive leftist policies. He was resented and widely disliked because of his championing of modern music. At the Moscow Conservatory, Ippolitov-Ivanov resisted and ultimately resigned in protest to the reforms initiated by Lourie. The Musician's Union complained about MUZO and almost split because of the deep divisions that formed. A meeting on the 29th October, 1920 lead to the resolution - "Basic Policies in the Realm of the Arts" which, in an attempt to end factionalism, subordinated the arts to the State and Party. Perhaps this resolution hinted to Lourie that his new found freedom was destined to be short-lived; that art for art's sake was a thing of the past and artists could no longer shut their eyes to politics.[1] These events must have contributed to his sudden departure the next year.

The reasons for Lourie's sudden departure from Russia have never properly been explained. He left ostensibly on an official trip and never returned. Perhaps Lourie's involvement in the political scene allowed him to fully understand the dreadful situation of Russia after the Civil War and where events were leading. 1921 saw the clamp down within the Party. It experienced the first internal purges and factionalizing was made illegal. These events, combined with the the fact that it must have been obvious to Lourie that his religious beliefs and communism were irreconcilable, must have influenced his decision to leave. Religion had become the new pariah of the communist regime. The power of the Church had been neutralized and Lenin was venomous in his hatred of religion. He described it as "one of the most disgusting things on earth" and villified "that disgraceful word 'god'."[2]Attacks against the 'left' by Proletkult and traditionalists were on the increase. All visions of the coming Utopia were fading fast. It is probable that Lourie realized that his future was dubious.

Although Lourie's fame lies in his experimental work, his modernist leanings are only a part of his complex character. He stands out amongst other composers by his extreme eclecticism. He absorbed every influence to which he was exposed and it is therefore impossible to generalize about his compositional style. Lourie's mind

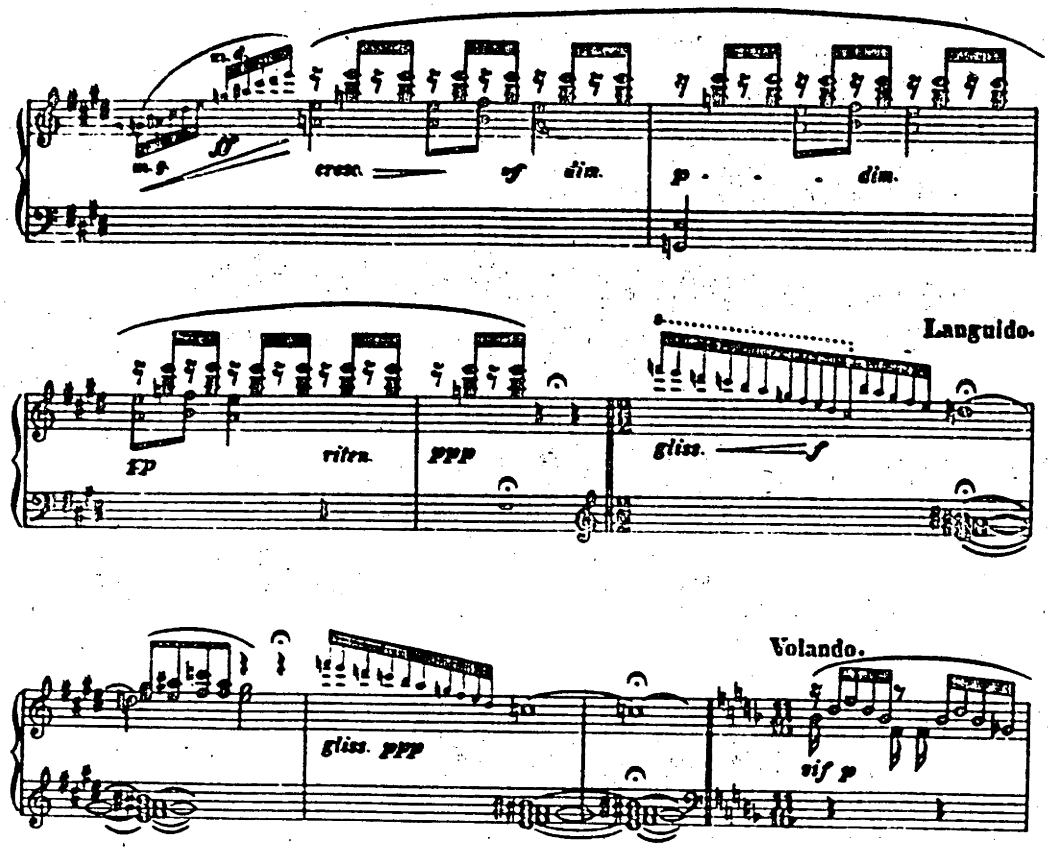
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1 Lourie,A. The Russian School'. *Musical Quarterly.* 18, October 1932: 519-529. p.524.

2 Bercken, W. *Ideology and Atheism in the Soviet Union.* Mouton de Gruyter: Berlin, 1989. p.61.

was extraordinarily agile, capable of absorbing the most diverse concepts. This ability lead to a type of eclecticism that in some ways affected his development as a composer; his talent for imitation impeded the evolution of an original and distinct language. As one critic detected not only futurist, but symbolist, Acmeist and classical devices in Khlebnikov, so too, can this be said of Lourie.[1] Gojowy says, "[h]e was, in many repects, a new Janus: he was a fusion of extremes."[2] His creative output between the years 1910 and 1915 offer examples of quarter tone, impressionist, neoclassic, atonal and modal music.[3] One has only to look at his *Deux Estampes Op.2* of 1910, a set of two pieces with the exotic titles: *Crepuscule d'un faune* and ...*"Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se repondent."* to find a blatant and inferior imitation of Debussy. The music, as well as the borrowed title, bears witness to this.

Musical Example 1.



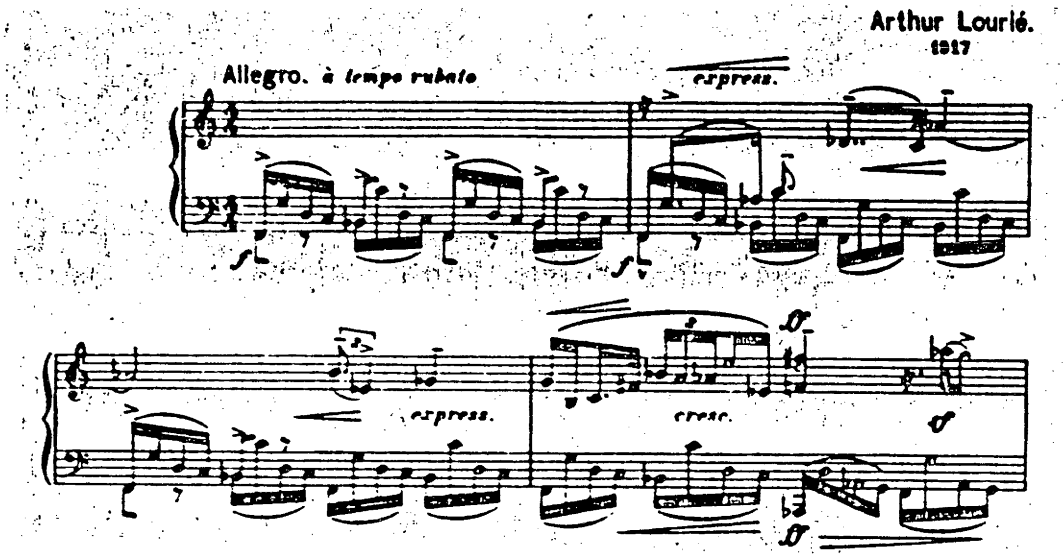
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[1] Markov,V. p.12.

[2] Gojowy, D. ibid.

[3] Sabeneev says this of Lourie's quarter tone experiments: "In 1910 Arthur Lourie, another Russian pioneer wrote in quarter tones but his music was extremely poor." ("To Conquer New Tonal Regions'. *Modern Music.* 4, May 1927: 15-19. p.17.)

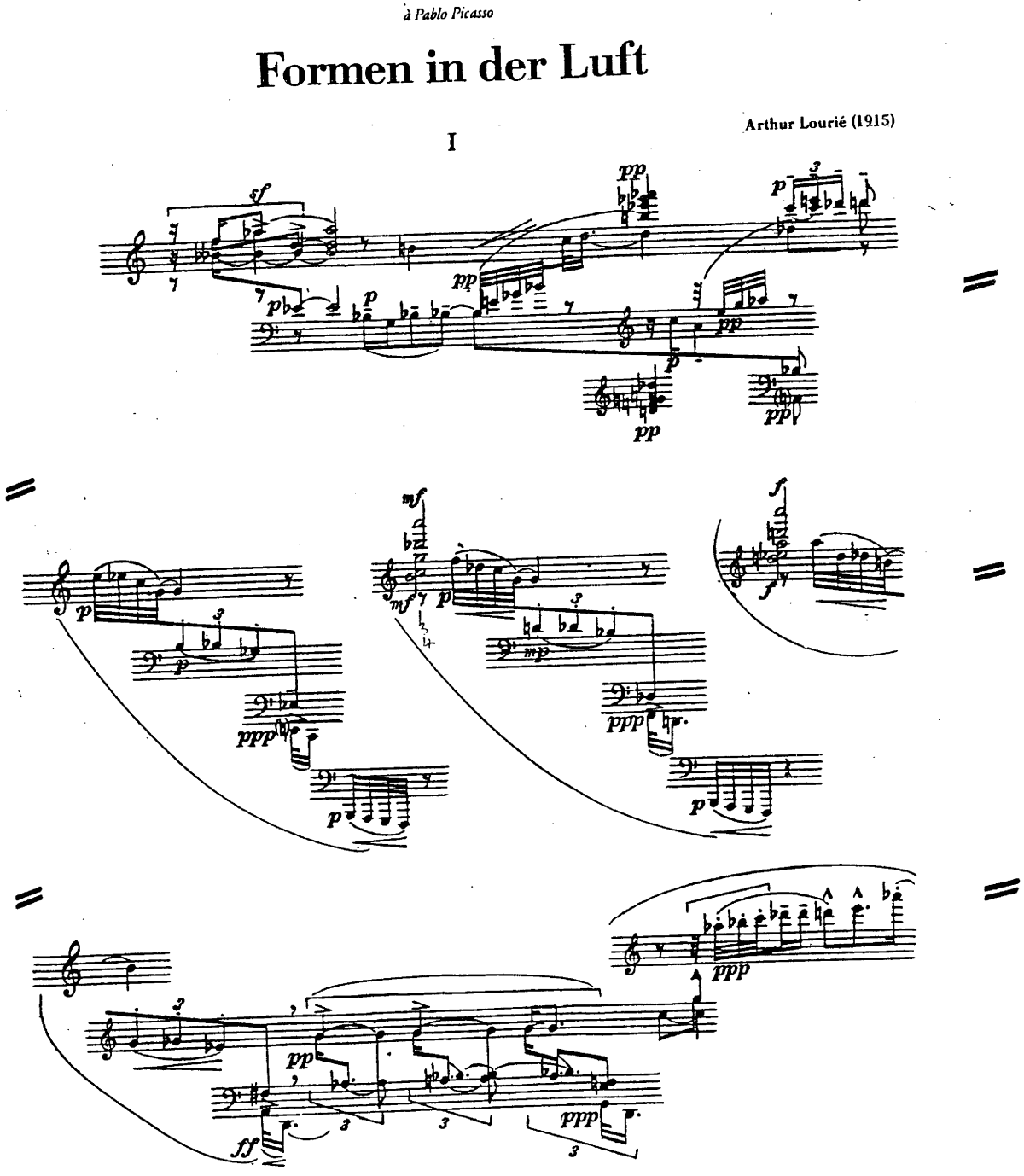
Machlitt speaks of a change in style around 1916/1917 to the 'new objectivity', although this statement is too simplistic, Lourie did write works of in a neoclassic style. An example of this is his *Troisieme Sonatine* written in 1917.
Musical Example 2.



