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Russian *Wikipedia* vs *Great Russian Encyclopedia*: (Re)construction of Soviet Music in the Post-Soviet Internet Space**

The article addresses the issue of cultural recycling of academic music from the Soviet period. The referential texts in the Russian Wikipedia and the *Great Russian Encyclopedia*, currently presented for the general public in the Internet space, were selected as examples for the analysis. A comparative analysis of articles on music and the composers who lived and worked in the USSR (including Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitri Shostakovich, Dmitri Kabalevsky, Tikhon Khrennikov, Boris Asafiev, Isaak Dunaevsky, Georgy Sviridov, Aram Khachaturian, Sofia Gubaidulina and Alfred Schnittke) displayed a number of regularities: emphasizing previously unknown areas of music of that period (“avant-garde music”, “repressed music”), replacement or disregard towards the epithet “Soviet” regarding musical phenomena and composers, and the absence of any nostalgia for Soviet musical culture in modern receptions.

Keywords: Soviet music, cultural recycling, Wikipedia, Great Russian Encyclopedia, Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitri Shostakovich.

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Русская «Википедия» vs «Большая российская энциклопедия»: (ре)конструирование советской музыки в постсоветском интернет-пространстве***

В статье рассматривается проблема культурного ресайклинга академической музыки советского периода. В качестве образцов для анализа выбраны тексты в русскоязычной версии «Википедии» и «Большой российской энциклопедии», функционирующие в настоящее время для широкой публики в интернет-пространстве. Сравнительный анализ статей о музыке и композиторах, живших и творивших в СССР (в том числе, С. Прокофьеве, Д. Шостаковиче, А. Хачатуряне, Б. Асафьеве, Т. Хренникове, Д. Кабалевском, И. Дунаевском, Г. Свиридове, С. Губайдулиной, А. Шнитке, и др.) показал ряд закономерностей: акцентирование маргинальных ранее сфер музыки этого периода (например, «авангардная музыка», «репрессированная музыка»), подмену или игнорирование эпитета «советское» по отношению к музыкальным явлениям и композиторам, отсутствие ностальгии по советской музыкальной культуре в современных рецепциях.

Ключевые слова: советская музыка, культурный ресайклинг, Википедия, Большая российская энциклопедия, С. Прокофьев, Д. Шостакович.

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Unlike the overwhelming majority of cultural practices at the beginning of the 21st century in the academic musical space, the issue of recycling¹ the legacy of the Soviet era has not yet been articulated and is subject to contradictory interpretations. Thus far, there is no consensus in understanding of what does the phrase “Soviet music” actually mean, to which extent it is synonymous with “music in the USSR”, and whether the notions of “Soviet composer” and “Soviet listener” really exist (by analogy with “Soviet

writer” and “Soviet reader” proposed by Evgeny Dobrenko [4; 5]). Among the questions considered, the following are most relevant: can there be a “Soviet musical avant-garde” in the academic classical music of the USSR; is the concept of “Soviet style in music” applicable, as well as the definition of “Soviet composer” regarding the greatest composers of the twentieth century who lived in the USSR, for example, Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich (for more details see: [1; 2; 3; 8; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16]).

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All these contradictions are getting especially conspicuous in universal editions like the Russian-language *Wikipedia* and the *Great Russian Encyclopedia* (GRE)². At the present time, these are two most popular resources on the post-Soviet Internet space which offer their versions of the cultural recycling of academic classical music in the USSR to the Russian-speaking reader. Undoubtedly, the Russian *Wikipedia* has become the leading meta-text for a variety of objective reasons: due to the longevity of its existence (since 2001), as well as the immense number of articles (more than one and a half million) and revisions (100 million), and the specific feature of its own way of functioning – namely, the introduction of new materials and revisions of old materials by anyone who is interested.

The feature of the *Wikipedia* project stipulates a certain format for the submitted articles, both declared and hidden. For example, the anonymity of the author and the moderator creates various means of interpretation of the composer's personality, whereas the infeasibility of personal contacts between them leads imminently to a certain authoritarianism on the part of the moderator who may not have sufficient professional knowledge in the field of academic music. However, the freedom and accessibility of this project makes it possible to propose new personalities and make supplementations and corrections to articles already published³.

