CHAPTER 2

SOVIET PROG AND "VOCAL-INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLES": IN-BETWEEN POLICY & PRIVACY

One August afternoon in 2012, Artemy Troitsky and I sat in the living room of his Moscow apartment, drinking tea and discussing Soviet popular music. Now in his early sixties, Troitsky remains one of Russia's most prominent music journalists and critics – with over four decades of involvement in its popular music scene, both from behind the Iron Curtain and after its dissolution. Our debate centered on musical style and genre, two concepts that have engendered confusion for centuries. Musicians and audiences alike have used both of these terms to refer to aesthetic, historical, commercial, and other facets of artistic production. More specifically, I was trying to unpack the Russian term *estrada,* used to refer to any type of "light entertainment."[1] A catch-all term, it seemed to contain no nuance – no room for distinguishing between such wildly different art forms as puppetry, magic, and circus, not to mention different types of music. Troitsky could not explain why this umbrella term was deemed sufficient to refer to virtually any kind of popular music, but he was unshakably certain about one thing: despite the fact that aesthetically speaking, much of what was produced under the label of *estrada* aligned itself with multiple genres worldwide (including different types of Anglophone rock) – *estrada* and rock were, in actual fact, mutually exclusive.

This is a commonly held view among musicians and listeners who were actively engaged in popular Soviet music of the Stagnation era under Brezhnev and subsequent leaders (1964-

[1] Taken from the French, the term literally means "small stage." Refers to cabaret, circus, popular music, and other small-scale forms of art intended to be performed on stage. For a comprehensive survey of the genre's history and its performers throughout the 20th century and beyond, see David MacFadyen's 2001-2001 trilogy of books on the subject.

1986). There seems to be no distinction made between musical genre and style in the minds of those who lived through it. This occurred as a matter of course for those working within the USSR, drawing comment only from those who had peered beyond the Soviet system (and often, only in retrospect). Thus, popular composer Aleksandr Zatsepin – who left the USSR for France in the early 1980s, returning a few years later – offers a retrospective comparison between Soviet and French *estrada:*

> The domestic [Soviet] mishmash annoys me. [Well-known *estrada* singer] Nadezhda Babkina, for instance, can perform a normal Russian song – and then her guitarist plays a blues solo. In France, there is a clear gradation: this is pop music, this is rock, and this is blues. Each genre has its own audience. And that's not just in France. My song "Goodbye, Summer" entered a contest in Los Angeles under the category "easy listening." It even won some sort of prize.[2]

Such generic differentiations familiar from Western pop music did not exist in the Soviet Union. Yet if one were to perform an experiment with listeners unaware of social and political context, much of the music discussed in this chapter would undoubtedly be sorted into the category of "rock" and perhaps even mistaken for the Western music it so frequently references. So how was music categorized in the USSR? What were the social, political, aesthetic, cultural, and musical factors that went into Troitsky's certain denial of *estrada* as "real" rock? As Eric Drott elaborates in his study of cultural politics in France around the same period: "Different kinds of music, performed or conceptualized in different social contexts, engage politics in different ways. The uses and meanings ascribed to a chanson are distinct from those ascribed to a piece of avant-garde classical music, which are distinct from those assigned to a jazz improvisation."[3] In a centrally planned society, how did style and genre form – and what did they mean?

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[2] "Aleksandr Zatsepin: Moia glavnaia muzyka napisana…" *Muzïkal'naya zhïzn'* 12 (December 2001), 22.

[3] E. Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution: Cultural Politics and Political Culture in France, 1968-1981* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2011), 4.

