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The Effects of Totalitarian Regimes and the Individual on Russian and Soviet Music

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at
Syracuse University

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and Renée Crown University Honors
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Honors Capstone Project in Russian Culture

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Abstract

This paper addresses the development of Russian and Soviet music from the 1860's through Stalin's terror in the late 1930's. It focuses on the constraints placed on the composers by the totalitarian regime and how these individual composers were able to not only survive, but leave a greater impact on the development and style of music than the state that was constraining them. The paper focuses on how individual composers were able to use their innovation and talent to create unique material that captivated audiences both at home and abroad.

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Introduction

The epilogue of Lev Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace* focuses on the argument of how much impact an individual can have on a society. Is it truly the power of a single man that creates these changes, or rather the culmination of many unseen or unnoticed factors? There have been several moments throughout Russian history where an individual has been portrayed as radically shifting the direction of the country. Most noteworthy in this regard are individuals like Peter the Great, Vladimir Lenin, and Joseph Stalin. While all these individuals made these impacts from the political realm, this discussion can also be applied to the individuals immersed in the culture realm of Russian and Soviet society. The development of Russian and Soviet music was heavily influenced by both state censorship and control and also the innovation of individual artists. Although the state generally controlled the shape of the final musical product through its censorship and control over the institutions, the individual composers were able to make a much more meaningful and lasting impact on the development of Russian music through their innovation of the Russian style.

Russian musical culture progressed and developed in a manner that was unique from any other European nation, developing much later and at a much quicker pace. Instead of simply developing along the standard European musical traditions, Russian musicians adapted the European style to create new music that captivated Western audiences. Before the nineteenth century, the primary musical material in Russia came from the rural regions through folk songs and from the church through plainchant. While other European nations experienced both the

growth and experimentation of the Renaissance and the repression of the Reformation, Russia managed to remain completely isolated from these events, developing independently from European influence until the time of Peter the Great. This unique historical development and isolation is what distinguished Russian music from the typical European baroque style, and it is what eventually made Russian music so intriguing to Western audiences. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries Russian music developed rapidly, thanks to the ability of Russian composers to combine European styles with Russian nationalism to create a new, unique, and innovative style. Russian musicians accomplished this despite Russia's isolation from Europe, pervasive censorship, and lack of formal institutions before the 1860's.

Early on the Russian state utilized church verses and plainchant in order to reach a population that was poorly educated and unable to read. Throughout early Russian history the church played an integral role in shaping the nation and its identity, binding and connecting the many small, independent Russian peasant communities that existed before the Russian's adoption of Christianity in 988. The church united these groups by providing not only a common religion and ideology, but also a common language. Music was used as a tool to reach the uneducated citizenry, allowing the church and state to spread their message of unquestionable loyalty to the state to a population that was vastly uneducated and illiterate. The state and church created the infrastructure and a purpose for music in Russia, but after the establishment of the conservatories in the 19th century, it became possible for the individual to play a central role in musical development.

The impact of the state and church on music was lasting even as individuals began to play a more dominant role in the development of music and culture. Even when the citizenry became more educated and literate in the early twentieth century and the Soviets began to separate religion from the state, there were hardly any literary texts to be found that did not contain some form of biblical or liturgical themes and imagery.¹ Russian culture had become so intertwined with religion that even the atheistic, Soviet works contained hints of religious imagery. During the Soviet era, the state continued to use music as a means to reach out to and connect with the general populace, even going so far as to borrow from the styles of church choral music for propaganda purposes. This is evident in many works produced by the state; take the Soviet National Anthem as an example. The Soviet national anthem, adopted during WWII, is a simple choral piece that is very reminiscent of plainchant with its unison movement and lack of ornamentation. The Soviets reworked the church's style of music, which was familiar to the population, in order to connect to and to solidify their power over the masses. This practice of borrowing foundations and ideas from an outside source or a historical source and restructuring them to create new forms of music, as found in the Soviet National Anthem, is a theme that is commonly found throughout Russian musical history. This was true in the era of Tchaikovsky when he borrowed from the traditions and ideas of the West and combined them with Russian and Slavic folk songs to create Russian masterpieces, and it was also true

¹ Katerina Clark, The Soviet Novel: History As Ritual (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1981) 50.

in the time of the Soviet Union when composers and officials borrowed from the musical culture from the time of the tsars to create a new Soviet culture.

For most of the nineteenth century Russia possessed no means of formally educating its citizens in the traditions and structure of Russian music. This remained the case until the creation of musical conservatories in the major cities during the 1860's. Russian music and musical style first became popular within Russia largely through the efforts of Mikhail Glinka, a 19th century composer.² Glinka was a major influence to the famous Mighty Five [Могучая кучка] comprised of Balakirev, Cui, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Borodin, who were the group of composers that made nationalist Russian music relevant within Russia and popularized music. This increase of public interest led to the creation of standardized conservatories, to the dismay of the Mighty Five. The first Russian musical conservatory was established in St. Petersburg in 1862 and this was soon followed by the creation of a second conservatory in 1866 in Moscow.³ The Mighty Five were distressed by this event because they fought so hard to create a purely nationalistic and romantic style. They had all become accomplished composers and musicians without formalized institutions and felt that the conservatories would simply promote the European style over the Russian. Despite the objections of the Mighty Five, the conservatories in each of these cities played a significant role in the musical education of Russian citizens.

² Richard Taruskin, Defining Russia Musically (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997) 42.

³ Boris Schwarz, Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia: 1917-1970 (New York: The Norton Library, 1972) 22.

St. Petersburg and Moscow quickly became the epicenters of musical development in Russia and still remain as the nation's major cultural centers today. There was always a certain degree of competition between the two cities, the St. Petersburg conservatory being viewed as the more Western influenced of the two. Both cities created and maintained a strong following at their respective conservatories and opera houses and both conservatories consistently shaped new talent and created performers of the highest caliber. Despite creating conservatories hundreds of years after they had already been established throughout Western Europe, the ability of Russian composers to combine familiar folk themes with European style created a musical scene that was accessible to a much larger portion of the population with the aid of the state. Russia and the Soviet Union continued to produce some of the most renowned performers and composers known throughout the world during the late 19th and early 20th centuries despite the countless restrictions they faced.

The late creation of a formal educational institution for music was only one obstacle that Russia, and later the Soviet Union, faced in bringing music and musical culture to its populace during the 20th century. During the first half of this century alone Russians had to contend with four wars (The Russo-Japanese War, World War I, The Russian Civil War, and World War II), the development of a new culture centered around the proletarian class, and internal persecution under Stalin's reign. Even with the constraints of constant conflict and bureaucratic regulations, Russian and Soviet composers managed to produce some the most memorable works of their time.

The early twentieth century was a time of experimentation and growth for Russia. In the first two decades of the twentieth century Russian musical culture carried on the traditions and high quality possessed by composers like Tchaikovsky, while also branching out and expanding through new, unique composers like Stravinsky and Scriabin. Stravinsky in particular was able to find much success because his work was so different and eccentric compared to the typical works coming from the rest of Europe. Performances of his works captivated audiences throughout Europe and with the help of Sergei Diaghilev and the *Ballets Russes*, his works created a lasting impression. The most notable and infamous of all his premieres was that of his ballet *The Rite of Spring* in 1913. The ballet opened to what is probably the most controversial theater performance in history, causing the entire audience to breakout into a near riot.⁴ Stravinsky's style was unlike anything else at the time and his works balanced the strange and absurd within the confines of typical symphonic structure, intriguing foreign audiences. Stravinsky's work elicited mixed reviews from both music critics and the general populace, though none quite as strong as the debacle in 1913. Stravinsky's innovation and creative works helped pave the way for the experimentation that grew to be so common in the 1920's.

The period immediately following the October Revolution of 1917 was the most crucial time for the growth and development of culture and the arts throughout Russia. Not only did the people have to contend with a revolution that completely changed the structure and makeup of their society and culture, but also

⁴ Modris Eksteins, Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1989).

with the Civil War that immediately followed it. The conflict between the two sides was so ideologically driven that no aspect of society or culture was sheltered from the radical changes that the revolution brought with it. The rise of Lenin and the Bolsheviks to power marks a pivotal point in Russian history. With the rise of Lenin and the institution of his New Economic Policy came a restructuring of the educational system. For music this involved the nationalization of both the Moscow and Petrograd conservatories in 1918.⁵ The new government sought to open the arts to the general public and give the working class the same opportunities and access that was once solely reserved for the bourgeois. This opened access to the arts allowed for new innovation and ideas from classes who were previously uninvolved in music.

The Soviets quickly realized that music was wholly capable of reaching any audience despite their audience's level of education. This versatility and ability to be understood by the masses gave music an inherent advantage over literature, and a greater connection with the working class. Not everyone in the working class could understand the deeper significance behind the newest piece of literature without it being simplified, but they could all appreciate a new piece of music in their own way. The state was able to simply bring the people into the already existing musical culture. Instead of lowering the standards to make their work more understandable to the masses, the state instead brought the masses up to the music's level by distributing free tickets to ballets and concerts to the working class in major cities. The Soviet state became directly involved in the

⁵ Schwarz 18.

cultural affairs of the working class and spent the majority of the tumultuous time after the revolution in an attempt to create a new culture centered around the new proletarian class.