Thereby, *Wikipedia* stresses the interest of the post-Soviet society towards certain phenomena and people reflected in the scholarly community's perceptions about any particular composer. Anonymous and changeable as it is, *Wikipedia* has not yet provided any opportunity for considering it as a stable and authoritative source of data, albeit holding an absolute record

in the number of requests from readers relating to different levels of professional qualifications (including musical ones). For this very reason, the potential reader of articles about music on *Wikipedia* might be perceived as a two-faced Janus within whom both a professional and an amateur neophyte exist simultaneously, let alone the fact, that the texts about Russian music and musicians balance in a wide range: from extensive analysis of a particular musical style with a large quantity of professional vocabulary to an assortment of facts and well-known quotes about the musician's personality.

The *GRE* has a fundamentally different focus, connected predominantly with the original printed format, which considerably narrowed down its 'textual' capabilities during its transformation into digital (i.e. internet) form in 2016–2017. Only two years after that, it is possible to see the influence of the printed format in the simultaneous presence of two versions of some of the articles (the current and the previous)⁴. Continuing the traditions of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, as asserted in the edition itself, the *GRE* is oriented on the professional community, prompting its representatives to write articles related to academic classical music. For this particular reason, the *GRE* can be considered as a source of a certain cumulative professional view of musical art, including its 'Soviet' segment.

This edition is comprised of two trends reflecting the modern Russian scholarly perspective of Soviet music. On the one hand, one of the active trends is the study of the composers and their musical works written in modernist compositional techniques (dodecaphony, musique concrète, aleatory music, sonoristics, etc.), i.e. the so-called "avant-garde music". These are the composers of the early

Russian avant-garde movement of the 1910s and 1920s (*Arthur Lourié, Nikolai Obukhov, Ivan Vyshnegradsky, Arseny Avraamov, Alexander Mosolov*, etc.), a small number of whom emigrated from the country. And most of all, the musical legacy of the post-World War II avant-garde trend is being promoted, represented mainly by *Alfred Schnittke, Edison Denisov, Sofia Gubaidulina* and their contemporaries and younger colleagues, for example, *Nikolai Karetnikov* and the composers from the group of “Khrennikov’s Seven”⁵. Such articles are devoted to the modernist approaches towards musical composition, often in their Western or transformed versions.

On the other hand, since the end of the 20th century, systematic attempts have been made to ‘resurrect’ musicians who were repressed or murdered during the era of the Great Terror, their musical compositions, and, correspondingly, the publications of articles about them; for instance, about *Nikolai Zhilyaev*. In addition, some fragments of these composers’ biographies related to these circumstances are also emphasized. One such composer is *Mechislav Weinberg*, whose personality and whose operatic compositions have become the central topic of two major international conferences and festivals in Moscow (held in 2017 and 2019). This phenomenon is known as “repressed music”⁶.

In both cases, the issue of “the composer and the Soviet regime,” as well as the denial of the very existence of “Soviet academic classical music,” are perceived as the core issues, unambiguously expounded in the shape of clear opposition. The authors of such articles about the Soviet-era academic classical music implicitly believe that neither the composers who wrote avant-garde music, nor those who died or were repressed, may be considered as “Soviet.”

Accordingly, this epithet is inapplicable to the music of their authorship. It is also worth mentioning that at the same time, for example, in the late Soviet era, analysis of contemporary Soviet music was a prerequisite for having articles published in either of the two most authoritative professional magazines: “Sovetskaya muzyka” [“Soviet Music”] (since 1992 – “Muzykal’naya akademiya” [“Musical Academy”]) and “Muzykal’naya zhizn” [“Musical Life”]. A number of composers who were members of the Composers’ Union of the USSR became the subjects of scholarly monographs, articles, and newspaper reviews. The works dedicated to them are still included in scholarly and educational publications and continue to get actively cited as sources on the post-Soviet space, especially on Internet resources⁷.