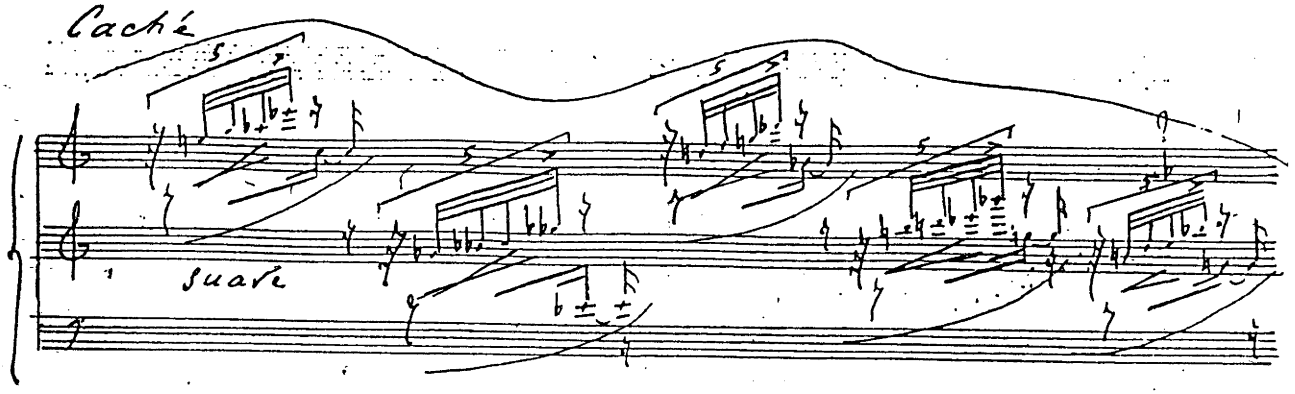
It is in Lourie's brief 'futurist' period that originality is found. Spurred on by the frenzy of experimentation around him, Lourie produced a series of works that are remarkable for their innovation and stand as precursors to styles that were not to re-emerge until the fifties and sixties. *Forms in the Air*, an extraordinary work for its time, shows the typographical infuence of e.e cummings and Mallarme in its layout. Written in 1913 and dedicated to Pablo Picasso, it preempts the graphic notation of David Earle, Karl Heinz Stockhausen and John Cage by half a century. While this notation does not change the sound of the piece it is a startling visual effect and also helps the performer to understand better the composer's intentions. (See Musical Example 3.)

Masques, a set of seven pieces anticipates the minimalism of Cage and Morton Feldman. Like *Forms in the Air*, this work is written without barlines, and demands considerable input from the performer. The unifying idea behind the piece is the direct repetition of phrases. Phrases are even shared between pieces so as to give a sense of cohesion and continuity to this otherwise abstract work. This motive, which appears as one among many in No.1. carries over to

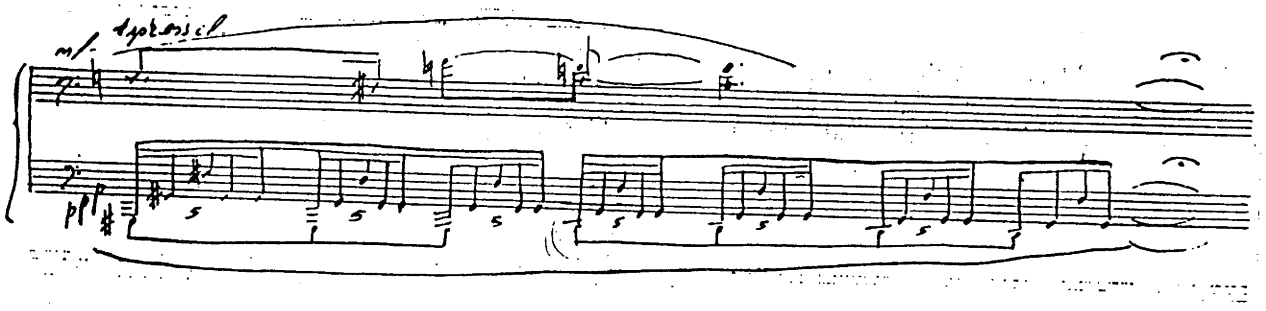
Musical Example 3.



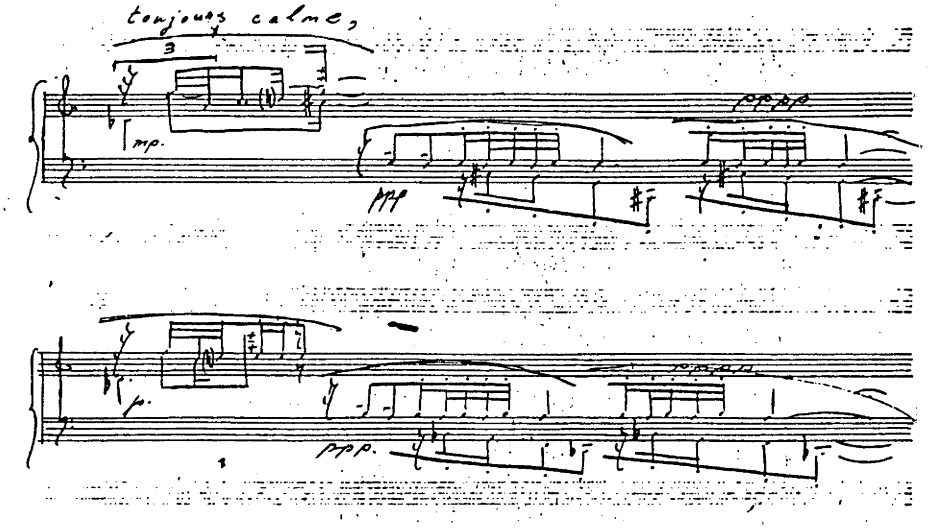
No.2, where it becomes the main feature of the piece.
Musical Example 4.



This mysterious phrase from No. 2 is repeated in its entirety twice in No.4 both as the introduction and coda and creates a highly effective echo effect. Musical Example 5.



A good example of the hypnotic, 'minimalist' atmosphere of this work can be found in No.6, where, after the beginning series of slow descending chords, which creates an atmosphere not unlike that of Debussy's *Cathedrale engloutie*, the entire work is then centred around the opposition of these two melodic ideas.
Musical Example 6.

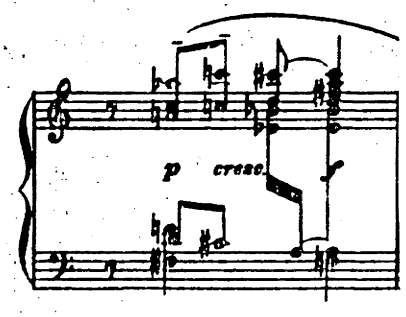


The phrase is repeated seven times, and each time is slightly different, in some instances only one note has been added. We can see clearly the minimalist ideal of drawing attention to the process of change.

Many writers, in particular Detlef Gojowy and Manfred Machlitt, have asserted that Lourie employs twelve-tone and dodecaphonic techniques in some of these early works. Even Camajani, who knew him personally, speaks of the serial elements in works such as *Ivresse*, the *Preludes fragile* and *Syntheses*. It is, however, difficult to find any real evidence of this in the music itself. Gojowy's writing on the twelve- tone writing of the Russian composers is misleading and has lead to a creation of a myth, that does not, in the case of Lourie, have its founding in the music. Gojowy admits, both: that composers consciously wrote in tone complexes that were not necessarily twelve- tone (such as Lourie) and that other composers fell into twelve-tone complexes almost by accident through extremely chromatic writing (such as Mosolov).He says "there are nonserial twelve-tone music and non twelve-tone rows"[1]. After having clarified this matter, he then continues to use the term 'twelve-tone' even though he is rarely speaking about actual twelve-tone music. Machlitt and others, who have used his writing as a source, have furthered this misconception.

Syntheses No.2 is cited as an example of twelve-tone technique, however,on analysis, this is not to be found.[2] The work does not contain a single instance of the whole twelve notes being used. Eight, nine, ten and eleven tone complexes make up the piece, but even these do not bear any resemblance to serial writing. Notes are constantly repeated and no recognizable sequence emerges. For example, the third bar contains eleven notes, but of these eleven, only three are not repeated.

Musical Example 7.



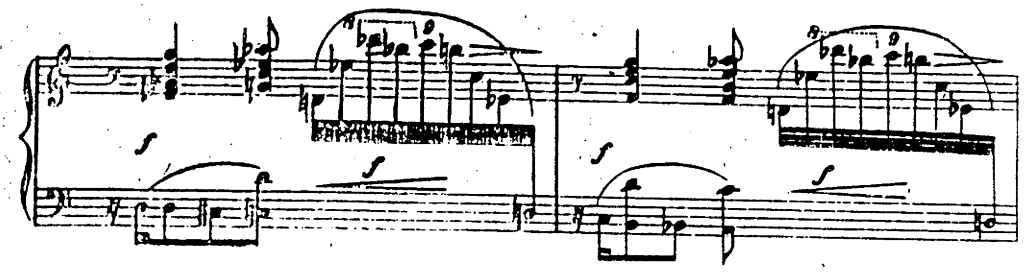
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[1] Gojowy, D. *Neue sowjetische Musik der 20er Jahre.* p.171.