Thanks to the wordless nature of many genres of music, like the symphony and the quartet, it was more difficult for state officials to accuse musical pieces of being blatantly anti-Soviet during the years of Soviet repression in the 1930's. Composers, musicians, and their works, however, were still subject to constant critique, review, and persecution from state officials, groups such as the Russian Association for Proletarian Musicians (R.A.P.M.), and the general public. During the 1920's different factions vied for power and each group sought the recognition and support of the new Soviet government. A period of internal strife and a constant battle for superiority between the R.A.P.M. and other organizations like the Association of Contemporary Musicians plagued the landscape of Russian music during the late 1920's. This trend continued until the year 1932 when the Soviet government outlawed all proletarian organizations in an effort to create a uniform culture and ideology.

Unfortunately this declaration by the Soviet government created a period of not only uniformity, but also monotony throughout much of the arts. Many musicians and artists initially welcomed the changes instituted by the Stalinist declaration of 1932 because they believed it would help end the control that radical leftist groups like the Russian Association of Proletarian Musician (R.A.P.M.) possessed over the future direction of music.⁶ While the decree did

⁶ Schwarz 101-102.

centralize power and end the competition between organizations like R.A.P.M. and the A.C.M., it failed at giving composers the freedom that they desired. The power during this time made a shift from a horizontal orientation, where several different organizations held equal footing, to a completely vertical hierarchy where everyone was under the control of Stalin and the state.⁷ Again the state proved capable of changing the landscape and infrastructure of music by making musicians answer directly to the state, but individual composers like Shostakovich and Prokofiev still shaped the style of Russian music. Instead of trying to appease several different organizations in power, now musicians and composers only had to contend with the state. This period created a structured educational system that left composers, directors, and musicians with little room for interpretation, but the truly talented still proved successful at creating meaningful works.

Because the Soviets placed a focus on education, musicians were able to benefit in two main ways. Firstly, for a time the Soviets allowed music to develop freely, being more concerned with formalizing the general education of its citizens. Secondly, the emphasis the Soviet's placed on education created a greater interest and involvement in the arts for the general population. The Soviet control over every aspect of life and culture improved the appreciation for arts in the Soviet Union and their abundance of talented composers is what allowed music to survive even during the harshest years of Soviet oppression. This new Soviet culture was influenced by previous Russian works, and European music as

⁷ Schwarz 110.

a whole, but developed in a distinct manner under the guidance of gifted composers, and was utilized by the Soviet state for the purpose of control.

Russian music, and Russian history for that matter, has always been influenced by the will of strong-minded, determined individuals. From the prerevolutionary dominance of Tchaikovsky to the Soviet's veneration of Shostakovich, the Russian and Soviet government has always had a composer the people could look to as a model for the future direction of music. Russian and Soviet musicians achieved individual greatness despite the government's emphasis on the importance of the state over the individual and the harsh constraints and changes during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but still produced works that arguably have had a greater lasting impact than works found anywhere else at the time.

Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky

In the nineteenth century the Russian state succeeded in creating an infrastructure for music to operate in, but what truly propelled Russian music onto the global stage were the improvements made by the composers. Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Igor Stravinsky are equally heralded as two of the best Russian composers, each innovating Russian music in their own way, utilizing a very unique style. Their differences in compositional technique epitomized the cultural conflicts that Russia and the Soviet Union struggled with under the tsars. These struggles of the Russian and new Soviet government centered on how much of the old bourgeois culture to maintain and incorporate into their new Bolshevik traditions. In his music, Tchaikovsky represented a more conservative style that was connected to the more traditional, aristocratic forms of music found in Europe, while Stravinsky represented a newer, more radical and modern style. Tchaikovsky incorporated Slavic themes into his works, making them sound unique and “Russian” in the West, but still held on to the structures and techniques that he learned in his European style conservatory education. Stravinsky built upon the ideas and practices of Tchaikovsky, incorporating Russian styles and themes into the existing European foundation, but moved farther away from European styles through his use of dissonance. Both of these composers built upon the works of previous generations and borrowed from the methods of other Europeans, but added a distinctive Russian style that made Russian music popular abroad.

Applying within its first year of creation in 1862 and graduating in 1865, Tchaikovsky was among the first group of musicians to study at the St. Petersburg conservatory, meaning that he was one of the first composers in Russia able to combine the nationalistic and romantic ideals of the Mighty Five with the styles taught in the traditional European conservatories.⁸ Tchaikovsky sought to reconcile the argument of national style versus European style by merging the two together. Early on in the conservatory he did this by keeping himself distanced from other composers who associated themselves with only one of these groups.⁹ Keeping himself distanced prevented Tchaikovsky from alienating himself from his fellow composers of both schools of thought. This gave Tchaikovsky the ability to draw from both sources in order to create new works; he used a wide variety of sources for his inspiration, from Beethoven to Slavic folk songs. In his own words, Tchaikovsky believed himself to be gifted with the ability to “truthfully, sincerely, and simply” express the moods of a text and that this quality is what made him “a realist and fundamentally a Russian.”¹⁰ Tchaikovsky’s statement emphasized how he sought to change the way music was created and viewed in Russia and to return to Russia’s musical roots. His early compositions set the standard for work emerging from the conservatories, creating an expectation of balancing Russian and Western styles, and also an expectation of a high quality of work.

⁸ Roland Wiley "Tchaikovsky, Pyotr Il'yich." *2. Study of Music, 1861-5* (2013): n.pag. *Grove Music Online*. Web. 20 Feb 2013. <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezproxy2.syr.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/51766pg2>>.

⁹ Wiley.

¹⁰ Taruskin 295.

Tchaikovsky's work was influenced by both European and Russian sources. In his work *Slavonic March*, [Славянский марш], Tchaikovsky draws from several different Slavic folk themes, as well as from the anthem *God Save the Tsar!*, [Боже, Царя храни!].¹¹ Tchaikovsky borrowed from both sides of Russian culture, the side of the lower class peasantry, and the side of the upper class nationalists. The wave of nationalism swept across Russia thanks to the efforts of the Mighty Five and Tchaikovsky sought to further instill this style of nationalism into Russian music by going to the roots of Russian folklore. In this way, Tchaikovsky's works appealed to all Russians, regardless of class. His works can also be viewed as a bridge between time periods, linking the old formalistic, traditional style with the newer, more experimental one that became so prominent under composers like Stravinsky. Tchaikovsky utilized the resources around him, the structure of the European conservatories and the passion of Slavic themes, themes that were the musical equivalent of folk lore and that could be found in many Slavic communities, in order to create music unlike anything else in its time. Tchaikovsky believed that these Slavic themes truly represented the Russian spirit and that their folk themes had as much to offer to Russian music as the established European style.

This combination of themes is what made artists like Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky so intriguing to the West. They were unlike anything else at the time and this exotic Russian feel to their music is what made the music so widely

¹¹ П. Е. Вайдман, "Славянский марш." Чайковский: Жизнь и творчество русского композитора. N.p., n.d. Web. 30 Jan 2013. <<http://www.tchaikov.ru/marche.html>>.

observed and discussed both at home and abroad. European music remained stagnant for a long period following the Renaissance and retained the baroque style. This lack of innovation created an opportunity for new, external music sources to be successful in Europe. Russian music and Russian culture as a whole would not have enraptured the West during this time without something to separate themselves from the everyday European artists. The Russians themselves even took pride in their difference from the West; attributing their difference to a cultural and moral superiority over other Europeans based on the philosophies of the Slavophiles, and even held the belief that Russians have a responsibility to use their culture to enlighten other nations.¹² Throughout much of Russian history Russians have held the belief that it was their responsibility to bring salvation to the world. Whether it was through Orthodox Christianity, Communism, or other means, the Russian people have often reworked the beliefs of other nations and attempted to reintroduce them to the world. In fact the Russians' ability to borrow and transform culture is what gave their music legitimacy and is what allowed their music to thrive into the twentieth century. According to the French composer and critic Alfred Bruneau, a Russian composer was unable to stand out from the endless sea of composers or possess any kind of identity without an exotic group identity.¹³ During this time Russian composers were held under great scrutiny and without this unique quality to separate them from the standard they were often viewed as merely mimicking European composers. The Slavic influences incorporated by Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky gave their music an edge over the

¹² Taruskin xiv.

¹³ Taruskin 49.

typical European compositions and gave Western audiences a reason to be intrigued.

The fascination with Russian music became so fanatic during the late 19th and early 20th centuries that there were cults and crazes created around these musicians. Because Russia was so closed off from the rest of European society throughout much of its history, the outpour of Russian musical culture at the start of the 20th century captivated Western audiences. It was Tchaikovsky who paved the way for later artists like Stravinsky and Prokofiev to further refine that style of experimentation and ornamentation that captured the attention of foreign audiences. Tchaikovsky was one of the first Russians to make a full-time living as a musician and composer without being born into the practice, or having the fortune of being a performing virtuoso. Tchaikovsky's successes changed music in Russia from something that was simply an entertainment for the upper classes into a legitimate profession.¹⁴ He made the Russian conservatories respected worldwide and also made it possible for others following in his path to make a living in music by demonstrating it was possible for anyone, even without a musical pedigree. Tchaikovsky's talent propelled Russian music into the twentieth century and his music inspired Russians from every area of society to become more involved in music. Although he had the benefit of conservatory training, it was his immense natural talent that allowed Tchaikovsky to achieve a position of high esteem both within his native Russia and throughout Europe. The conservatories made it possible for more individuals from all aspects of society to

¹⁴ Taruskin xiii.

become involved in music, but it was the individuals like Tchaikovsky who stepped outside the bounds of the conservatory teachings who truly shaped the future of Russian music by adding a flavor of Russian nationalism to their works.