Besides “avant-garde music” and “repressed music”, the Soviet era included composers who cannot be attributed to either of these phenomena, and it is in regard to them particularly that the present-day ‘receptions’ are extremely contradictory.

What does “Soviet music” mean?

First of all, it must be mentioned that the *GRE* does not include any separate article on Soviet music or music from the USSR. Information about this period is included in the general heading of “Russia,” placed first on the title page of the encyclopedia’s website, in the paragraph called “20th century” (the section of “Culture and Art,” the subsection of “Music”). It does not provide either any relevant definition or chronology of “Soviet music,” nor of “Soviet opera,” “Soviet performers,” etc. As a result, the described period in the history of Russian music is considered as a natural part of the entire 20th century, something which continued the traditions of the Silver Age of the 1920s and then

smoothly shifted into the post-Soviet 1990s. The proposed periodization of music in Russia in the 20th century is generally comprised of 6 parts: the early avant-garde, the 1920s, the 1930s, the 1940s, the period from the 1950s to the 1980s, and, finally, the 1990s. Special attention may be drawn to the greater differentiation of the first half of the 20th century and the relative 'unity' of its second half. In the latter, a lack of a reflection is noticeable in relation to the later time alongside with its perception as being, after all, "our own" recent past, and not a "foreign" past – this is basically the way how the first 50 years of the 20th century are broadly perceived. Nevertheless, the phrases: "the Soviet performing school," "Soviet song", "Soviet composers," "the Soviet symphony," "Soviet music" are used throughout the article on a regular basis. The author's estimate of the "Russian Soviet music" of the early 1990s as a phenomenon "diversified in genre and style, and authoritative on a global scale" also appears indicative [9]. Moreover, the author claims that Soviet art "has never been a phantom, and its remnants continue to exist after the collapse of the USSR."

Within the same text (in its second version, unlike the first from 2004) an interesting attempt has been made not only to insert the music of the Soviet period into the previous historical context as a somewhat peculiar, albeit still an inherent part of Russian music – certain parallels of the phenomena in Soviet music with the Western European phenomena in the art of music are suggested. For example, in the opinion of the article's author, the music of "the Soviet composers of the 1970s and 1980s is characterized by some kind of a stylistic 'mollification,' which is fairly similar to the process taking place on the European scene at that time, as well." As a result, the specificity of the Soviet period,

which had carefully been embedded into a wide historical and geographical context, simply becomes eroded.

The article mentions popular songs, film music, operetta, jazz and even rock music as symbols of the 1980s and 1990s. However, this information is presented as peripheral and given in a remarkably limited capacity. The focus is made on academic classical music and academic classical performance. It can be asserted that the article virtually performs the function of a specialized publication, which the Soviet six-volume *Musical Encyclopedia* actually presented, and its potential readers are primarily professional musicians. Thereby, in this encyclopedia Soviet music is not highlighted as a historical and cultural phenomenon, although put in use as a synonym for the work of composers and performers who lived at that time.

The anonymous articles on opera and symphony in the GRE, once again, do not contain the adjective "Soviet" (instead, they use, for example, the collocation of "Russian opera"), which maximally removes the work of composers from the historical and political context of their time. By mentioning the national operatic schools in the Soviet Union, the authors replace the words "Soviet republics" with geographical specifications – Transcaucasia, Ukraine, the Baltic States, Moldova, simultaneously, however, admitting that "opera houses were built in all of the capitals of the Soviet republics especially for the national repertoire." Both opera and symphony are regarded strictly within the framework of a highly narrow-specialized understanding of the musical genre. Paradoxically, the literature quoted in the article on the genre of the symphony is entirely taken from Soviet musicology, which is explicitly indicated by their authors, who also provide the years of publication. The sole book published in

2000 does not change the situation much, being, in fact, a more up-to-date reprint of an earlier published edition.

