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The View from an Open Window:
Soviet Censorship Policy from a Musician's Perspective

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Abstract

Under the leadership of Joseph Stalin from 1924 to 1953, censorship notoriously became a central aspect of Soviet society. As citizens were rewarded for exposing any possible opposition to the government's policies, no sector was left unmarked by what scholars now call the "Great Purge." While music was not an obvious victim of this movement, the Soviet music scene nonetheless found itself at the forefront of government criticism and reform. In this thesis, I conduct case-studies of Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* and his Fifth Symphony, as well as Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* film soundtrack and his cantata *Zdravitsa*. *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* brought its composer, and Soviet music as a whole, to the disapproving eye of Soviet censorship policy, while Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony saved him from further consequences. *Alexander Nevsky* and *Zdravitsa* played instrumental roles in Prokofiev's reintegration into Soviet society after spending years abroad. I examine the Zhdanov Affair of 1948, in which both prominent and upcoming composers were called into a government conference concerning the unsavory music production in the Soviet Union, as a central event in the history of censorship. Music magnifies the inherent futility of censorship, and as such, I use this investigation in conjunction with the case-studies to evaluate censorship practices within society: past, present, Soviet, and beyond.

Introduction

From the 1920s to Joseph Stalin's death in 1953, censorship was an integral part of Soviet society; it pervaded nearly all sectors of distributed information, ranging from academia to the arts. Stalin's regime was thought to be a time to throw away the shameful past of the Russian Empire and rise to the glory of the new Soviet Union. The harshest period of censorship lasted from 1934 to the mid-1950s in a period known as the "Great Purge." While the focus of this movement was to remove political opposition, the aim widened to include others who were suspected of causing future complications.¹ Citizens were encouraged to expose anyone who was a possible anti-Soviet and were rewarded for their efforts. In the arts sector, this was a period of transition from relative freedom of expression to restriction to a style now known as socialist realism. During and after the campaign, artists were required to glorify the Soviet State and Communist Party in their works or face exile or execution.² For the first couple of years, there was little to no attention given to music. As Soviet musician Juri Jelagin recalls it, "until the middle Thirties, the Soviet Government had never interfered in purely musical problems except for revising the lyrics in songs and opera librettos."³ The perilous situation of musicians wasn't fully realized until the Campaign against Formalism and Naturalism, which lasted from 1936 to 1938.

Originally, following the Russian Revolution in 1917, fine arts and literature of the Soviet Union remained relatively untouched by the government. Rather, the effects of Soviet

¹ Brian Moynahan, *Leningrad: Siege and Symphony* (Great Britain: Quercus Editions Ltd, 2013), 26.

² Caroline Brooke, "Soviet Musicians and the Great Terror," *Europe-Asia Studies* 54, no. 3 (2002): 397.

³ Juri Jelagin, *Taming of the Arts* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1951), 183.

socioeconomic policies became apparent in the education and culture of the nation; the first of the sectors to feel the pressure of government censorship were popular education and publishing houses.⁴ Artists were given the freedom to experiment with different forms of expression, as the Party was otherwise occupied with reforming the politics and economy of the Soviet Union. While composers and performers were given the liberty to work with various forms, the government insisted that the primary purpose of music was to glorify the recent Russian Revolution. Unlike in later years, Western music was still played and accepted as exemplary; in fact, it was common for people to defend Western artists and describe them in a way to make them seem like icons of Soviet ideals.

This changed on April 23, 1932, with the Decree on the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations. While the threat of violence aided in ensuring reforms occurred, it was not only government censorship that made controlling the arts so widespread in the Soviet Union. Many of the changes made to the structural organization of artistic society made artists subordinate to the government and prompted artists to self-censor to maintain good relations with government officials.⁵ Artists required government support, because no other form of support was made available to them.⁶ In its decree, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party declared all former art organizations were to be dissolved and replaced by central artists' unions. These unions were to be the artists' sole method of receiving commissions, exhibitions, and supplies. Artists could receive support only by following the

⁴ M.K. Dziewanowski, *A History of Soviet Russia and Its Aftermath: Fifth Edition* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1997), 127-128.

⁵ Samantha Sherry, "Introduction: New Perspectives on Censorship under Communism," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 96, no. 4 (2018): 601-13.

⁶ Amei Wallach, "Censorship in the Soviet Bloc," *Art Journal* 50, no. 3 (1991): 75.

instructions laid out by the government.⁷ The Academy of the Arts, which had been neglected for decades, was revived as the solitary option for education for those seeking a profession in the arts. Every aspect of the artistic career was under the control of the government, from education to performance and publication. It was in the Academy of the Arts and through commissions that the government began to advertise socialist realism as the Soviet definition of “real art.”

As it was taught to students in the Felix Kon Memorial School of Higher Music (formerly Moscow Conservatory),⁸ socialist realism consisted of four main components: *narodnost*, *partiinnost*, *dostupnost*, and *opora na klassiku*.⁹ *Narodnost* was the idea that art had to contain elements of folk or nationalist culture.¹⁰ Often, this meant the deliberate insertion of well-known folk stories and tunes within works of art. Many operas and ballets were based on stories that already had been accepted by the government as socialist realist works, such as operas *The Nose* (1928) and *Quiet Flows the Don* (1935), by Dmitri Shostakovich and Ivan Dzerzhinsky, respectively.¹¹ *Partiinost* was the requirement that art embody Soviet ideology.¹² This was typically achieved through the glorification of the Soviet Union and its leaders and closely

⁷ Idem.

⁸ Juri Jelagin, *Taming of the Arts* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1951), 188. The name was changed to avoid the word “conservatory,” which has a common root with the word “conservatism.”

⁹ Alexander Ivashkin, “Who's Afraid of Socialist Realism?” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 92, no. 3 (2014): 430–431.

¹⁰ *Oxford English Dictionaries*, s.v. “narodnost,” accessed January 30, 2019, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/245097?redirectedFrom=narodnost#eid>. Etymologically, this word consists of two parts: the word root “narod”, which translates to nation or people, and the suffix “-nost”, which is similar to the suffix “-ness” in English.

¹¹ Philip Ross Bullock, “Staging Stalinism: The Search for Soviet Opera in the 1930s,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 1 (2006): 87.

¹² *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “party,” accessed January 30, 2019, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-russian/party_1. This is a made-up word that literally means “party-ness” and was roughly defined as “party-mindedness” or “party membership.” It is formed from the word for political party, “partii” and the suffix “-nost”.

related the arts with propaganda.¹³ A new “Soviet folklore” arose, in which Lenin was depicted as “an immortal deity who kept a watchful eye on his brother Stalin,” and Stalin was “the embodiment of the people’s dream for a benevolent and wise leader.”¹⁴ To fulfill *dostupnost*, a work of art needed to be relevant to all audiences that witnessed it in the Soviet Union, which was greatly aided by both the requirements of *narodnost* and *partiinost*.¹⁵ The final quality, *opora na klassiku*, required that current art be related to past classical models.¹⁶

Because most popular classical pieces, such as those by Bach and Beethoven, were not from the Soviet Union, there was a lot of foreign influence on the music produced in the Soviet Union, despite the emphasis on nationalism. This was largely achieved with the “naturalization” and insistence that these foreign artists embodied the revolutionary spirit of the Soviet Union. A prime example of this naturalization is the Beethoven festival, held in 1927 in Vienna to honor the centennial of his death. Perhaps encouraged by the concurrent preparations made for the tenth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, the committees planning the Soviet delegation insisted Beethoven’s music displayed the spirit of a pure Soviet. As historian Amy Nelson notes, Beethoven’s “timeless popularity and his music’s expression of revolutionary passion, courage, and brotherhood” gave his work the widespread accessibility and perceived optimism that would

¹³ Philip Ross Bullock, “Staging Stalinism: The Search for Soviet Opera in the 1930s,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 1 (2006): 87.

¹⁴ Frank J. Miller, “The Image of Stalin in Soviet Russian Folklore,” *The Russian Review* 39, no. 1 (1980): 50-67.

¹⁵ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “availability,” accessed January 30, 2019, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-russian/available?q=availability>. *Dostupnost* literally translates to “availability.”

¹⁶ *WordReference.com*, s.v. “опора на классику,” accessed January 30, 2019, <http://www.wordreference.com/ruen/опора?s=опора%20на%20классику>. *Opora na klassiku* translates roughly to “reliance on the classics.” *Opora* is similar to “foothold” in English.

become central in the formation of “truly Soviet music.”¹⁷ The naturalization of foreign artists was coupled with a movement known as Russification. This movement sought to standardize language and culture throughout the nation and equate the Soviet identity with the Russian identity.¹⁸ As a result, composers throughout the Soviet Union, Russian or not, aimed to include not only bits of their native cultures, but also aspects of famous Russian classical pieces. These were mainly pieces by Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Mily Balakirev, César Cui, Alexander Borodin, and Pyotr Tchaikovsky, as these were thought to be representative of Russia and its culture.