While Tchaikovsky contributed to making Russian music more intriguing to Western audiences by using both lower class Russian folk themes and upper class European themes, his lifestyle directly represented that of only the upper class. Tchaikovsky succeeded in making music more accessible to the entire Russian population and while his music combined upper class and lower class themes, his upbringing and lifestyle showed that the musical scene was still dominated by the upper class. He still lived very much in the style of the typical bourgeois of the time, enjoying the status of a social celebrity and making many friends among the upper levels of society like the conductor Nikolai Rubinstein and Nikolai Kashkin, a professor within the Moscow conservatory.¹⁵ Tchaikovsky surrounded himself only with members of the upper class, who relied heavily on the practices and the traditions of other European nations, mainly France, Italy, and Germany. This heavy European influence was evident in many of his works, but especially in his symphonies. The symphony was a staple of European composers and differed from the other genres in that they possessed a much more rigid structure. Tchaikovsky was still relatively conservative in his approach and in his symphonies Tchaikovsky lived up to Western standards by integrating standard Western styles into his works. While Tchaikovsky was at times criticized for being too conservative in his approach, utilizing too much of the old European

¹⁵ Wiley.

techniques, he contributed greatly to the development of Russian music with his innovation.

After Tchaikovsky, no composer's work more accurately depicted the internal struggles Russia was facing in the early twentieth century than those of Igor Stravinsky. Stravinsky's compositions brought forth the existing struggle between culture and civilization, a conflict that Taruskin believed would be a characteristic of Russia until the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.¹⁶ What he means by this is that throughout the years leading up to the Bolshevik Revolution, the state was constantly uncertain of how to address the demands of an evolving society and Stravinsky's dissonance and chaotic themes highlighted this. Stravinsky challenged the standard of music coming from the bourgeois conservatories and proved that the lower classes were capable of making a profession in music. While it is highly unlikely that Stravinsky had all these different social issues specifically in mind when he created his works, it is clear that his emphasis on dissonance and chaos in his music accurately captured the existing struggles within Russia's social structure. Stravinsky built on all the ideas and practices of Tchaikovsky, taking them even farther. He still incorporated Russian folk themes into a modern European style like Tchaikovsky, but he also succeeded in creating music that differed from anything during its time and completely changed the standard for musical culture in Russia. His changes polarized audiences throughout Europe: some celebrated Stravinsky as a composer who revolutionized the style of classical music and others vilified him

¹⁶ Taruskin 378.

for destroying musical traditions. Stravinsky's many works, especially his ballets, radically transformed the way Russians and Europeans viewed and created music in the twentieth century. Stravinsky's ballets were particularly successful because the combination of exotic dance and music enhanced these differences from the typical European musical performance.

Unlike Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky never studied in the official conservatories, but grew up in a musical family and was constantly surrounded by musical influences. Stravinsky's father was a famous singer at the Mariinsky Theatre in Petersburg and his mother was a pianist. While both were very musically inclined they still pushed Igor to study law so he could ensure a position in civil service.¹⁷ The upper classes still viewed music as more of a form of entertainment rather than a legitimate profession. Even though Stravinsky never studied at the conservatory, he still took private lessons and from an early age and showed promise in his compositions. His early works and talent captured the attention of established composers within Russia including Rimsky-Korsakov, a member of the Mighty Five. This was an important distinction because it proved that it was still possible for any member of society to become involved in music and to be successful without the teachings of the European style conservatories, a message that would be emphasized by the Soviets, who sought to eradicate the distinction between social classes. Stravinsky's style, which upheld the ideals of nationalism emphasized by the Mighty Five, separated him from other composers

¹⁷ Stephen Walsh, "Stravinsky, Igor (Fyodorovich)." 1. Background and Early Years, 1882-1905. n.pag. *Grove Music Online*. Web. 20 Feb 2013.

and allowed him to further develop his talents under the guidance of Rimsky-Korsakov.

Like the members of the Mighty Five, Stravinsky possessed no institutionalized training, but sought to use his own radical methods to bring Russian music to the forefront of European culture in the twentieth century. He managed to accomplish this largely through his ballets, which captivated audiences throughout Europe with their exceptional choreography and radical themes. Stravinsky was aided in his ballet tours with the help of choreographer Sergei Diaghilev and his *Ballet Russes*. The *Ballet Russes* was a Russian troupe based in Paris that premiered the works of the famous Russian composers of the time. Diaghilev's style greatly complemented that of Stravinsky because like Stravinsky, he was innovative and unorthodox. Together, through Diaghilev's Russian company founded in Paris, they created many masterpieces. *The Firebird* (1910) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913) are two ballets that highlight different aspects of Stravinsky's talent that made his music so appealing and beloved. *The Firebird* represented his continuation of Tchaikovsky's tradition of combining Russian folk culture with other sources to create a composition that intrigued audiences everywhere. *The Rite of Spring* demonstrated Stravinsky's affinity for the use of dissonance and its premiere in Paris remains one of the most controversial debuts in musical history because of the riot it incited. Stravinsky's ballets forever changed Russian music and set the stage for a period of further experimentation and innovation in music.

Stravinsky's first ballet, *The Firebird* was an instant success and it quickly gained popularity throughout Europe. It was a brilliant combination of Russian fairytales and music, and it possessed all the most beloved characters of Russian fairytales, from the mythical Firebird to Kashchey the Immortal.¹⁸ However, this brilliant ballet was not an original idea of Stravinsky's. He was merely commissioned to write the score for *The Firebird* by Sergei Diaghilev who was searching for a new composer for his ballets after he failed to impress critics with the musical aspects of his ballet in 1909.¹⁹ *The Firebird* was one of Stravinsky's earliest musical compositions and his first ballet, and it successfully premiered on one of the largest stages in the world in Paris. Audiences and critics worldwide quickly recognized Stravinsky as the composer who would mold the future of Russian music because of his radical innovation and bold musical style.

The Firebird is one of Russia's most exotic creatures from traditional fairytales and the choice to use it as the subject of a ballet was no doubt tied to the European fascination with the recent spread of Russian culture coupled with the spread of nationalism during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This spread of culture was greatly aided by the political and social relaxation that started under Alexander II. Tsar Alexander II emancipated the serfs, which created a new working class and relaxed the restrictions on creative materials moving in and out of Russia. This allowed the Russian works and culture to gain a strong foothold in foreign cities like Paris, and what allowed it to grow and develop internally. Starting in the 19th century, Russian music has developed along a more

¹⁸ Walsh.

¹⁹ Walsh.

nationalistic trend under the guidance of the Mighty Five. Artists like Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky continued this development, drawing from all aspects of Russian culture to create music that captured world attention in the 20th century.

Stravinsky's most well known work, *The Rite of Spring*, shows the full extent of Stravinsky's ability and demonstrates how far his style had moved from the traditional European model still taught at the conservatories. Both Stravinsky and Diaghilev pushed the boundaries of their respective artistic fields, which moved Russian culture into a new period of modernity. The work highlighted every aspect of his music that made him so popular: his ability to connect rural folk themes with a modern musical style, his innovation, and his frequent use of dissonance over harmony. *The Rite of Spring* represented the high point of Stravinsky's early career and immediately had a strong impact upon musical culture with its emphasis on dissonance and controversial style. The impact of this piece was even felt as early as the night of its Paris premiere when a riot broke out during one of the most heated movements of the ballet, the sacrifice.

The Rite of Spring premiered in May of 1913 in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris and highlighted the conflicts plaguing society within Russia that would soon be addressed in both World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution. The fighting amongst the crowd between the upper balconies and lower balconies epitomized the struggle between the existing tsarist culture and the way that society was constructed.²⁰ Stravinsky's music coupled with Nijinsky's

²⁰ Taruskin 378.

choreography represented the new emerging culture that embodied the beliefs of the common people (*narod*) and the lower classes. The spectators feuded over the quality of Stravinsky's work and the true meaning behind his radical style.

In Modris Eksteins' book, Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age, he uses this riot to represent the crisis Europe underwent entering the modern age. The same can also be applied to the modernization Russia underwent during this period, both politically and culturally. The riot represented the Russian state's inability to understand or address the problems of this new emerging working class and the fight itself foretold the conflict that would plague Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution and the Civil War. Stravinsky's premiere symbolized the conflict that seized Russia between a new, radical culture that was gaining strength and emerging from the lower classes and an upper class which failed to identify with their radical ideals.

Stravinsky's work polarized audiences everywhere and the violence that occurred at the premier of *The Rite of Spring* made Stravinsky turn his attention inward. Stravinsky believed that music had its own intrinsic value and that it did not need to be constantly compared to the context surrounding it to have value.²¹ This philosophy of the natural value music possesses emphasized by Stravinsky continued throughout the 20th century, and was even adopted by the Soviets. The Soviets lauded musicians like Shostakovich and Prokofiev who carried on these ideals and emphasized the importance of music itself. Thanks to the efforts and

²¹ Taruskin 366.

talent of Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky, Russian music became more influential and respected globally and more celebrated nationally

The early years of the twentieth century are perhaps the most tumultuous in all of Russian history, and this unrest was evident in all aspects of life. This was especially true of the music in Russia, which radically changed from a system with no formalized institutions as late as 1860, to one of the most impressive and sought after art forms in twentieth century Europe. While the creation of these institutions greatly aided the musical development of Russia, it was the composers who were able to go beyond the standard, strictly European style of the conservatories that were able to find the most success. Tchaikovsky was one of the first artists to propel Russian music into the modern age and he paved the way for later composers to build off of his traditions. In the twentieth century Stravinsky, Diaghilev, and Nijinsky did just that by bringing classic Russian folktales and folk characters to the forefront of European culture through contemporary music and dance. These cutting edge performances of Diaghilev's *Ballet Russes* set to Stravinsky's music demonstrated how far Russian music had progressed since the last century and what potential it held for the foreseeable future. Both Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky possessed immense talent and used the methods of their time together with the elements of local culture and folklore to revolutionize Russian music and bring it to the forefront of European art.