Unlike the *GRE*, the Russian *Wikipedia* contains an article on Soviet music under the appropriate title of “Music of the USSR,” which in turn is included in the large set of articles named “Culture of the USSR.” The time of the existence of the USSR (1922–1991) became the basic footing for the Soviet authors who gave the leeway for establishing the boundaries of the examined musical phenomenon. Accordingly, the music “written and performed at that time” is given recognition as being “Soviet.” A variety of genres and time periods within a large historical interval are noted, and specification is provided for all the nationalities whose representatives made a significant contribution into this area of culture (in addition to Russians: Ukrainians, Belarusians, Jews and peoples from the Caucasus are also mentioned). In *Wikipedia* the morphology of Soviet music is described differently: academic classical music comes first by order, but is not the only part of the phenomenon which is mentioned. It is presented here alongside film music (movie music), jazz in the USSR (Soviet jazz), pop songs, vocal and instrumental ensembles, authorial songs, Russian rock, dance and disco music.

The modest size of the texts dedicated to academic music (in comparison with all the others) makes it possible to consider them as a kind of ‘digest’ which includes notable events and personalities. Thus, *Sergei Prokofiev*, *Dmitri Kabalevsky*, *Dmitri Shostakovich*, *Georgy Sviridov*, *Kara Karaev* and *Aram Khachaturian* are called representatives of the academic style of the “Stalinist period.” There is also a mention of the composers from the 1960s associated with the avant-garde movement – most notably, *Schnittke*, the “*Khrennikov*

Seven,” *Karetnikov* and *Galina Ustvolskaya*. Among the historical events of that time, the year 1932 is especially distinguished – the year, when the Composers’ Union of the USSR was established, headed long thereafter by Tikhon Khrennikov. Special attention is paid to the newspaper articles and Communist Party decrees, which set up ideological constraints for composers (1936 and 1948). The list of achievements of Soviet music mentioned in the article includes the system of public music education and the high status of Soviet opera, ballet and large instrumental groups (orchestras and military ensembles). Such an approach to the characterization of academic Soviet music as a whole does not contradict the point of view of the *GRE*, but is evidently aimed at a different audience (a non-specialized one), and the genuine purpose of the article in *Wikipedia* is to create merely an outline of Soviet music.

Information about opera, operetta, art songs and other musical genres in the USSR is included in the extensive article titled “Russian Music/Music of Russia,” in its respective sections on academic classical, theatrical and popular music. An accurate genre stratification dictates their inclusion into the general historical line – from the moment they appeared in Russia to the present. The texts themselves are a synthesis of extremely diversified sources: from the Musical Encyclopedia and the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, textbooks for bachelors published in Tashkent, fragments from the Internet encyclopedias ‘Krugosvet’ and ‘Russian Civilization’ to translations of articles from the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and scholarly monographs on Soviet music. The absence of a unified concept of Soviet opera, art songs and other genres in these sources leads to chaos in their interpretations. The emphasis on enumeration of facts, in turn,

entangled with the deliberate disregard to the prescribed line of ideological influence on Soviet music, leads to incorrect information, such as the statement that Prokofiev's opera "The Story of a Real Man," in which "a synthesis of the Russian folk style with Western styles emerged, provided an example of the establishment of Soviet opera in the late 1940s." Because of this, the readers receive the impression of a mosaic, incoherent picture of the world of Soviet academic music, which places mere facts themselves in a higher position than cause-and-effect relationships.

A Composer: Soviet or Russian?

The stumbling block for both encyclopedias is the image interpretation of the "Soviet composer." The authors of the *GRE* totally reject applying the definition of "Soviet" to the composers of that time period. Instead, the word "Russian" is predominantly used, whereas in relation to composers of other nationalities, they apply options, emphasizing their respective nationality. As a result of this kind of substitution, the concept of "Soviet composer," as well as "Soviet music" disappeared entirely. *Otar Taktakishvili* is mentioned as a "Georgian composer," *Arvo Pärt* becomes "Estonian," *Kara Karaev* is defined as "Azerbaijani and Russian," and *Aram Khachaturian* – as "Armenian and Russian." Perhaps, in part this is an indication not only of the composers' nationality, but also of their respective ethnicities; however, *Schnittke* and *Gubaidulina*, who are not Russian in their ethnic backgrounds, are also called "Russian." As a result of such a substitution, a virtual field is created for all composers having an all-Russian affiliation. Outside their particular historical and cultural contexts, they are recognized by contemporary Russian society as its inherent part.