In the works of these composers, “the folk song exerted an increasingly powerful influence on the musical texture...with its multiformity of modes, its characteristic technique of subordinate voices and its free...interweaving of vocal variants derived from the basic melody.”¹⁹ Thus, through reference to works by these composers, Soviet musicians were able to include not only the classical model that socialist realism required, but also the folk melodies that would allow their music to be more accessible and project a more unified image of the Soviet identity. An example of this is in the opening of the first movement of Shostakovich’s 7th Symphony (1942), with the use of a phrase reminiscent of Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition*. While not a folk tune, the fanfare-like chord progression of the 7th Symphony would evoke memories of a nearly identical chord progression present in Mussorgsky’s piece, which was based on a group of Russian folk stories. With this association, Shostakovich was able to

¹⁷ Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 188-189.

¹⁸ Dinko Tomasic, “The Structure of Soviet Power and Expansion,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 271 (1950): 32-42.

¹⁹ Andrey Olkhovsky, *Music Under the Soviets: The Agony of an Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1955), 16.

connect his own piece to a set of Russian folk tales and thus display *narodnost*, *opora na klassiku*, and *dostupnost* in the first few measures of his symphony.

Both intonazia and musical imagery were important aspects of the embodiment of socialist realism in music.²⁰ Intonazia, broadly defined as a sound that conveys meaning through association, was commonly realized in one of three ways: (1) by using instruments to mimic the sounds made by recognizable objects (e.g. voices, gunshots, marching, etc.), (2) by correlating with other art forms through performance or words, and (3) by referencing certain events or ideas through the use of paraphrased melodies, folk songs, or styles associated with that event or idea. Intonazia describes the techniques used to achieve socialist realism, while musical imagery describes the interpretation that arises from the use of these techniques. A musical image is the meaning that is supposed to be created by the sound (intonazia) and is the product of an individual's interpretation of the sounds in a musical piece.²¹ The goal of socialist realist music was to create a universal musical image that could be recognized by all listeners and to portray a peaceful, prosperous, and singular image of the Soviet Union.

If socialist realism attempted to create a unified Soviet identity, formalism and naturalism were thought to be inimical to that goal. Formalism considers the formal aspects of a piece to be more important than the meaning of the piece. Specifically, the government focus lay on experimentation with atonality, dissonance, twelve-tone music, and cacophony, as well as influence of modernist composers such as Stravinsky and Schoenberg. For music students,

²⁰ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. "intonation," accessed January 30, 2019, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-russian/intonation>. The literal translation from Russian to English of "intonazia" is intonation.

²¹ Malcolm H. Brown, "The Soviet Russian Concepts of 'Intonazia' and 'Musical Imagery,'" *The Musical Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (1974): 557–567.

compositions that held “highly mannered, extravagant style” meant to display a performer’s skill at the expense of a piece’s meaning were thought to be musically immature and in bad taste.²²

Naturalism, a term that gradually replaced modern-day realism in Soviet culture, similarly described an undesirable form of art in which that which was represented in the art piece was too grotesquely realistic. It was viewed as vulgar, lacking in artistic form, and inferior due to its extreme likeness to the real world.²³

While the Decree on the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations was the beginning of censorship for the majority of the arts, music remained relatively free of government intervention at first. Although, musicians had experienced the centralization of their union, guidelines regarding their musical experimentation were not strongly enforced. This may have been due to the large contribution the aforementioned Russian composers made to music as an art or simply because music was held to be of lesser importance in reform due to the difficulties in implementing ideological censorship in an auditory art.²⁴ Either way, censorship of music was almost an afterthought. It wasn’t until 1936, with a scathing, anonymous music review of Dmitri Shostakovich’s opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* in the government newspaper *Pravda*, that attention was turned toward music and its role in disseminating ideologies.²⁵

²² Juri Jelagin, *Taming of the Arts* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1951), 193.

²³ Maria Silina, “The Struggle Against Naturalism: Soviet Art from the 1920s to the 1950s,” *RACAR: Revue D'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review* 41, no. 2 (2016): 91–104.

²⁴ Andrey Olkhovsky, *Music Under the Soviets: The Agony of an Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1955), 7-16.

²⁵ Victor Seroff, *Dmitri Shostakovich: the Life and Background of a Soviet Composer* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943), 204-207. These pages provide an English translation of the *Pravda* article “Muddle instead of Music,” the article condemning Shostakovich’s *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*.

As I have described it in this introduction, the Soviet policies regarding music censorship seem self-consistent and plainly laid out, and outside the realm of music, they were. It was only once the Soviet government extended its censorship policies beyond the language-bound into the

Censorship and music were almost wholly separate, akin to two objects in different rooms, connected only through a closed window; one might affect the other, but only very slightly. In this thesis, I will focus on censorship as it began to cross the threshold from one side of the window to the other and the impact that it had on music in the Soviet Union. Specifically, I will focus on select works of Dmitri Shostakovich and Sergei Prokofiev, and on the features of these works that either conformed with or were placed under criticism for opposing socialist realism. I follow the nebulous definition of “socialist realism” in Soviet art policy to reveal the role of music in politics and as an ideological vector. This examination will rely upon analysis of the pieces themselves, as well as of the music reviews released in government newspapers and by other musicians and musicologists of the time. It will explore various types of music, from symphony to film score, and the circumstances surrounding reception of these different selections. I will use analysis of prominent musical pieces in the Soviet Union to explore the contradictory nature of Soviet ideology and the politics that were imposed upon music under Stalin’s regime, as well as examine the effectivity of censorship as a government policy.

Chapter 1: The Music of Dmitri Shostakovich

Even what I wrote as a child...showed a trend to give vent to my reactions in real life. – Dmitri Shostakovich

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) set the stage for the first major change in the Soviet government's attitude toward music. Two of his pieces, an opera entitled *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* and his Fifth Symphony, will be analyzed in relation to their reception, political implications, and musical form. As previously mentioned, in 1936, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* brought music to the forefront of government scrutiny for the first time; it also placed Shostakovich in political disfavor for a yearlong period. The performance of his Fifth Symphony in 1937 brought Shostakovich back into prominence in the Soviet musical stage. Analysis of the two works will be juxtaposed to an examination of the political climate and the concurrent government policies of the Soviet Union to expose conflicts between Soviet ideology and implementation of policy that led to later complications in music censorship.

Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich was born on September 25, 1906 in St. Petersburg, Russia, to Dmitri Boleslavovich Shostakovich and Sofya Vasilyevna Kokoúlina. He was the middle child of three and the only son. At age 9, he began piano lessons with his mother and at age 13 he was admitted to the Petrograd Conservatory to study music.²⁶ Upon his graduation from the conservatory, Shostakovich had his first international success with his First Symphony, but his following compositions, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, were criticized for being

²⁶ Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2000), 7-15.

incomprehensible due to his experimentation with tonality and form.²⁷ It wasn't until the late 1930s, however, that he faced serious consequences for his music.

Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District

On January 28, 1936, *Pravda* released an article entitled “Muddle instead of Music.” It was a critique of Shostakovich’s second and last opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, which deemed the music naturalist and formalist and began the Campaign against Naturalism and Formalism. The Campaign against Naturalism and Formalism was led by a branch of the government known as the Committee on Artistic Affairs.²⁸ Prior to 1936, “socialist realist” music was a rejection of all past models, but this campaign introduced new standards (*narodnost*, *partiinost*, *dostupnost*, and *opora na klassiku*) that had already been a focus of other art forms. With the implementation of these new standards, the government’s focus was directed to music more than to any other sectors of art.

Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District was first performed in 1934 and initially met with great success, both from government officials and the general populous. It was hailed as an example of the finest socialist realist opera, as an opera that “could have been written only by a Soviet composer brought up in the best traditions of Soviet culture.”²⁹ Soviet opera, as with the other arts, was in the process of an adjustment in terms of the values being portrayed, the audience it reached, and the aspects of critique from both academic and nonacademic reviews. Opera in the 1920s and before had been an art primarily enjoyed by the upper class, and with the

²⁷ Andrey Olkhovsky, *Music Under the Soviets: The Agony of an Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1955), 218-219.

²⁸ Maria Silina, “The Struggle Against Naturalism: Soviet Art from the 1920s to the 1950s,” *RACAR: Revue D'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review* 41, no. 2 (2016): 91–104.

²⁹ Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia: Enlarged Edition, 1917-1981* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 120.

Bolshevik Revolution, it was nearly abolished as an outmoded and unnecessary art form.³⁰ Soviet art “could not have anything in common with the hostile and foreign culture of the bourgeois world and had to be completely independent in content and form.” All other art was withdrawn “for the good of the proletariat.”³¹ It was clear that reform was necessary, but the aspects of opera that needed to be changed were still unclear. It was during this period of experimentation in operatic form that *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* was written and performed.