A People's Revolution

From the First World War to the October Revolution to the Russian Civil War, the first quarter of the twentieth century was a period of constant conflict for the Russians. While this time period was known for its bloody conflicts, it was also a time of incredible social and cultural development for Russia and the Soviet Union. During the early 20th century the Russian state underwent drastic changes, but the changes made by the state had a limited direct impact on music at the time. The state was much more successful in musical advancement during this period by removing itself from control rather than through its implementation of policies. The period after the October Revolution was a time of experimentation and growth without the strong authoritarian censorship of the tsars and before the rigid state control of Stalin. Immediately following the October Revolution, the heads of government were too concerned with trying to create a stable system of government to worry about regulating every aspect of culture. Ironically, once the new Soviet regime was finally established in 1922, it still utilized many of the foundations originally instituted by the tsars it just overthrew. In the musical world, the conservatories of the old bourgeois culture were still being used to train new students and the theaters in the major cities were still performing the same operas as before. In the West the Bolsheviks are often portrayed as a party that only brought a culture of fear, repression, and control to Russia. However, in reality during their early years in power they held on to much of the old culture from under the tsars. The Bolsheviks did not do much to physically change the musical culture of the time, but they successfully restructured the current musical

infrastructure, changed its purpose, and used the foundations that were in place in order to bring the working class into all aspects of society.

Thanks to the Bolshevik's radical platform, the October Revolution completely polarized society. Their intent was to revolutionize social structures globally and to create a world proletarian class. This proletarian class would be accompanied by a state sponsored brand of artistic culture that would eventually take control of the Soviet culture during the 1930's. However, until the 1930's the new Communist Party was very open to the use and integration of other cultures with its own. In fact the party's goal was not to "deprive itself of the tried weapons of the classics," but to give the old culture of the tsars a new function and use it in the construction of the new world.²² The Bolshevik Party realized the influence and power that existed in the old works and structures of the tsarist culture and wished to utilize it for their own means.

Even though Soviet society was completely under the influence of a single, unified culture by the 1930's, it was not the original intent of the Bolshevik party to completely eradicate the other forms of art. Before Stalin the Bolsheviks still clung to the idea of creating a world revolution, a goal that would be impossible to accomplish without a combination of cultures. Stalin instead focused on internal revolution and creating a uniquely Soviet culture. Following the October Revolution, the Bolshevik party theoretically remained a true party of the common people, and while the state was more concerned with the recovery

²² Boris Groys, The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992) 39.

and survival of the nation, it sought to consolidate society into a single, unified culture that combined the best of the old and new.

Early Bolshevik ideology frightened many musicians who had close ties with the aristocracy. Hearing the Bolshevik rhetoric regarding these sweeping political and social changes that they planned to make caused many musicians to assume the worst for the future and flee the country by both using visas and emigrating illegally. Sergei Prokofiev was among this group of emigrating musicians who obtained an exit visa, leaving the country in 1918. Despite leaving the country, Prokofiev emerged as a musician ready to take the helm as Soviet Russia's most celebrated composer and proved capable of revolutionizing musical composition. Prokofiev was politically indifferent and did little to participate in the Revolution, deciding to focus solely on his music; a trend that the Bolsheviks felt was too common across the artistic community.²³ Soon after the Revolution, the state was still lenient with artists and members of the intelligentsia, simply imploring them to become more involved in the new government and to aid the Bolsheviks. Anatoly Lunacharsky, the newly created People's Commissar of Education, attempted to convince Prokofiev to remain in the country, arguing that Prokofiev was a "revolutionary in music," while the Bolsheviks were "revolutionaries in life."²⁴ Despite this exodus of artists, Soviet-Russian music still thrived during the period immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution, largely thanks to the state's relaxation of policies.

²³ Schwarz 10.

²⁴ Schwarz 19.

After the October Revolution, very little changed in the way music was written and developed. Instead of reshaping the music itself, the Bolshevik party sought to reshape the purpose and the use of music to be more suitable for its new intended audience. The Party did this by continuing to give performances at locations like the former tsar's Winter Palace, but renamed it the "Palace of the Arts," removing any connection to the tsars, making it a place for all citizens rather than just the aristocracy.²⁵ Schwarz believes that even though the Bolsheviks were still willing to use the structures of the old regime, they removed the surface connections these old places had with the Romanov dynasty in order to highlight their rule as the only remaining, and only legitimate, rule. However, it was nearly impossible to remove itself completely from the old regime, especially in the public's mind if they constantly utilized the resources of the tsarist regime. This continued use of concert venues directly associated with the old aristocracy created the impression that the Bolshevik party was merely inheriting the position of power, rather than establishing its own regime. The new Bolshevik state was too preoccupied to create a new culture at this point and instead utilized that of the aristocracy to benefit the common people. This created a shift in focus for music from one of entertainment for the bourgeois, to solidifying power and strengthening the lower classes, both in terms of education and economic status. In order to conserve their power in such a chaotic time, the Bolsheviks simply borrowed and repurposed the existing system to suit their own needs rather than building an entirely new culture from the ground up.

²⁵ Schwarz 16.

After 1917, the Bolsheviks shifted the role of music from a role of entertainment for the upper class to a role of education for the working class. For the musical education of their citizens, the Bolshevik government again utilized a system that was already in place by making both the Moscow and St. Petersburg conservatories state institutions on July 12, 1918 in a decree signed by Anatoly Lunacharsky and Vladimir Lenin.²⁶ Turning the conservatories into state institutions was an immense victory for the musical culture in Soviet Russia. The Russian state immediately authorized a budget for the conservatories, which allowed them to run continually without having to rely on private funding. Funding the conservatories helped to maintain their business, and also gave the Bolsheviks a greater control over their everyday operations and policies.

The conservatories could now afford to offer admittance to members of the lower class, a procedure that would prove beneficial in multiple ways. It allowed the lower classes to gain an education and it helped to create the proletarian culture that the Bolsheviks desired. It was much more advantageous for the new state to simply borrow the old systems and change their purposes to meet their own, new goals rather than completely restructuring the infrastructure of society. This allowed the Bolsheviks to focus their time and resources on fighting off their enemies and gaining complete political control. The increased involvement of the working class in music forced the conservatories to deal with the issue of how to balance choosing a repertoire that would be easy to understand

²⁶ Schwarz 18.

for an untutored audience, but still meet the demands of sophisticated critics.²⁷ Here music took a different approach than the rest of the arts. Instead of changing the quality of art to make it connect more with the audience, as literature did, the conservatories and musical theaters simply kept the same performances and standards as before the Revolution. Only the musical arts were able to accomplish this so easily because music audiences did not require any level of education to fully appreciate these works. The state maintained the same quality of performances and education, but opened them to a wider audience. In the words of Anatoly Lunacharsky, “We recognize the immense values created by the old culture and we make them available, not to a small group of parasites, but to the entire working population.”²⁸ Music after the Revolution was repurposed and became an art of the common people. Music gave the working class a direct connection with the upper classes of society by providing them with a shared form of entertainment.

In addition to increasing the number of performances and involvement of the working classes during this time, Vladimir Lenin’s new state gave direct funding to the arts and education. Before the Revolution Russian musical culture received little financial support from the state for future development, instead relying on patronage from the upper classes. The Bolsheviks’ main goal was to gain the support of the lower class, and they accomplished this in the musical realm by opening the opera and musical theaters of the tsars to the entire population. The funding they provided to the arts alleviated the pressures of

²⁷ Schwarz 67.

²⁸ Schwarz 15.

maintaining the high-performing standard of the conservatories and gave the working class a much greater involvement in the arts. Even though members of the proletariat were becoming more and more involved in music, the state still recognized the importance of maintaining the old curriculum and did little to change the structure of the conservatories. The state's policies ensured the continuation of music during a tumultuous time, but these policies did nothing to further the advance or innovation of music and instead simply perpetuated the existing system.

Immediately after the October Revolution the Russian Civil War began, forcing the Bolsheviks to focus on establishing a firm control over the country. To gain full political control, the Bolsheviks originally left many cultural aspects unchanged in order to gain any support that they could. The Bolsheviks accepted support from any group, even if they fundamentally disagreed with their ideals or practices, simply to give them the edge in terms of finances and numbers. The Bolsheviks even accepted support from the intelligentsia and the avant-garde, even though the Bolsheviks were concerned by their dictatorial ambitions.²⁹ The Bolsheviks even went so far as to accept financial aid from the Germans, with whom the Russian state was still at war with as of October 1917, in order to fund their greatest propaganda project, *Pravda*.³⁰ *Pravda* was a political newspaper that became the most important tool for the Soviet regime and was utilized by the state to control the news and information available to the people. The Bolsheviks

²⁹ Groys 23.

³⁰ Georg Schild, Between Ideology and Realpolitik: Woodrow Wilson and the Russian Revolution, 1917-1921 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995) 45.

used *Pravda* as a template for their countless cultural forms of propaganda that they developed and used since the onset of the Russian Civil War.