This chapter will examine the historical, sociological, sonic, and poetic contexts of music produced in the USSR of the 1970s in order to demonstrate that Soviet *estrada* functioned as neither a style nor a genre, but as a hybrid containing elements of both. In certain senses, this catchall phrase could not encompass the myriad forms of artistic activity for which it served as an umbrella. And yet it did, strangely, act as an enabling force for artists within this state-determined framework to produce songs and albums clearly inspired by phenomena this same system critiqued. A fundamental ambivalence in tagging and labeling was characteristic of much Soviet existence, as outlined by anthropologist and social theorist Alexei Yurchak. I will draw upon and extend his concept of *vnye* – a Russian preposition meaning "outside of" or "external to," here denoting the possibility of simultaneously existing within and externally of a given construction.[4] This will enable me to theorize the production of a subset of *estrada* that I call "progressive rock with a Russian accent."

I will first contextualize popular music-making in the Soviet 1970s, which split off into different branches along the lines of the individual (professional composers) and the collective (initially amateur Vocal-Instrumental Ensembles). A close sonic reading of a "rock" re-working of an ancient Russian folk song by nationally popular group Ariel' will clarify how this music was created, approved, embodied, and heard. Following this, an exploration of a 1975 album produced by composer David Tukhmanov will bring us closer to understanding the difference between *estrada* and rock; between mainstream and underground; and between domestic and foreign influences. It will, therefore, also allow us to shed light on the specifics of living and working *vnye*. These examples will ultimately help to demonstrate the seeming paradox of flourishing creativity in restrictive conditions. Put simply, the norms of popular Soviet music-

[4] For a comprehensive explanation of the concept, see "Living *'Vnye':* Deteritorrialized Milieus" in A. Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 126-157.

making cannot be reduced to official and unofficial, pop (*estrada*) and rock. The restrictions on self-expression engendered nuanced forms of artistic practice, within officially recognized genres. By playing with musical – rather than lyrical – reference points, Tukhmanov and others like him were able to exist at the *edges* of the state system. Composers and performers both wrote and read "between the lines," with a rich system of subtle borrowings.

Cultural Context: Songwriting between the Academy and Disconcerting Novelty

Western art, books, and music were often forbidden behind the Iron Curtain for fear of their corrupting ideological influence – but the idea of a complete separation between the USSR and the rest of the world was impossible to enforce in a country that was otherwise extremely developed and urbanized. Using the example of popular music, just how feasible was it to police every border, physical and ideological, of the enormous Soviet territory? As writers like Troitsky have documented, the Soviet Union had an active musical black market.[5] First and second-hand witnesses in the 1970s describe the circulation of records by artists such as the Beatles, Queen, Yes, Led Zeppelin, and Pink Floyd – all notably British – and even the doubly dangerous religiously informed rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar*.[6] A representative example of Soviet fascination with these works can be seen in the diary of Andrei Vadimov, a fifteen-year old high school student from Dniepropetrovsk who took a trip with his class to the West Ukrainian (and more foreigner-friendly) city of L'viv in May 1974:

[5] A. Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (Boston and London: Faber and Faber, Inc., 1987).

[6] A detailed account of *JCSS* circulating in composers' circles can be found in P. Schmelz, "From Scriabin to Pink Floyd: The ANS Synthesizer and the Politics of Soviet Music between Thaw and Stagnation," *Sound Commitments: Avant-Garde Music and the Sixties,* ed. R. Adlington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 254-276.

> The best result of our trip was the visit our entire class made (secretly) to L'viv's black market, where seven members of our tourist group, myself included, and our Komsomol ideologist Natasha, bought new British records of the rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* from Polish tourists. It was great because Ian Gillan, our favorite vocalist from the hard-rock band Deep Purple, sings in this rock opera. The Polish tourists also recommended that we buy crosses because we were Gillan's fans and Gillan sang the part of Christ in the opera.[7]

As Soviet historian Sergei Zhuk explains, this exposure to rock *and* religion made young people curious about both; the boy from whose diary this excerpt was taken went on to find an old Russian Bible and eventually attend the worship meetings of a local Baptist group – for which he and his friends were eventually arrested.[8] This was just one of the many dangerous roads down which exposure to Anglo-American rock music and culture could lead.