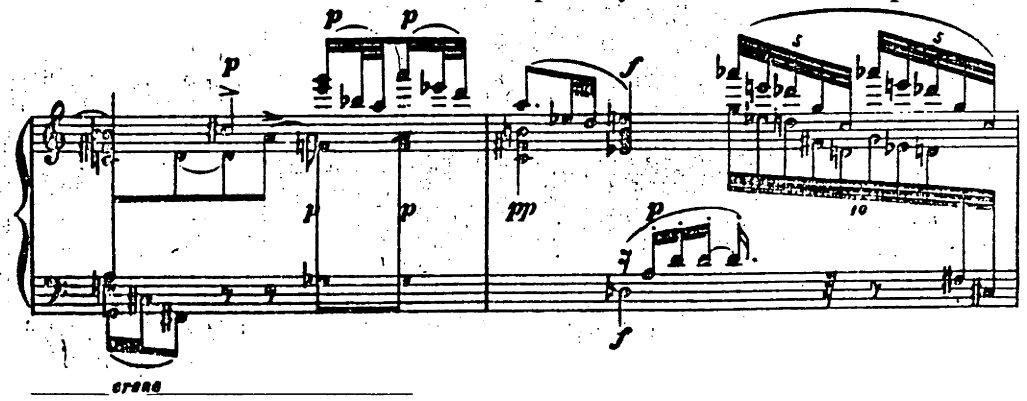
[2] Gojowy, D. p.174.

This work and the others of its kind do not succumb easily to systemised analysis. Neither Gojowy's serial nor P.D Roberts's quasi-Schenkarian approaches succeed.[1] The artistic conception appears to be a very free one and the methods of analysis should correspond to this.

These works share common characteristics: all are abstract, all defy accepted traditions and share similar formal and harmonic principles. They are atonal with the unresolved seventh chord and ninth chord as the harmonic basis.
Musical Example 8.



Although containing much dynamic contrast they are on the whole soft-edged, fluid and atmospheric and belie Gojowy's statement that Lourie's style is linear, dry (unklanglich) and constructive.[2] Particularly in *Syntheses*, the dynamic markings are meticulous; almost Webernian in their complexity. Musical Example 9.



[1] P.D. Roberts methods of analysis treats the music as if it were founded on a kind of mutated diatonicism. He uses methods derived from Schenkarian analysis. The conclusions drawn bear little relation to the music. Found in his *Aspects of Modernism in Rusian Piano Music: 1910-1929.* Ph.D. dissertation, CNAA, England.

[2] Gojowy, D. p.187.

Formally the works are held together by motivic repetition resulting at times in a loose ternary form. On examining these works it is difficult to establish whether Lourie used a definitive compositional system. It is hard to believe that these works are by the same man who was to write in 1941, that alternating majors and minors are the basis of musical language.[1] Lourie has this to say of this earlier 'fallen' period, "even at that time (1914-1916) I had realized that atonality leads to an emotional void due to objectivity and abstract thinking."[2]

Unlike Lourie, Mosolov developed a truly original style from the very outset. Already in the first piano sonata, the Mosolovian mannerisms are present and, by the fourth sonata, these have evolved into a taut and highly personal language. The music shows a complex personality at work. Mosolov does not sacrifice his temperament in order to be 'scientific' and 'logical'. Belaiev, in1925 writes of the individual emotionalism inherited from Scriabin, Feinberg and Miaskovsky. Exultation is mixed with a dark and tragic intensity. In Mosolov there is a blend of the Scriabin school and the new influences of urbanity, linearity and rhythmic drive which is found in the music of Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Les Six. Barsova says his music "is marked by drama, a nocturnal urban quality, parody... and a Moussorskian intensity."[3] At the time it was the latter influences that made a most marked impression upon some listeners. This is evident in Roslavets's words:

> The author is a representative of the extreme 'left' modernism. His first Sonata is a true Bible of modernity, in which are concentrated all the tricks in the spirit of Prokofiev, Stravinsky and the Western representatives of polytonal music.[4]

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[1] Lourie, A. 'Musings on Music'. p.236.

[2] Lourie, A. 'An Inquiry into Melody'. p.36.

[3] Barsova, I. 'Mosolov'.
The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. Macmillan Publishers Ltd.: London, 1980. Edited by Stanley Sadie. Volume 12: 611-612. p.612.

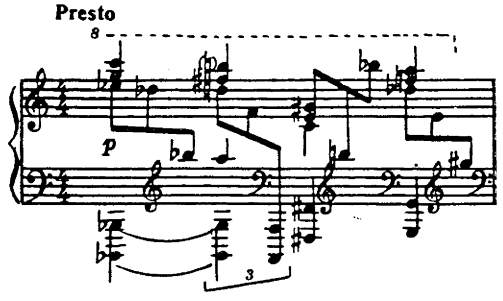
[4] Roslavets, N. 'Das Notenregal'.
Rabis. 4, 1927: 15.
Found in Rimsky's 'Alexander Mosolov. Biographischer Abriss'. p.646.

There is a sincere effort to find new expressive material It is not a pose nor does the work suffer from gratuitous complexity. I disagree with Belaiev's words:

> It seems to me that a certain intellectualizing and pedantry are present at the expense of originality.[1]

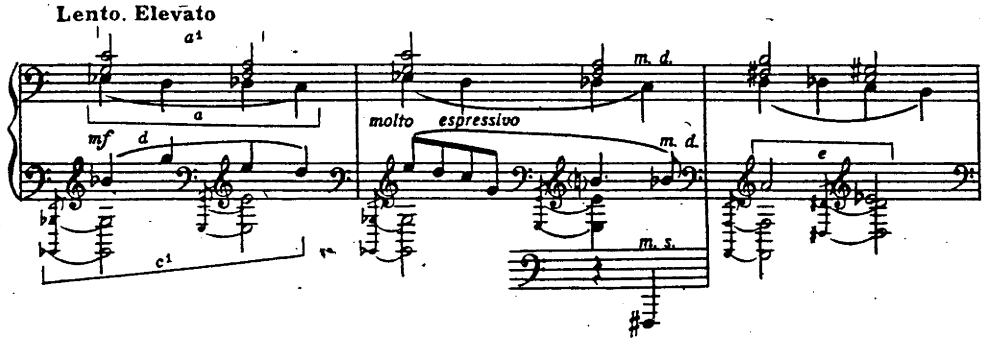
In Mosolov's piano works we find the emotional content of the late romantic piano sonata, but with a 'sharpened' musical language. As with Lourie, Mosolov derives his harmonic language from Scriabin. The minor seventh, ninth, tritone and augmented triads form the basis of his harmony. Chromatic saturation leads to the 'accidental' appearance of twelve-tone complexes as can be seen in the opening bar of the fourth sonata.

Musical Example10.



There is, however, no strict tonal system. The influence of Scriabin is found not only in the harmonic language or in the musical instructions such as *estatico*, *elevato*, *colerico* etc. but also in the interest in sonorities and the notion of foreground and background. He creates a foreground and background by the overlapping of thematic material with one line at a time being brought to the fore against a sonorous background.

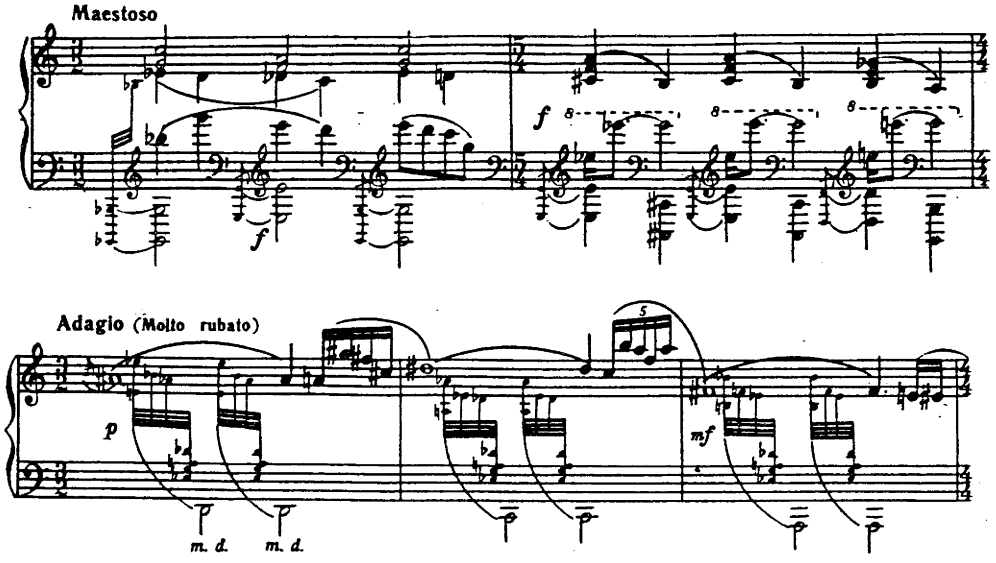
Musical Example 11.