By originally maintaining the status-quo and allowing everything involving culture to continue as it had been previously, the Bolsheviks made their transition to power much more seamless. They held the musical performances of the same quality and with the same level of consistency as the period before the Civil War. Continuing musical and operatic performances as if nothing had changed allowed the Bolsheviks to reassure their population that everything was as it should be. The Soviets also deployed this method during the German forces' siege of Leningrad from 1941-43 in order to keep order during a tumultuous time.³¹ Thanks to these practices, music remained an important part of Russian culture and continued to entertain citizens even during times of conflict and war. While they succeeded in maintaining the current level of musical culture, the Bolsheviks were too focused on internally stabilizing the country to effectively change the culture immediately following the Revolution.

Although the Bolsheviks are often depicted as a ruthless, controlling regime, even their leader recognized the importance of the arts. Lenin was generally supportive of the arts and allowed artistic freedom, contrary to the typical Western perception of the Bolshevik Party. The Bolsheviks wished to eventually obtain complete control over its population, but recognized that it was necessary to utilize the structures from tsarist times because of their limited resources. The Soviets are responsible for creating the longest lasting regime of

³¹ Schwarz 11.

artistic repression, yet the ideals they were founded on under Vladimir Lenin respected the benefits of freedom in the arts and recognized the importance of the advances previous generations had made. Lenin himself stated that “every artist takes it as his right to create freely, according to his ideal, whether it was good or not,” but Lenin felt that while this experimentation was necessary for culture to develop further, it should be guided to avoid any “chaos.”³² The original policies of Lenin’s party were relatively relaxed and allowed music to survive and continue to develop in Soviet Russia.

Lenin’s New Economic Policy, despite its name and goals, also had a lasting impact on music during the 1920’s. Lenin recognized the importance of strengthening and modernizing society, using whatever means necessary to achieve these goals. His New Economic Policy completely contradicted the ideals of communism, but Lenin justified this by claiming it was all in the interest of solidifying the power of the state, which was necessary to rebuild the economically struggling country. One of the main successes of the NEP was how it reopened Russia’s contact with the West by reopening trade and reducing restrictions on private industry in Soviet Russia. During WWI Russia again isolated itself from the West and allowed very little new cultural material to enter the country, but the relaxation of regulation that accompanied the NEP allowed foreign artists to again perform in Soviet Russia, increasing the repertoire and creating a new stimulus.³³ Soviet-Russian opera theaters at this time became a mixture of both Russian and European classics, playing the operas and ballets of

³² Schwarz 19.

³³ Schwarz 43.

Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov along with European hits like *Carmen* and *The Barber of Seville*. Importing these works from the West was one of the methods by which Russian music was able to survive the loss of talent from emigration.

Although the NEP created a relaxation of government regulations and aided music with the importation of outside works, it was also harmful to the musical scene because the government became stingier with its allocations of funds. The state refused to finance as many musical projects as it had during the period of development in the early 1920's, deeming too many as frivolous and not worthy of funding.³⁴ The state was still supportive of the arts during this period, but state officials believed general education played a more important role in society. Lenin worried about what message it might send to the rest of the country if they were spending so much money financing what was generally viewed as an art of bourgeois culture instead of using that money to invest in the education that the working class so desperately required.

While the Bolsheviks allowed other forms of art to develop and flourish during the 1920's, they began to implant their own brand of culture that would systematically take control of society by the early 1930's. They managed this through the creation of organizations like The Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM), The Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP), and The Association of Artists for a Revolutionary Russia (AKhRR). All of these organizations solidified their power by announcing their affiliation with the

³⁴ Schwarz 42-43.

Bolsheviks and denouncing all their opponents as counter revolutionaries, a practice that became commonplace during Stalin's Purges in the 1930's.³⁵ These groups soon became cancerous to artistic freedom, establishing their own concepts of what should represent the party and they began to methodically weed out every other group that refused to recognize their authority. These groups dominated the musical scene in the late 1920's up until the Soviet state took direct control of musical development in the 1930's.

The Bolshevik revolution forever changed the relationship between the arts and the government. During this period the state took a much firmer control over the everyday operations of the conservatories and took a greater interest in the path of development that music would take. The state's involvement in the musical scene fluctuated during this period and while they successfully managed to take control of the conservatories, they did little to further the style and development of music. While they were originally open to what musical styles were allowed and what influences artists drew from, the Bolsheviks realized that they must shape art along the ideals of communism in order to create what Stalin would eventually call "an art national in form and socialist in content".³⁶ In order to create this new art form, the newly created Soviet state first had to contend with the many different musical organization that gained influence during the 1920's. The Soviet government was able to do this through the infamous 1932 Resolution titled "On the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations," signaling

³⁵ Groys 23-24.

³⁶ Taruskin 52.

the start of a period of art that would follow the tenets of Socialist Realism.³⁷ The state finally combated the issue of competing musical ideologies by instituting a uniform policy under the direction of Stalin. Russian music quickly shifted from one of the most creative and experimental periods to its most repressive and controlled artistic period in the Soviet period.

Struggles under Stalin

After Vladimir Lenin's death in 1924, the Soviets struggled to find both leadership and direction for the Soviet Union. When Joseph Stalin finally took absolute control of the state in 1929, he inherited all of the problems that plagued the artistic community and the country as a whole. The main problem facing music during this time was the competing ideologies of groups like The Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (R.A.P.M.) and The Association of Contemporary Musicians (A.C.M.). These groups created tension and an environment where cooperation and cohesion became impossible. Stalin and the Communist Party put an end to the unhealthy competition with the 1932 Party Resolution. The Socialist Realist style of art that resulted from this was characterized by a culture of conformity where every art was directly under the control of the state, limiting the artistic freedom and creativity that had existed under Lenin. The 1932 Resolution gave the Soviet government direct control over the development of the arts and marked the start of a shift of the state's attention from a focus on industrialization and survival to a focus on the internal, cultural development of the Soviet Union.

³⁷ Schwarz 109.

During the Plan years music and the arts developed in a manner representing the new, industrialized Soviet society. Stalin successfully modernized the Soviet economy and propelled the Soviet Union onto the world stage. The rhetoric of Soviet literature shifted to reflect both the use of machinery in the new, industrialized Soviet society and also the ideology of the Soviets regarding the machinery. Socialist Realist literature often contained references to the ability of a machine to outperform thousands of workers, a theme that Soviet state constantly utilized under Stalin.³⁸ The propaganda under Stalin frequently revolved around this change to machinery and the relation of an individual as a single cog to the Soviet machine as a whole. The music and arts of the 1930's also developed in this manner, mirroring the Stalinist propaganda and industrial society of the time. The music of the time even went so far as to mimic the sounds of industrial machinery in an attempt to appear innovative and to separate the music from the typical European style.³⁹ Stalin utilized this propaganda and new art style to legitimize the direction the Soviet Union had taken since his transition to power.

Before the 1932 Resolution and the spread and development of Socialist Realism, the main focus of the culture was creating material that connected with everyone and that glorified the victory of the Bolsheviks. During the early years following the October Revolution the culture of the Soviet Union broadened in order to reach a wider portion of the population and the new proletarian class, but

³⁸ Clark 94

³⁹Taruskin 74-75.

often did so at the expense of the depth of the works.⁴⁰ Some of the main complaints regarding Soviet culture are its simplicity, its superficiality, and its repetition of themes. These issues were only worsened by the 1932 Resolution, which often used the bland, simplified works as a model for other artists. The Soviet government celebrated these works because they were accessible to all audiences and contained a subject matter that lionized the actions of government.

All of the arts suffered during this time under Stalin and the early years of Socialist Realism and the majority of artists, writers, and musicians created bland works that today are rarely observed outside of academia. Despite the harsh constraints and the consequences facing works that stepped outside the guidelines of Socialist Realism, the artists were not completely frustrated and stifled in their creativity.⁴¹ The best artists were still able to put their unique style into the music subtly within the constraints of Socialist Realism and be recognized both at home and abroad for their talent. This is mostly true in the music produced during this time, with composers like Shostakovich, Scriabin, and Prokofiev remaining among the most celebrated in Russian and Soviet history. Literature and the other arts still found success, but often had to do so by subverting and working around the Soviet system rather than through it. This is true of writers like Pasternak and Akhmatova who at times took drastic measures to avoid the Soviet censors. The purpose of glorifying the state and Stalin still existed in music, but its intrinsic nature allowed it to retain its style and success much better than literature or painting under the Stalinist regime. The 1932 Resolution radically changed the

⁴⁰ Schwarz 109.

⁴¹ Clark 160.

subject matter in literature and painting. This made artists focus solely around working class elements and issues, but in music the general structure remained the same and the most radical change was with the politicized atmosphere surrounding the composition and its performance, rather than the piece itself.

The early Plan years were very similar to the early 1920's in that the government was still more focused on solidifying the power of the state than changing and developing a Soviet culture. Instead of building up and further developing a Soviet art style, the Soviet leadership was content with just standardizing the quality of art and music and creating a culture of the ordinary.⁴² In order to bring politics to the forefront of public thought the newspaper *Pravda* released a call for a consolidation of communist forces in literature in December of 1929.⁴³ Stalin's regime exploited any resource available in an attempt to secure power and create an unquestioning following. The Stalin regime recognized the importance of controlling the arts and wanted to quickly eradicate any opposition and strengthen their influence within the artistic and musical communities. Stalin mainly used arts for the glorification of the Bolshevik Party and the success of the Soviets, a theme that predominated under Stalin's rule.