The denial of the "Soviet composer" phenomenon automatically entails the "appropriation" of the composer (in a figurative sense). This tendency becomes most blatantly perceptible in the *GRE*, which applies the term "Russian" with regard to numerous people, especially emigrants. For example, the following composers are considered "Russian": *Sergei Rachmaninoff*, who left the country in 1918 for the rest of his life and died in 1943 in the United States; *Alexander Glazunov*, who became the head of the Leningrad Conservatory and later, in 1928, departed from the country; and *Sofia Gubaidulina*, who was not only born and received her academic musical education in the USSR and was a member of the Composers Union of the USSR, but, after having emigrated to Germany in 1991, has regularly visited Moscow and Kazan, organizing concerts of her own music, while retaining her Russian citizenship. At the same time, *Igor Stravinsky*, who emigrated at about the same time as Rachmaninoff, but, unlike the latter, made one visit to the USSR in 1962, is mentioned as a "Russian and American composer."

Unlike the *GRE*, in *Wikipedia* the definition of "Soviet" provides the basic characteristic feature of every composer. However, there are also some nuances present here. For instance, *Dunaevsky* and *Kabalevsky* are unambiguously defined as "Soviet composers," *Shostakovich* and *Nikolai Myaskovsky* – as "Russian and Soviet composers," *Shchedrin* – as being "Soviet and Russian," and *Schnittke* – as being "Soviet and German." In the case of the composers from the national republics (besides Russia), the following option was proposed, previously approbated in Soviet editions: first, mention is made of affiliation with the country, – namely, Soviet, then – the respective nationality. For example, *Kara Karaev* is described

as a “Soviet-Azerbaijani composer.” The criteria concerned are likely to be largely historical – derived from the particular musician's lifetime. If the years of the composer's life and work coincide with the Soviet period, then he or she is likely to be identified as “Soviet” with indication of his or her nationality. When the composer's life span coincides also with the other historical periods, before or after the Soviet era, he or she is most likely to be called “Russian” (“russkyi” – applying to the time period of the Russian Empire). At the same time, if the composer lived and worked after the collapse of the USSR, he or she will also be called “Russian,” but in the sense of being connected to the present-day Russian Federation (“rossyiskiyi”)⁸. Thus, *Eugen Kapp* (1908-1996) is presented in *Wikipedia* as an “Estonian-Soviet composer,” while *Otar Taktakishvili* (1924–1989) is mentioned as being “Georgian-Soviet.” The same applies to the famous avant-garde composers, with the specification of their citizenship: *Edison Denisov* and *Rodion Shchedrin* are “Soviet and Russian,” while *Alfred Schnittke* is “Soviet and German.”

Nevertheless, *Alexander Glazunov*, who was the director of the Leningrad Conservatory until 1930 and was awarded the title of People's Artist of the RSFSR in 1922, is regarded as a “Russian composer,” which is probably due to his departure from the USSR in 1928. The resulting confusion and high probability of misnomers in applying of the notions of “Soviet,” “Russian (by nationality)” and “Russian (by citizenship),” along with the active use of sources from the Soviet period is highlighted in *Wikipedia's* article about *Georgy Sviridov* (1915–1998). Here the composer is labelled as “Russian-Soviet,” while the article's bibliography includes the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, the *Musical Encyclopedia* and the *GRE*; at the same

time, a sense of regret is expressed about the fact that his music is next to unknown in the West, while in Russia it retains high level of popularity.