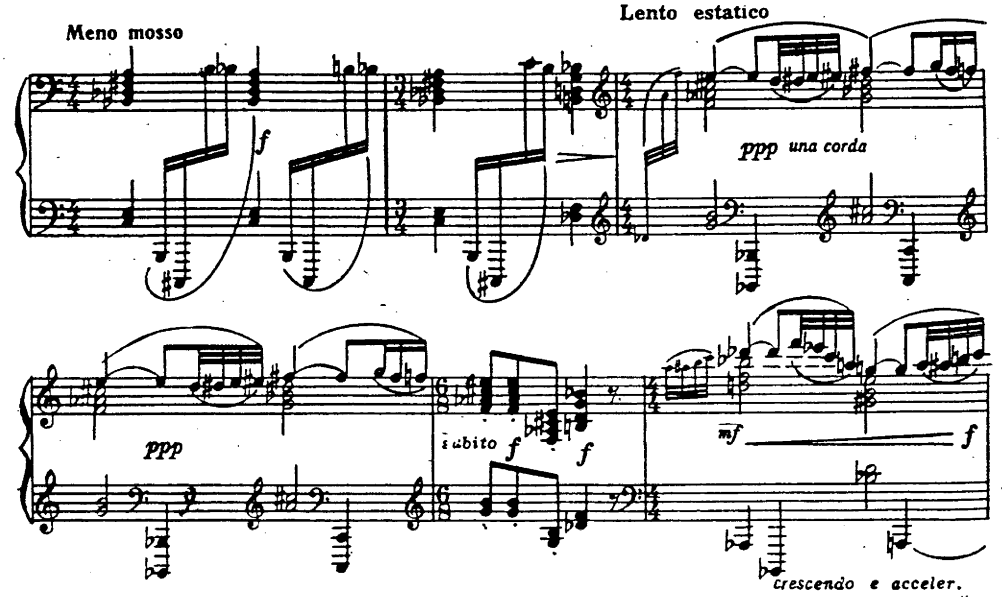
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[1] Belaiev, V. 'Russia's Newest Composers'. *Modern Music*. May-June 1926: 33-35. p.35

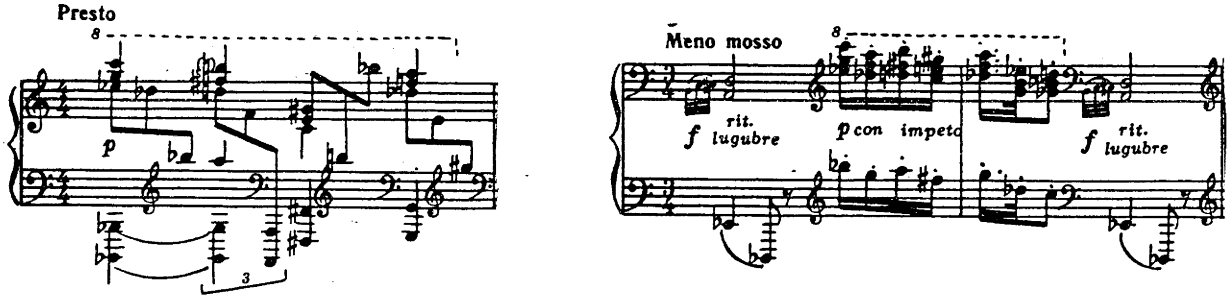
Like Scriabin, Mosolov was a brilliant pianist and we can tell much of Mosolov's pianism from his piano works. For example the many instances of hand crossing and the very characteristic flourishes which are found throughout his work.
Musical Examples 12 and 13.



The music is marked by sudden changes in tempi, dynamics and texture and the use of extreme registers. There is a sharp contrast between savage rhythmic eruptions and a curious nocturnal music reminiscent of Bartok's night music.
Musical Example 14.



Ostinato is a fundamental in this music. The compositions are compact and tightly organized. The form is a fragmented mosiac form. An open process or extended variation method is used, which again stems from Scriabin. In both the first and fourth sonatas much of the thematic material is derived from the opening bars. Both pieces are based on a handful of main motives which appear in many different and often unrecognizable guises. This semiquaver motive, which occurs halfway through the work, is virtually identical to the opening bar, although it sounds completely different. Musical Example 15.



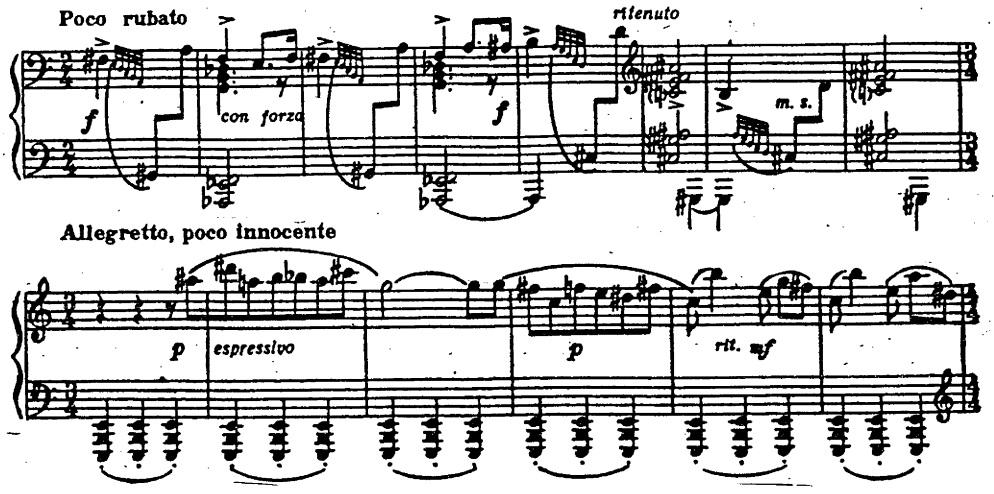
This provides a sense of unity to the otherwise fragmented style. Ivashkin sees it as a 'poster art treatment'. The themes are used as protagonists.[1] Because of the extreme fragmentation of the music it can be seen as anti-narrative; each fragment creates an aural shape and so can be seen as a musical equivalent to the paintings of Malevich and Tatlin. As Ivashkin says, "Semantically, they are the same as Malevich's and Kandinsky's geometrical figures." [2] In Mosolov there is the fusion of the old and the new; the simple and the complex: the trite and the serious. This can be seen, not only when works such as the piano sonatas are set against the song cycles, *Newspaper Announcements* and *Three Children's Scenes*, but also within individual works. The explosive opening of the first sonata increases in dramatic intensity until the point of climax ,when, out of nowhere, a little 'folk' melody appears, of such simplicity and innocence, that it virtually thumbs its nose at the turbulent upheaval that went before.

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[1] Ivashkin, A. Letter from Moscow
Post October Soviet Art: Canon and Symbol'.
Musical Quarterly. 74, 1989: 303-317. pp.311-312.

[2] Ivashkin, A. p.311.

Musical Example 16.



Mosolov uses this effect of juxtaposition to brilliant effect in the *Newspaper Announcements*. The fact that the texts were taken directly from the newspaper adds to the humour. The piano parts are used to parody the words. In the case of Stefan Naumovich (No.3) who wants to change his name, the droning dissonant piano accompaniment paints a depressed and morose character. The repeated flash in the treble adds a mocking note and Naumovich becomes a figure of ridicule.

Musical Example 17.



The insertion of this simple diatonic melody amongst the prevailing dissonance adds to the tragi-comic atmosphere.

Musical Example 18.



The solemn, funereal writing in No. 4 becomes grandiose and self important on realizing that it is only a rat catcher advertising his prowess for killing
rodents; he has twenty five years experience.
Musical Example 19.



The portraits in the *Newspaper Annoucements* are similar to those in Meyerhold's plays. He presents disconnected and brief portraits of lower middle class NEP figures and by running them together creates a type of mosaic. Mosolov with the use of attacca creates the same kaleidoscope effect.

The change in style that Barsova sees in 1926, is probably based on the ironic, biting style of the *Newspaper Announcements* .[1] It should be remembered, however, that the *Two Nocturnes* were also written in this year and they are very much in that sonorous, nocturnal style found in the earlier sonatas.

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[1] Barsova, I. 'Das Fruehwerk von Aleksandr Mosolov '. p. 124.

Musical Example 20.



It is too simple to describe him merely as the anti-emotional "Constructivist', the rugged 'barbarist' or the objective linear composer. While the music is not overtly romantic or sentimental, it is highly charged and emotional. In Mosolov there is a synthesis of many different approaches. These 'different approaches' are all transformed, under the power of a strong and original personality, into a distinct and characteristic style.

The influence of Scriabin on the music of these composers is unmistakeable. The harmonic language comes directly from Scriabin as does the formal idea of open thematic variation. Both men share his love of sonorities. By absorbing different aspects of Scriabin's music these two composers have reinforced the characteristic qualities of their music. They have assumed qualities of Scriabin's music which are in keeping with their own temperaments. Lourie has inherited the soft-edged, mystical side; the sensuality and langour which is so much a part of Scriabin. The fluid, metereless rhythm of Scriabin's *Sonata No.10* is found *Masques* and *Formen in der Luft.* Mosolov exhibits the more tempestuous ecstaticism. He has concerned himself more with ideas of the foreground and background; the overlaying of thematic material. It is possible to see the two sides of Scriabin separated in the music of these two individuals.

Mosolov was reinstated in the Composers Union soon after his expulsion. But like so many other victims of Stalinism he was never allowed to recover his former creative brilliance. The later works, which appeared only after a long interruption, have undergone a radical stylistic change, reverting to simple forms and an 'accessible' diatonicism. Or, as Rimsky says, in the true style of the Soviet musicologist, the music which had been "somewhat artificial and contrived, ha[s] become significantly simpler and more expressive."[1] Mosolov turned to large-scale genres and produced politically 'correct' works such as *Glory to October* (1947) and *Cantata to Lenin* (1948). After his death Mosolov was hailed only for his later investigations into folk music, his work during the twenties was ignored. In one instance his biography does not begin until 1948, completely circumventing the earlier 'dangerous' period.[2] According to most sources, after the 'thirties', Mosolov turned to the folkmusic of the USSR and much of his late music is based on this 'new found' interest. In the forties and fifties he travelled extensively in Khirgiz, Kuban and Stavropol collecting folk music. Although this type of work was a common way for composers to earn a living, the interest, Mosolov showed in the music of the Krasnodar Cossacks and other ethnic groups, is nontheless genuine. He spent the last years of his life working with the the Northern Folk Choir. He died in 1972, unknown and forgotten.

The documentation of Mosolov's later life, particularly of the crucial decade of the thirties, is littered with unexplained holes. The shroud of uncertainty and mystery which surround Mosolov's later life has been partially lifted with the publication of a very important paper compiled by Inna Barsova: *Iz neopublikovannikh arkhivov Mosolova* - From the Unpublished Archive of Mosolov.[3] Due to the liberating influence of *Glasnost*, Inna Barsova, in 1989, was able to gain entry to the Mosolov Archive and publish hitherto supressed information. What Barsova uncovers is a tragic tale of harrassment and persecution. That Mosolov had become disillusioned with the turn of events becomes immediately obvious with his involvement in a film, that intended to paint the picture of the dreadful conditions in the labour camps. Not surprisingly the film was never screened. With

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[1] Rimsky, L. 'Alexander Mosolov. Biographischer Abriss'. *Kunst und Literatur.* 35 (5), 1987: 641-657, p.653.

[2] N. Brodyanskaya's biography of Mosolov found in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart.* (Baerenreiter: Kassel, 1961. p.635l.) does not begin until 1948.

[3] Barsova, I. 'Iz neopublikovannikh arkhivov Mosolova'. *Sovyetskaya Muzyka.* 8, August 1989: 69-75.

hindsight we can wonder at the foolhardiness of Mosolov to be involved in such an enterprise in the year, 1936.

Amongst this compilation of documents there is one that stands out in importance. This is a letter written by Mosolov's teachers, Gliere and Miaskovsky to the respected Bolshevik, Mikhail Kalinin in March, 1938.