The opera is based on a popular Russian story by Nikolai Leskov, published in 1865 in Dostoyevsky’s magazine *Epoch*. Leskov’s story experienced a revival in the 1920s, when a film version was released. Shortly thereafter, the story was reprinted with illustrations by the renowned artist Boris Kustodiev.³² The story follows a married woman, Katerina Ismailov, the murders she commits to obtain the lifestyle that she desires, and her ultimate demise as a result of her actions. In the short story, she commits four murders. She kills her father-in-law when he confronts her about her lover, her husband when he finds out that she has a lover, the legitimate heir to her husband’s fortune when she realizes that she is not the inheritor, and her lover’s lover when he loses interest in her.³³ While retaining characters, Shostakovich and his librettist, Aleksandr Preis, made some drastic modifications to the story when transferring it from text to stage. The relationship between Katerina and her father-in-law, Boris Timofeevich, was

³⁰ Philip Ross Bullock, “Staging Stalinism: The Search for Soviet Opera in the 1930s,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 1 (2006): 83-108.

³¹ Juri Jelagin, *Taming of the Arts* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1951), 186.

³² Caryl Emerson, “Shostakovich’s ‘Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk,’” In *All the Same The Words Don’t Go Away: Essays on Authors, Heroes, Aesthetics, and Stage Adaptations from the Russian Tradition*, 347.

³³ Nikolai Leskov, Richard Pevear, and Larissa Volokhonsky, “The Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk: A Sketch,” *The Hudson Review* 64, no. 4 (2012): 569-614.

eroticized in the opera, with Boris lusting after his daughter-in-law during his son's absence. In addition, it is Katerina's lover, Sergei, who kills her husband Zimoy Borisovich, instead of Katerina herself. The opera also includes a marriage between Katerina and Sergei prior to their arrest and the murder of Sergei's lover Sonya by Katerina.³⁴ In the opera, Katerina commits three murders, instead of four, as the legitimate heir to her husband's fortune was a child and, as the composer noted in his essay "How I conceived *Lady Macbeth*," "the killing of a child, no matter how it might be explained, always creates a negative impression." Later in this essay, Shostakovich admits that all of these changes were made to "justify the behavior of Katerina Ismailova, so that the audience would think her an essentially positive person, worthy of compassion."³⁵

Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, stylistically and thematically, brought to mind a German opera that had been produced just seven years earlier in 1927: *Wozzeck* by Alban Berg. Berg's opera was the first to bring atonality to the forefront of the musical genre, and Shostakovich's opera could be seen as an homage to this new style that had so shocked the public with Berg.³⁶ The theme of *Wozzeck*, as well as its central character, seemed to match Shostakovich's intentions for his own opera. *Wozzeck* presented "human creatures drawn up from the lower depths and magnified under psychology" and "exposes the

³⁴ Dmitri Shostakovich, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, conducted by Mariss Jansons, directed by Thomas Grimm and Martin Kušej, Der Nederlandse Opera and Opus Arte, Amsterdam, recorded in 2006.

³⁵ Andrew Porter, "Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk," *The Musical Times* 104, no. 1450 (1963): 858-60. Translated excerpts of Shostakovich's essay "How I conceived *Lady Macbeth*" are provided in this article.

³⁶ Maria Cristina Bostan, "Dmitri Şostakovici – Representative of the National Russian Music of the 20th Century. The Opera *Lady Macbeth from Mţensk*, Between Tradition and Modernity," *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov, Series VIII: Art & Sport* 5 (2012).

tragedy and comedy of sordid lives and twisted, tortured souls” by exemplifying the misery and struggles of its main character and following the tragedy that resulted from these struggles. The opera utilized the “intensified reality” of German expressionism to present and examine the misery produced within society of the early 20th century.³⁷ Through the character of Katerina, Shostakovich mimics this effect. Katerina becomes a willful and tragic heroine, a victim of her circumstance, as opposed to the cold, merciless hero she is in Leskov’s story.

Despite the initial approval of the opera by all parties, the *Pravda* article “Muddle instead of Music”, published two years after the opera’s premiere, denounced Shostakovich for producing a “primitive and vulgar” work full of naturalistic tendencies. The article was printed after the opera had been performed in a showcase of five Soviet operas: Tchaikovsky’s *Queen of Spades*, Valery Zhelobinsky’s *The Kamarino Peasant* and *The Name*, Ivan Dzerzhinsky’s *Quiet Flows the Don*, and, of course, Shostakovich’s *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. This showcase was intended to display the progress that Leningrad musicians had made in the area of opera and present these achievements to the public of Moscow and the government.³⁸ Stalin and a group of his officials attended performances of these operas and reportedly found *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* “disgusting...immoral, and cheerless.”³⁹ As was typical of articles portraying the official Party stance, “Muddle instead of Music” was published anonymously, perhaps in an attempt to encourage a unified collective opinion in the Soviet population. The article singles out the scenes of Boris’s death and Sergei’s flogging for being

³⁷ Richard Anthony Leonard, *A History of Russian Music* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), 329.

³⁸ Philip Ross Bullock, “Staging Stalinism: The Search for Soviet Opera in the 1930s,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 1 (2006): 83-108.

³⁹ Irina Kotkina, “Soviet Empire and Operatic Realm: Stalinist Search for the Model Soviet Opera,” *Revue Des études Slaves* 84, no. 3/4 (2013): 515.

“practically on stage,” an affront to “the demand of Soviet culture that all coarseness and savagery be abolished from every corner of Soviet life.” Shostakovich was also criticized for his modification of the original story, as he depicts “the predatory merchant woman [Katerina] who scrambles into the possession of wealth through murder...as some kind of "victim" of bourgeois society,” giving “Leskov's story...a significance which it does not possess.”⁴⁰

In terms of the music itself, the composer was disparaged for the lack of a clear, easily followed melody, as “[f]rom the first minute, the listener is shocked by deliberate dissonance, by a confused stream of sound. Snatches of melody, the beginnings of a musical phrase, are drowned, emerge again, and disappear in a grinding and squealing roar. To follow this ‘music’ is most difficult; to remember it, impossible.” This largely has to do with the fact that the opera is much more explicitly about sex than Leskov’s story. Operatic convention at the time included sex scenes “as almost entirely of foreplay and afterglow...overly-romanticized, but [with] always lushly-orchestrated, swelling accompaniment.”⁴¹ The theatrics of *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, for the most part, maintained this convention, but the music decidedly did not.

Rather than grand melodic interludes, the sex scenes in the opera are more akin to rape scenes, with a greater emphasis on embodying the physical aspects of sex than the emotional. The first sex scene in the opera is when Katerina and Sergei consummate their “mutual attraction,” and it begins with Katerina’s attempt to dismiss Sergei for fear that Boris will catch them. Sergei stays and, despite Katerina’s urgings to let her go, forces himself upon her. He asks, “Why should I not?” Here, a thematic musical phrase, or motif, representative of sexual

⁴⁰ Victor Seroff, *Dmitri Shostakovich: the Life and Background of a Soviet Composer* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943), 204-207.

⁴¹ Elizabeth A. Wells, “The New Woman': Lady Macbeth and Sexual Politics in the Stalinist Era,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 13, no. 2 (2001): 170.

arousal is introduced. This motif is repeated until the climax of this scene and is reintroduced in each subsequent erotic scene. The image of rape becomes most apparent near the end of the scene, at which point Katerina screams but is drowned out by the final note in Sergei's rising chromatic scale. The scene ends with loud staccato notes accompanied with a shuddering figure, before the trombones begin a downward glissando from the same final note of Sergei's upward scale. The scene is filled with intonazia depicting male sexuality; loud brass and glissandi were used to portray male arousal, domination, and detumescence.⁴² It was this explicit musical imagery that "Muddle instead of Music" marked as naturalistic and immoral.

Based on this and subsequent reviews, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District's* place in socialist realist art can be examined. The first point to consider is *narodnost*, the idea that art needed to contain elements of folk or nationalist culture. In this opera, Shostakovich attempted to achieve this through the staging of Leskov's well-known and widely published Russian story. However, due to the heavy modifications that the composer and librettist made to the original narrative, this staging was seen more as a rejection of an established national literary piece. In regard to *partiinnost*, the opera was seen as opposing Soviet ideals, as it attempted "to arouse the sympathy of the spectators for the coarse and vulgar inclinations and behavior of the merchant woman Katerina Ismailova." This was further enforced by the opera's popularity overseas, which was attributed to its "nonpolitical and confusing" nature.⁴³ Here is the introduction of another aspect of music, and specifically opera, that was not addressed up until this point: that it needs to be politically focused, so as to remain accessible and interesting to the Soviet audience.

⁴² Ibid, 171-174.

⁴³ Victor Seroff, *Dmitri Shostakovich: the Life and Background of a Soviet Composer* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943), 204-207.

