

**THE YEAR
1948**

IN SOVIET MUSIC



A. Gerasimov, The Bolshoi Theatre 1947

THE BACKGROUND



Zhdanov and Stalin

ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ ОРДЕНА ЛЕНИНА АКАДЕМИЧЕСКИЙ БОЛЬШОЙ ТЕАТР СОЮЗА ССР

И ЖЖЖ ГОДОВЩИНЕ ВЕЛИКОЙ ОКТЯБРЬСКОЙ СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКОЙ РЕВОЛЮЦИИ

7 И **9** НОЯБРЯ 1947 Г.

Ваша РУССКАЯ

ВЕЛИКАЯ ДРУЖБА

Музыка и либретто А. С. ДВОЙКО
Актриса Елена МАРШАК
Сопрано Елена М. Маршак

Пролог	ДВОЙКО, ДВОЙКО, ДВОЙКО, ДВОЙКО, ДВОЙКО
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Акт XX	ДВОЙКО, ДВОЙКО, ДВОЙКО, ДВОЙКО, ДВОЙКО

Директор - А. С. МЕЛНИ-ТАЦАЕВ Генеральный директор - Б. А. ПОНЯТОВСКИЙ Художественный руководитель - Ф. Ф. ФЕДОРОВСКИЙ

Начало в 7 час. 30 мин. выходы



Sergo Ordzhonikidze (1886-1937)



5 January 1948 Stalin attends *The Great Friendship* at the Bolshoi

6 January Zhdanov has a meeting with the performers of the opera and plans major changes in the administration of culture

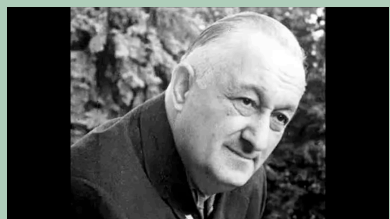
10-13 January a meeting with composers at the Party CC

Dismissals and new appointments: Tikhon Khrennikov becomes the General Secretary of the Composers' Union

10 February publication of the actual Party Resolution on *The Great Friendship*



The opera's principal faults lie primarily in the music, which is inexpressive and impoverished. It does not contain a single memorable aria. It is chaotic and inharmonious, being constructed largely from dissonances and sonorities that offend the ear. Individual lines and scenes that make some pretence to melodiousness are suddenly interrupted by disorganized noise that is totally alien to normal human experience, and which has a depressive effect on the listener. There is no organic connection between the development of the action on stage and the musical accompaniment. The vocal aspect of the opera—the choral, solo and ensemble singing—makes a poor impression. Due to all of this, the abilities of the orchestra and singers remain unused.



V. Ivanov sketch for a set of the Great Friendship

Пролетарии всех стран, соединяйтесь!

Всесоюзная Коммунистическая Партия (больш.)



ПРАВДА

Орган Центрального Комитета и МН ВКП(б).

№ 42 00782 | Среда, 11 февраля 1948 г. | ЦЕНА 20 КОП.

Об опере «Великая дружба» В. Мурадели.
 Постановление ЦК ВКП(б) от 10 февраля 1948 г. (1 стр.)

Телеграмма товарищу Н. С. Сталину от Президиума Совета Министров Грузинской Народной Республики 2-го П. Грозд (1 стр.)

А. Калоев, Д. Бакиев. — После денежной реформы. Письмо из деревни (2 стр.)

Г. Деборин. — Марксизм-ленинизм о возможности крушения капитализма. К 100-летию «Манифеста» Коммунистической партии (3 и 4 стр.)

Комментарии вранских газет к франко-американскому военному соглашению (3 стр.)

Сессия Народного собрания Северной Кореи (3 стр.)

Борьбой народа требуют удаления из Кореи «американских ООИ» (3 стр.)

Отказники скандинавских странки предложены Бетина о «западном блоке» (2 стр.)

Англо-американские переговоры о разделе сфер влияния на Ближнем Востоке (3 стр.)

К англо-иранским переговорам (3 стр.)

Задавание Залюксуса (3 стр.)

Английские воскресные газеты о пролетарской революции (3 стр.)

Новое издание барельефов для Социалистической Школы (4 стр.)

К предостережению молодежи в западных зонах Германии (4 стр.)

Демонстрации во Франции в связи с 100-летием событий 1848 года (4 стр.)

