



Fairclough, P. (2017). "We should not sing of heaven and angels": Western Sacred Music in Soviet Russia. In P. Hall (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Censorship* Oxford University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199733163.013.8>

Peer reviewed version

Link to published version (if available):  
[10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199733163.013.8](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199733163.013.8)

[Link to publication record in Explore Bristol Research](#)  
PDF-document

This is the author accepted manuscript (AAM). The final published version (version of record) is available online via Oxford Handbooks at <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199733163.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199733163-e-8>. Please refer to any applicable terms of use of the publisher.

## University of Bristol - Explore Bristol Research

### General rights

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the reference above. Full terms of use are available: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/pure/user-guides/explore-bristol-research/ebr-terms/>

## **“We Should Not Sing of Heaven and Angels”: Performing Western Sacred Music in Soviet Russia, 1917–67<sup>1</sup>**

The performance of sacred music in Russia during the Soviet period remains an obscure topic in the West. Knowledge of what was played is almost nonexistent outside Russia; within Russian musical circles much is known and remembered from personal experience, but as is often the case with events comfortably within living memory, it has not yet been a subject for research. With regard to Russian sacred music, links with Russian Orthodoxy mean that its fate was bound up with official Soviet attitudes to the church itself, which were themselves shifting and contradictory over the seventy-four-year Soviet period. In effect, between around 1928 and 1965, very little Russian sacred music was publicly performed, and so contemporary Russian scholarship has, not surprisingly, concentrated mainly on the rich performance traditions of the prerevolutionary years.<sup>2</sup> My focus therefore is not on Russian sacred music performance in the Soviet Union but rather on Western sacred music in the concert practice of the major cultural centers of Moscow and Petrograd-Leningrad. I have chosen to end my study at the point of Khrushchev’s fall from power in 1964, since despite the ensuing so-called stagnation under Brezhnev, patterns of musical life had changed permanently since the end of the Stalin years and would never return to the pre-Thaw climate of repression.<sup>3</sup>

Lenin’s new administration set as one of its early objectives the discrediting and near-elimination of Russian Orthodoxy. It would not be unreasonable, therefore, to expect suspicion towards those musical institutions whose work was closely involved with the church and its music. Nor would it be unreasonable to expect sacred repertoire to be purged from concert schedules. Religious communities were persecuted, churches demolished, and priests discredited and even arrested in vicious campaigns against the Church, so at first

glance there seems no reason why the singing of sacred texts should have been permissible in a concert hall—especially in venues so blatantly emblematic of Tsarist times as the Imperial Capella in Leningrad or in former churches.<sup>4</sup> However, Western sacred works were an established part of concert repertoire, particularly the large-scale oratorios, requiems, and masses. They therefore belonged to the canon of “bourgeois” works that Lenin’s administration wished to bring within reach of the proletariat. To place bans on performing Bach, Handel and Mozart’s sacred works was unthinkable, and was in fact never seriously proposed. Many of these works were, however, set to Latin texts, which meant they would not be understood by the new Soviet working classes. But it was this very fact that helped to ensure their survival: by the mid-1920s, texts would not be presented, translated or otherwise, in program notes. As presented to audiences, Western requiems and masses were religious only in name: their textual content was rendered no more significant than the orchestral parts. Those sacred works that were in vernacular languages such as German were more problematic, and different strategies for accommodating those works were eventually found, as will be seen.

While there was never any ban as such on performing Western sacred music in concerts, artists did not have *carte blanche* to perform exactly what they liked, when they liked. Tracing the various twists and turns through Soviet music policy to determine what was and was not permissible at any given time does not always give straightforward answers. Evidence of direct Party interference in the selection of repertoire does not necessarily mean a document issued by the Kremlin, but can be located in low and middle-ranking committee decisions that reflect the leadership’s taste or opinion at that time. In the case of official or top-down attitudes to religion in Soviet society, prejudice can clearly be seen in decisions made by Narkompros (Commissariat of Enlightenment) and its repertoire committee, Glavrepertkom, in the 1920s; in 1936, the newly formed All-Union Committee on Arts

Affairs replaced all previous intermediary committees and was directly answerable to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. As an organization, it was also considerably more interventionist and aggressive than Narkompros had been, but that should not be surprising. During the second half of the 1930s the Stalinist repressions created a climate of such fear and paranoia that whole musical institutions suffered purges thanks to the Committee's desire to demonstrate its own zeal; in such extreme conditions, it is not surprising that repertoire selection became more cautious. A huge upsurge in national feeling during the war years (1941–45) cemented the xenophobia that was already making its mark on repertoire selection, and this insularity was completely entrenched by the late Stalin period. Russia's musical life was able to refresh itself only after 1953, and though it was a long time before it returned fully to the internationalism of the 1920s and 30s, by 1964 the process of normalization was well underway. Therefore, the selection of repertoire can be regarded as an evolving process, with influence from the top exerting a greater or lesser influence at certain times, the personal tastes of musicians and artistic advisors initiating important decisions, and repertoire and arts committees performing an intermediary role as interpreters and guardians of the leadership's position.

### **First steps: Mikhail Klimov and the Leningrad Capella**

As is well documented, the Bolshevik coup of October 1917 did not result in the immediate closure of cultural institutions.<sup>5</sup> The most distinguished prerevolutionary musical bodies (for example, the Bolshoy and Mariinsky Theatres) were generously supported by the new government; indeed, despite the many difficulties and privations of the first decade, multiple new music groups sprang up in response to the revolutions' new creative spirit.<sup>6</sup> Two notable prerevolutionary survivors in Petrograd-Leningrad who were given the chance to remodel themselves were the former Imperial orchestra and capella, both organizations

which were given priority funding on a level with the big opera houses. After donning various different names throughout the 1920s, they were eventually called the Leningrad Philharmonia and Leningrad State Academic Capella.<sup>7</sup> From the perspective of performing both Russian and Western sacred repertoire, the Leningrad Capella makes an ideal case study for the first half of this chapter because, unlike many other Soviet choirs, it never specialized in folk or popular song repertoire: it had been based in Saint Petersburg since the time of Peter the Great and was protective of its distinguished classical heritage. The Capella therefore took responsibility for maintaining prerevolutionary performance traditions, and the very fact that it did this with government blessing is significant. Its repertoire over the period of this study is a good barometer of broader Soviet cultural policy, echoing changing positions on mass and bourgeois culture, the Russian Orthodox Church, the rise of nationalism under Stalin and the “Thaw” years that followed. Through all these chapters of Soviet cultural history, the performance of Western sacred music is a consistent indicator of official policy.

The conductors and artistic directors of both the Capella and the Philharmonia during the first two decades of the Soviet state were crucial in establishing Leningrad’s repertoire traditions, some of which survived for the whole Soviet period and beyond. The body with overall responsibility for musical institutions was Narkompros, headed by Anatoly Lunacharsky<sup>8</sup>: nothing in the musical world happened without the support and permission of this organization.<sup>9</sup> The first conductors of the Philharmonia were Sergey Koussevitsky, Emil Cooper, and Albert Coates; though all would soon to emigrate to the West, they played a major role in establishing a high-quality, international concert life under the new Bolshevik government. The Capella, however, maintained Mikhail Klimov as conductor and director from 1918 through 1935, ensuring a remarkable continuity over nearly two decades of dramatic upheaval. Like most musicians in important roles during these years, Klimov was

well trained and highly professional. He had been taught composition and conducting at the Petersburg Conservatory by Rimsky Korsakov, Liadov, and Tcherepnin. In addition to this, he seems to have been a gifted administrator and an astute diplomat, traits that were valued highly in the changeable years of the 1920s and 30s. From the time of the Capella's first concert in February 1918, Klimov's relationship with Lunacharsky proved critical to the Capella's survival during the 1920s and had a clear impact on their programming.