> Deeply respected Mikhail Ivanovich,
> The fate, which is befalling the composer MOSOLOV Aleksandr Vasilevich, who has been sentenced by the organs of the NKVD (the precursor to the KGB) under Article 58... to eight years in a concentration camp (... in the Volgalag region), has been passed on to us by his mother, - it cannot but worry us - his teachers.
>
> Mosolov became known to us in 1921, when he enrolled in the Moscow Conservatory, where he immediately discovered his extraordinary creative talents and already in his last year was showing himself to be a mature and unique master, possessing all kinds of compositional skills. After leaving the Conservatory he produced a large number of works in different genres, and if in the beginning his work was directed mainly towards the instrumental side of music, he has lately turned his attention to music and songs, he has produced around 100 Khirgizian songs (some of which have been published) and also many on Turkmenian themes and so on. Many of Mosolov's works are known in the USSR and abroad. For instance, his symphonic poem, *Zavod* has been performed with great success in England, France and Spain (mainly in workers' auditoriums). Mosolov did not resist the harmful influences of Western music in his early creative life, but recently, particularly in his last works, he has completely shifted to the position of realistic art, imbued with the spirit of the 'people', his latest works speak of this: *Cantata to Stalin*, based on Turkmenian themes, the *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*, *Turkmenian Suite* and others. It is impossible to go past the everyday side of Mosolov's life. Because of the scandal of his appearing in public in a drunken state he was expelled from the Composers Union in January, 1936. This event played an important role in Mosolov's life.
>
> We maintain, with full responsibility, that profound changes have taken place within Mosolov and that his behaviour is now different. His work in Turkmenia, between August,1936 and February, 1937... and his work in Moscow in the Stalin Institute of Physical Culture indicate that Mosolov is struggling with all of his strength against social weakness. Knowing Mosolov's creative side well and never having observed, from the school bench until recent times, any anti-Soviet attitudes, - we are asking YOU, Mikhail Ivanovich to review this matter, for it may be possible that there is a wrong accusation or judicial error. The creative possibilities of Mosolov are great (he has an enormous gift) and, if the possibility arises to return Mosolov to his creative activities, we believe, that, after having undergone such severe trials, he will now be able to devote all his creative gifts to the service of our great motherland.
>
> People's Artist, RSFSR, AzSSR, and UzSSR

medal bearer	R. Gliere
Honoured Art Worker, Professor Moscow State Con.	N. Miaskovsky[1]

The demeaning and humiliating position that these important composers were forced to assume in the writing of this letter bears witness to the dreadful and destructive forces that were wreaking destruction on Soviet society. This desperate plea did, however, ultimately bear fruit. Mosolov was released on the 25th of August 1938, after having served only eight months of his eight year term. Gliere and Miaskovsky saved his life. This event and the earlier trouble with the Composer's Union irrevocably changed Mosolov's future. They informed the main decisions he was to take from then on. His work in Turkmenia in 1936/1937 was almost certainly a direct result of his trouble with the Composer's Union. There was only six months between his return to Moscow in February, 1937 and his arrest in October of the same year. This could explain why he never again lived in a major centre but, instead, limited himself to the 'safer' republics and their equally 'safe' folk music.[2] Despite his efforts to become the 'model' Soviet composer, Mosolov was still, in 1948, coming under attack by the head stooge of the Composer's Union, Tikhon Khrennikov. The publication of Barsova's article demonstrates that, particularly with post 1920 Soviet history, nothing should be accepted at face value. Alternative and hidden explanations are often the rule rather than the exception.

Lourie's later life, although not as dramatic as Mosolov's, is, nontheless, not a happy one. The step from being a powerful force in Russia's artistic world to the relative obscurity of Paris must have been a terrible jolt for Lourie. The first city he lived in after his emigration was Berlin in 1921. Here he met Busoni and Busoni's student of the time, Edgar Varese. (As we can see he continued the pattern of befriending some of the most reknowned personalities of the time.) They found a mutual interest in new harmonies. It was probably Lourie's fleeting interest in new tonal systems , such as quarter tone music, that prompted this dialogue. From 1923 until 1924 he lived in Wiesbaden. His activities during this year are

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[1] Barsova, I. pp.70-71. (Translated by the author.)

[2] It was a condition of his release that for the next five years he was not to live in Moscow, Leningrad or Kiev. Even after this period the danger would still have been great. Arrests and disappearances continued in great numbers up to Stalin's death in 1953.

unknown. In 1924 he attempted to move to Paris but was first driven away by French authorities as a Bolshevik commissioner. He was finally allowed to enter. On arriving in Paris he joined the entourage around Stravinsky, however this brief friendship ended nastily. He also met with the circle of unusual Catholic writers and thinkers such as Georges Bernanes, Mme Leon Bloy and her daughter and Jacques and Raissa Maritain. His relationship with the Maritains seems to have been of great importance. Maritain sings his praises in his *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* :

> There is magic in Schubert, in Chopin, in Moussorsky. Magic is not always white. The magic of Lourie rises from a sort of catastrophe of being whose tragic or deperate character remains so to speak in suspense, because of the face of God, which passes through the walls. His music, when it prays, crosses the threshold of supernatural inwardness... The magic of the chief of princes is an angelic magic.[1]

Although Lourie spent the next seventeen years in Paris, he does not seem to have made a lasting impression as a composer. By becoming an instant 'minion' and imitator of Stravinsky on his arrival and his obsession with sacred music (an interest not in keeping with the times) Lourie did draw any attention to himself. Whether or not this would have changed became will remain unknown for the outbreak of the Second World War and the Nazi occupation of Paris forced Lourie, with his Jewish background, to flee the country. In his position of Music Commissar, Lourie had enabled Koussevitsky to leave Russia. In 1941 Koussevitsky returned the favour and helped Lourie to emigrate to America.

Lourie never wanted to be considered an emigre or White Russian. Until the end he held fast to his Russian heritage. It is likely that he felt a keen sense of dislocation and isolation, particularly after his move to America. This feeling of having been abandoned must have intensified as even earlier supporters of his music, such as Koussevitsky, Ansermet and Stokowski, ceased to show any interest. A conversation between Camajani and Madame Lourie reveals the depth of Lourie's insecurity:

> That memorable evening we played through a great deal of Lourie's music. When I went into the kitchen to get a glass of water, I saw that Madame Lourie was standing just inside the kitchen, her hands clasped in front of her with a worried expression on her face, an almost anguished look. she said, "What do you think of the music?" And I said, "Why, it's simply magnificent; it's overwhelming." She

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[1] Maritain, J. *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry.* Pantheon Books Inc.: New York, 1953. p.402.

> seized my hand and said, "Then tell him that, will you?" And I said' "It seems almost ridiculous. He knows what he's writing. It seems ridiculous for me to banalize it with that kind of compliment." She said, "No, no, no tell him, give him some reassurance....[1]

Lourie, who had always been at the forefront of the musical avant-garde came to change and stiffen in response to the developments around him. His perceived 'spiritual bankruptcy' and nihilism of the next generation caused him to dig in his heels. He turned more and more to writing as a medium through which to vent his increasingly doctrinaire views on art. He abhorred the cerebral approach of the younger composers. In his view, their deviation from creative expression and free inspiriation had caused the alienation of the public. As his surroundings became unacceptable he withdrew into himself, turning his back on the musical world. He became a proud and defiant recluse. In 1945, Lourie and Varese were the only musicians at Bartok's funeral. Lourie was experiencing Bartok's feelings of estrangement and alienation and was also to share his lonely fate. This man, the Petersburg eccentric, the Bolshevik commissioner, the aesthete in Paris; this man, who had lived through the most momentous events in twentieth century history and had known some of the major personalities, died in Princeton in 1966, unrecognized and alone.

The tragic fates of these two men clearly shows the hopeless situation in which these Russian artists found themselves. To stay in Russia meant either, the surrendering of artistic integrity, or incarceration and possible death, whereas emigration, although it removed the personal danger, confronted them with the possibility of obscurity and a sense of alienation from which the majority never recovered. Lourie and Mosolov are considered two of the most extreme avant-garde composers, but two more disparate characters would be hard to find and it is by their very differences that they epitomize the unique artistic worlds from which they come: the strange eccentric world of St. Petersburg set against the twilight of the decaying Tsarist Empire and the brave new world of Communism centred in the new capital, Moscow.

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[1] Camajani, 'The Music of Lourie'. p.34.

CONCLUSION

The demise of Symbolism in 1910 marks the point of divergence of the paths of music, art and literature. Composers of 'pure' music found themselves unable to follow their colleagues along the road to Futurism and Constructivism. Because these movements were so entrenched in ideology composers found themselves musically unable to meet their doctrinaire demands. The path which avante-garde music followed after 1917 was very much its own. It stood out against its artisic and literary counterparts, not just the Futurist and Constructivists, but also many of the 'fellow travellers', by its conventionalism and close ties with tradition. The writings of Sabaneev and Belaiev bear no resemblance whatsoever to the writings of Mayakovsky and Gan, nor does the music reflect the sentiment expressed in the writing and art.

The pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary years were to an extent guided by a different aesthetic and were subject to different influences and demands. In the 1920s the age-old question of 'art for art's sake' versus utilitarian art transformed into the struggle between art which was revolutionary in substance and art which was revolutionary in intent. The musical avant-garde stood out by its adherence to the idea of 'art for art's sake'. The 'late romantics', who dominated the musical scene for much of this decade, championed this idea at a time when its popularity was waning. The theory that this group of composers can be seen as a Scriabin school is perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn from this thesis. That the influence of Scriabin permeates even the music of the most 'extreme' leftists, Alexander Mosolov, proves the far-reaching influence of Scriabin on the music of the 1920s. The unique situation of Russia between the years 1900 and 1917 and the peculiarities of the Russian character created a brand of music that is unique in the history of Western music. This music, by its inability to express ideology, was swept aside by the evil winds of Stalinism. The nationalism of the 1860's had, by 1929, mutated into the chauvinism found in the proletarian movements and it was the chauvanist proletarian movements that were to rise to ascendancy. Abramsky's assertion in his article, 'Moskauer Komponisten' that music, was guided along different directions after 1917 is correct but not necessarily in the way that he meant.

As Larry Sitsky observes, this period is interesting enough without having to attribute to it achievements which have no musical founding. The music can stand on its own. It does need the claims of twelve-tone and serial writing. Terms such as Futurist or Constructivist, in regards to Lourie and Mosolov, are also misleading and only show the historian's desire to jump on the bandwagon. That these labels do not describe even these most extreme of the avant-garde composers further supports the claim that the composers were intrinsically more conservative than the other artists.Western European influence and the music of earlier Russian composers, Stravinsky and Prokofiev is, if anything, greater than the influence of the Russian Futurists and Constructivists. The influence of the West remained an constant factor in both the pre- and post revolutionary musical generations.