Dostupnost, according to the *Pravda* review, was also absent, despite the popularity of the opera with the masses. The lack of morals displayed by the principal character was explained as a result of the exploitation of the masses by bourgeois society; however, this placed Katerina, a member of the working class, in direct relation with the general public of the Soviet Union, thus making the opera less than ideal for performance. This reveals a greater emphasis placed on unification through the collective Soviet community, rather than unification against bourgeois society. While some reviews cited this representation of Katerina as satire, “Muddle instead of Music” claimed that it was an insult and thus not relevant to the audience.⁴⁴ Shostakovich failed to achieve *opora na klassiku*, relation to past classical models, as he used contemporary experimental techniques and styles, such as atonality and jazz, within *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*.⁴⁵ Quite a number of his compositions up until this point had included the same experimentation, but “Muddle instead of Music” was the first substantial attack against such techniques.

Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District became an example of formalism and naturalism, and its review in *Pravda* became an example of the consequences of producing an unacceptable art piece. The review was condemning; losing government favor during the Great Purge meant

⁴⁴ *Idem*.

⁴⁵ Elizabeth A. Wells, “The New Woman: Lady Macbeth and Sexual Politics in the Stalinist Era,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 13, no. 2 (2001): 173-174. The use of trombones and saxophones in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District* was also associated with moral depravity due to their use in jazz. Jazz was “equated...with homosexuality, drugs, and bourgeois culture.” It is important to note that this is not the African-American genre that we call jazz today, but rather a type of light popular music from Weimar Germany, itself distinct from Germanic jazz, that had resounding success when first introduced to the Soviet audience. An example is Ernst Krenek’s opera *Jonny spielt auf*, which was popular both in large cities, such as Leningrad, and in rural villages.

risk not only to one's own life, but also to the lives of family and friends.⁴⁶ Shostakovich's music was removed from concert halls, and his income was reduced sharply.⁴⁷ While the consequences of producing formalist and naturalistic music were made clear, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* was not very helpful as an example for artists to modify their works. "Muddle instead of Music" seems to have provided clear reasons for why *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* was contrary to socialist realism as an art form, but the review failed to outline clearly what artists were expected to produce.

The Fifth Symphony

The publication of "Muddle instead of Music" and a subsequent negative review of another of Shostakovich's works, the ballet *The Limpid Stream*, prompted the composer to withdraw his already completed Fourth Symphony from its scheduled premiere. On December 11, 1936, the intended date of performance, the government released an announcement in the *Sovetskoye iskusstvo* newspaper, stating that "Shostakovich appealed to...withdraw his Fourth Symphony from performance on the grounds that it in no way corresponds to his current creative convictions and represents from him a long outdated phase."⁴⁸ While many rumors about the performance cancellation circulated, Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony did not resurface until 25 years had passed; focus instead turned toward his new composition, the Fifth Symphony.

In 1937, a year after falling into government disfavor for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*, Shostakovich was able to recover his reputation and support with the first performance of his Fifth Symphony, subtitled 'A Soviet artist's response to just criticism.' The subtitle was

⁴⁶ Caroline Brooke, "Soviet Musicians and the Great Terror," *Europe-Asia Studies* 54, no. 3 (2002): 397.

⁴⁷ Barbara Mekanowitzky, "Music to Serve the State," *The Russian Review* 24, no. 3 (1965): 270.

⁴⁸ Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2000), 95.

suggested and added to the score by a local journalist and editor two months prior to the premiere, but it is generally accepted that Shostakovich agreed with the addition as he never protested its addition.⁴⁹ Composition of the piece came quickly, with work beginning in April of 1937 and ending in July of that same year. Throughout this time, Shostakovich became intimately aware of the dangers political disfavor had brought; by mid-1937, his sister had been exiled, his brother-in-law arrested, and his mother-in-law sent to a labor camp. In addition, one of Shostakovich's friends and primary political supporters, Mikhail Tukachevsky, had been executed.⁵⁰ The symphony premiered on November 21, 1937, performed by the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, and received a standing ovation that lasted over half an hour.⁵¹

Following the 1936 *Pravda* review of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*, music and music composition had come to the center of government attention; interestingly, this led to the formation of a unique space for Soviet symphonies. While most other music forms were undergoing drastic changes in expectation, symphonies remained largely untouched. Symphonies were viewed as a particularly important outlet of Soviet art, as they were typically well-received both within the Soviet Union and abroad. Because of this success, various exceptions were made regarding the qualities of symphonies, further complicating the message of what composers were expected to produce.

Conservatism in the composition of symphonies was viewed not as preservation of an obsolete bourgeois society, but rather as a promotion of the accessibility of symphonic music. As such, most symphonies retained the standard four movements and were placed in their own

⁴⁹ Francis Maes, *A History of Russian Music: From Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 304.

⁵⁰ Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2000), 98-99.

⁵¹ Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia: Enlarged Edition, 1917-1981* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 132.

category of “Stalinist neoclassicism.”⁵² Soviet musicologist Boris Asafiev describes the Soviet symphony as a balance of four modes. The first mode is a composer’s inclination toward the “universal creative consciousness” and removal from individual expression. This aligns with the standards of socialist realism in that the end goal is to have a uniform society and goes even further to highlight the idea that this uniformity exists not just in the end products of composers but also in the process of composition. The second mode is the composer’s acknowledgement of the symphony as an emotional outlet for the individual. The composer’s individual experience and suffering provides the basis for a communicable story to which the audience, both individually and collectively, can relate. The third mode is the recognition that while the symphony is an emotional outlet, it should not be used solely as such because that would make the symphony too individualistic. As Asafiev describes it, the composer must have the strength of will to resist the temptation of writing a wholly emotional piece, as it would draw too much on personal experience and detract from the accessibility of the symphony. The final mode is the composer’s use of logic to create a symphony that stimulates the audience not only emotionally but also intellectually.⁵³ The contrast between emotion and intellect will create a symphony that engages all members of the audience from the common worker to the intelligentsia.

The official status of Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony was solidly established with the release of a review by Alexey Tolstoy, a prominent Soviet writer.⁵⁴ In his review, Tolstoy

⁵² Richard Taruskin, “Public lies and unspeakable truth interpreting Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony,” In *Shostakovich Studies*, ed. David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 26.

⁵³ David Haas, “Boris Asaf’yev and Soviet Symphonic Theory,” *The Musical Quarterly* 76, no. 3, (1992): 419-420.

⁵⁴ Alexey Tolstoy was a relative of both Leo Tolstoy and Ivan Turgenev. Shostakovich knew Tolstoy well, as he had recently collaborated with him in the production of the abandoned opera *Orango*. Tolstoy worked as a librettist along with Alexander Starchakov, but the two failed to write the libretto by the proposed deadline. This led to Shostakovich, who was working on the

compares the symphony to the literary model of Soviet Bildungsroman, a genre that sought to teach the common people to appreciate the justice of revolutionary ideals. He presents Shostakovich's symphony as an exemplary model of the musical version of socialist realism. In his review, he establishes the standard that the Soviet audiences were "incapable of accepting decadent, gloomy, pessimistic art. Our audience responds enthusiastically to all that is bright, optimistic, life-affirming." In an article released very shortly after Tolstoy's review, Shostakovich affirms much of what the writer interpreted. He revealed that his Fifth Symphony describes "the formation of a man," a statement which was interpreted by the government as the formation of a Soviet man. In the symphony, Shostakovich "tried to imagine a man in all his suffering," building up to the finale of the piece, which "resolves the tense and tragic moments of the preceding movements in a joyous, optimistic fashion." Perhaps in an attempt to conform with the neoclassical nature of Soviet symphonies, Shostakovich makes a point to reference widespread and recognizable classical literature, stating that his symphony is "comparable to the life-affirming ardor of Shakespeare's tragedies."⁵⁵

This symphony bears striking similarities to works by Tchaikovsky. It functions as theatre piece with dramatic trills and allusions to many Russian and foreign sources, qualities typical of Tchaikovsky's compositions. In the first movement, Shostakovich includes a Slavic *Sturm und Drang* (similar to Tchaikovsky). In music, *Sturm und Drang* is achieved through slight dissonance and a long-drawn sentimental melody with throbbing accompaniment.⁵⁶ The

scores for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*, to deferring and then abandoning his score. Starchakov was later arrested in 1936 and shot in 1937.

⁵⁵ Francis Maes, *A History of Russian Music: From Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 354.