The Capella's repertoire before 1917 was not confined only to sacred works. Among the secular pieces performed were nineteenth-century romances (Arensky, Glinka, Gounod, and others), choruses from Russian and Western operas (*Prince Igor*, *Khovanshchina*, *Orfeo*, *Tannhauser*, and others) as well as major Western sacred works like Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli* and Handel's *Messiah*.<sup>10</sup> Both sacred and secular repertoire would be retained and further developed after 1917, but initially Klimov had no assurance that the Capella's sacred repertoire would be acceptable to the new Soviet government. Their first postrevolutionary concert—at which they sang sacred music as well as Russian folk songs—was in February 1918, at the House of the Red Army, prefaced by a lecture by Lunacharsky on “The separation of the Church from the State and the art of church singing” in which he argued for the historical value of Russian church singing independently of its religious context.<sup>11</sup> Lunacharsky supported the Capella as a worthy musical institution which could play a full role in the early revolutionary project to bring bourgeois culture to the masses, and he valued Klimov as a talented professional who could be entrusted with the *perestroika* of the Capella from an imperial, private choir to a public one. Moreover, Klimov's talents as an administrator were useful to Lunacharsky beyond his work in the Capella. From 1925, Klimov, at Lunacharsky's behest, joined the administration of the Leningrad Philharmonia, and the two organizations maintained a close relationship, with the Capella acting as the Philharmonia's official choir.<sup>12</sup>

Between 1918 and 1935 (when he stopped conducting due to illness, which proved fatal in 1937), Klimov performed the following major sacred or biblical works, some of which had not previously been in the Capella's repertoire: Mozart Requiem; Beethoven *Missa Solemnis*; Rachmaninoff *All-Night Vigil*; Tchaikovsky *Liturgy*; Berlioz *Damnation of Faust*, Requiem, and *Te Deum*; Verdi Requiem; Bach St. Matthew Passion, B Minor Mass, St. John Passion, Cantata no. 80; Handel *Samson*, *Judas Maccabeus*; and Brahms Requiem.<sup>13</sup> Not all gained equal status throughout the 1920s and 30s, and some were quickly deemed problematic: Tchaikovsky's *Liturgy* and Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil* were early casualties of the Repertoire Committee's zeal to ban anything redolent of prerevolutionary Orthodoxy. By 1922 Klimov was required to submit repertoire plans to the repertoire section (Glavrepertkom) of Narkompros for inspection, and those for the forthcoming year were set out on the following lines: (1) Russian folk song, 4 concerts; (2) Russian choral music, 11 concerts; (3) Russian choral literature of the fifteenth through seventeenth century, 1 concert; (4) Western choral literature, 5 programs; (5) works for choir, soloists, and orchestra, 5 concerts. The single concert devoted to fifteenth- through seventeenth-century Russian choral music was not allowed to go ahead; Klimov would not perform this repertoire again until after 1932. On the Narkompros repertoire committee that year were three highly respected cultural and musical figures: Lunacharsky himself, the music education specialist Nadezhda Briusova, and the theoretician Boleslav Yavorsky. All evidently respected Klimov and the Capella but felt unable to permit them to perform what was self-evidently Orthodox choral liturgy. Tension would simmer over the Capella's retention of sacred works, both Russian and Western, over several years; by 1926 Lunacharsky had to intervene in their defence. In his address to the presidium of the scientific-artistic section of GUS (The State Academic Council), "On the repertoire of the Leningrad State Capella," he concluded that "[this section] believes that, notwithstanding those political considerations which have been

brought to its attention, the best repertoire for the Capella is classical; it is undoubtedly essential for the future of our musical culture.” (Sheremet’yeva, 1983: 46) By “classical” Lunacharsky almost certainly meant Bach, Handel, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, since Russian sacred music was rapidly becoming a lost cause. A directive from Glavrepertkom in July 1928 states:

there is no objection to the inclusion in the State Academic Capella’s work plan of Bach’s ‘Passions’ and Mass, on the condition that they will not be performed more than twice a year, and not on any day coinciding with the church calendar ... [regarding] concerts of choral Russian music of the 17th and 18th centuries, Glavrepertkom considers these unsuitable and does not permit them.<sup>14</sup>

Tchaikovsky’s *Liturgy* had already vanished from the Capella’s schedules four years earlier, and Rachmaninoff’s *All-Night Vigil* was dropped after 1928, having been performed annually by the Capella from 1923. Neither work would be sung by a major state choir again until the mid 1960s.<sup>15</sup>

Russian sacred music, then, made a fairly swift exit from the Soviet concert stage. But works by Western composers were consistently treated more leniently. Of the above list of Klimov’s premieres, a few were dropped quickly: Berlioz’s *Te Deum* doesn’t appear again in schedules during my time-frame of research; Brahms’s *Requiem* was not heard again after its Soviet premiere (under Klemperer) in 1929 until 1960, and the *St. John Passion* was only performed a few times in the late 1920s and 1930s before disappearing altogether for twenty years. Both the *Passions* drop out of the repertoire in the so-called High Stalin period from around 1940 to 1954, as does Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis*. The Leningrad Philharmonia performed the *St. John Passion* under Kurt Sanderling in 1954–55, the first time since the 1934–35 season, but though the Latvian Philhamonic and Capella brought it to Leningrad in

1958, the Leningrad Philharmonia did not perform either *Passion* again during the period of this study. Bach's B Minor Mass and the Requiems by Mozart, Berlioz, and Verdi, however, attained the rare status of Soviet classics and were the only major sacred works to comfortably maintain their place in the repertoire during the entire Stalin period.

### **RAPM, the Cultural Revolution, and the rise of Stalinism**

The rise of the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM) and its deleterious effect on Soviet musical life is by now well documented.<sup>16</sup> But the period of its greatest influence in the late 1920s and early 1930s has a broader context: that of the so-called Cultural Revolution. Catastrophe in the countryside as the result of forced collectivization, industrial unrest, and personal disagreements within the Politburo all fed into what proved to be the first stage of Stalin's consolidation of totalitarian power. The feared charges of saboteur, spy, and Trotskyite now became weapons in this process. Although apparently remote from the musical world, the increased climate of repression and bullying had a powerful effect on all aspects of Soviet life. The press, whose naming-and-shaming campaigns now began to hound victims to their eventual destruction or banishment to the Gulag camps, was an extremely potent force where accusations could be publicly made. Lenin's New Economic Policy was rejected in favour of Stalin's First Five-Year Plan, a blueprint for massive industrial expansion and social reconstruction. During the launch of this process, proletarian organizations did receive some official support, and the stoking of class warfare could only emphasize this.<sup>17</sup> Now that they were indirectly reinforced from above, proletarian music organizations, whose influence had been limited before, felt empowered to attack icons of the musical establishment such as the conservatories and orchestras, certain that their voice echoed government policy.