The goal of the 1932 Resolution was not necessarily to shift culture to glorify communism, although that was a byproduct, but to change the culture in a way that would explain and support the newfound power of the state.⁴⁴ If the work strayed at all from this path the state censored the work, prevented it from

⁴² Clark 120.

⁴³ Schwarz 58.

⁴⁴ Clark 15.

being published or distributed, and often persecuted the creator. Artists, writers, and musicians during this period had to be wary of the watchful eyes of the censors and develop their new works along the exact guidelines of Socialist Realism. If the authors and composers strayed even the slightest bit, or if state officials felt they did not represent the Communist Party or the Soviet State to their exact specifications, the artists could be subject to exile from the Soviet Union, or worse, sentenced to a prison term in the Gulags. The Soviet leadership sought to legitimize its power during the 1930's and utilized the harshest methods in order to create a country and a culture that automatically bent to its will.

Many artists initially welcomed the 1932 Resolution, believing that it would create a shift away from the competing ideologies pushed by different organizations like the R.A.P.M. and the A.C.M. Musicians believed that the resolution would be a progressive movement and would bring liberalization and greater freedom to composers by removing the radicals who had taken a stranglehold over the Soviet Union's artistic direction.⁴⁵ What the musicians failed to realize was who would step in to fill the void that had been left by the eradication of any organization that was not under the direct control of the state. Musicians believed that their individual beliefs would be better recognized without these other organizations around to push their works to the side, but they quickly realized that the only ideals that the state represented were its own. Before the Resolution these different groups all worked on an equal plane and no group was able to gain a significant advantage over the other, but the 1932 resolution

⁴⁵ Taruskin 513.

shifted the balance of power and made everyone under the control of the state.⁴⁶ The Soviet government believed that none of the existing musical organizations truly represented its interests and decided that it was necessary to take absolute control over the development of Soviet music.

This change in physical structure to the musical scene was accompanied by a change in cultural ideology under Stalin. During the 1930's there was a noticeable shift in focus from a culture reaching out to the proletarian class to a culture celebrating the accomplishments of extraordinary talents. One of the main features of Socialist Realism is the creation and exaltation of positive heroes. In literature authors like Gladkov and Kataev represented these positive heroes as outstanding workers capable of outperforming any of their counterparts. In music, it was through the stage performances where the heroes were characterized in lyrical song, accompanied by the authentic Soviet themes, while their enemies were satirized.⁴⁷ The Soviets were fascinated with the practice of worshiping and idolizing individuals, and under Stalin revamped their entire culture to reflect this and glorify the spectacular individual as a model for the society as a whole. During this period the sole purpose of the musical culture was defined by the state and the state structured the music to glorify the power of the state and Stalin for creating and leading this power.

Accompanying the strength and new culture of propaganda of the state was adoration and a cult of personality surrounding their leader Stalin. The celebration of Stalin was one of the main things that the Soviet state focused on

⁴⁶ Clark 136.

⁴⁷ Schwarz 68.

and utilized in its propaganda. By the end of the 1930's, Socialist Realism had completely taken control of the official Soviet culture and eradicated any other style of art from being formally taught within the Soviet Union. There was no question that Stalin had absolute control and this was reflected in his appointments of individuals to positions of power in the arts. Those who showed loyalty and dedication to the regime quickly found their way into a more influential position like Gorky who early on gained a position in literature and culture.⁴⁸ Placing those loyal to him in control over different aspects of culture solidified the cult and myth surrounding Stalin and ensured that the culture would develop in his favor and continue to deify his leadership.

One thing that separated the Soviet Union from the other oppressive regimes in Europe during this time was the ability of the Soviets to produce and stimulate musical richness while other regimes, particularly the Nazis, were musically barren.⁴⁹ While the fascist regimes in nations like Italy, Spain, and Germany were successful in creating their own effective propaganda, it could to some extent still be separated from the culture, unlike in the Soviet Union. Again the Soviet Union faced many of the same problems found throughout Europe and possessed similarities to European culture, but used the European model as a foundation for their own culture and built on top of these foundations to create a unique, unparalleled culture. There are very few nations found throughout history that placed such an emphasis on the importance of culture to society, and even

⁴⁸ Clark 128.

⁴⁹ Taruskin 108.

fewer that had the arts subjected to such a terrible stress.⁵⁰ Even after the Communist Party established its dictatorship, removing the social hierarchy of the tsars, the state still allotted a higher social rank to writers.⁵¹ Artists and composers were still celebrated, but were always kept under close scrutiny by those in power in the government so the state could better monitor and control their literature and compositions. During the height of Stalin's terror in the late 1930's the state censored any newly created material and the authors and composers lived in constant fear of being sent away to the Gulags.

Stalin's regime took control of Soviet culture in the late 1930's and instituted a system of terror that was capable of arresting anyone for any reason and was also utilized to arrest those whose works strayed from Socialist Realism and the ideals promoted by the state. One of the goals of Stalin's terror was to create a single, uniform art that could be used to connect and control the people. However, in their attempt to turn art and music into a medium that could connect with all individuals in the society the Soviet government removed the true purpose of art: which according to Taruskin is to innovate and create new, often controversial methods of characterizing a culture and society.⁵² Stalin's harsh, unyielding rule contributed to what the West often views as monotony and a lack of innovation in Soviet arts. Soviet citizens under Stalin lived every day in fear of censorship and incarceration, yet those held under the most scrutiny, the writers

⁵⁰ Taruskin 482.

⁵¹ Abram Tertz (Andrei Sinyavsky), The Trial Begins and On Socialist Realism (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1960) 136.

⁵² Taruskin 485.

and composers responsible for promoting the Soviet culture, were still sometimes capable of surviving and even producing memorable works.

Soviet music under Stalin produced prolific composers and musical works that gained worldwide recognition and prestige despite the restrictions of the state. Composers like Shostakovich and Prokofiev managed to not only survive during this tumultuous time, but also to gain the recognition and support of the Soviet state with their works. Stalin succeeded in creating a more unified Soviet culture, but did so at the cost of creative freedom and the lives of millions of artists, composers, and ordinary citizens. When the Soviet state became more involved in culture during the 1930's, its policies had a profoundly negative effect on the general quality of work being produced. However, the influence of the Soviet state during this time proved much more effective at altering the bureaucratic structures surrounding music rather than creating a discernible change in the music itself. The Soviet totalitarian regime was unlike anything seen before. Its emphasis on the use of propaganda and the creation of Socialist Realism created many bland, monotonous works, but also stressed the importance of the arts and allowed Soviet composers to continue creating great works and allowed music to thrive in the Soviet Union while it struggled elsewhere in Europe.

Shostakovich and Prokofiev: Talent in a Dark Era

The Soviet Union under Stalin was in a position to completely eradicate any art style that it deemed unfit, and often exercised this right during the height of the Stalinist purges starting in 1937. Despite its incredibly overbearing, authoritarian policies, the Soviet Union still produced great composers like Dmitri Shostakovich and Sergei Prokofiev who created works that were celebrated both within the Soviet Union and abroad. Although there were significant differences between these two composers, both survived and continued to produce music despite Stalin's totalitarian leadership. Shostakovich and Prokofiev dominated the Soviet musical scene and their compositions were heralded by the Soviets as the best music could offer due to their popularity and prolific works. Both musicians struggled against the Soviet bureaucracy, regulation, and censorship, but in the end both still contributed to the advancement of Soviet-Russian culture despite the high frequency of imprisonment within the artistic community. Both Shostakovich and Prokofiev demonstrated amazing courage and talent through both their music and their ability to survive within the Soviet system during the height of Stalinist oppression.

Dmitri Shostakovich was a true product of the Bolshevik Revolution and was among the first group of musicians to receive his formal education under the new Soviet regime.⁵³ Shostakovich and his generation grew up surrounded by revolutionary ideals and rhetoric and became loyal to the Bolshevik cause as a

⁵³ Schwarz 79.

result. Shostakovich's revolutionary upbringing and education made him stand out in the eyes of state officials and made him an ideal candidate for veneration by the state. His ability to stand out however proved as detrimental in drawing the eyes of the Soviet censors as it was gaining him recognition early in his career. Even while under the continuous watch of Soviet censors, Shostakovich never shied away from producing works.

Even in his early compositions the revolutionary influence of his upbringing could be clearly seen with titles including *The Soldier*, *Hymn to Freedom*, and *Funeral March for Victims of the Revolution*, but his private instructors took little notice of his works.⁵⁴ The instructors failed to recognize anything special within his works and treated Shostakovich just as any other student. Because of this, Shostakovich quickly grew tired of the lack of enthusiasm from his private instructors and studied at the Petrograd Conservatory in 1920's.⁵⁵ In the conservatory there was a greater chance for his compositions to gain the attention and favor of both the instructors and the state. Shostakovich recognized the growing importance and influence of the state and sought to be recognized by the state so his works could become more renowned throughout the nation. Shostakovich accomplished this and quickly gained the favor of state officials thanks to the popularity of his work and his nationalistic style.

⁵⁴ David Fanning and Laurel Fay, "Shostakovich, Dmitry" *1. Up to 1926* (2013): n.pag. *Grove Music Online*, Web. 2 Apr 2013
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezproxy2.syr.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/52560pg1#S52560.1>>

⁵⁵ George Weickhardt, "Dictatorship and Music: How Russian Music Survived the Soviet Regime," *Russian History* 31 (Spring/Summer 2004): 121-141.