⁵⁶ Richard Anthony Leonard, *A History of Russian Music* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), 332.

second movement is a dance-scherzo. It removes itself from grotesque mockeries to display old-fashioned ballet music. The third movement is a slow Weltschmerz, a recognition and lamentation of all the suffering in the world. The piece closes with a rousing finale. This final movement begins with a typical Russian march, bringing the audience into a familiar sounding theme, and closes with slow build-up from soft mutterings to exultant major mode in brass with timpani.⁵⁷

While many Soviet listeners heard Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony as a celebration of Soviet ideals, others saw it as a criticism and lamentation of the Soviet citizen's life. These listeners interpreted the symphony as an expression of grief. Audience members such as Alexander Fadeyev, the head of the Writer's Union, recognized the symphony as "a work of astonishing strength," but also noted "a terrible emotional force...[that] arouses painful feelings." This is largely due to the allusions that Shostakovich makes in the piece. Shostakovich includes references to the Russian orthodox requiem, *panikhida*, which typically centers on themes of deliverance from life and suffering. He also includes references to Russian and foreign works written in memory of the dead. These include preludes by Russian composers Alexander Glazunov, Maximilian Steinberg, and Igor Stravinsky, and the Austrian composer Gustav Mahler's symphony *Das Lied von der Erde* (1909). The finale of Mahler's symphony, "Der Abschied" ("The Farewell") was the most recognizable passage included in Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Idem.

⁵⁸ Francis Maes, *A History of Russian Music: From Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 355.

Officially, the Soviet government approved Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, even going so far as to award him a Stalin Prize for his work.⁵⁹ However, this did not settle the disagreement in regard to the piece's interpretation. The many references made throughout the symphony made it difficult to assess whether the piece was truly in accordance with the proposed ideals of socialist realism. What the symphony did reveal, however, was that the government was willing to be more lenient in the musical interpretation of symphonies than in other musical forms. The nature of symphonies as wholly instrumental works made them much more subject to varied interpretation, as other compositions, such as ballets or cantatas, had accompanying dances or librettos that could direct the conclusions that an audience draws. Despite the controversy over the meaning of the symphony and perhaps ignoring the dissident opinions, the Soviet government still recognized it as an outstanding example of socialist realism. Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, while viewed as a successful reintegration of a Soviet musician into society, failed to clarify the points that were left unclear after the *Pravda* review of *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* and went even further to reveal more ambiguity regarding government policies with music.

⁵⁹ Oliver Johnson, "The Stalin Prize and the Soviet Artist: Status Symbol or Stigma?," *Slavic Review* 70, no. 4 (2011): 819. Stalin Prizes were the government's highest-ranking awards in recognition of a single work's contribution to science or culture. In the arts, it helped promote the political and ideological plans of the Soviet government.

Chapter 2: The Music of Sergei Prokofiev

Music and politics are incompatible, even mutually rejecting each other. – Sergei Prokofiev

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) was one of the best-known Soviet composers before and during Stalin's regime, but even he was not able to escape the criticisms of the government. Unlike Shostakovich, who never lived outside the Soviet Union, Prokofiev travelled throughout the Western world in his youth before returning home to the Soviet Union. The first of his compositions examined in this thesis is the film score of *Alexander Nevsky*. It was one of Prokofiev's first major compositions since his return and was vital in his reintegration into Soviet society. The second composition, *Zdravitsa*, will be analyzed as an example of a government commission, with specific focus on the instructions laid out to Prokofiev and on his freedom, or lack thereof, in composition. The version that will be used in this thesis is the original composition, prior to the deStalinization movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Both compositions will be evaluated based on their immediate reception and their willingness or refusal to conform to the ideals of socialist realism.

Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev was born on April 27, 1891 in Sontsovska, a rural province of the Russian Empire in modern-day Ukraine, to Sergei Alexeyevich Prokofiev and Maria Zhitkova. His father worked as a soil engineer on an estate of a former classmate, while his mother devoted herself to music. Prokofiev grew up listening to her play the piano and gained an interest in music from that. He completed his first composition at age 5 and by the age of 13 had written three operas and had been admitted to the St. Petersburg Conservatory.⁶⁰ Upon his graduation, his mother granted him a trip to London, during which he met a mentor, Sergei Diaghilev, and made a connection to the Western music circles. In 1918, Prokofiev lived and

⁶⁰ Israel Nestyev, *Prokofiev* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960) 1-16.

travelled in the United States and Eastern Europe, composing music and making a name for himself internationally. During this time, he made several visits back to the Soviet Union, but did not completely resettle there until 1936, the same year in which “Muddle instead of Music” was released by the *Pravda*. Prokofiev’s primary motivation for returning home was his decreasing popularity with Western audiences and his increasing patronage from the Soviet Union. However, upon return, he was plagued by denunciations, cancelled performances, and government investigations.⁶¹ Forcing himself to adjust to new restrictions that were laid out by the government, Prokofiev produced a selection of mass songs in his first two years following his return to the Soviet Union.⁶²

Alexander Nevsky

Prokofiev was already a well-established musician, both nationally and internationally, by the time he returned to the Soviet Union. Due to his extensive travels over his 18-year self-imposed exile, he was hailed as an icon of Russian artistic abilities abroad; unfortunately, with the changes in the Soviet government, his welcome home was not so friendly. His time abroad had left him for too long with the possibility of contamination of Western ideals. Since his composition of *Peter and the Wolf* in 1936 just after his return, Prokofiev was unable to have his works performed or even published. The notable exception was his *Cantata for the 20th*

⁶¹ Russell Merritt, “Recharging Alexander Nevsky: Tracking the Eisenstein-Prokofiev War Horse,” *Film Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (1994-1995): 36.

⁶² Simon Morrison, *The People’s Artist: Prokofiev’s Soviet Years*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 67-68. This is in reference to his collections *Six Songs* and *Songs of Our Days*, which are collections of folksong-inspired vocal works. Mass songs were a form of propaganda intended to create recognizable melodies that could form a unifying social identity in support of the Soviet Party. They were not connected to the Catholic mass ceremony in any way.

Anniversary of the October Revolution, which was not well received due to its length and complexity.

Prokofiev's first large musical undertaking that was released to the Soviet public after a three-year dry period was the film soundtrack of *Alexander Nevsky*, released in 1938. This film, a collaboration with successful Soviet director Sergei Eisenstein, depicts a heroic epic of Alexander Nevsky and the defeat of invading Teutonic Knights. For both Prokofiev and Eisenstein, *Alexander Nevsky* served as a testament to the artists' adherence to Soviet ideology and socialist realism as an art form. Eisenstein, who, in 1933, had also recently returned from living abroad, selected *Alexander Nevsky* as his first completed film in 10 years and specifically reached out to Prokofiev for the film score. It was imperative for both artists that the film be well received by both the public and the government.⁶³

Film held a special place in Soviet culture, as it demonstrated the development of a new technology that could bring in a new age. Above all else, film gained its importance as a propagandist tool through its compound visual and auditory nature.⁶⁴ Censorship of films happened by two separate means: visual and auditory. The main issue with the visual component of films was the convolution of fiction and reality. Both Lenin and Stalin valued a film's ability to present a political message in a form similar to reality but failed to acknowledge the worth of creating films centered around a fictional premise and story.⁶⁵ Auditory censorship focused primarily on the message being communicated through the dialogue and the soundtrack. The

⁶³ Russell Merritt, "Recharging Alexander Nevsky: Tracking the Eisenstein-Prokofiev War Horse," *Film Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (1994-1995): 36.

⁶⁴ Richard Taylor, "Soviet Socialist realism and the cinema Avante-Garde," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 17, no. 3-4 (1984-85): 186.

⁶⁵ Ronald Levaco, "Censorship, ideology, and style in Soviet cinema," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 17, no. 3-4 (1984-85): 174.

dialogue posed a threat of revealing anti-Soviet sentiments in an easily communicable way, while the soundtrack would reinforce these possible sentiments.⁶⁶

Alexander Nevsky begins with an invasion of the city of Pskov by the Teutonic Knights. The knights, aided by the traitorous Tverdilo, conquer the city and massacre its residents. The titular character, a prince of Novgorod, rallies the common people of his home city to fight against the invaders against the wishes of the nobles and merchants. Despite the opposition, Nevsky brings his troops to battle, successfully forcing the knights to drown in a thinly frozen lake, in the iconic Battle on Ice. The film resolves with the freeing the captive foot soldiers by a liberated Pskov, the ransoming of the remaining Teutonic Knights, and the presumed murder and dismemberment of Tverdilo.⁶⁷

Most films from the early 20th century were created such that the music was composed after the filming had been completed. Prokofiev and Eisenstein, however, decided to have the music composed concurrently with filming. In fact, the score for the Battle on Ice was written months prior to the planned filming.⁶⁸ The concurrent music composition and filming allowed for two important aspects of the film. First, the music and the picture attempted to depict the same scene independently. In the film score, the actions of the scenes were demonstrated through intonazia and musical imagery. Second, during development of both the music and the picture, editing could be done throughout the process to ensure that a unified message was being presented in the film. As a result of this editing, the message portrayed by the two stand-alone

⁶⁶ Thomas Saunders, "Art, Ideology, and Entertainment in Soviet Cinema," *Canadian Journal of History/Annales canadiennes d'histoire* XXX 30, no.1 (1995): 85.