This thesis has demonstrated that there is still an enormous amount of resesarch still to be done in this area. It is time to undo the terrible wrongs that this history has suffered and recreate a more honest picture of what might have occurred. It is time to see what the alternatives may have been.

Appendix i

'Slap in the Face of Public Taste' is the first and most famous manifesto of the Cubo-Futurists.

(Taken from Anna Lawton's *Russian Futurism through Its Manifestoes, 1912-1928.* Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 1988. p.51.)

To the readers of our New First Unexpected.

We alone are the *face* of *our* Time. Through us the horn of time blows in the art of the word.

The past is too tight. The Academy and Pushkin are less intelligible than hieroglyphics.

Throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc., etc. overboard from the Ship of Modernity.

He who does not forget his *first* love will not recognize his last.

Who, trustingly, would turn his last love toward Balmont's perfumed lechery? Is this the reflection of today's virile soul?

Who, faintheartedly, would fear tearing from warrior Bryusov's black tuxedo the paper armorplate? Or does the dawn of unknown beauties shine from it?[1]

Wash Your hands which have touched the filthy slime of the books written by those countless Leonid Andreyevs.[2]

All those Maxim Gorkys, Kuprins, Bloks, Sologubs, Remizovs, Averchenkos, Chornys, Kuzmins, Bunins, etc.[3] need only a dacha on the river. Such is the reward fate gives tailors.

From the heights of skyscrapers we gaze at their insignificance! . . .

We *order* that the poets' *rights* be revered:

1. To enlarge the *scope* of the poet's vocabulary with arbitrary and derivative words (Word-novelty).
2. To feel an insurmountable hatred for the language existing before their time.
3. To push with horror off their proud brow the Wreath of cheap fame that You have made from bathhouse switches.
4. To stand on the rock of the word "we" amidst the sea of boos and outrage.

And if *for the time being* the filthy stigmas of Your "Common sense" and "good taste" are still present in our lines, these same lines *for the first time* already glimmer with the Summer Lightening of the New Coming Beauty of the Self-sufficient (self-centered) Word.

D. BURLIUK, ALEXANDER KRUCHENYKH,[4] V. MAYAKOVSKY,
VICTOR KHLEBNIKOV

Appendix ii

Nikolai Ryabushinsky's Preface to the Symbolist journal, the Golden Fleece stands in stark contrast to the Futurist manifesato 'Slap in the Face of Public Taste'.
(Taken from John E. Bowlt's *The Documents of Twentieth Century Art. Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism_1902- 1934.* The Viking Press Inc.: New York, 1976. p.8)

We embark on our path at a formidable time.

Around us, like a raging whirlpool, seethes the rebirth of life. In the thunder of the fight, amid the urgent questions raised by our time, amid the bloody answers provided by our Russian reality, the Eternal, for many, fades and passes away.

We are in sympathy with all who work for the rebirth of life, we renounce no task of our contemporaneity, but we believe that life without Beauty is impossible, that together with our institutions we must attain a free and brilliant art for our descendants, one that is illumined by the sun and induced by tireless search; we believe that we must preserve for them the Eternal values forged by many generations. And in the name of this new life to come we, the seekers of the Golden Fleece, unfurl our banner:

Art is eternal for it is founded on the intransient, on that which cannot be rejected.

Art is whole for its single source is the soul.

Art is symbolic for it bears within it the symbol, the reflection of the Eternal in the temporal.

Art is free for it is created by the free impulse of creation.

Appendix iii

'Illiteracy and Socialist Construction' by Klara Zetkin. An account of a conversation betwen her and Lenin in 1920.
(Taken from Tamara Deutscher's *Not By Politics Alone.....The Other Lenin.* George Allen and Unwin Ltd.: London, 1973. p.168.

It was in 1907... that Rosa Luxemburg, who possessed an artist's eye for the characteristic, pointed Lenin out to me with the remark: 'Take a good look at him. That is Lenin. Look at the self-willed, stubborn head. A real Russian peasant's head with a few faintly Asiatic lines. That man will try to overturn mountains. Perhaps he will be crushed by them. But he will never yield.'

It was in the early autumn of 1920 that I first saw Lenin again after the outbreak of the Russian revolution....

I found Lenin's wife and sister at supper, which I was immediately and heartily asked to share. It was a simple meal, as the hard times demanded: tea, black bread, butter, cheese. Later the sister tried to find something 'sweet' for the 'guest of honour' and discovered a small jar of preserves. It was well known that the peasants provided 'their Ilyich' with gifts of white flour, bacon, eggs, fruit, etc.; but it was also well known that nothing remained in Lenin's household. Everything found its way to the hospitals and children's homes; Lenin's family held strictly to the principle of not living better than the others, that is, than the working masses....

Lenin found us three women discussing art and questions of education and instruction. I expressed my enthusiastic admiration for the titanic cultural work of the Bolsheviks, for the energy and activity of creative forces, which were opening up new channels for art and education. But I did not conceal my impression that there was a great deal that was uncertain, unclear, hesitating and experimental and together with the passionate desire for a new content, new forms, new ways of cultural life there were many artificial, cultural fashions after the Western model. Lenin immediately entered with great liveliness into the discussion:

'The awakening, the activity of forces which will create a new art and culture in Soviet Russia', he said, 'is good, very good.

The stormy rate of this development is understandable and useful. We must and shall make up for what has been neglected for centuries. The chaotic ferment, the feverish search for new solutions and new watchwords, the "Hosannah" for certain artistic and spiritual tendencies today, the "crucify them" tomorrow! – all that is unavoidable.

'The revolution is liberating all the forces which have been held back, and is driving them up from the depths to the surface. Let us take an example. Think of the pressure exercised on the development of our painting, sculpture and architecture by the fashions and moods of the tsarist court, as well as by the taste, the fancies of the aristocrats and the bourgeoisie. In a society based on private property the artist produces goods for the market – he needs buyers. Our revolution has lifted the pressure of this most prosaic state of affairs from the artists. It has made the Soviet State their protector and patron. Every artist, and everybody who wishes to, can claim the right to create freely according to his ideal, whether it turns out to be good or not. And so you have the ferment, the experiment, the chaos.

'But of course we are communists. We must not put our hands in our pockets and let chaos ferment as it pleases. We must consciously try to guide this development, to form and determine its results. . . .

'Why turn away from real beauty, and discard it for good and all . . . just because it is "old"? Why worship the new as the god to be obeyed, just because it is "the new"? That is nonsense, sheer nonsense. There is a great deal of conventional art hypocrisy in it too, and respect for the art fashions of the West. Of course, unconscious! We are good revolutionaries, but we feel obliged to point out that we stand at the "height of contemporary culture". I have the courage to show myself a "barbarian". I cannot value the works of expressionism, futurism, cubism, and other isms as the highest expressions of artistic genius. I don't understand them. They give me no pleasure. . . .'

. . . Lenin laughed heartily. 'Yes, dear Klara, we two are old. We must be satisfied with remaining young for a little longer in the revolution. We don't understand the new art any more, we just limp behind it.'

'But,' Lenin continued, 'our opinion on art is not important. Nor is it important what art gives to a few hundreds or even thousands out of a population as great as ours. Art belongs to the people. It must have its deepest roots in the broad mass of workers. It must be understood and loved by them. It must be rooted in and grow with their feelings, thoughts and desires. It must arouse and develop the artist in them. Are we to give cake and sugar to a minority when the mass of workers and peasants still lack black bread? . . .'

'So that art may come to the people, and the people to art, we must first of all raise the general level of education and culture. And how is our country in that respect? You are amazed at the tremendous cultural work we have accomplished since the seizure of power. Without being boastful we can say that we have done much in this respect, very much. We have not only cut off heads, as the Mensheviks and their Kautskys in all countries accuse us of doing; we have also enlightened heads. Many heads. . . . We are confronted with the gigantic needs of the workers and peasants for education and culture, needs awakened and stimulated by us. . . . And we are a poor nation, a mendicant nation, whether we like it or not, the majority of the old people remain culturally the victims, the disinherited. . . .'

'While in Moscow today ten thousand – and perhaps tomorrow another ten thousand – are charmed by brilliant theatrical performances, millions are crying out to learn the art of spelling, of writing their names, are crying out for culture, are anxious to learn, for they are beginning to understand that the universe is ruled by natural laws, and not by the "Heavenly Father" and his witches and wizards.'

'Don't complain so bitterly of the illiteracy, Comrade Lenin', I interjected. 'To a certain extent it really helped forward the revolution. It prevented the mind of the workers and peasants from being stopped up and corrupted with bourgeois ideas and conceptions. Your propaganda and agitation is falling on virgin soil. It is easier to sow and to reap where you have not first of all had to uproot a whole forest.'

'Yes, that is true,' Lenin replied, 'but only within certain limits, or, more correctly, for a certain period of our struggle. . . .

Illiteracy is incompatible with the tasks of construction. As Marx said, it must be the task of the worker himself, and, I will add, of the peasant, to set himself free. Our Soviet society makes that possible. . . .'

'We are doing our very utmost to draw in new men and women into Soviet work and in this way to instruct them practically and theoretically. The need for administrative and constructive forces cannot be disguised. We are compelled to employ bureaucrats of the old style, and we are getting a future bureaucracy. I hate it heartily. Not the individual bureaucrat – he may be a capable rascal. But I hate the system. It paralyses and corrupts from above and below. And the most important weapon in overcoming and uprooting bureaucracy is the widest possible popular education and instruction. . . .'

'Do not let us forget that our workers and peasants are no Roman mob. They are not maintained by the State, they maintain the State by their work. . . . Our workers and peasants truly deserve more than circuses. They have the right to true, great art. So, before everything else, wide popular education and instruction. They are the cultural soil – assuming the bread is assured – on which a truly new, great art will grow up, a communist art, arranging its forms in accordance with its content.'[13]

Appendix iv

Lenin's and the Futurists.
(Taken from Tamara Deutscher's *Not By Politics Alone.....The Other Lenin.* George Allen and Unwin Ltd.: London, 1973.

AGAINST MAYAKOVSKY: LETTERS TO A. V. LUNACHARSKY AND COMRADE POKROVSKY

6 May 1921

Aren't you ashamed to vote for printing 5,000 copies of Mayakovsky's '150,000,000'?

It is nonsense, stupidity, double-dyed stupidity and affectation.

I believe such things should be published one time out of ten, and *not more than 1,500 copies*, for libraries and cranks.

As for Lunacharsky, he should be flogged for his futurism.