Leading figures in proletarian groups such as Prokoll and RAPM had never been marginalized, as is clear from the fact that their names appear regularly on committee meeting lists of Narkompros and the Philharmonia throughout the 1920s. RAPM began in 1923 as a small group of like-minded colleagues with no significant influence, but from 1928 their ranks were significantly increased, which, together with the aggressive climate fostered by the Cultural Revolution, also made them much more influential.<sup>18</sup> They seized the opportunity to dominate musical life and attacked their ideological enemies ruthlessly. In a long-winded controversy over the Moscow Conservatory that was encouraged and whipped up by RAPM, a Communist named Boleslav Pshibishevsky was given the post of rector in 1929 (in preference to the composer Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov, the conservatory's own choice), and the conservatory was promptly renamed the Felix Kon Higher Music School.<sup>19</sup> RAPM certainly aimed to extend their influence to the repertoire of the orchestras, and archival evidence shows that they were partially successful, at least in the sphere of sacred music. RAPM managed to create a stifling atmosphere within musical circles, publishing aggressive articles in the mass press and their own journals, *Proletarsky muzikant* [Proletarian musician, published from 1929] and *Za proletarskuyu muziku* [Towards a proletarian music, published from 1930]. Professors of the stature of Nikolay Myaskovsky preferred to resign their Conservatory posts rather than endure RAPM's constant hounding of their teaching methods and systematic dumbing-down of the curriculum (Hakobian, 2010: 266). Attacks on religious music do appear in these journals, and religion itself was one of their targets, even if the religious music they attacked was less that of the concert hall than that sung for worship by Christian groups.<sup>20</sup> That being said, minutes from meetings of Glaviskusstvo (Main administration of arts affairs) between 1929 and 1931 show clearly that the Capella and Leningrad Philharmonia were in RAPM's sights. In a meeting dedicated to antireligious propaganda on April 9, 1929, the Mass [work] Department of Glavisskustvo

included among their aims to “ban the sale of religious musical literature,” to “examine concert, opera and radio repertoire with the aim of banning religious music and any works saturated with religion,” and “to exclude any operas saturated with religion.”<sup>21</sup> A worker at the All-Russian Conference on Amateur Musical Art, Moscow, March 1931, angrily declared: “We still have to pose the problem of the liquidation of musical illiteracy as a political question. Because this illiteracy is used by our class enemies—priests, precentors, papists and vermin who shove their own music at us, because we are not literate enough.”<sup>22</sup> The tenacity of religion in the Soviet Union is frequently classed with social problems such as alcoholism in documents of this kind.

Stenogrammes from the 1931 conference at which that angry worker spoke out yield further evidence of a burgeoning campaign against the Capella and its sacred repertoire. A representative from Glavisskustvo (possibly the RAPM-based conductor Alexey Sergeyev) declared that the Capella’s work was “alien” to the contemporary Soviet listener and the delegation from Leningrad grouped the Capella together with their other targets, the “white émigré” composer Rachmaninoff (especially his composition *The Bells*, to texts by Edgar Allen Poe) and the jazz band leader Leonid Utyesov, as “class enemies.”<sup>23</sup> Alexander Davidenko, a leading RAPM composer, complained in 1931 that on the radio workers’ choirs were performing Rachmaninov’s *All-Night Vigil* while church choirs (meaning the Capella) sang works by proletarian composers (Edmunds, 2000: 171). The notion that proletarian choirs, subject to far lighter scrutiny than the big state-sponsored institutions, were still singing the *All-Night Vigil* in 1931 is certainly intriguing, but it is unlikely that this practice was very widespread, and in any case it could surely not have survived much beyond that date.

Unbeknown to RAPM, their days were numbered. Only a year after this conference, the group was dissolved along with all other cultural organizations, and their manifestos and

policies themselves became targets for high-level criticism. By the end of 1931, RAPM were already on the defensive, having been publicly attacked and their members openly mocked at a meeting of the All-Russian Drama Committee in December.<sup>24</sup> Mikhail Gnesin's file in the State Archive of Literature and Art contains drafts of his speech - probably written in November 1931 and delivered at the December All-Russian Drama Committee meeting - robustly attacking not only the impoverishment of Soviet musical life, but also the RAPM pamphlet by Viktor Vinogradov "Against the influence of the church in music."<sup>25</sup> Gnesin ridicules Vinogradov's claim that the best antidote to "church influence" (tserkovshchina) was the singing of mass songs composed by RAPM.<sup>26</sup> Add this to Shostakovich's scornful description in his All-Russian Drama Committee speech of the works of the RAPM luminaries Koval and Davidenko as "helpless" and "illiterate" and one cannot escape the conclusion that by late 1931 the period of RAPM's intimidation of composers and musicians was nearing its end.<sup>27</sup> This renders its total period of real power a mere three or four years; all the more reason, then, to conclude that its influence during that time must have been exceedingly potent. No one knew in 1928 that its power would be short-lived; and taken together with the social and political background over the period 1927–32, there was every reason to suppose that its strident antireligious, antibourgeois and antimodern platforms and bullying tactics would continue indefinitely with the blessing of the State.<sup>28</sup>

During the five years that RAPM exerted real influence on musical life, there is a perceptible drop in the numbers of sacred works performed by the Capella. Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* was done in the Leningrad Philharmonia's 1929–30 season, to critical acclaim; but it is noticeable that Ivan Sollertinsky's *Leningradskaya Pravda* review took great pains to stress that it was not really a religious work at all but rather a Shakespearean drama (Sollertinsky, 1939: 3). In a poignant echo of RAPM's insistence on the importance of mass songs, Klimov's work plans show a marked increase in popular Soviet song repertoire as

early as the 1929–30 season plan. His plans for the 1931–32 season included the major themes Songs of the Peoples of the USSR (5 concerts) and Russian choral literature (4 concerts)<sup>29</sup>; other themed concerts included “Humour and satire,” a Lenin memorial concert, and “Antireligious choral literature.” This last category is clearly extraordinary for the Capella, and it was happily never repeated, since the political pressure to gratify RAPM tastes vanished after the resolution that was issued during that very season.<sup>30</sup>

As already noted, major works of Russian sacred music (Tchaikovsky’s *Liturgy* and Rachmaninoff’s *All-Night Vigil*) vanished from the Capella’s programs after 1928; but after 1932 they did begin once again to perform Russian liturgical music in closed educational concerts in music technicums and conservatories. In Klimov’s work plan for 1932–33, under the heading “Educational-illustrative programs,” the following works are listed: Lassus madrigals and motets; Josquin *Stabat mater*; Palestrina madrigals and motets; Lotti *Crucifixus*; Bach “Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf”; Russian *raspevi* from the fourteenth century onwards<sup>31</sup>; *kanti* on texts by Simeon Podotsky<sup>32</sup>; polyphonic sacred compositions of Russian eighteenth-century composers (Vasily Titov, Nikolay Bavikin, Vasily Redrikov); sonatas and sacred concertos for a capella choir and choir with instrumental accompaniment by Italian composers who had worked in Russia such as Baldassare Galuppi, Antonio Sapientsa, Giuseppe Sarti, and their Russian students Artemy Vedel and Stepan Degtyarev ; Bach B Minor Mass and Passions; Mozart Requiem. Klimov’s plans for the following years up to 1936 additionally include, in standard (noneducational) repertoire: Handel *Samson*; Bach B Minor Mass, St. Matthew Passion, *Magnificat*, and Cantata No. 80; Mozart Requiem; Verdi Requiem; Josquin “Agnus Dei” from *Missa l’homme arme*; Lassus motets; Palestrina movements from a Mass (probably *Missa Papae Marcelli*, which was already in their repertoire); and a Gabrieli 12-part motet. By 1935, Klimov’s plans for the next season (which, sadly, he was unable to direct owing to illness) placed eighteenth-

and nineteenth-century Russian sacred music in the very first programs.<sup>33</sup> Klimov evidently began cautiously, only performing the treasured early Russian sacred music in special closed concerts, but it seems that he soon brought them back into public view and intended doing so more and more.<sup>34</sup> It is a shame that it is not possible to see what the Capella actually *did* perform in that 1935–36 season but only Klimov’s work plans; but in any case, the change in the Capella’s leadership during that year coincided with much deeper shifts in Soviet cultural life that would affect all musical organizations, including the Capella. Tragically, this flowering of sacred music performance would be all too brief.