⁶⁷ Petr Andreevich Pavlenko, Sergei Eisenstein, D. Vasil'ev, É. Tisse, Nikolaï Cherkasov, Okhlopov Konstantinovich, Nikolaï Pavlovich, Andreï L'vovich Abrikosov, *et al*, *Aleksandr Nevskii* (New York: Janus Films, 2006), DVD.

⁶⁸ Kevin Bartig, *Sergei Prokofiev's Alexander Nevsky*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 31.

components of the film, the image and the music, was much more coordinated and united than others of the same time period.⁶⁹

The film itself uses strong association to the political climate of the Soviet Union and to Russian folklore to securely fulfill both *narodnost* and *dostupnost*. To begin with, it leaves out many important details about the characters and setting, as Eisenstein assumed that his audience would be familiar with the references. For instance, the titular character, Alexander Nevsky, was a real prince of Novgorod, who led medieval Russian forces to victory over German and Swedish invaders during a time of turmoil. Eventually, he rose to power over the entirety of Rus (a medieval Slavic civilization spanning current-day Belarus and extending into surrounding countries) and was canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1547.⁷⁰ Because the intended audience was the common populace of the Soviet Union, viewers would have recognized the reference of the titular character to one of the iconic saints and folk heroes of Russian history. The film was released during a time of increasing tension between the Soviet Union and Germany, making the character choice immediately relevant to the contemporary Soviet population. In addition, much of the set and costume design deliberately referenced contemporary German symbols, such as helmets resembling those of the German troops in the First World War and swastikas on the clothing of the Teutonic Knights. The fact that the film was released alongside the propagandist film *If Tomorrow Brings War*, a compilation of Soviet military practice footage meant to reassure the Soviet public that the nation was prepared to

⁶⁹ Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, trans. Jay Leyda, (New York: Hartcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1949), 72-83.

⁷⁰ E Cole, "The Image of Aleksandr Nevskiy in Medieval Russia: Warrior and Saint," *Choice* 44, no. 9 (2007): 1587.

defend itself against aggressors at any moment, only made these connections even more strikingly obvious to the Soviet audience.⁷¹

The music also lent itself to easy comprehension through easily recognizable imagery. Throughout the film, Prokofiev uses various techniques to achieve musical representations of the actions onscreen. While the music is not completely synced to the images to avoid a cartoon-like effect, the sound is clear enough on its own. The sound of hooves against the ground is mimicked through a repeated pair of chords that slowly increases in speed during the approximately four-minute advance of the Teutonic Knights. The image is not accompanied by the sound of actual hooves, as both Eisenstein and Prokofiev thought the music was an accurate enough depiction to stand alone. During the battle sequence, Prokofiev uses pairs of eighth notes, alternating back and forth between a low and high register, to evoke the image of swordplay. He captures the swinging of the swords through the use of grace notes, played quickly just before the first eighth note in a pair.⁷² The clear representations that Prokofiev provides in his music made it easily accessible and memorable to viewers.

To achieve *partiinost*, the film also firmly roots itself in alignment with government goals. Although the film subject is a saint of the Russian Orthodox Church, the film displays may anticatholic and anticlerical tendencies, particularly by placing the Catholic church as the main antagonist of the film. The official stance of the Soviet government was antireligious, and the film's accordance with policy was further enforced by the emphasis on the societal necessity of the common people.⁷³ As was typical of socialist realist art, the upper classes of nobles and

⁷¹ Kevin Bartig, *Sergei Prokofiev's Alexander Nevsky*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 4-14.

⁷² Ibid, 50-51.

⁷³ M.K. Dziewanowski, *A History of Soviet Russia and Its Aftermath: Fifth Edition* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1997), 207-8.

merchants were portrayed as being detrimental to achieving the common good. The character representations of these classes actively sought to prevent Nevsky from confronting the Teutonic Knights, thus impeding Russian victory. Because Nevsky could find support nowhere else, it was only through the efforts of the common people of Novgorod that Rus was able to triumph over the Crusaders.

Opora na klassiku can be seen in references throughout the film score. The most obvious is a reference to Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *The Snow Maiden* in the celebration of victory at the end of the film. The upbeat tune played by the minstrels in *Alexander Nevsky* is nearly identical to a piece in the opera, leaving no room to doubt the intentionality of the reference. Prokofiev also uses techniques found in multiple other Russian composers' works, such as pastoral themes including a sustained trill on a violin found in pieces by Borodin and Balakirev.⁷⁴

The film was so successful that Prokofiev rewrote the film score in the form of a cantata. The cantata is a combination of cues from the film and newly written segments to ensure smooth transitions between the different sections. Part of the challenge was reimagining a piece that was originally meant for a small studio orchestra into a grand production for a full chorus and orchestra. Many modifications were made to accommodate this change, but the cantata remained extraordinarily popular and praiseworthy, perhaps riding on the previous success of its associated film.

Ultimately, in the case of *Alexander Nevsky*, it would seem that the musical success lent itself more to the images themselves than to the music's actual adherence to Soviet policies. Prokofiev himself may also have realized this, as prior to the production of this film, he viewed

⁷⁴ Kevin Bartig, *Sergei Prokofiev's Alexander Nevsky*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 61-62.

musicians who contributed to film scores as popular artists who had lost their touch with the creative inspiration necessary to produce their own music.⁷⁵ Following the release of *Alexander Nevsky*, however, Prokofiev's opinion drastically changed, as he lauded Soviet Cinema as the "most contemporary art" and continued to pursue a career that included regular film score production.

Alexander Nevsky revealed an almost capitalistic value attributed to music under Stalin. If a composition was approved and successful, Prokofiev demonstrated that composers could exploit that success to produce a strikingly similar, yet different version of the same song and still receive funding (possibly even increased funding) from the government.⁷⁶ The film score and subsequent cantata revealed that the government expected not just a unified message to be portrayed and interpreted, but was willing to accept essentially the same music multiple times to achieve this goal. *Alexander Nevsky* illustrates a striking contradiction within the Soviet government's attitude toward music; while Soviet art was expected to pave the way into the new era and maintain its originality, it was also expected to remain unchanging and static in its style and message.

Zdravitsa

In 1939, Prokofiev received a commission from the All-Union Radio Committee to write a cantata for Stalin's 60th birthday (December 21, 1939). This was the artist's the third cantata written with government sponsorship, following the failed *Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution* and the rearrangement of the extraordinarily successful film score of

⁷⁵ Ibid, 22.

⁷⁶ Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 233.

Alexander Nevsky.⁷⁷ Cantatas were rising in popularity amongst composers under Stalin's regime, due to the ease of communicating a pro-Soviet message. The lyrics allowed for composers to make their support of the Soviet Union obvious, by showering the nation and its leaders with praise.⁷⁸ They were also often written for and performed at major government-sponsored events. *Zdravitsa* was to be showcased with pieces ranging from vocal to full orchestral works written by other composers during a state-run event celebrating the progress and prosperity achieved under Stalin's regime. During its premiere and in subsequent performances, *Zdravitsa*, often translated as *Hail to Stalin*, was wildly successful and lauded as the paragon of what Soviet cantatas should be.

In form and style, *Zdravitsa* is very similar to the multitude of mass songs that were produced during Stalin's regime. Compared to other types of compositions, *Zdravitsa* is relatively short, at a mere thirteen minutes in performance. It also has a melody that is easy to follow and a clear rondo structure.⁷⁹ *Zdravitsa* and mass songs embodied the idea of *pesennost*: Soviet music was required to be lyrical. *Pesennost* was particularly important for choral works, as a clear memorable vocal line was the hallmark of a "successful" Soviet song.⁸⁰

Prokofiev achieves *narodnost* through reference not only to past models but also to contemporary popular songs. Here, Prokofiev quotes one of his own mass songs, "Provodi." During the wedding narration of *Zdravitsa*, the melody line is identical to "Provodi," and the lyrics describe similar situations. Prokofiev also includes a reference to Mussorsky's opera *Boris*

⁷⁷ William Braun, "Prokofiev's Choral Works," *The Choral Journal* 31, no.10 (1991): 20-22.

⁷⁸ George G. Weickhardt, "Dictatorship and Music: How Russian Music Survived the Soviet Regime," *Russian History* 31, no. 1/2 (2004): 125.

⁷⁹ Vladimir Orlov, "Prokofiev and the Myth of the Father of Nations: The Cantata *Zdravitsa*," *The Journal of Musicology* 30, no.4 (2013): 581.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 601.

Godunov.⁸¹ As *Boris Godunov* was a well-known work, the monophonic beginning of *Zdravitsa*, which diverges into multiple choral voices, would remind listeners of a similar phrase from the first scene of the opera.