The ambiguous situation with the term “Soviet” in relation to the most famous composers is evidenced by the latest version of the article about *Sergei Prokofiev* in *Wikipedia*, which was virtually rewritten anew in 2017. Its beginning is devoted to a comprehensive discussion on the composer's affiliation to Soviet, Russian (by nationality) or Russian (by citizenship) music. This discussion is fairly intriguing because of the arguments and the personalities upholding various epithets. Thereby, the definition “Soviet” is viewed as solely a “relic” of the Soviet publications about the composer. Later in the course of the narrative, the confrontation between “Russian (by nationality)” and “Russian (by citizenship)” becomes increasingly intensive, as “Russian” is explained through citizenship or territorial affiliation. The term “Russkoye” (which has an approximate meaning of “Russian by nationality or by origin”) is emphasized through the high-frequency rhetorical argument of “references to the authoritative music scholars”: the opinions of prominent researchers of Prokofiev's musical legacy (*Igor Vishnevetsky*, *Svetlana Petukhova* and *Yuri Kholopov*) and musical public figures (for instance, the rector of the Moscow Conservatory *Alexander Sokolov*). To strengthen this effect, the statistics on the matter has been inserted – namely, the count of the appellations of both meanings of “Russian” in scholarly editions and articles from recent years. Prokofiev's self-identification as a Russian composer and the opinion on the matter of his elder contemporary *Stravinsky* were cited as irrefutable arguments. It is noteworthy that both statements are dated in 1915, when

there was nothing “Soviet” whatsoever in existence, while “Russian (by nationality)” was practically synonymous with “Russian (by citizenship)”. Thus, in the new version of the article, Prokofiev becomes completely divorced from his Soviet identity, turning into an inherent part of Russian academic music.

Such a gesture is quite remarkable, since the article about Prokofiev appears almost as a “golden standard” for *Wikipedia*. It contains enough details about the composer's life and its association with Soviet Russia (such as obtaining a Soviet passport in 1927, the incident occurring with Prokofiev related to his personal life, his difficult relationship with Shostakovich, etc.); a huge variety of qualitative sources, including prominent Western researchers; numerous views of the composer by his contemporaries; along with a wide range of opinions. All that combined creates a highly comprehensive image of the musician in the eyes of the 21st century readers, with the article being addressed to an audience that is rather professional, than merely “inquisitive.” This circumstance is demonstrated not only by the frequent references to descriptions of features of musical style and professional terminology, but also by an array of details about the performance of the composer's works.

At the same time, the “Soviet” Prokofiev is encrusted into the narrative only in certain places, wherein the term “Soviet” is comprehended rather in connection with the place of residence than the cultural context or source of influence. The aforementioned idea extends to his musical compositions, as well, even to such work as “Zdravitsa,” which was composed especially for Stalin's anniversary.

Despite its declared objectivity, the article on Prokofiev in the *GRE* contains plenty of evaluative judgements in favor

of the composer. For example, the operas “Semyon Kotko” and “Betrothal in a Monastery” are called “masterpieces of the pre-war period.” The cantata “Towards the 20th Anniversary of October” is interpreted as “a bold creative task which the composer managed to brilliantly cope with,” aestheticizing the texts of Marx, Engels and Stalin he did not set (to music). The main pathos of the article is the idea of the underestimation of the composer's musical legacy in our country, which is asserted to be still in effect at the present. While disguising the “Soviet” realities in relation to Prokofiev, relevant substitutions are made within the text: the Stalin Prizes of the 1940s are replaced by the State Prizes, as has been the case in the country since 1961. This additional casus allows us to suggest the “Soviet” reality in the discussed biographical narrative to be synonymous to “Stalinist.”