### **The Capella after Klimov**

Following a brief interval during which E. P. Kudryatseva directed the Capella (from the autumn of 1935), Alexander Sveshnikov was invited to become the Capella’s next conductor and artistic director, and he assumed this position from 1937 until the onset of Russia’s entry into the war, when Kudryatseva stepped in once more. It was not an easy time to accept such a role; Sveshnikov was a proven choral conductor but his political credentials were nonexistent and he could easily have been vulnerable to attack.<sup>35</sup> The Committee on Arts Affairs, formed in 1936, was soon to launch an aggressive investigation into the organization and affairs of the Leningrad Philharmonia and it was obvious that the Capella would at some point undergo the same process. There is a gap in the Capella’s repertoire record-keeping between around 1936–38 and so it is not currently possible to judge the speed and scale of the changes either of the new conductors instigated. Records resume in the 1938–39 season, and one important event in 1938 was particularly well documented: the Capella’s tour to Moscow in December as part of their 225-year anniversary celebrations. Bach’s *Magnificat* formed the big showpiece of their celebrations, and in fact its success in Moscow was cited in documents from the Committee on Arts Affairs to the Kremlin

successfully recommending Sveshnikov and select members of the capella for awards.<sup>36</sup> The Capella's repertoire for 1938–39, as submitted to the Committee on Arts Affairs in May 1938, ran as follows:<sup>37</sup>

Degtyarev: Minin i Pozharsky  
 Tchaikovsky: To Joy  
 Josquin: Canzona  
 Palestrina: Canzona  
 Janequin: Song of the Birds  
 Lasso: Ekho  
 Schutz: Students' song  
 Hassler: Madrigal  
 Bach: Magnificat  
 Folk songs: Ukrainian, Belarussian, Tartar, Czech, German, Italian,  
 Norwegian, French.  
 Viktor Bely: Chuvash song, Golubev: Kuznets, Dunaevsky: mass songs

As can be seen from this list, Sveshnikov had retained Klimov's legacy of blending contemporary Soviet music, folk song, Western sacred music, and even old Russian music (even if the eighteenth-century composer Stepan Degtyarev was the sole representative). It is noticeable, though, that Sveshnikov's selection eschews works that would be listed as obviously sacred: for example, the canzonas by Josquin and Palestrina presumably replace previous sacred works by them. Sacred Russian music has once again vanished, and this time it would not return to public view until Khrushchev's Thaw was well underway.

What does this list tell reveal about repertoire politics between 1935–38? In the first place, it shows that the Capella's conductor did not judge it safe to perform Russian sacred music, which in itself does not necessarily point to a more aggressive state policy on religion, but more likely reflects the enormously increased climate of repression at the peak of Stalin's mass arrests between 1937 and 1938. Any repertoire that carried even a hint of unacceptability was best avoided when the stakes were so high, and though I have not found any voices raised publicly against Klimov for his attempts to rehabilitate that repertoire in the mid-1930s, it surely seemed safer to Sveshnikov to steer well clear of it. The wide choice of

folk songs (including Western ones) strikes a boldly internationalist note that was actually slightly at odds with Stalin's move away from cordial cultural relations with the West, and in particular the openly hostile attitude to Germany until the sudden signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1939. However, the embracing of Ukrainian, Belarussian and Tartar culture was very much in line with the current policy of what Marina Frolova-Walker has termed Stalin's "national-culture project" of the mid-late 1930s, whereby the supposedly indigenous culture of the Soviet republics was fostered under the control and supervision of Moscow.<sup>38</sup>

In this risky and fragile climate, Sveshnikov had judged Bach's *Magnificat* to be a safe option, and this fact is remarkable in itself. Documents in the Capella file at the Central State Archive of Literature and Art in Saint Petersburg show that Sveshnikov's intention to continue performing Bach's sacred music was not only very short-lived but may have been problematic even at the time. Apart from the big *Magnificat* performances in the anniversary tour, the Capella performed its five-voice fugue "Fecit potentiam" separately, the full text of which is typed up in the Committee repertoire submission.<sup>39</sup> Presenting the Latin in typed Cyrillic on this document raises the distant possibility that it was typed as an aid to avoid censorship and draw attention away from the fact that they were performing in a foreign language. Normally, if not typed in Latin characters, foreign text in such documents was inserted, hand-written. Precisely why anyone should have been at pains to disguise the text is not obvious: the English translation makes no explicit reference to God, though perhaps the biblical source is obvious enough to require veiling: "He has shown strength with his arm / and has scattered the proud in their conceit, / Casting down the mighty from their thrones / and lifting up the lowly." Subsequent references to Bach fugues in the Capella's program lists to the Committee offer no text at all and merely read "Five-voice fugue," or "Fugue". In concert programs, this text would never be reproduced and the audience was thus invited to

“hear past” the words and enjoy a purely musical experience. The same, of course, held true for performances during the Stalin period of any Western sacred work.

Regardless of the *Magnificat*'s success, documents for the forthcoming 1939–40 season show a gradual change of repertoire direction, especially in its a capella listings. The Capella performed an increased number of Soviet popular classics and fewer Western sacred works, retaining only Lotti's *Crucifixus*, Purcell “Evening Hymn,” and an unspecified Bach fugue (presumably “Fecit potentiam” from the *Magnificat*). They still did the big classics with the Philharmonia: in March 1939 they performed Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* and in December the same year they gave the Soviet premiere of *Israel in Egypt*—a rare example of Sveshnikov enlarging Klimov's portfolio of Western sacred works. Despite positive reviews, this work was dropped and not repeated in the whole period examined here. The years immediately preceding the war, then, saw a shift in emphasis in concert practice from Western to Soviet works, but even the short-lived appearance of the *Magnificat* and *Israel in Egypt* at such a tense period of Soviet history—the peak years of the Stalinist repressions—suggests that the sacred content of these works was not considered a bar to their performance. Rather, if some Western music was dropped in favor of Soviet works in the late 1930s, this was because of a determined drive to demonstrate support for Soviet culture over and above accommodating distinguished foreign conductors and musicians (who had been performing more or less what they wanted) and maintaining an international performance culture. In short, it had to do with the much-vaunted Soviet policy of “national in form, socialist in content,” not with any decrees on banning Western music. Within Stalin's “socialism in one country,” internationalism had gone out of fashion, while showcasing the “national” art of the Soviet Republics was a matter of urgency. Notwithstanding these pressures, the Capella's repertoire on the eve of the Soviet Union's entry into the war in 1941 was still rich in Western music. It also shows that some sacred (or religious-themed) works were still in the

Capella's repertoire. I reproduce here the full repertoire listings submitted to the Committee on Arts Affairs for the 1941–42 season, prepared before the war:<sup>40</sup>

Russian classics

Taneyev *St John of Damascus* plus smaller works

Glinka "Lullaby"

Rimsky Korsakov Songs ("Venetian Night," "Fields of Tartary," "Old Song," "Oleg")

Cui Two songs

Borodin Polovtsian chorus

Tchaikovsky Songs

Arensky "Anchor"

Rachmaninoff "Spring"

Musorgsky "Jesus of Nazareth"

Grechaninov "Lullaby"

Soviet works [not fully listed here] by Alexander Alexandrov, Tomilin, Yegorov, Isaak Dunaevsky, Sergey Vasilenko, Alexander Kastalsky ("Troika"—text by Gogol).