In an era when the Soviets gained complete control of society and sought to eradicate the class system, Shostakovich managed to work within the bounds of the immense scrutiny the upper classes were subjected to. Although he was a revolutionary in spirit, Shostakovich grew up in a privileged, upper-class family and enrolled in a private music school. Many of the artists in the same position as Shostakovich at this time fled the country in fear of the growing Soviet power and in fear of the persecution they might face. Shostakovich however took the opposite path and decided to not only remain within the newly created Soviet Union, but also to attempt to become the composer that the Soviet Union would idolize. Shostakovich also separated himself from the other composers of his time through his interactions within the established educational system. Shostakovich retained his ties to the Soviet education system and distinguished himself as a composer the Soviets could utilize for propaganda due to his continued support during a time when others around him fled. Shostakovich proved to the state that he was willing to listen to authority, a quality that helped Shostakovich gain the favor of state officials and become a more prominent composer.

The first major obstacle Shostakovich faced in his musical career came in 1936 regarding his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. The opera originally premiered in January 1934 and according to Richard Taruskin, was hailed by critics as a praiseworthy advance for the musical field.⁵⁶ What he fails to point out however is that what made this piece truly stand out was not the spectacular new themes or innovation, but rather the circumstances surrounding

⁵⁶ Taruskin 504.

the work. Shostakovich did not stray far from the traditions of previous Russian and Soviet artists. Like the great composers before him, Shostakovich based his opera on Russian literature. Shostakovich used the novel of the same name by Nikolai Leskov as a framework and transformed the book into a world-renowned opera, just as Tchaikovsky had done with Pushkin's works. However, in 1936 the praise for his opera disappeared and the official tone surrounding this work took a dramatic shift, placing Shostakovich directly under the scrutiny of the Soviet state. The issue began when an article from *Pravda* was released that condemned the opera for its moral failings and sexual themes. *Pravda* highlighted these themes that were hidden within the subtext of Shostakovich's that had apparently eluded the censor. From that point forward Shostakovich lived only a moment away from persecution and imprisonment from the Soviet state, a fate that befell many of his colleagues, but a fate that did not dissuade him from continuing to compose.

Immediately following the article in *Pravda*, Shostakovich's opera was removed from the Soviet repertoire and the Soviet state censored his works from that point forward. The Soviet government denounced Shostakovich for "trifling with difficult matters" and warned him that if he continued that things would not end well for him.⁵⁷ These warnings did not deter Shostakovich and he continued to compose musical pieces even during the height of Stalinist repression when the censors were monitoring everything he produced. Shostakovich even went so far as to reproduce *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* with a few edits in the

⁵⁷ Taruskin 508.

1960's, when the Soviet Union experience a period of relative cultural freedom. Artists and musicians alike struggled to survive during this period of Soviet repression, but Shostakovich found a way to not only survive, but also to continue to compose. At the peak of Stalinist repression and terror during the late 1930's, Shostakovich composed works that were not only celebrated in the Soviet Union and abroad, but were also viewed as anti-Stalinist.

The Soviet government was unable to come to a consensus regarding what action to take against Shostakovich. There had been many artists during this time who were ostracized for much less by the state, yet still received the death sentence or imprisonment in the Gulags at the least. Yet the most severe action that the Soviet government took against Shostakovich was to censor his works, remove them from the repertoire, or warn him that his works did not represent the interests of the state. Shostakovich's works became a target for the Soviet government because of their unprecedented success, but their success and the sensation they caused were also what allowed him to survive.⁵⁸ Shostakovich reached a level of attention and interest that was unknown to composers within the Soviet Union, but the state, which had not hesitated to hand down harsh punishments for far less serious infractions in Stalin's regime, struggled to discipline Shostakovich.

The inability and hesitation of Stalin and his cabinet to make a disciplinary decision with regard to Shostakovich showed evidence of the internal struggles of the Soviet state. Abroad, Shostakovich represented the best the Soviet Union

⁵⁸ Taruskin 508.

could offer in music and he was portrayed as a champion of Soviet music. However, within the Soviet Union he was often criticized by the censors for the themes found within his works, whether imagined or real. The main controversy surrounding Shostakovich's intention and political leanings revolve around the authenticity of memoirs released in the late 1970's.⁵⁹ In his article, Weickhardt avoids the discussion and instead emphasizes that no matter what Shostakovich's original intentions were, he still had to deal with the way his works were perceived by the general public, and more importantly by Soviet officials.⁶⁰ By avoiding this controversy he is able to draw attention to the true issue of how Shostakovich managed to continue to produce works despite drawing the eyes of Soviet critics. One of the main reasons Shostakovich was able to survive the Soviet oppression was due to his works being so prolific both at home and abroad.

Throughout the 1920's and 1930's the Soviets placed a strong emphasis on the promotion of a proletarian culture. When Shostakovich emerged as a talented musician, he proved capable of being a composer that the state could utilize as a means to promote this culture. Even though his works represented themes that were not explicitly promoted or favored by the Soviet state, it still found use for his music in the connection it had with the public. His usefulness to the Soviet state as a means of controlling and connecting to the public as well as using his music for propaganda were the main reasons that Shostakovich was permitted to continue producing his works. Shostakovich also increased his

⁵⁹ Neil Edmunds, "Music and Politics: The Case of the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians," *The Slavonic and East European Reviews* Vol 78, No. 1 (Jan 2000): 66-89.

⁶⁰ Weickhardt.

chances of survival by appeasing the Soviet government by producing overtly propagandistic music, painting himself as a Soviet patriot.⁶¹ Because of the immense success of Shostakovich's works and his marketability as a propaganda tool, the Soviet government was unable to determine what was more important: utilizing Shostakovich for propaganda and remaining a dominant presence in world culture, or continuing the Stalinist imprisonments and exerting absolute control over artistic works.⁶²

Sergei Prokofiev is another composer who challenged the Soviet Union's fortitude because he obtained world renown, but did not represent the interests or qualities of the Soviet "positive hero." Like many members of the intelligentsia and artistic community, Prokofiev was indifferent towards the Bolsheviks and showed little interest in the Bolshevik Revolution.⁶³ While Prokofiev revolutionized music at the time, he failed to take any interest in politics or communism; a characteristic that Stalin attempted to eradicate from the arts. Prokofiev even fled the country in 1918 in order to escape the political turmoil and settled in the United States.⁶⁴ While it was not uncommon for artists of this period to flee Russia and later the Soviet Union, what made Prokofiev's case so unique was that he decided to return to the Soviet Union while Stalin reigned. He returned to the Soviet Union in the 1930's, during the height of artistic repression and during a period when many thought creative freedom to be completely nonexistent. By leaving the powerful nations of the West, where his musical

⁶¹ Weickhardt.

⁶² Weickhardt.

⁶³ Schwarz 10.

⁶⁴ Schwarz 19.

career had thrived, to return to the Soviet Union, Prokofiev gained the support of the Soviet government and his political apathy towards the Bolshevik Revolution was not held against him.

While he was abroad, Prokofiev spent much of his time in Paris, but also traveled to the United States and throughout Europe where his music found great success. Prokofiev grew and developed his musical talent during his time abroad combining Western styles with the themes he learned in the Russian conservatories. This combination of styles which separated Prokofiev from other artists of the time allowed Prokofiev to leave a profound impact on the musical scene when he finally chose to return to the Soviet Union. While Prokofiev toured in Europe during the 1920's, he continued to correspond with influential Russian artists in positions of power like Mussorgsky. This continued correspondence with people in positions of power led to his works being played regularly and even being premiered within the Soviet Union despite his absence.⁶⁵ This ensured that Prokofiev remained relevant at home, even while living abroad and it made his transition back into the Soviet Union much smoother.

Prokofiev first returned to the Soviet Union in 1927 to play with an orchestra named *Persimfans*, a group who played without a director.⁶⁶ While the group represented the entertainment side of the music industry more than the official Soviet policy, their decision to allow Prokofiev to play represented that

⁶⁵Redepenning. "Prokofiev, Sergey (Sergeyevich)" 3. *Europe, 1922-36* (2013): n.pag. *Grove Music Online*, Web. 2 Apr2013
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezproxy2.syr.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/22402?q=Prokofiev&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#S22402.3>.,

⁶⁶ Schwarz 46.

Prokofiev had in fact retained his ties to his home country. Even after being absent from Russia and the Soviet Union for so long, Prokofiev immediately found his place on the main stage of Soviet music. His connections with composers like Mussorgsky allowed Prokofiev to effectively leave an impression upon the Soviet people throughout the 1920's despite the lack of his physical presence. When he finally returned to the Soviet Union in 1933, 15 years after he originally left, he was able to rejoin the musical community and easily transition back into Soviet life. Prokofiev used his connection with the Soviet people to his advantage and immediately resumed his production of world-renowned compositions upon his return to the Soviet Union. This connection to the people and his reputation abroad prevented the Soviet state from taking immediate action, much like it did with Shostakovich.

After returning to the Soviet Union Prokofiev continued to produced his most well-known and lasting works during the height of Stalinist repression during the late 1930's and during the war-torn years of the 1940's. During this time Prokofiev composed both *Peter and the Wolf* (1936) and *Cinderella* [*Zolushka*] (1945). Both works quickly gained world acclaim: the first was reproduced in a Disney film in 1946, and the second earned its spot in the world repertoire and was hailed as the best opera since Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* thanks to its accessibility and familiarity to the public.⁶⁷ Like Shostakovich, Prokofiev managed to escape persecution within the Soviet Union even during periods of harsh repression by drawing world attention to his works and his status

⁶⁷ Redepinning.

within the Soviet Union. Keeping their works so ingrained in Soviet culture and so loved abroad allowed Prokofiev and Shostakovich to continue producing works despite the strict guidelines of Stalinist censorship.