Lenin

6 May 1921

Comrade Pokrovsky,

Again and again I am asking you to help in the struggle against futurism, etc.

1. Lunacharsky made the Collegium (oho!) pass the publication of Mayakovsky's '150,000,000'.

Cannot this be stopped? It should be stopped. Let's agree to publish these futurists twice a year and *in not more than 1,500 copies.*

2. Kiselis, who is said to be a 'realist' artist, was again squeezed out by Lunacharsky who promoted the futurist directly and *indirectly.*

Can't any reliable *anti*-futurist be found?

Lenin

Appendix v

Excerpts from Lunacharsky's essay, 'Revolution and Art'.

(Taken from John E. Bowlt's *The Documents of Twentieth Century Art. Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism_1902- 1934.* pp.190-193.)

I.

For a revolutionary state, such as the Soviet Union, the whole question of art is this: can revolution give anything to art, and can art give anything to revolution? It goes without saying that the state does not intend to impose revolutionary ideas and tastes on artists. From a coercive imposition of this kind only counterfeit revolutionary art can emerge, because the prime quality of true art is the artist's sincerity.

But there are other ways besides those of coercion: persuasion, encouragement, and appropriate education of new artists. All these measures should be used for working, as it were, toward the revolutionary inspiration of art.

Complete absence of content has been very characteristic of bourgeois art of recent times. If we still did have some sort of art then, it was, so to say, the last progency of the old art. Pure formalism was exuberant everywhere: in music, painting, sculpture, and literature. Of course, style suffered as a result. In fact, the last epoch of the bourgeoisie was unable to advance any style at all—including a life style or a style of architecture—and advanced merely a whimsical and absurd electicism. Formal searches degenerated into eccentricities and tricks or into a peculiar, rather elementary pedantry tinged with various, puzzling sophistications, because true perfection of form is determined, obviously, not by pure formal search, but by the presence of an appropriate form common to the whole age, to all the masses, by a characteristic sensation, and by ideas.

Bourgeois society of the last decades has seen no such sensations and ideas worthy of artistic expression.

The Revolution is bringing ideas of remarkable breadth and depth. Everywhere it kindles feelings—tense, heroic, and complex.

Of course, the old artists have not the slightest understanding of this content and stand quite helplessly before it. They even interpret it as a kind of barbaric torrent of primitive passions and small ideas, but they think that only because of their own myopia. To many of them, especially the talented ones, this can be explained, and they can be, so to say, disenchanted; their eyes can be opened. But in particular, we must count on the young people, who are much more receptive and who can be, so to speak, nurtured in the very waves of the Revolution's fiery torrent. Hence I anticipate a great deal from the influence of the Revolution on art; to put it simply, I expect art to be saved from the worst forms of decadence and from pure formalism by its aspiration toward the real objective and by its infectious expression of great ideas and great experiences.

But in addition to this the state has another continuous task within its cultural activity, namely, to diffuse the revolutionary image of ideas, sensations, and actions throughout the country. From this standpoint the state asks itself: can art be of use to it in this? And the answer inevitably suggests itself: if revolution can give art its soul, then art can give revolution its mouthpiece.

Who is not aware of the full force of agitation? But what is agitation, how is it distinguished from clear, cold, objective propaganda in the sense of elucidating facts and logical constructions germane to our world view? Agitation can be distinguished from propaganda by the fact that it excites the

feelings of the audience and readers and has a direct influence on their will. It, so to say, brings the whole content of propaganda to white heat and makes it glow in all colors. Yes, propagators—we, of course, are all propagators. Propaganda and agitation are simply the ceaseless propagation of a new faith, a propagation springing from profound knowledge.

Can it be doubted that the more artistic such propagation, the more powerful its effect? Don't we know that the artistic public speaker or journalist finds his way to the people's hearts more quickly than those lacking in artistic strength? But the collective propagandist is the collective propagator of our age; the Communist Party, from this point of view, should arm itself with all the organs of art, which in this way will prove itself to be of great use to agitation. Not only the poster, but also the picture, the statue—in less volatile forms and with more profound ideas, stronger feelings—can emerge as graphic aids to the assimilation of Communist truth.

The theater has so often been called a great tribune, a great rostrum for propagation, that it is not worth dwelling on this. Music has always played an enormous role in mass movements: hymns, marches, form an indispensable attribute of them. We have only to unfurl this magic strength of music above the hearts of the masses and to bring it to the utmost degree of definition and direction.

For the moment we are not in a position to make use of architecture on a wide scale for propaganda purposes, but the creation of temples was, so to say, an ultimate, maximum, and extremely powerful way of influencing the social soul—and perhaps, in the near future, when creating the houses of our great people, we will contrast them with the people's houses of the past—the churches of all denominations.

Those art forms that have arisen only recently as, for example, the cinema or rhythmics, can be used with very great effect. It is ridiculous to enlarge upon the propaganda and agitational strength of the cinema—it is obvious to anyone. And just think what character our festive occasions will take on when, by means of General Military Instruction,[1] we create rhythmically moving masses embracing thousands and tens of thousands of people—and not just a crowd, but a strictly regulated, collective, peaceful army sincerely possessed by one definite idea.

Against the background of the masses trained by General Military Instruction, other small groups of pupils from our rhythm schools will advance and will restore the dance to its rightful place. The popular holiday will adorn itself with all the arts, it will resound with music and choirs and that will express the sensations and ideas of the holiday by spectacles on several stages, by songs, and by poetry reading at different points in the rejoicing crowd: it will unite everything in a common act.

This is what the French Revolution dreamed of, what it aspired to; this is what passed by the finest people of that most cultured of democracies—Athens; this is what we are approaching already.

Yes, during the Moscow workers' procession past our friends of the Third International, during the General Military Instruction holiday declared after this,[2] during the great mass action at the Stock Exchange colonnade in Petrograd,[3] one could sense the approach of the moment when art, in no way debasing itself and only profiting from this, would become the expression of national ideas and feelings—ideas and feelings that are Revolutionary and Communist.

Appendix vi

Alexander Bogdanov's 'The Proletarian and Art, 1918'.
(Taken from John E. Bowlt's *The Documents of Twentieth Century Art. Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism_1902- 1934.* p.177.)

1. Art organizes social experiences by means of living images with regard both to cognition and to feelings and aspirations. Consequently, art is the most powerful weapon for organizing collective forces in a class society—class forces.

2. To organize his forces in his social work, his struggle and construction, the proletarian needs a new class art. The spirit of this art is collectivism of labor: it assimilates and reflects the world from the viewpoint of the labor collective, it expresses the relevance of its feelings, of its fighting spirit, and of its creative will.

3. The treasures of the old art should not be accepted passively; in those days they would have educated the working class in the cultural spirit of the ruling classes and thereby in the spirit of subordination to their regime. The proletarian should accept the treasures of the old art in the light of his own criticism, and his new interpretation will reveal their hidden collective principles and their organizational meaning. Then they will prove to be a valuable legacy for the proletarian, a weapon in his struggle against the same old world that created them and a weapon in his organization of the new world. The transference of this artistic legacy must be carried out by proletarian critics.

4. All organizations, all institutions, dedicated to developing the cause of the new art and of the new criticism must be based on close collaboration, one that will educate their workers in the direction of the Socialist ideal.

Appendix vii

Extracts from Aleksei Gan's book *Constructivism.*
(Taken from John E. Bowlt's *The Documents of Twentieth Century Art. Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism_1902- 1934.* pp.220-223.)

But the victory of materialism in the field of artistic labor is also on the eve of its triumph.

The proletarian revolution is not a word of flagellation but a real whip, which expels parasitism from man's practical reality in whatever guise it hides its repulsive being.

The present moment within the framework of objective conditions obliges us to declare that the current position of social development is advancing with the omen that the artistic culutre of the past is unacceptable.

The fact that all so-called art is permeated with the most reactionary idealism is the product of extreme individualism; this individualism shoves it in the direction of new, unnecessary amusements with experiments in refining subjective beauty.

Art

is indissolubly linked:

with theology,

metaphysics,

and mysticism.

It emerged during the epoch of primeval cultures, when technique existed in "the embryonic state of tools," and forms of economy floundered in utter primitiveness.

It passed through the forge of the guild craftsmen of the Middle Ages.

It was artificially reheated by the hypocrisy of bourgeois culture and, finally, crashed against the mechanical world of our age.

Death to art!

It arose naturally

developed naturally

and disappeared naturally.

MARXISTS MUST WORK IN ORDER TO ELUCIDATE ITS DEATH SCIENTIFICALLY AND TO FORMULATE NEW PHENOMENA OF ARTISTIC LABOR WITHIN THE NEW HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OF OUR TIME.

In the territory of labor and intellect, there is no room for speculative activity.

In the sphere of cultural construction, only that has concrete value which is indissolubly linked with the general tasks of revolutionary actuality.

Bourgeois encirclement can compel us to carry out a whole series of strategic retreats in the field of economic norms and relationships, but in no way must it distort the process of our intellectual work.

The proletarian revolution has bestirred human thought and has struck home at the holy relics and idols of bourgeois spirituality. *Not only the ecclesiastical priests have caught it in the neck, the priests of aesthetics have had it too.*

Art is finished! It has no place in the human labor apparatus.

Labor, technology, organization!

THE REVALUATION OF THE FUNCTIONS OF HUMAN ACTIVITY, THE LINKING OF EVERY EFFORT WITH THE GENERAL RANGE OF SOCIAL OBJECTIVES—

that is the ideology of our time.

And the more distinctly the motive forces of social reality confront our consciousness, the more saliently its sociopolitical forms take shape—the more the masters of artistic labor are confronted with the task of:

Breaking with their speculative activity (of art) and of finding the paths to concrete action by employing their knowledge and skill for the sake of true living and purposeful labor.

Intellectual-material production establishes labor interrelations and a productional link with science and technology by arising in the place of art—art, which by its very nature cannot break with religion and philosophy and which is powerless to leap from the exclusive circle of abstract, speculative activity.

From "Tectonics, Texture, Construction"

A productive series of successful and unsuccessful experiments, discoveries, and defeats followed in the wake of the leftist artists. By the second decade

In the specific situation of our day, a gravitation toward the technical acme and social interpretation can be observed in the work of the masters of revolutionary art.

Constructivism is advancing—the slender child of an industrial culture.
For a long time capitalism has let it rot underground.
It has been liberated by—the Proletarian Revolution.
A new chronology begins

with October 25, 1917.

From "From Speculative Activity of Art to Socially Meaningful Artistic Labor"

. . . When we talk about social technology, this should imply not just one kind of tool, and not a number of different tools, but a system of these tools, their sum total in the whole of society.