Russian and National folk songs

Prokofiev *Alexander Nevsky*

Khachaturian *Song about Stalin*

Shaporin *On the Field of Kulikovo*

West European classics:

Haydn *Seasons*

Handel *Israel in Egypt, Judas Maccabeus*

Mozart Requiem

Beethoven Ninth Symphony, *Missa Solemnis, Fidelio*

Berlioz Requiem

Grieg *Peer Gynt*

Bach 5-voice Fugue, Motet No. 1, "The Night Falls," chorus [unspecified] from B minor mass, Fugue No. 1 from *Magnificat* ("si cut la cutus est")

Janequin [illegible]

Lotti *Crucifixus*

Lasso "Ekho"

Palestrina Kyrie (from Canonic Mass)

Purcell "Evening Hymn"

Rossini Tyrolean chorus from *William Tell*

Saint-Saens *Bolero*

Fogel *Valse*

Verdi *Te Deum*, Requiem

Telemann motet [not named]

Schutz madrigal [non-sacred]

Schumann [*sic*—should read Verdi] "Rataplan"

With the outset of war, everything changed. In 1941, the Capella was evacuated to Kirov, where it spent the war years singing morale-boosting Soviet and folk songs for soldiers and local people in small venues like schools and hospitals. The shift towards favoring Soviet and Russian repertoire before the war intensified during the war itself, largely owing to Russian musicians' genuine desire to serve the national cause at a time of foreign threat, and also as a result of the sheer volume of new patriotic works produced after 1941: there was simply a lot more Soviet repertoire to choose from, some of it of high quality (cantatas by Khachaturian, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Shaporin, and others). This change in emphasis was confirmed in the post-war years and became deeply entrenched in Soviet concert practice until after 1953. A typical late-wartime Capella program, given in Tallin, April 4, 1947, illustrates well how things had changed:<sup>41</sup>

Khachaturian *Poem about Stalin*<sup>42</sup>  
 Grechaninov "Lullaby"  
 Taneyev "Sunrise," "See such darkness," "Evening"  
 Lotti *Crucifixus*  
 Schumann "Grydzi"<sup>43</sup>  
 Lasso "Ekho"  
 Davidovsky on Ukrainian folk songs (skita?)  
 Voloshinov "Winter Morning"  
 Yegorov "Taiga," "Rodina"  
 Folk song "Taiga"  
 Novikov "Evening Bells," Suite on Russian folk themes

Little, apart from Lotti's *Crucifixus*, remained of the Capella's rich prewar Western sacred legacy. As happened a decade earlier, sacred works were more or less entirely confined to large-scale orchestral concerts with the Philharmonia, and even this arrangement could not be sustained. The 1948–49 season included Bach's B minor mass, Handel's *Samson*, the Berlioz and Verdi requiems and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. So far, there is no substantial change from the 1938–39 season. But in February 1948 the musical world suffered a crippling blow that was to have very wide-reaching consequences. After a

pugnacious three-day conference of composers, performers, and critics chaired by the Minister of Culture, Andrey Zhdanov, the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a resolution. It condemned by name five Soviet composers—Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Myaskovsky, Shebalin, and Popov. Their work was criticized for its adherence to Western formalist tendencies, a list of banned works was circulated, and all those with teaching posts at the conservatories were dismissed.<sup>44</sup> Though there was nothing in Zhdanov's resolution that specifically criticized the presence of Western classical music in Soviet schedules, he did place a strong emphasis on the importance of nineteenth-century Russian classics, to the point of instructing Soviet composers to return to that style. Even if there was no ban on Western music as such, the enforced emphasis on Soviet and Russian national music meant that Western repertoire was simply squeezed out. Sacred music was just another casualty of this, rather than a direct target. Programs for the 1949–50 season show a near-total absence of any Western sacred music: Lotti's *Crucifixus* is the sole survivor in the Capella's prewar sacred a capella repertoire, and when it came to orchestral concerts, in the five seasons between 1948 and 1953, (Moscow and Leningrad combined), they performed only Bach's B Minor Mass (four times), Mozart's Requiem (four times), and Verdi's Requiem (twice) with the Philharmonia. These are all that remained of the Western sacred works in the Capella's repertoire until after Stalin's death in 1953.

The resurrection of sacred music after Stalin's death occurred in various ways. One of the quickest moves to revive a long-neglected work was made by the young conductor Kurt Sanderling. Sanderling, who had moved to the Soviet Union in 1935, became Yevgeny Mravinsky's assistant to the Leningrad Philharmonic during their evacuation in Novosibirsk. In the 1954–55 season, he conducted the first performance of Bach's St. John Passion since the 1935–36 Leningrad season (both with the Capella). This seems to have been something of a one-off event, since it was not performed again until the Bach Ensemble from the German

Democratic Republic did it on a tour to the Soviet Union in 1968. Other choirs from Soviet-bloc countries played a small part in bringing Bach and others back to Moscow and Leningrad, but mainly outside the boundaries of the period I am investigating here: the Latvian Philharmonia and choir performed Handel's 1741 Mass on their tour in 1964, while two tours to Moscow in 1967 by the Estonian male voice choir and the Armenian Capella saw the revival of Cherubini's Requiem and Rossini's *Stabat Mater*. By this time, however, Soviet concert programming was radically altered, and it would be fair to say that Soviet-bloc choirs played a role no more significant than that of visiting Western performers who began to arrive in 1964, when the New York period group Pro Musica, first visited the USSR.

Once Western groups began regular visits to the Soviet Union, bringing with them music, new performance techniques and trends, and even instruments, the veil was finally lifted from the wealth of European sacred music from the last half-millennium. The impact of these visits was literally revolutionary. Andrey Volkonsky, then a young composer living in Moscow, knew members of Pro Musica, and learned about their new approaches to performing medieval and Renaissance music. In 1965, he began his own early music ensemble, Madrigal, supplied with block flutes and some music from Pro Musica, who had also given Volkonsky recent Western scholarship on music of that period.<sup>45</sup> Also active at that time was Rudolf Barshai's Moscow Chamber Ensemble, which performed a lot of Baroque music during the 1960s, including many sacred works. In the years 1963–64, the final season of this study, there was a series of important revivals: the Latvian Academic Choir gave what may have been the first Soviet performance of Handel's *Messiah*, Barshai conducted Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, Sveshnikov performed Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*,<sup>46</sup> and several Western choirs made their first visits. The choir and orchestra of Oberlin College in the United States (directed by Robert Fountain) performed Bach Cantata No. 150, Brahms motet op. 29 no. 2, Palestrina "Hodie Christus natus est," Lotti *Crucifixus*,

Lassus “Ekho,” Wilkes “Hosanna to the Son of David,” and a Mozart’s *Missa Brevis*. Pro Musica’s concerts were themed: for example, English Elizabethans, Italian early Baroque, Josquin and his contemporaries, and so on. Soviet musical life was utterly transformed by these visits, and by the growing musical freedoms they were experiencing, in however constrained circumstances. Sveshnikov’s State Russian Choir also enjoyed the freedom to expand their repertoire beyond the set pieces they had continually repeated since 1955: Lotti’s *Crucifixus* and Iomelli’s *Miserere*. From 1958, Lassus, Monteverdi, Josquin and others returned to the Russian Choir’s regular repertoire. But there remained the problem of European vernacular languages: though Western groups might sing in English and medieval French, and even the Latvians could sing the *Messiah*, major Soviet choirs in Moscow were more cautious. This leads us to a bizarre chapter in Soviet sacred performance that lasted a very long time: the Sovietization of J. S. Bach.