For the most part, *partiinost* was included in the libretto of the cantata, provided by the All-Union Radio Committee. The words were drawn from a collection of poems, songs, and stories, entitled *Works of the People of the USSR*, compiled for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution. The Committee specifically selected 7 folk poems dedicated to Stalin by Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Mari, Mordvinian, Kumyk, and Kurdish storytellers.⁸² As the authors of the poems originated from areas across the Soviet Union, the selection of poems was intended to make the cantata more relevant to the entire Soviet public. It was also meant to demonstrate a unifying quality of Stalin that extended across many different places and ethnic groups in the Soviet Union. These texts embodied a new type of cultural epic, called “novina,” that replaced bylina, the old Russian epic.⁸³ These epics, often told in seaside fishing communities, were typically separated into three parts: introduction, narrative, and epilogue. The introduction generally describes the hero of the story and the problem the hero will be solving. The narrative portion outlines how the hero solved the issue, often with wild exaggerations to keep the interest of the listeners. The epilogue details the hero’s reward, a moral, or a reference to the sea.⁸⁴ Novina differed from bylina in that there was a heavy emphasis on the veneration of the leaders of the Soviet Union, indicating that now even folklore

⁸¹ Ibid, 605.

⁸² Simon Morrison, *The People’s Artist: Prokofiev’s Soviet Years*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 115.

⁸³ Vladimir Orlov, “Prokofiev and the Myth of the Father of Nations: The Cantata *Zdravitsa*,” *The Journal of Musicology* 30, no.4 (2013): 589.

⁸⁴ Feliz J. Oinas, “The Problem of the Aristocratic Origin of Russian Byliny,” *Slavic Review* 30, no. 3 (1971): 513-522.

of the nation was meant to be used as a propagandist tool instead of as a culture-preserving entity. The references included in these new Soviet epics drew upon familiar folk images to form more universal propagandist works.

In addition to the use of the Russian epic, *Zdravitsa* includes other common poetic and lyrical forms to achieve *dostupnost*. In the chorus description of Stalin, Prokofiev includes *chatushka*, a form of Russian folk poetry and music recitation. Due to its memorable rhythm and simple rhyme scheme, it was easily understood by all Soviet citizens and was hence upheld as a clear depiction of socialist realism.⁸⁵ Later, during the quotation of “Provodi”, there is a recreation of a *velichal'naya*, a Russian wedding song, with the use of undulating theme and plagal harmonies. By using the *velichal'naya* during the description of a girl's travels to Moscow to meet Stalin, *Zdravitsa* elevates weddings to a central feature of Russian culture, from a personal and private ordeal to a national event.

While for the most part the song was well received, there were some criticisms. The piece begins and ends in C major, but the main theme of *Zdravitsa* travels across multiple musical keys. This was not acceptable by Soviet standards, because it ventured toward the highly discouraged experimentation with tonalities that was iconic of contemporary Western music. In addition, when the chorus is first introduced, it can easily be covered up by the brass instruments in the background. This was seen as a possible attempt to drown out the joyous and celebratory libretto. Further problems arose when the female chorus response is in a minor key, typically interpreted as morose, though the libretto speaks of the joys of the Soviet people.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Pauline Fairclough, *Classics for the Masses: Shaping Soviet Musical Identity Under Lenin and Stalin*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 50.

⁸⁶ Vladimir Orlov, “Prokofiev and the Myth of the Father of Nations: The Cantata *Zdravitsa*,” *The Journal of Musicology* 30, no.4 (2013): 610-615.

While they were made by prominent Soviet critics, these disapprovals were, for the most part, ignored by the government, as the overall message of the libretto and the clear inclusion of Russian folk-art forms placed *Zdravitsa* as one of the most iconic socialist realist music pieces to be composed.

The decision to ignore the dissident criticisms reveals even more confusion regarding Soviet expectations of music. This piece made clear that censorship surrounding music did not pertain to solely the music itself, but also to its reviews. However, this decision to ignore certain criticisms and not others did not help clarify the aspects of music that were considered good and those that were considered unideal. In fact, it instead leads to the idea that music censorship was, to an extent, arbitrary and had little to do with the music and its interpretation and more to do with politics and displays of power.

Chapter 3: Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and the Crisis of 1948

A roof can be repaired, but there is a great big hole in the very foundation of Soviet music. –

Andrei Zhdanov

Despite criticism and the looming threat of harm that accompanied it, Shostakovich and Prokofiev remained at the top of Soviet musical society. While some of the music they produced were not approved by the government, they wrote many more compositions that were praised and exemplified. They had positions in the Musical Committee and at the Music Conservatory and continued to compose prolifically. A number of their works were awarded Stalin Awards, and their pieces were sent abroad to display the wonders of the Soviet Union to foreign powers. For the most part, the two composers stayed out of trouble until the condemning review of *The Great Fellowship*, an opera by Vano Muradeli.⁸⁷

Vano Muradeli and The Great Fellowship

Vano Muradeli (1908-1970) was born in Georgia and moved to Tbilisi to complete his early musical studies. He later became a student at the Moscow Conservatory under the primary tutelage of Nikolai Miaskovsky, a close associate of Shostakovich and Prokofiev. While he was a lesser-known composer, Muradeli received a number of government awards leading up to the performance of *The Great Fellowship*.⁸⁸ While he had gained government recognition, the premiere of Muradeli's opera did not produce any real excitement with the public. In fact, the premiere was a closed performance, attended by approximately 500 people, most of them government officials. It was later claimed that the audience was composed of "sufficiently

⁸⁷ The title of this opera is also translated as *The Great Friendship*.

⁸⁸ Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia: Enlarged Edition, 1917-1981* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 213.

cultured” individuals. However, Tamara Livanova, a distinguished music historian, was unable to get a ticket, while members of the Food and Fish Ministries were able to attend.⁸⁹

The Great Fellowship premiered on September 28, 1947 in Stalino, before enjoying performance in roughly twenty other cities.⁹⁰ The libretto was written by Georgi Mdivani. The opera was promoted as a tribute to Georgia, Stalin’s home country, and an homage to the Georgian Communist commissar Sergo Ordzhonikidze, who had played a major role in the integration of Georgia into the Soviet Union. The original title of the opera, “The Special Commissar,” was changed to “The Great Fellowship,” changing the focus of the title from Ordzhonikidze to the fraternity between the many peoples of Soviet Union. The story draws upon Ordzhonikidze’s personal account of his life, *The Path of a Bolshevik*. The opera is set in 1919 in northern Georgia and follows Lezgin Murtaz and Cossack Galina. The two fall in love, but are unable to pursue their relationship due to the rivalry between their two communities. By chance, Ordzhonikidze visits the area to persuade locals to support Revolution, prompting Murtaz to join. This leads to Murtaz’s heroic death, as he stops a bullet aimed at Commissar. With his dying words “The great Lenin showed us the way. Stalin will lead us through the storms to defeat the enemy” Murtaz renews his dedication to the Bolshevik cause.

The opera was generally received well during its performances outside Moscow, but Stalin, who attended a performance at the Bolshoi Theatre, did not have such a high opinion. On February 10, 1948, the Soviet government released a statement entitled “On V. Muradeli’s opera *The Great Fellowship*,” labeling Muradeli and other Soviet musicians as formalists and anti-

⁸⁹ Patrick Zuk, “Nikolay Myaskovsky and the Events of 1948,” *Music & Letters* 93, no. 1 (2012): 62.

⁹⁰ Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia: Enlarged Edition, 1917-1981* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 213. Stalino is modern-day Donetsk.

popular and the opera itself as “anti-artistic”. According to the government statement, *The Great Fellowship* displayed four objectionable qualities. The first was the insufficient inclusion of the Ossetians when depicting the Georgian populous. The Ossetians were marginalized by Georgians in the opera, and Stalin, who was Ossetian, took offense at this slight against his people. Further, the libretto gave the impression that the Georgians and Ossetians were opposed to the Bolsheviks, giving rise to accusations of historical inaccuracy. The second issue was that opera did not sufficiently demonize other peoples who were being deported from the region to Siberia and East Central Asia. These were primarily the Ingushes and the Chechens, who had displayed anti-Russian sentiment during the Second World War.⁹¹ The third was the praise of Ordzhonikidze, who, as Nikita Krushchev revealed years later, was driven to suicide by Stalin during the Great Purge. The opera served as a reminder of the fallout between the two Bolshevik leaders.⁹² The final offense was Muradeli’s decision to write his own lezginka dance. The traditional dance melody was one of Stalin’s favorite folk tunes, and Muradeli’s interpretation of this melody was viewed as a “false originality.”⁹³

The most condemning accusation of all, not just for Muradeli, but for all Soviet composers was the equation of stylistic issues found in both *The Great Fellowship* and *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. In “On V. Muradeli’s *The Great Fellowship*,” the Central

⁹¹ Robert H McNeal, *Resolutions and Decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Volume 3: The Stalin Years 1929-1953* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 248-251.