The biographical narratives about *Dmitri Shostakovich* in encyclopedias also involve themselves in the construction of different images for the composer. An anonymous author from the *GRE* describes him as a “Russian composer” but a “classic of the Soviet music.” The article makes use of expressions (incidentally, without any quotation marks), the stylistics of which unequivocally refers to Soviet realities: “a vulgarization of the concepts of realism and nationality” – when characterizing the review “Ballet Falsity” (“Baletnaya Fal'sh”), and “a symbol of fight against fascism” – in relation to the Seventh Symphony. At the same time, while disregarding the definition of “Soviet,” he quotes the oratorio “Song of the Forests” as an example of an “ideologically consistent composition.” The same ambiguity arises when Shostakovich's activities in the Soviet official governing institutes (the Composers' Union of the RSFSR) are stated, but his membership in



the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is kept out of discussion, and the Stalin Prize he received is called the State Prize.

In the same way as he described Prokofiev, when analyzing Shostakovich's musical style, the anonymous author actively incorporates professional terminology: atonality, sonoricism, extended percussion group, diminished fourth, serial technique.

On *Wikipedia* the article about Shostakovich is written entirely differently. First of all, he is stated to be a "Russian and Soviet composer," and information about the titles and awards he had ever been rewarded (having been a recipient of five Stalin prizes, a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union since 1960, Chairman of the Board of the Composers' Union of the RSFSR) forms a clear comprehension of how high his merits were officially valued by the Soviet regime.

The first section of the article is devoted to detailed "family studies": an analysis of the musician's family line, starting with his paternal great-grandfather, with an emphasis on his "anti-tsarist" peasant origin, the revolutionary trends in the life of all his descendants: the Polish uprising, the "Land and Freedom" political society, the exile to Siberia, and the printing of proclamations. On the maternal side of Shostakovich's family "heritage," prominence is given to the composer's grandmother's musical talents and love for music, and then his mother's studies at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. In other words, the reader clearly sees Shostakovich's genesis, which turns out to be the indivisible interconnection of music and revolution. These two components of his "wiki" image, while being transformed into the opposition of "music and the Soviet regime," become regularly perceptible in the text: for example, the specification of Stalin's opinion on the opera "Lady Macbeth" as a composition which is incomprehensible for

the people, and the premiere of the Fifth Symphony in 1937.

In fact, all of Shostakovich's compositions are one way or another integrated in the changing ideological context of the Soviet era and accompanied by explanations of the connection a particular composition has with a concrete political situation. The authors are interested not solely in the opera "Lady Macbeth" and the notorious newspaper articles of 1936, but also in the refusal to publish the vocal cycle "From Jewish Folk Poetry"; the "Anti-Formalist Rayok," which was never intended to be published at all, or the publication of the First Violin Concerto under the influence of the Decree of 1948 and "The fight against cosmopolitanism." *Wikipedia* interprets the 1949 cantata "About the Forests" as a kind of rehabilitation before the authorities, calling it "an example of the pretentious grand style of the official contemporary art."

The onset of the "thaw" era in Soviet politics and the change in ideology in the late 1950s is directly linked in the *Wikipedia* article's text to Shostakovich's convergence with official authorities, his entry into the official musical structures, becoming a Communist Party member and, at the same time, the growing optimistic mood present in his compositions from that time. For example, the Twelfth Symphony of 1961 is unambiguously positioned as a composition imbued with an emphasized "ideological" program. Regarding the beginning of Brezhnev's era of "political stagnation," the author of the article asserts that Shostakovich's music once again acquired "a gloomy tone."

The dichotomy between "music and government" is mounted both into a small section devoted to the composer's family, including the work of the second wife as a member of the Central Committee of the Soviet Komsomol [Communist

Youth League] and the repressed father of his third wife, and in various sources, which, along with the composer's personal website "DSCH"⁹, cite works of Solomon Volkov, who has an ambiguous reputation among professional musicians¹⁰. The term "Soviet," however, is not used either with regard to Shostakovich's music in general, or to any of his compositions in particular. It is substituted by synonymous phrases – characterizations of that time period, usually in quotation marks, which in the new era looks no longer like a simple citation, but rather like a way to express doubts about the assessments of musician's professional heritage related to the Soviet past. In other words, Shostakovich is identified as a "Soviet composer" when referring to social history and the facts of the composer's life, yet not when characterizing his music.