### **Bach à la Stalin: the Sovietization of the sacred songs**

Bach’s sacred songs had been an early part of the Capella’s repertoire under Klimov: programs preserved in his archive show that in April 1921 the Capella performed “Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf,” “Ich liebe Jesum,” “Komm, süßer Tod,” “Mein Jesu was für Seelweh,” “Vergiss mein nicht,” and “Komm, Jesu, komm.”<sup>47</sup> One of Sveshnikov’s notable, though controversial, achievements was the preservation of part of Bach’s a capella legacy through setting the music to Soviet texts. This was not something he did with the Capella; rather, this particular tradition seems to have begun with the choir he formed during the war: the State Academic Russian Choir of the USSR (and its youth section, the Boys’ Choir), usually called simply the Russian Choir or even Sveshnikov’s Choir. 1949 seems to have been the first year that one of these songs was performed: “Come, people” with words by Alexander Preis. Sveshnikov’s Russian Choir regularly sang these bowdlerized versions, with

a range of titles such as “Night departs”; “When the sun shines over us”; “Who carries proudly the banner of victory”; “Spring hopes”; “Joy of life”; “Who carries a sad burden”; “Let us sing a festive song,” “Heart, be silent,” “Consolation”; “Song of Triumph.” All of these titles were first performed in 1951; over the years more were added, and indeed, choirs were still singing these words well into the 1980s. New editions of choral music published in the late 1980s reprinted them, and some as early as 1966 gave both the original German *and* the Soviet texts, so that the choir could select which version to sing for themselves.<sup>48</sup> The Soviet texts therefore became completely embedded in Soviet choral performance long after their original purpose (to provide politically safe alternatives to the original texts) had become irrelevant.

One example from these songs will suffice to illustrate the kind of texts that were set. “Gimn likovaniya” (Hymn of rejoicing) was “Dir, dir Jehova, will ich singen” (BWV 452) with new words by Ya. Rodionov. The opening lines of its text are as follows: “I praise great deeds and bravery / For the truly brave there are no obstacles! / I praise valour and might / A hero leads us on to greatness.”<sup>49</sup> The ingratiating nature of such words is obvious, but not all Soviet Bach texts were like this: many were innocuous poems about spring, nature, and sunshine. The same fate befell Russian sacred works by Dmitry Bortniansky, Maxim Berezovsky, and others (Sveshnikov performed their music again from 1965, and Yurlov made it a specialty of his from around that time), though that particular line of inquiry goes beyond the scope of this chapter. Sometimes textual changes to the originals could be quite minor: substituting “sun” for “God,” for example, or describing a hymn to God as a hymn to nature. Writing about this aspect of Sveshnikov’s career, S. Kalinin defends this practice as a necessary evil:

Sveshnikov, brought up in this culture [that of Church training] ... bravely performed the sacred music of Russian composers, often skilfully

manoeuvring, sometimes compromising, but always preserving the highest humanitarian spirituality and philosophical ideas. The circumstances of those times required certain sacrifices for the sake of saving music. In the 1940s and 50s, and in the last years of the choir, Sveshnikov performed a lot of Russian sacred music—famous concertos by Bortniansky and Berezovsky, works by Balakirev, Rachmaninoff, Kastalsky. Often he had to alter the texts, but it was worth doing so; these good words, which we remember from those unkind years, meant that this imperishable part of Russian choral culture was not consigned to oblivion (Kalinin, 1998:153).

### **Final thoughts**

There was never any period in Soviet history when no Western sacred music was performed. Despite many limitations and restrictions, a handful of solo and orchestral works always remained in the repertoire. Any attempt to analyze why it was, for example, that Bach's *Magnificat* was dropped while the B Minor Mass was consistently performed would be fruitless. It is easy to understand why major concert works like the Romantic requiems retained their place: these were popular dramatic works that, despite their "bourgeois" origins, fit the grandiose style that was so much a part of Stalinist culture. Brahms's German Requiem, which set biblical texts in the vernacular, was an equally obvious candidate for omission, despite the fact that Bach's Passions were performed several times in the 1930s. Clearly, it was Russian sacred music that fared the worst. But though it would be correct to point out that almost no Renaissance or medieval sacred music had been heard in Moscow or Leningrad for thirty years or more, this has more to do with that fact that such repertoire did not form a strong part of the imperial capella's traditions, and so it is not surprising that Klimov did not seek to make a special place for it after 1917. And though Volkonsky was

indeed a pioneer of Soviet times in establishing a performing tradition for early music, he himself stated bluntly that he simply got the music from libraries:

I always find it strange when people ask me where I got the music from for “Madrigal.” What dreadfully lazy people! In any decent library, say for example that of the Conservatory, you can find the complete Palestrina edition. I simply took them into the reading room and copied them. I don’t know why no one else had thought of doing it, because the music was all there! The Philharmonia in Peter [Saint Petersburg] has a wonderful library. They have the complete works of Schutz and Palestrina. Probably, these 19th-century editions contain many mistakes, but the scores are accessible (Dubinets, 2010:62).

It is tempting to attribute neglect of all corners of repertoire during the Soviet period to political repression. But in fact there are a great many causes, amongst which simple lack of interest and awareness ranks just as highly as any ban from Narkompros or the Kremlin. In fact, as I hope to have shown, such bans were few and far between, and most gaps in performance practice occur because of general caution, not because any committee or politician decreed that certain works could not be played. After all, the West’s own traditions of performing early music were reinforced, even rejuvenated, in the 1960s, so it was not the case that musicians in Europe and America reliably knew and played such music while those behind the Iron Curtain were oblivious to it.<sup>50</sup> The supposed “discovery” of early music by Soviet audiences and composers in the 1960s must be set in the context of a staid, but nevertheless palpable tradition of performing a small handful of Baroque and Renaissance works throughout the entire Stalin period (quickly expanded to a slightly more generous handful after 1953): while it is likely that not a soul in the audience at Pro Musica’s first

concert had ever heard music by Dowland, Morley, or Wilkes, it is very likely that many knew at least one work by Lotti (*Crucifixus*) or Josquin (the likely candidate being “Et incarnatus est”), and practically everyone would have known Lassus’s “Ekho” or “Tik-tak,” perennial favorites with Soviet choirs. There was, therefore, a small performance tradition of singing early music that had clung on throughout the Stalin years, almost fading in the late 1940s and early 50s, but reviving soon after that. It took only inspiration and encouragement from visiting choirs for the old Soviet choral conductors to take up the cause for their own national early music culture—not just the performance of Western works, but also the music of the Orthodox liturgy and the works that it produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This quote comes from Bruno Walter's memoirs (*Thema und Variationen*, Stockholm, 1947) and is cited in Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917–1981*. Enlarged edition, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1983, p. 45. It was a comment made to Walter by a Philharmonia official justifying the cancellation of his planned performance of Mahler's Fourth Symphony in Moscow.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the monumental six-volume study *Dukhovnaya muzika v dokumentakh i materialakh* [Russian Sacred Music in Documents and Materials] ed. Marina Rakhmanova et al., Moscow: Yaziki slavyanskoy kul'turi, 2002-10. 1928 is the last date I have traced of a public performance of Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil*, and 1965 marks the year of Alexander Sveshnikov's recording of that work by Melodiya.

<sup>3</sup> Dates for the ending of the "Thaw" period do vary among historians because it was never a seamless process, even under Khrushchev; Peter Schmelz has recently extended the period to 1974, thereby arguing for the longest Thaw period currently on record, a whole decade later than the earliest cut-off point of 1964. See Schmelz, *Such Freedom, if only musical: unofficial Soviet music during the thaw*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Churches were used as concert venues in the early Soviet period: in 1918, Moscow Conservatory students performed a three-concert series of Western sacred works (Mozart Requiem, Bach sacred songs, and other works by Corelli, Haydn, and Bach at the Church of St. Peter and Paul, Moscow. It is worth noting that at this early stage, Latin texts were still translated for Russian audiences: the entire Requiem text is given in Russian in the program. See RGALI fund 2985, inventory 1, file 640. The latest date I have traced for this practice of translating or summarizing the Latin Requiem text is 1922, with extensive summaries by Igor Glebov (Boris Asafiev) placed alongside the Latin original. See RGALI fund 2685, inventory 1, file 244.