Обзор военных действий греческой Демократической армии (4 стр.)

Полония в Испанском Марокко (4 стр.)

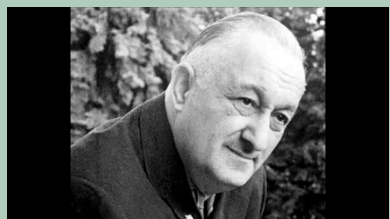
К предстоящим парламентским выборам в США (4 стр.)

ВСЕСТОРОННЕ ПРОВЕРИТЬ ПОДГОТОВКУ МТС К ВЕСЕННЕМУ СЕВУ!

Об опере «Великая дружба» В. Мурадели
 Постановление ЦК ВКП(б) от 10 февраля 1948 г.

В последние дни перед началом работ по подготовке весеннего посева МТС всемерно устремлены к тому, чтобы обеспечить в достаточной мере потребности колхозников в удобрениях и средствах защиты растений. ЦК ВКП(б) считает, что опера «Великая дружба» (музыка В. Мурадели, либретто Г. Манана), поставленная Большим театром Союза ССР которой исполнению нужны многие современные советские инструменты народом объясняется тем, что народ якобы еще далеко не достиг в области музыки что не только не имеет значения и не

The composer failed to draw upon the riches of folk melody, the songs and dance tunes that are to be found in such abundance among the peoples of the USSR in general, and in particular among the peoples of the North Caucasus, where the action of the opera takes place.



V. Ivanov, sketch for *The Great Friendship*

REASONS FOR THE 1948 RESOLUTION

The anti-Western ideological trend instigated by Stalin and Zhdanov after the War

Zhdanov's personal distaste for anything remotely modernist

Zhdanov's opportunism in using the moment for sidelining his rivals (such as the minister Khrapchenko) and establishing direct Party domination over culture, rather than through the mediation of state institutions

The desire of certain previously overlooked composers for recognition and remuneration that had been concentrated for years in the hands of a narrow elite

A sincere aesthetic dislike of modernism among composers of a more traditional bent