It is essential to picture that in this society, lathes and motors, instruments and apparatuses, simple and complex tools are scattered in various places, but in a definite order.

In some places they stand like huge sockets (e.g., in centers of large-scale industry), in other places other tools are scattered about. But at any given moment, if people are linked by the bond of labor, if we have a society, then all the tools of labor will also be interlocked: all, so to say, "technologies" of individual branches of production will form something whole, a united social technology, and not just in our minds, but objectively and concretely.

The technological system of society, the structure of its tools, creates the structure of human relationships, as well.

The economic structure of society is created from the aggregate of its productional relationships.

The sociopolitical structure of society is determined directly by its economic structure.

But in times of revolution peculiar contradictions arise.

We live in the world's first proletarian republic. The rule of the workers is realizing its objectives and is fighting not only for the retention of this rule, but also for absolute supremacy, for the assertion of new, historically necessary forms of social reality.

Appendix viii

AKhRR. Declaration of the Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia, 1922.
(Taken from John E. Bowlt's *The Documents of Twentieth Century Art. Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism_1902- 1934.* p.266.)

The Great October Revolution, in liberating the creative forces of the people, has aroused the consciousness of the masses and the artists—the spokesmen of the people's spiritual life.

Our civic duty before mankind is to set down, artistically and documentarily, the revolutionary impulse of this great moment of history.

We will depict the present day: the life of the Red Army, the workers, the peasants, the revolutionaries, and the heroes of labor.

We will provide a true picture of events and not abstract concoctions discrediting our Revolution in the face of the international proletariat.

The old art groups existing before the Revolution have lost their meaning, the boundaries between them have been erased in regard to both ideology and form—and they continue to exist merely as circles of people linked together by personal connections but devoid of any ideological basis or content.

It is this content in art that we consider a sign of truth in a work of art, and the desire to express this content induces us, the artists of Revolutionary Russia, to join forces; the tasks before us are strictly defined.

The day of revolution, the moment of revolution, is the day of heroism, the moment of heroism—and now we must reveal our artistic experiences in the monumental forms of the style of heroic realism.

By acknowledging continuity in art and by basing ourselves on the contemporary world view, we create this style of heroic realism and lay the foundation of the universal building of future art, the art of a classless society.

Appendix ix

The frontispiece of Sabaneev's Piano sonata which stands as a homage to Scriabin.

ПАМЯТИ СКРЯБИНА



Я радость светлая Последнего Свершенья
Я в белом пламени сгарающий алмаз
Я—несказанное блаженство растворенья
Я—радость Смерти, я—свобода, я—экстаз

. . . . . .

Вот она, в растворении сладостном твердь!
В нашей пляске живой к нам грядущая Смерть!

. . . . . .

Все мы влюбленный
Ток устремленный
От мига к вечности, в путь к бесконечности
От каменной мрачности к светлой прозрачности,
Так как на каменном
Творчеством пламенным
Лик твой божественный
Запечатлели

. . . . . .

Зажгись, священный храм, от пламени сердец!
Зажгись и стань святым пожаром!
Смесись блаженно в нас, о сладостный отец!
Смесись со Смертью в танце яром!

. . . . . .

Родимся в вихрь!
Проснемся в небо!
Смешаем все чувства в волне единой!
И в блеске роскошном
Рассвета последнего
Являясь друг другу в красе обнаженной
Сверкающих душ
Исчезнем...
Растаем....

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Ты будешь, как сумрак, об'ятый дремой
А вскоре, изгаснув, ты станешь и тьмой.

(Скрябин „Предварительное действие")

Appendix x

Central Committee ofthe All-Union Communist Party Decree on the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations.

(Taken from John E. Bowlt's *The Documents of Twentieth Century Art. Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism_1902- 1934.* pp.288-290.)

The Central Committee states that over recent years literature and art have made considerable advances, both quantitative and qualitative, on the basis of the significant progress of Socialist construction.

A few years ago the influence of alien elements, especially those revived by the first years of NEP,[1] was still apparent and marked. At this time, when the cadres of proletarian literature were still weak, the Party helped in every possible way to create and consolidate special proletarian organs in the field of literature and art in order to maintain the position of proletarian writers and art workers.

At the present time the cadres of proletarian literature and art have managed to expand, new writers and artists have come forward from the factories, plants, and collective farms, but the confines of the existing proletarian literature and art organizations (VOAPP, RAPP, RAPM,[2] etc.) are becoming too narrow and are hampering the serious development of artistic creation. This factor creates a danger: these organizations might change from being an instrument for the maximum mobilization of Soviet writers and artists for the tasks of Socialist construction to being an instrument for cultivating elitist withdrawal and loss of contact with the political tasks of contemporaneity and with the important groups of writers and artists who sympathize with Socialist construction.

Hence the need for the appropriate reconstruction of literary and artistic organizations and the extension of the basis of their activity.

Following from this, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) decrees:

1. Liquidation of the Association of Proletarian Writers (VOAPP, RAPP).

2. Integration of all writers who support the platform of the Soviet government and who aspire to participate in Socialist construction in a single union of Soviet writers with a Communist faction therein.

3. Execution of analogous changes with regard to the other arts.

4. Charging of the Organizational Bureau with working out practical measures for the fulfillment of this resolution.

Appendix xi

Excerpts from Zhdanov's 'Concluding Speech at a Conference of Soviet Music Workers, 1948' from his book, *On Literature, Music and Philosophy.* Lawrence & Wishart Ltd.: London, 1950. pp.72-75.)

TASKS OF SOVIET MUSIC

What conclusions can be drawn? The significance of the classical heritage must be fully restored. The danger of destruction threatening music from the formalist trend must be stressed and this trend must be condemned as an assault upon the edifice of the art created by the great masters of musical culture. Our composers must reorientate themselves and turn towards their people. All of them must realise that our Party, expressing the interests of our state and our people, will support only a healthy and progressive trend in music, the trend of Soviet socialist realism.

Comrades, if you value the lofty calling of Soviet composer, you must prove yourselves capable of serving your people better than you have done up to the present. You are facing a serious test. The formalist trend in music was condemned by the Party twelve years ago. Since then the Government has awarded Stalin prizes to many of you, among them those guilty of formalism. The rewards you received were in the nature of a substantial advance payment. We did not consider that your compositions were free of defects, but we were patient, expecting our composers to find within themselves the strength to choose the right road. But it is now clear to everybody that the intervention of the Party was necessary. The Central Committee tells you bluntly that our music will never win glory along the road you have chosen.

Soviet composers have two highly responsible tasks. The chief one is to develop and perfect Soviet music. The other is to protect Soviet music against penetration by elements of bourgeois decay. We must not forget that the U.S.S.R. is now the true custodian of the musical culture of mankind just as she is in all other fields, too, a bulwark of human civilisation and culture against bourgeois corruption and decay.

We must take into account the fact that alien bourgeois influences from abroad will muster what remains of a capitalist outlook in the minds of some Soviet intellectuals

in frivolous and crazy attempts to replace the treasures of Soviet musical culture by the pitiful tatters of modern bourgeois art. For this reason not only the musical but also the political ear of Soviet composers must be very sensitive. Your contact with the people must be closer than ever before. The ear for music must be an "ear for criticism" too. You should keep track of the various stages through which art is passing in the West. But it is your task not only to prevent the penetration of bourgeois influences into Soviet music: it is your task, too, to consolidate the supremacy of Soviet music and to create a mighty Soviet musical culture which will embody all that is best from the past, and which will reflect Soviet society of today and enable the culture and the communist consciousness of our people to attain still greater heights.

We Bolsheviks do not deny our cultural heritage. On the contrary, we subject to a critical study the cultural heritage of all peoples and all ages in order to draw from it all that can inspire the working people of Soviet society to great achievements in labour, science and culture. You must help the people in this; and if you do not set yourselves this task and devote yourselves wholeheartedly to it and give to it all your enthusiasm and creative ardour, you are not fulfilling your historic role.

Comrades, we would very much like—we fervently wish —to have in existence among us our own "Mighty Few", a group which would be more numerous and more influential still than that which in its day sent the fame of its talents around the world and glorified our people. In order to achieve this you must clear out of your path all that might weaken you and select only the means and equipment which will make you strong and mighty. If you use to the full our great musical heritage and at the same time develop it in the spirit of the new demands of our great epoch, you will become a Soviet "Mighty Few". We want to see this backwardness through which you are passing overcome as quickly as possible, so that you can the sooner re-orientate yourselves and become a glorious cohort of Soviet composers, the pride of the entire Soviet people.

Appendix xii

Extracts from Nikolai Kulbin's essay, 'Free Art as the Basis of Life: Harmony and Dissonance'. (On Life, Death,etc.)
(Taken from John E. Bowlt's *The Documents of Twentieth Century Art. Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism_1902- 1934.* pp.16-17.)

I. Theory

Ideology. Symbol of the universe. Delight. Beauty and good. Love is gravity. Process of beauty. Art is the quest for gods. Creation is the myth and the symbol. Freedom. The struggle of Titans and Olympus. Prometheus and Hercules. Painting and servitude.
A single art—of the word, music, and the plastic arts.

Artist, picture, and spectator.

Creation. Thought is the word. Feeling. Will. Individuality. Child. Artist. Talent. Temperament. Sensation. Contrast. Dynamic principle in psychology. Growth and decline. Associations. Revelation and consciousness. Search, imagination, realization. Artistic vision. Mastery of unconscious creation. Accumulation of impressions, processing of them (the throes of creation). Outbursts of creation (inspiration). Interchange of creation and self-criticism. Harmony. Dissonance. Peace and life. Harmony of sequence. Rhythm, Style.

Blue. Thought in word, sounds, and colors. Drawing is melody.

Red. Mood. The sounds of colors. The colors of the word. The colors of sounds. Scales. Ornament.

Yellow. The plastic arts. Free creation. Illusion and form. The psychology of depiction. Mutual creation of artist and spectator.

Cognition. Sight and blindness. The psychology of the spectator. Sympathetic experience. Criticism.

Supplements. The life of the artist, of the picture, and of the spectator.

II. The History of Art

The sources of art. Nature. People. Nation.
Movement of the pendulum, realism—idealism. Ants. Spiders and bees. Translational movement. Evolution and revolutions in art. Cycles of art. Destruction, fertilization, decadence. Sowing. New styles. Flowers and fruits. School. Academism. Degeneration.

The Past. Primitive art. The periods of antiquity. The Middle Ages. The latest cycles.

The Present. Contemporary art trends.

New Tendencies. The revaluation of values.

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