<sup>5</sup> The best account of this is still to be found in Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life*, pp. 11-37.

<sup>6</sup> In the first half-decade after 1917, new orchestras included Persimfans, the famous conductorless orchestra founded by Lev Tseitlin in 1922. There is a short list of post-1917 ensembles in Schwarz (1983, 32–33).

<sup>7</sup> The Leningrad Philharmonia was first called the (Petrograd) State Symphony Orchestra, then the State Philhamonic Orchestra ,and finally the Leningrad Philharmonia—a huge musical and educational organization founded formally in 1921, of which the orchestra itself was just one part. The Moscow Philharmonia was founded in 1925, with similar wide-reaching structures. The Leningrad Capella was initially renamed the Petrograd People’s Choral Academy (1918), gaining the appellation “Academic” in 1922, becoming the Leningrad State Academic Capella, then from 1954 the Glinka State Academic Capella. It is known today simply as the Glinka Academic Capella.

<sup>8</sup> Lunacharsky occupies an honorable place in the annals of early Soviet history. He was well educated and a respected writer and lecturer on the arts. Stalin demoted him to the post of Soviet ambassador to Spain in 1933: a clear signal that his liberal role in Soviet cultural life was at a definitive end. In poor health at the time, Lunacharsky died of natural causes on the way to his new post—a fate that almost certainly saved him from being purged with his Bolshevik colleague Nikolay Bukharin and others in the show trials of the 1930s.

<sup>9</sup> For a good account of Narkompros’s membership and policies as well as an excellent picture of musical life during the first five years after 1917, see Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution. Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia*. Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania University Press, 2004, pp. 13-40.

<sup>10</sup> A complete list of pre- and post-revolutionary repertoire up to 1957 is given in D. V. Tkachev and I. L. Gusin, *Leningradskaya akademicheskaya kapella imeni M. I. Glinki* [The Leningrad Academic Glinka Capella]. Leningrad: 1957, pp. 139-61.

<sup>11</sup> The concert was reviewed in *Izvestiya*, February 21, 1918. See Nadezhda Sheremet'yeva, *M. G. Klimov. Dirizher Leningradskiy akademicheskoy kapelli* [M. G. Klimov. Director of the Leningrad academic capella]. Leningrad: Muzika, 1983, pp. 20-1.

<sup>12</sup> They had been merged briefly under Narkompros but from July 1922 the Capella was independent. Records show that a merger was again broached in the summer of 1941, but was vigorously opposed by the Capella management. See TsGALI fund 77, inventory 2, file 242, pp. 4-7. Its independence saved it from the purge that followed the Committee on Arts Affairs investigation of the Philharmonia in late 1937, which resulted in several arrests. When the Capella's turn came to be investigated in 1941, its affairs were judged to be in good order. See *ibid*, p. 3. The investigation seems to have taken place actually during the first few months of the war: by the time the report was sent to the Committee on Arts Affairs (September 1941) the capella had already been evacuated to Kirov.

<sup>13</sup> He performed many other smaller sacred works, including sacred songs and motets by Lassus, Palestrina, and Bach, in addition to early Russian liturgical music (from the fourteenth century on). After 1932, when the proletarian organizations that campaigned against religious music were dissolved, the Capella again performed Russian liturgical music for a brief period until around 1935–36.

<sup>14</sup> See RGALI fund 645 inventory 1, file 524, p. 55. The document is signed by the secretary of Glavrepertkom, Sokolov.

<sup>15</sup> The director of the Respublika choir and Alexander Sveshnikov's pupil, Alexander Yurlov, first discovered this repertoire in the 1950s. See the reminiscences of his choristers A. Ushkarov, I. Veprintsev and Ye. Buneyeva in Irina Marisova, ed., *Alexander Yurlov*.

Moscow: Sovetskiy Kompozitor, 1983, pp. 65 and 103-8. All remember the upsurge in interest in Russian choral music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and how Yurlov was a passionate advocate of this repertoire very early on. Sveshnikov finally recorded Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil* with Melodiya in 1965.

<sup>16</sup> See for example Nelson, *Music for the Revolution*, pp. 207-40.

<sup>17</sup> See Nelson, *Music for the Revolution*, pp. 207-10.

<sup>18</sup> In 1928 the membership of Prokoll was partially absorbed into that of RAPM. Neil Edmunds reports that even in 1928 RAPM's Moscow membership was only 50, though unfortunately it is unclear whether this count took place before or after Prokoll members joined. It is likely (in my opinion) that the figure of 50 represents the extended membership after Prokoll's partial absorption. See Edmunds, *The Soviet Proletarian Music Movement*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2000, p. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Felix Kon was a political activist with no links to music so far as is currently known. For an excellent discussion of the proletarian groups' activities in music from 1917 to 1932, see Edmunds, *The Soviet Proletarian Music Movement*. For a useful brief summary of the extent of RAPM's influence at this time, see Nelson, *Music for the Revolution*, especially pp. 213-20.

<sup>20</sup> See for example G. [spell out, if possible] Anisimov, 'Na bor'ba s tserkovshchinoy v muzike' [On the struggle with the church's influence in music] *Za proletarskuyu muziku*, No. 6 (40), 1932, pp. 6-9, where the writer indignantly quotes from the 1927 plenum of the All-Union Society of Evangelical Christians, who reported seven Evangelical choirs in Leningrad. Religion, along with the so-called "kulaks" (rich peasants), was a target of the Cultural Revolution, which extended the attacks upon priests and worshippers that Lenin had initiated, but informal small-scale meetings of worshippers were never fully stamped out. The

toleration of this Soviet “Christian Union” typified the more liberal years of the New Economic Policy (approximately 1921–28).

<sup>21</sup> RGALI fund 645 (Glavisskustvo), inventory 1, file 121, pp. 87-88.

<sup>22</sup> RGALI fund 645, inventory 1, file 344. Stenogramme of All-Russian Conference on Amateur Musical Art, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> See RGALI fund 645 inventory 1, file 344. Stenogramme of All-Russian Conference on Amateur Musical Art, p. 28.

<sup>24</sup> See transcripts in Gnesin’s file: RGALI fund 2954, inventory 1, file 176, pp. 87-124. For a discussion of this chapter in Soviet musical life, and of Gnesin’s contribution to debates at this point, see Marina Frolova Walker and Jonathan Walker, *Music and Soviet Power 1917-1932*, pp. 314-21 and Yekaterina Vlasova, *1948 god v sovetskoy muzike* [The year 1948 in Soviet music], pp. 122-41.

<sup>25</sup> Viktor Vinogradov, *Protiv tserkovshchina v muzike*. Moscow: State Music Publishers, 1931.

<sup>26</sup> See RGALI fund 2954, inventory 1, file 176, p. 56.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92 verso, 111 (recto and verso).

<sup>28</sup> Modernism was also a RAPM target, despite the fact that earlier in the 1920s, proletarian groups like Proletkul’t had included major figures of Soviet modernism. By the late 1920s, this attitude had changed, and an aggressive anti-intellectualism prevailed in RAPM music circles.

<sup>29</sup> Works in this category range from Glinka’s “Lullaby” to songs by the RAPM composers Davidenko and Koval.