⁹² Laurel Fay, “Velikaya družba (‘The Great Friendship’),” *Groove Music Online* (2002). <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/0-mo-9781561592630-e-5000006500>.

⁹³ Robert H McNeal, *Resolutions and Decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Volume 3: The Stalin Years 1929-1953* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 248-251. It is important to note that while this paper focuses on the issues with music, Muradeli faced government threats on other grounds, as well. In producing *The Great Fellowship*, he considerably exceeded his budget, and it was revealed that he was involved in shady financial dealings, contracting with multiple theaters across the country.

Committee of the Soviet Union argued that *Pravda*'s "Muddle Instead of Music" had "clearly formulated the demands that the Soviet people make on their composers" (which, as explained earlier, it had not), and turned the criticism from Muradeli to other composers, including Shostakovich and Prokofiev.

The Zhdanov Affair

Andrei Zhdanov (1896-1948), whom I have quoted at the beginning of the chapter, was Stalin's advisor on cultural policy. By early 1948, he had already conducted attacks on literature, cinema, and theater, and was beginning to turn his attention toward music. Zhdanov was expected to be Stalin's successor had he not died in August of the same year. He was a main player in the Great Terror, having personally approved 176 execution lists. From 1946-47, he served as the Chairman of the Soviet Union and, having organized the Cominform, had a personal duty to oversee the arts.⁹⁴ The Cominform was formally known as the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties and was used to repel anticommunist expansion. While this expansion referred in some part to territorial expansion, expression of anticommunist ideals was thought to be due to the expansion of anticommunist parties.⁹⁵

In January of 1948, Zhdanov convened a conference of musicians at the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party in Moscow. Composers, both prominent and rising, attended, though Prokofiev opted to stay at home and send in his response as a letter after the meeting. In accordance with the advertised subject of the meeting, Zhdanov began the discussion by offering some criticism of Muradeli's opera. In his perilous situation, Muradeli

⁹⁴ Alexander Werth, *Musical Uproar in Moscow* (Westport: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1973), 35-36.

⁹⁵ M.K. Dziewanowski, *A History of Soviet Russia and Its Aftermath: Fifth Edition* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1997), 279-280.

chose to shift the blame: “When I enrolled at the Moscow Conservatory, I loved folk music, and I also loved our Russian classical composers...I was told they were unoriginal...at the Conservatory they forced us to study ‘modern models’ and poured scorn on ‘traditionalism.’”⁹⁶ This unfortunate choice ultimately opened the floor to an attack on all of the musicians present, though particular focus was given to “the Big Four,” Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Nikolai Miaskovsky, and Aram Khachaturian, who dominated the Soviet musical realm at the time.⁹⁷

During the conference, Zhdanov accused the musicians of having failed the Soviet People, going so far as to suggest that there had not been a single achievement in the realm of Soviet music. The response was tragic. A few musicians attempted to defend their musical choices, referencing the government awards and recognition they had received for their works, but the widespread response was apologetic. Shostakovich offered his apologies, and even acknowledged the perceived validity of the attack being made against him. Prokofiev offered his own apology in the letter he sent days later in response to the meeting. All the accolades previously won by the musicians were deemed too easily given out and thus invalid, so were retracted. Their compositions, no longer hailed as being iconic, were instead viewed as worthless.⁹⁸

The official government decree “On V. Muradeli’s *The Great Fellowship*” was released shortly thereafter. Beyond its comments on Muradeli’s opera, the Decree goes into depth in its criticisms of other musicians, in particular Shostakovich and Prokofiev, both of whom are

⁹⁶ Patrick Zuk, “Nikolay Myaskovsky and the Events of 1948,” *Music & Letters* 93, no. 1 (2012): 63.

⁹⁷ Alexander Werth, *Musical Uproar in Moscow* (Westport: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1973), 18.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 47-86. These pages are translated excerpts of the three-day conference.

mentioned multiple times as being guilty of having divorced themselves from the Soviet public. The Decree ended with four resolutions: (1) to condemn formalistic trends in Soviet music as anti-People and leading to the destruction of music, (2) to advise the Committee on the Arts that the situation in Soviet music be rectified and to assure the development of Soviet music in the realistic tradition, (3) to urge composers to be more conscious of their duties to the Soviet people and assure an upsurge of creative activity that would lead to the creation of high-quality works worthy of the Soviet people, and (4) to approve organizational measures by appropriate party and soviet bodies aimed at improving the state of Soviet music.⁹⁹ These four resolutions display the idea that the government has an unnatural amount of control over music and the ability of composers to produce music.

First, they assume that a clear idea of socialist realism and formalism had been presented to the composers, which it had not. Further, this decree implies that the government has control over the “creative activity” of Soviet composers. Finally, it assumes one unified identity that the musicians occupy; that is, it assumes that the condemnation of one musician serves as a condemnation of all musicians. Perhaps reflective of the Soviet Union’s ideals to create a singular unified Soviet identity, culpability became not just an individual experience, but a shared one.

⁹⁹ Robert H. McNeal, *Resolutions and decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: Volume 3, The Stalin Years: 1929-1953* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 248-251.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have stressed the notion that the Soviet government was not promoting consistent or understandable guidelines for musicians to understand concretely the difference between socialist realism and formalism. While the government continually proclaimed things that were done incorrectly and correctly, its pronouncements were vague and often contradicted former assessments. As years passed, it became clear that the expectations for Soviet musicians were inconsistent and almost constantly in flux. The government awarded musicians for their work, only to retract the awards at a later date. While positive reviews could be revised and changed into negative reviews, once a composition received a negative review, it would never be redeemed.

The four pieces examined in this thesis serve as a testament to the government's uncertain standards. Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* gained notoriety after the *Pravda*'s condemning review, despite its initial popularity. Again and again, it was dragged out to face further scrutiny: first, during Zhdanov's attack against prominent musicians in 1948, and then, when Shostakovich rewrote the opera in 1962 under the new name *Katerina Ismailova*.¹⁰⁰ His Fifth Symphony was first viewed as heroic and supportive of the Stalinist Soviet Union. As power transferred to Krushchev, it was viewed instead as an artist's pain and struggle not to bend to the will of a harsh dictatorship.¹⁰¹ Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* came into prominence with its accompanying film, as it portrayed the Russian resistance against an invading Germanic force. Strangely enough, it remained a "classic" of Russian Cinema after

¹⁰⁰ Francis Maes, *A History of Russian Music: From Kamarinskaya to Babi Yar* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 362-3.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 354.

1948, when all his other works were removed from performance.¹⁰² His cantata *Zdravitsa*, initially thought to exemplify all that the Soviet Union was attempting to promote in its lyrics, was one of those pieces removed from public performance. Four years later, in 1952, it was the first of Prokofiev's pieces to be broadcast on the radio to signal the end of the government's disapproval. Under Krushchev, *Zdravitsa* underwent great revision in the late 1950s and early '60s, as the government carried out its de-Stalinization campaign.¹⁰³

While the actual policies of the Soviet Union were not consistent, the reasons for censorship were, and reflect reasons for censorship to this day. As we can see in the dynamic between the Soviet government and musicians, such as Shostakovich and Prokofiev, censorship concerns above all the power that one has over another. It exists as a way to control information to promote one singular opinion amongst a large population. As we turn to look at the present day, we find that censorship is still extremely prevalent. In North Korea, the government created its own separate internet server, the only server that citizens can access. In China, television broadcasts have recently begun censoring male celebrities' earrings, as they "display femininity that is not representative of the male population of China." In Greece, we have a minority group, the Macedonian Greeks, which is not even recognized as an ethnic group within the country. In the US, politicians, ranging from local officials to President Donald Trump, are being called to court for blocking individuals and groups on social media to prevent public criticism on online platforms. Benin, in its most recent election, has joined the multitude of African countries to use complete internet shutdowns to limit the information that citizens can receive. Perhaps most

¹⁰² Kevin Bartig, *Sergei Prokofiev's Alexander Nevsky*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 99.

¹⁰³ Vladimir Orlov, "Prokofiev and the Myth of the Father of Nations: The Cantata *Zdravitsa*," *The Journal of Musicology* 30, no.4 (2013): 580.

relevant to the topic of this thesis, on March 13, 2019, President Vladimir Putin signed a bill into law, stating that it is now a crime in Russia to express negative opinions on the government and government officials. As we evaluate the current stances on censorship, I hope this thesis has brought the idea that there is simply no way to use censorship successfully to express a singular message in art to your attention. For one, there are too many variables that go into the interpretation of art. For another, the use of censorship to produce a single opinion is inherently contradictory. It assumes the presence of multiple opinions prior to even the implementation of censorship. Censorship is inherently futile, as it fails to remove the other opinions and instead creates confusion regarding the desired opinion.

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