OFFENDING WORKS



KREMLIN BY NIGHT



Nikolai Myaskovsky



О каждом из нас заботится Сталин в Кремле

Viktor Govorkov

Poster from 1940



Tatiana Sharova; Conductor Gennady Rozhdestvensky

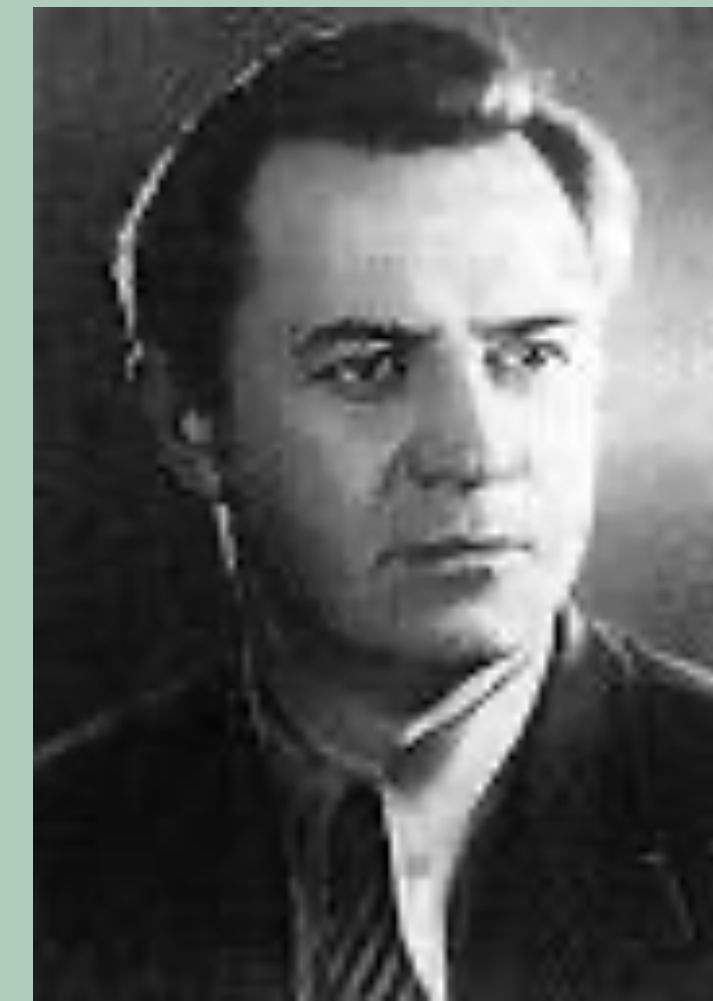
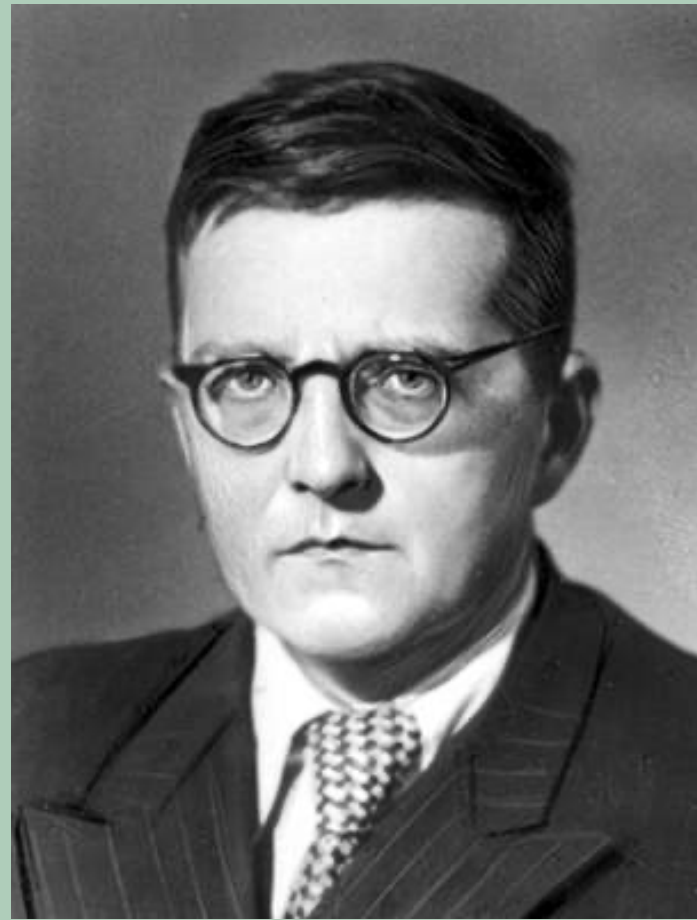
SYMPHONY-POEM

Aram Khachaturian





THE FORMALISTS



Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Shebalin, Popov, Myaskovsky

Things are especially bad where symphonic and operatic works are concerned: here we find composers who are devoted to this anti-social formalist trend. The trend has found its fullest expression in the work of such composers as comrades D. Shostakovich, S. Prokofiev, A. Khachaturian, V. Shebalin, G. Popov, and N. Myaskovsky, whose music displays most strikingly these formalist perversions and undemocratic tendencies so alien to the Soviet people and their artistic tastes. This music is characterized by the negation of the chief principles of classical music, by the preaching of atonality, dissonance and disharmony, all of which are supposedly signs of “progress” and “innovation” in the development of musical form. These composers reject the essential foundations of the musical work, such as melody; instead, they take delight in chaotic and neurotic sonorities, turning music into cacophony, an anarchic piling-up of sounds. This music strongly suggests the spirit of present-day bourgeois music in Europe and America, music that reflects the dementia of bourgeois culture; this is a complete negation of musical art, a dead end.

Moscow, February 14, 1948

The following works of Soviet composers currently in the schedules of concert organizations are to be banned from performance and removed from the repertoire lists [only works by Shostakovich and Prokofiev are included in this extract]:

Shostakovich

Symphony No. 6
Symphony No. 8
Symphony No. 9
Piano Concerto
Poem of the Motherland
Octet
Piano Sonata No. 2
Songs on English verses
Aphorisms, a cycle of piano pieces

Prokofiev

Symphonic Suite *1941*
Ode for the End of the War
Festive Poem
Cantata for the 30th Anniversary of the October Revolution (text by Dolmatovsky)
Ballad about a Boy ...
Thoughts, a cycle of piano pieces
Piano Sonata No. 6
Piano Sonata No. 8