<sup>30</sup> See Russian National Library, manuscript department. Fund 1127 (Klimov), file 26.

<sup>31</sup> A *raspev* is basically the same as plainchant.

<sup>32</sup> *Kant* in Russian simply means “song,” but *kanti* in this context denotes a capella sacred songs that could be sung in church.

<sup>33</sup> See Russian National Library, manuscript department. Fund 1127 (Klimov), file 26 (Klimov’s work diary).

<sup>34</sup> Whether the Capella really did perform this repertoire publicly is impossible to verify. Klimov’s work diary shows that it was certainly his intention, but Sheremet’yeva’s excellent book (which, like my own study, includes study of Klimov’s personal papers as well as the Capella fund in TsGALI) states that it was only sung in closed educational concerts. See Sheremet’yeva, *M. G. Klimov*, p. 69.

<sup>35</sup> Sveshnikov did not join the Communist Party until 1948, the year when he was asked to take up the post of rector at the Moscow Conservatory. Unfortunately, this was in replacement for Vissarion Shebalin, sacked in the wake of the 1948 attacks on him and other distinguished figures in Soviet musical life: Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Myaskovsky, and Gavriil Popov.

<sup>36</sup> See especially the letter from the Presidium of the Committee on Arts Affairs to the Kremlin in RGALI fund 962, inventory 16, file 15, p. 136.

<sup>37</sup> I retain the Russian spelling convention of Lasso rather than Lassus in citations and quotations from Russian documents and published sources.

<sup>38</sup> The limitations of this “fostering” (for example, requiring every nation to have Russian as their first language, and being directly under Moscow’s command) are discussed by Frolova-Walker in her seminal article ‘National in Form, Socialist in Content: Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics.’ *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 51/2, 1998, pp. 331-71.

<sup>39</sup> See TsGALI fund 77 inventory 2, file 166.

<sup>40</sup> TsGALI fund 77, inventory 2, file 229. This plan was, of course, unrealized.

<sup>41</sup> TsGALI fund 77, inventory 2, file 346, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> This would have been the chorus part only, sung without orchestra.

<sup>43</sup> This work, which remained very popular not only in the Capella's repertoire but in that of numerous Soviet choirs, was a wordless choral arrangement of the piano piece "Traumerei."

<sup>44</sup> For a concise account of this episode in Soviet musical life, see Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life*, pp. 204-48

<sup>45</sup> Namely, Gustav Reese, *Music of the Renaissance*. New York, W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1954. For a discussion of Madrigal, see Elena Dubinets, *Knyaz Andrey Volkonsky: Partitura zhizni* [Prince Andrey Volkonsky: the score of life], Moscow: Ripol Klassik, 2010, pp. 61-73.

<sup>46</sup> He had already recorded this work with Melodiya in 1962.

<sup>47</sup> See *ibid*, file 21 (concert programmes).

<sup>48</sup> See J. S. Bach, 10 songs for voice and piano, Moscow: Muzika, 1966; but the multi-volume 'The State academic Russian Choir of the USSR sings' edited by Sveshnikov only gives Soviet-period texts.

<sup>49</sup> The song is available online at

<http://www.notarhiv.ru/zarubkomp/bah/noti/1%20%286%29.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> I would like to take this opportunity of thanking David Fallows for several enlightening conversations on this topic, especially for sharing his own performance experiences as an early music performer in California during the 1960s.

## **Bibliography**

### **Archival sources**

Committee on Arts Affairs. Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv Literaturi i Iskusstva

[Russian State Archive of Literature and Art], Moscow. (RGALI fund 962)

- Asaf'yev. Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv Literaturi i Iskusstva [Russian State Archive of Literature and Art], Moscow. (RGALI fund 2658)
- Glaviskusstvo and Narkompros. Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv Literaturi i Iskusstva [Russian State Archive of Literature and Art], Moscow. (RGALI fund 645)
- Glavrepertkom. Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv Literaturi i Iskusstva [Russian State Archive of Literature and Art], Moscow. (RGALI fund 656)
- Gnesin. Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv Literaturi i Iskusstva [Russian State Archive of Literature and Art], Moscow. (RGALI fund 2954)
- Ippolitov-Ivanov. Gosudarstvenniy tsentral'niy muzey muzikal'noy kul'turi imenni M. I. Glinki [Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture], Moscow. (GTsMMK fund 2)
- Kiselev. Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv Literaturi i Iskusstva [Russian State Archive of Literature and Art], Moscow. (RGALI fund 2985)
- Klimov. Manuscript Department, National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg.
- Leningrad Capella. Tsentral'niy Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv Literaturi i Iskusstva, St. Petersburg. (TsGALI fund 77)
- Moscow Philharmonia. Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvenniy Arkhiv Literaturi i Iskusstva [Russian State Archive of Literature and Art], Moscow. (RGALI fund 2922)
- Program archive of the Leningrad Philharmonia. Philharmonia Library, St Petersburg.
- Sveshnikov. Gosudarstvenniy tsentral'niy muzey muzikal'noy kul'turi imenni M. I. Glinki [Glinka State central museum of musical culture], Moscow. (GTsMMK fund 448)

### **Published Primary Sources**

Anisimov, G. “Na bor’ba s tserkovshchinoy v muzike” [On the struggle with the church’s influence in music]. *Za proletarskuyu muziku* 6, no. 40 (1932): 6–9.

Dubinets, Elena. *Knyaz Andrey Volkonsky: Partitura zhizni* [Prince Andrey Volkonsky: the score of life]. Moscow: Ripol Klassik, 2010.

Sollertinsky, Ivan. Untitled review. *Leningradskaya Pravda*, 22 April (1939), 3.

Vinogradov, Viktor. *Protiv tserkovshchina v muzike* [Against church influence in music]. Moscow: State Music Publishers, 1931.

### Secondary sources

Edmunds, Neil. *The Soviet Proletarian Music Movement*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2000.

Frolova-Walker, Marina. “National in Form, Socialist in Content: Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics.” *This Journal* 51, no. 2 (1998): 331–71.

Hakobian, Levon. “Shostakovich, Proletkul’t and RAPM.” In *Shostakovich Studies 2*, edited by Pauline Fairclough, 263–71. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Kalinin, Stanislav, ed. *Pamyati Alexandra Vasil’evicha Sveshnikova* [In memory of Alexander Vasil’evich Sveshnikov]. Moscow: Muzika, 1998.

Marisova, Irina, ed. *Alexander Yurlov*. Moscow: Sovetskiy Kompozitor, 1983.

Muzalevsky, Vladimir. *Stareyshiy russkiy khor* [The oldest Russian choir]. Leningrad and Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1938.

Muzalevsky, Vladimir. *Mikhail Georgevich Klimov: Ocherk zhizni i tvorcheskoy deyatel’nosti* [Mikhail Georgevich Klimov: Essays on his life and work]. Leningrad: Sovetskiy Kompozitor, 1960.

Nelson, Amy. *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004.

Schmelz, Peter. *Such Freedom, if Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music During the Thaw*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Schwarz, Boris. *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia, 1917–1981*. Enl. ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.

Sheremet'yeva, Nadezhda. *M. G. Klimov. Dirizher Leningradskiy akademicheskoy kapelli* [M. G. Klimov. Director of the Leningrad academic capella]. Leningrad: Muzika, 1983.

Tkachev, D. V. and Gusin, I. L. *Leningradskaya akademicheskaya kapella imeni M. I. Glinki* [The Leningrad Academic Glinka Capella]. Leningrad, 1957.

Vlasova, Yekaterina. *1948 god v sovetskoy muzike* [The year 1948 in Soviet music]. Moscow: Klassika XXI, 2010.