The same tendency becomes meaningful when presenting other composers, including those endowed with a different level of talent and differing life strategies. For example, *Lev Knipper* is called "Soviet," bearing in mind his affiliation with the NKVD. However, his musical style has not merited the epithet of "Soviet" and is defined by the composer's interest in the national melody, namely, the folk music of the Trans-Caucasus region.

For *Wikipedia* reprints of old texts are not something uncommon (for example, their article about *Boris Asafiev* is virtually a verbatim reprint of an article from the *Musical Encyclopedia* from the 1970s about him) and is stipulated by a number of objective factors. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to grasp, as an example, why the *GRE* includes the almost complete text of an article by Olga Chekhovich (1912–1982) from the Soviet period about Asafiev, where the modern reader actually views an ideal image of a Soviet musicologist, whereas a mild reproach for the conformist tendencies

of Asafiev as a critic by no means diminishes the article's prevailing panegyric tone.

In sum, it is worthwhile to highlight that in the present-day public encyclopedic resources in Russian the use of the adjective "Soviet" in regard to the phenomena of the art of music in the USSR serves as a kind of litmus test to determine the respective author's attitude to this era – either its recognition as a certain uniquely distinctive phenomenon, or its nullification in the context of the country's history. The uncertainty and confusion in the respective expressions of these positions can be seen both in the *GRE* and in the Russian *Wikipedia*. Thus, it can be argued with caution that the cultural recycling of the Soviet element does not appear as conspicuous in academic music, as it does in other fields of culture and art. Moreover, an active reconstruction and transformation of the actual understanding of the "Soviet element in music" is occurring, which also can be seen in its frequent replacement by the synonymous phrase "music of the USSR / music in the USSR," the extension and emphasis on the pages of music history which were nearly obscure, silenced down or prohibited for ideological reasons – primarily "avant-garde" and "repressed" music.

Among the most discernible trends are active usages of Soviet narratives without any changes alongside post-Soviet musical works, the inappropriate application or substitution of the epithet "Soviet" for "Russian" ("russky," representing nationality) or "Russian" ("rossiysky," representing citizenship") in the description of composers and their musical compositions, as well as the rejection or disregard of the concept of "Soviet music" with respect to composers of the "first rank," such as Shostakovich and Prokofiev.

 NOTES 

¹ Cultural recycling here means the active circulation and mention of actual musicians and musical compositions from the Soviet era in the post-Soviet period. This trend is based on the feeling of nostalgia for an era long gone and a desire to return at least some fragments of it. About the importance of nostalgia in cultural recycling, see, for example: [11].

² The *Great Russian Encyclopedia* (<https://bigenc.ru>). The majority of the links to certain articles from the *Great Russian Encyclopedia* and Wikipedia are not cited in the article, since they are easy to be found by name or title. All references to them have been relevant prior to 01/01/2020.

³ Since 2015, the author of the article has been the head of the project of *Wikipedia* in Russian, i.e., the Russian musical *Wikipedia*, as part of which students of the Petrozavodsk A. K. Glazunov Conservatory have participated in contributing to the Russian-language segment of the encyclopedia with articles on music from Russia and from other countries (in particular, Alexander Glazunov and his compositions).

⁴ See the review by Svetlana Savenko about 20th century music in the section “Russia” [9] or the article about Nikolai Zhilyaev.

⁵ Elena Firsova, Dmitri Smirnov, Alexander Knaifel, Victor Suslin, Vyacheslav Artyomov, Sofia Gubaidulina and Edison Denisov.

⁶ Following the book: [6].

⁷ For example, the only Russian monograph about Weinberg so far is the book by Liudmila Nikitina [7].

⁸ There are two exceptions to this rule – Aram Khachaturian, who was called “Soviet”, and Sofia Gubaidulina, who was named “Russian” composer, which can probably be explained by the mistakes made by the person “monitoring” (in other words – moderating) this particular article.

⁹ A publishing house founded by the composer’s widow – Irina Antonovna Shostakovich, devoted to disseminating his compositions.

¹⁰ For a short digest of this discussion, see [10].

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