THE BENEFICIARIES

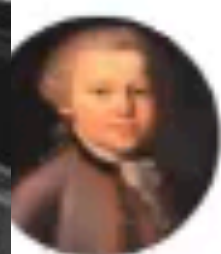




Reinhold Glière
Quartet No. 4
(1943)

Квартету имени Бетховена:
Цыганову, В. П. Ширинскому, В. В. Борисовскому и С. П. Ширинскому

КВАРТЕТ № 4



Bartje Bartmans

I

Р. ГЛИЭР, соч. 83

Allegro moderato (♩ = 108)

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello



Juozas Tallat-Kelpša

The Stalin Cantata

(Poem by Salomėja Nėris)



Vivo (Живо) 17 [1] 11 [2] 8 Cello e Viola

[3] Allegro (Быстро)

[4]

[5] 8

The image displays a page of musical notation for the Violin Concerto by Balys Dvarionas. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff is marked 'Vivo (Живо)' and 'Cello e Viola', with a measure count of 17 and two boxed measure numbers, [1] and [2]. The second staff is marked '[3] Allegro (Быстро)'. The fourth staff has a boxed measure number [4]. The fifth staff has a boxed measure number [5] and a measure count of 8. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.



Balys Dvarionas, Violin Concerto, performed by Alexander Livont



Nikolai Budashkin

Russian Fantasy



Сормовская лирическая



Boris Mokrousov

Lyrical Song of Sormovo

REPENTANCE AND COMEBACKS



Prokofiev at the Congress of Soviet Composers, 1948

Response of Sergei Prokofiev to the Resolution of February 10 1948

[letter read *in absentia* during General Assembly of Soviet Composers,
Moscow, February 17-26, 1948]



Regarding my own case: some elements of formalism were characteristic of my music as early as fifteen to twenty years ago. I was probably infected through my contact with a number of Western trends. After *Pravda* (under the direction of the Central Committee) had exposed the formalist errors in Shostakovich's opera, I pondered over the various creative devices in my own music and concluded that the path I had taken was wrong. In a number of the works that followed (*Alexander Nevsky*, *Zdravitsa*, *Romeo and Juliet*, the Fifth Symphony), I attempted to liberate myself from formalist elements, and I think I succeeded in this to some extent. The persistence of formalism in some of my works can probably be explained by a degree of complacency on my part, and a failure to understand that our people have no need for such things. After the Resolution, which has had a rousing effect on the entire community of composers, it has become clear exactly what kind of music our people need; and now it is also clear how we can overcome the formalist disease.



Shostakovich at the Peace Conference in New York, March 1949



A Hymn of People's love, collective work, 1949
Алексей Шовкуненко, Платон Белецкий, Игорь Резник. Гимн народной любви. 1950

The Fall of Berlin (1949), final scene





**Shostakovich,
Song of the Forests**



Yevgeni Svetlanov in Japan



Recording from 1950 (?) , images collated by 783nata and posted on 2 March 2022

Prokofiev,

On Guard for Peace



The Schoenberg Ensemble



Octet (1950) IV

The image displays a page of a musical score for the fourth movement of the Octet (1950) by Galina Ustvolskaya. The score is written for an octet ensemble. The instruments and their parts are:

- Ob. (Oboe):** Two staves (I and II). The first staff starts with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 144$ *espr.* and a dynamic of *ff*. The second staff has a dynamic of *ff* and *sf sf*.
- V-ni (Violins):** Four staves (I, II, III, IV). These staves are mostly empty, indicating rests for the violins in this section.
- Timp. (Timpani):** One staff. It begins with *con sord.* and *molto ritmico!*. The dynamics are *f* and *ff*.
- Piano:** Two staves (treble and bass clef). The treble staff has a dynamic of *fff* and *espr.*. The bass staff has a dynamic of *fff*.

The score is in 9/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings throughout.

STALIN'S DEATH



A. Gerasimov, Stalin's Funeral (1953)

CONCLUSIONS

investment in music as high art

the concept of individual creator

the agency of professional communities

art belongs to the people

the obscurity of textless music



PROKOFIEV
SONATA FOR CELLO AND PIANO
IN C MAJOR, OP. 119 (1949)

LAURA VAN DER HEIJDEN
PETR LIMONOV

I. ANDANTE GRAVE II. MODERATO III. ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO