




MUSICAL LIFE IN RUSSIA

1917-1954





THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

- Took place in October of 1917
- Conflicted agendas set forth by the Bolsheviks
 - Scorn for the culture of the ruling elite
 - Making this culture accessible to all

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Art belongs to the people. It must have its deepest roots in the broad masses 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.

-Vladimir Lenin



ANATOLY LUNACHARSKY

- ▶ Threefold task:
 - ▶ Educate the untutored masses
 - ▶ Win confidence of the arts intelligentsia
 - ▶ Convince political leadership of the value of the arts to mass education

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But of course we are Communists. We must not drop our hands into our laps and allow the chaos to ferment as it chooses. We must try consciously to guide this development and mould and determine the results.

-Vladimir Lenin

THE NEED FOR CULTURE

- Proletarian culture organizations emerged
 - Prolekul'ts gave musicians an opportunity to study in exchange for monetary incentives
- Vladimir Kirillov was a result of these Prolekul'ts
 - Used “revolutionary romanticism” in his poetry



There he is the savior, the lord of the earth,
The master of the titanic forces-
In the roar of countless steel machines,
In the radiance of electric suns.

We thought he would appear in a sunlight stole,
With a nimbus of divine mystery,
But he came to us clad in gray smoke
From the suburbs, foundries, factories.

-Vladimir Kirillov

RUSSIA IN THE 1920'S

- New Economic Policy (NEP)
 - Temporary retreat to capitalism and private ownership
 - Brief respite for artists
- Death of Lenin in 1924
 - Marked a harsher period of oppression for artists
- Joseph Stalin began to take over and solidify his power
 - Stalin's rise to power began a new orthodoxy

RUSSIA IN THE 1920'S

- Music world split in two:
 - Modernists
 - Proletarians
- “The Socialist Offensive” in 1929
 - New philosophy of arts: Social Realism

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Socialist realism, being the basic method of Soviet literature and criticism, requires from the artists truthful, historically concrete representation of reality in its evolutionary development. Moreover, truth and historical completeness of artistic representation must be combined with the task of ideological transformation and education of the working man in the spirit of socialism.

-Andrei Zhdanov



SOCIAL REALISM

- Not realistic portrayal of life
- Portrayal of life as Communist party saw fit
- Portrayed a distorted fantasy
- Two main purposes:
 - Enlist Artists to serve the party's agenda
 - Maintain strict control over artistic production

SOCIAL REALISM

- Union of Soviet Composers (USC)
- Financial support was obtained by joining the USC
- Celebrated example of Social Realism:
 - Ivan Dzerzhinsky's opera, Tikhii Don
- Poorly received opera:
 - Shostakovich's opera, Lady Macbeth

Operation Barbarossa, 1941

-  Areas of fierce fighting
-  Front line, Dec. 1941



WWII

- Music was focused on patriotic propaganda
- Response to newfound freedom:
 - Themes of patriotism and military triumph
 - War symphonies



ZHDANOVISM

- A return to Socialist Realism and anti-Western sentiment
- Purging began anew
- Composers strove hard to conform to new expectations
- Many retreated into creative silence while waiting for Stalin's death