Even during a period in the Soviet Union remembered for the strict control the state had over society, individual composers were still able to effectively produce their works and affect the direction of Soviet music. During this time music had been inescapably linked with politics and no work was without political meaning.⁶⁸ This link led to the constant search for hidden or double meanings within works and led to the arrests of several artists and musicians. However, in comparison to the other forms of art during the Stalinist purges, music thrived during this period. This was possible because of the ability of some individual composers to make their works both accessible to a world audience and marketable to the Soviet state as a propaganda tool. The Soviet Union, which had created the most controlling, totalitarian regime seen in Europe, found itself unable to fully control music. This was partly due to the nature of music, which allows it to be interpreted in different ways, and partly thanks to the prominence and talent of artists like Shostakovich and Prokofiev. While many composers still suffered under this oppressive regime, a select few managed to find their own safe haven thanks to both public and foreign support.

⁶⁸ Edmunds.

Conclusion

The Russian and Soviet states have consistently attempted to control the direction and message behind the arts, but ultimately they were less successful at changing the development of music than individual composers. Even during the height of government control over culture during Stalin's reign, Shostakovich and Prokofiev still created works that would determine the direction of Soviet music. One reason that the state attempted to control the culture was to create a national identity that it could use to unify its people and gain greater control. Although the state often promoted a single ideal as wholly representative of the national interest (Orthodox Christianity, Communism, etc.), the Russian and Soviet states were rarely able to act in a consistent manner regarding their ideals. In the tsarist times musicians like Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky were able to challenge the existing foundations of the state and conservatories by applying the nationalistic trends emphasized by the Mighty Five to the European musical style. The Soviet Union likewise found its promoted culture of Socialist Realism challenged by composers like Shostakovich and Prokofiev, who challenged the ideal of the positive hero. The arts in Russia and the Soviet Union were subjected to as much, if not more hardships, censorship, and state influence than any other modern country. Russian and Soviet music survived and even grew from a culture that existed mainly in folk songs and plainchant to a modernized, innovative culture during two world wars, a civil war, and under a repressive, totalitarian regime. In all these cases the composers were the ones to make the significant, lasting changes and they were

able to succeed by combining European styles with Russian/Soviet nationalism, creating new, unique material.

The individual has always played an important role in Russian and Soviet music, despite the state's focus on the importance of society and country over the individual. In the 19th century it was not the conservatories that created the most lasting change on the future direction of music in Russia, but composers like the members Mighty Five and Tchaikovsky. After the Bolshevik Revolution the government tried to take a larger role in culture and emphasized the importance of the new working class in culture. The state attempted to make these lower classes more involved in the arts by providing free tickets to performances as well as providing more funding to the conservatories. Even though the lower classes became more involved in the arts under the Soviet leadership, many of the advancements in music still came from outside the traditional working class. Many of the men who created a lasting impact on Russian and Soviet music still came from the traditional, noble background.

Under the Soviet Union and Stalin's rule, individuals still managed to impact the development of music despite censorship and the threat of imprisonment. Shostakovich accomplished this by incorporating his messages into the hidden subtext of his works and many times his subtlety succeeded in escaping the eyes of the censors. By leaving his works free to interpretation and ensuring that they made a strong impact abroad, Shostakovich made it difficult for the Soviet state to fully challenge him as it had done to so many other artists. Prokofiev managed to absolve his sins of fleeing the country by maintaining

connections with composers who were in influential positions in the Soviet Union. Both of these composers also successfully avoided persecution by ensuring their works were celebrated abroad, thus making themselves useful as tools for propaganda for the state. Because these two musicians and their works were so recognizable abroad, it placed any action taken by the soviet regime upon them under global scrutiny. Any action taken by the state would undermine the image that they had strived so hard to achieve.

Russian musical culture grew and developed over a span of about 80 years (from the 1860's through the 1930's) to a remarkable extent, equivalent to the advancement of music in the rest of Europe that occurred since the Renaissance. Not only did the Russians and Soviets manage to modernize music to the extent of other European nations, but also lead the way in terms of innovation and talent. Due to the ability of the Russian and Soviet composers to create new, exciting works by combining old styles with new ideals and themes, music in Russia and the Soviet Union was able to become a major part of the culture. This occurred despite the state's attempts to control music and artistic culture and it allowed Russian music to help develop an identity for Russia and the Soviet Union through the emphasis of nationalistic themes as well as make an impact on global musical culture.

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Summary of Capstone Project

This project focuses on the development of Russian and Soviet music from the mid 19th century up through the Stalinist terror of the 1930's and 40's. In the paper there is a focus on the impacts of both the talented musical individuals as well as the restrictions of the state on musical development. The paper mainly focuses on four composers (Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, Shostakovich, and Prokofiev) who each dealt with the constraints of an overbearing state as well as censorship. While each composer came from different backgrounds and fought against different governmental regulations, they all managed to innovate and contribute to Russian/Soviet music by combining European styles and techniques with themes of Russian nationalism as well as modernism. Combining the European styles with Russian themes allowed these composers to create new materials that stood out from their European counterparts and gave each composer great success both at home and abroad.

The first composer chronologically (Tchaikovsky) was born during a time of development in Russia. When Tchaikovsky was born there were no formal musical institutions within Russia. The only way to receive an education in music at this time was through private instruction. This all changed during the 1860's when the St. Petersburg and Moscow conservatories were created. Tchaikovsky was among the first group of students to study at these newly created conservatories and he combined the structured, European styles taught there with the influences of a group known as the Mighty Five [*Могучая кучка*]. Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Cui, and Mussorgsky were the members of the Mighty Five and they each sought to bring Russian nationalism into music and to

pull away from the typical European style of the time. Tchaikovsky emulated this brand of nationalism in his works by incorporating Slavic folk themes into his works. In his piece *Slavonic March* [*Славянский марш*], Tchaikovsky incorporated three Slavic folk songs as well as the anthem “God Save the Tsar!” into his work. Tchaikovsky stood out among Russian composers as the man who truly made it possible to make a living in music in Russia. He was among the first group to study within the new Russian conservatories and he proved that it was capable for a musician trained solely within Russia to be competitive on the world stage.

The next composer to show major innovation in Russian music was Igor Stravinsky. Stravinsky innovated Russian music by utilizing dissonance and bringing modernism to the forefront of his productions. Stravinsky emphasized the importance of making his works prominent abroad by working together with Sergei Diaghilev’s *Ballets Russes*. This troupe performed and premiered Russian ballets and operas within Paris in order to bring Russian culture to the rest of Europe. Stravinsky’s ballets were his most popular works and premiered in Paris with the help of Diaghilev. While his works were widespread, they often polarized audiences. This was especially true of the premier of his work, *The Rite of Spring* (1913). When this piece premiered the feuding between the audience became so heated that a riot broke out, stopping the performance. Stravinsky’s works demonstrated the shift in Russian culture that was occurring and the improvements and modern techniques that he brought into his music mirrored those occurring in the Russian political scene.

Shortly after the height of controversy surrounding Stravinsky's works, the Bolshevik Revolution occurred. The Revolution created a tumultuous time in Russia, but did little at first to change the physical structures of the Russian musical scene. Performances were still carried on at the same theaters, like the Tsar's Winter Palace. In order to remove the connection from the old regime, the Bolsheviks simply renamed it the Palace of the Arts. The Bolsheviks were too focused on solidifying their power and supporting the country following the Revolution and during the Civil War to effectively make lasting changes on the culture.

The first major changes came under Lenin and his New Economic Policy in the 1920's. Under Lenin the state made the conservatories state institutions, reduced the cost of music education for members of the lower class, and provided free concerts and performances for the working class. The cultural policies under Lenin allowed for a greater involvement in the arts from all classes rather than just the aristocracy and allowed for a period of growth and experimentation throughout the 1920's. This led to an increased competition between emerging groups like the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians and the Association of Contemporary Musicians. These two groups took almost complete control over the musical scene in the 1920's and made it difficult for individual voices to be heard.

Soon after Stalin came to power, the 1932 Resolution was passed by the state, making every artistic organization answer directly to the state. At first this change was welcomed by members of the artistic community because they

originally believed it would put an end to the overbearing control of these organizations. However, artists and composers soon found one brand of control replaced by a new one. This marked the beginning of Socialist Realism as well as Stalin's absolute control. This period was characterized by uniformity, heavy-handed ideology, and a general lack of innovation in many of the arts. Despite these constraints a few select, extraordinary artists and composers were able to work within the constraints placed upon them and still produce meaningful works. Soviet composers proved especially capable of still producing globally relevant works. This was partly due to music's inherent ability to be interpreted on so many levels and also due to the ability of the composer to make his work so prominent and accessible to audiences at home and abroad.

Despite facing the overbearing pressure and censorship from a controlling state, Russian and Soviet composers continued to change the direction and style of music. The Russian and Soviet state attempted to gain an absolute control over its population, but the individuals in the society proved more capable of shaping the musical culture. Russian and Soviet composers combined European styles with Russian themes to create new, unique material. Their innovation and talent propelled Russian and Soviet music from a period that was dominated by strictly European styles to one that led the way for innovation in Europe by using Russian nationalistic trends. Russian and Soviet music evolved quickly in a span of 80 years and individual composers shaped the future of this music despite the overbearing constraints placed upon them by a totalitarian government.