The Soviet government's concession to these Western fashions and passions was the creation of an artificial musical entity called Vocal-Instrumental Ensembles (hereafter VIA, as in the Russian).[9] A novel practice in a society where "musical group" had heretofore referred to orchestras or folk ensembles, the VIA attempted to duplicate the organically grown phenomenon of the Western rock band – with music that avoided the threatening realms of 1970s metal or punk. VIA songs were often dedicated to positive aspects of life in the Soviet Union, nature (as a metaphor for civic harmony), or other pleasantly apolitical topics. As Valeriy Shchelkin sums up in the preface to his 2007 study of these ensembles:

> It is important to note that VIA became the *de facto* and *de jure* form of expressing an enormous energetic build-up of musical and poetic creativity of the Soviet youth. And

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[7] Quoted in S.I. Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dniepropetrovsk, 1960-1985* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 1.

[8] Ibid., 2.

[9] For history and descriptions of various VIAs, see V. Shchëlkin and S. Frolov's *Legendy VIA* (Moscow: Grifon, 2007); B.P. Sokolovskiy's collected volume, *Samodeyatel'nye VIA i diskoteki* (Moscow: Profizdat, 1987); and V.K. Yashkin's *Vokal'no-instrumental'nye ansambli* (Moscow: Znanie, 1980).

> therefore, what was published about it in the press was, of course, penned under the stern gaze of the cultural editors…[10]

In order to keep potential trouble with stern officials at bay, many VIAs turned to folk music as a legitimizing strategy; as we shall see, ancient Slavic folk texts and melodies were refashioned in a progressive style by groups such as Pesniary (Songsters) and Ariel'. As musicologist Mitchell Morris points out in his 2000 article "Kansas and the Prophetic Tone," such a turn toward folk music was common of Western progressive rock as well:

> Less prominently mentioned in accounts of the genre, but equally important to its stylistic range, was the tendency of 'prog' bands to incorporate identifying marks of (mostly British) folk music alongside their classical tropes. Folk music, in fact, offered a special flexibility since it could be taken as raw material both from less audibly mediated versions in popular performances and folksong arrangements and from the 'classicized' versions encountered in the work of composers such as Vaughan-Williams and Holst.[11]

Although the musicians discussed here never went so far as to incorporate "classicized" versions of Russian folk music into their scene, folk music "from less audibly mediated versions in popular performances and folksong arrangements" was a huge influence, acting as a legitimizing agent. Several state-sponsored Vocal-Instrumental Ensembles (VIA) made a career out of "updating" Russian folk tunes and texts in this way. Folk songs fit easily into approved notions of national, working-class, or peasant performance – yet they also spoke to a pre-urban/pre-Soviet, self-sustaining, and Christian society. And so we turn to a "peasant" register from a town of heavy industry.

Formed in the late '60s in Chelyabinsk, Ariel' was originally a six-member VIA containing three classically trained musicians. Rostislav Gepp contributed keyboard and flute skills; Boris Kaplun played percussion and the violin; and Lev Gurov played classical and

[10] V. Shchëlkin & S. Frolov, *Legendy VIA* (Moscow: Grifon, 2007), 14.

[11] M. Morris, "Kansas and the Prophetic Tone," *American Music* 18.1 (2000), 2.

electric guitar. All three sang.[12] They began by playing covers of The Beatles, The Monkees, The Tremeloes, and The Turtles with Russian lyrics of their own making. The band's current biography (since they perform to this day) lists the basis of their repertoire and style as "Russian musical folklore." Nonetheless, the same text also acknowledges that "at different times, Ariel' worked in different genres. Yet the generic basis of the ensemble has always been a Russian variant of folk-rock, comprised of arrangements or stylizations of popular Russian folk songs."[13]

Figure 2.1: One of the ways Ariel' remained in good standing with Soviet authorities was by closely allying themselves with a valorized folk tradition

[12] "Istoriya gruppy 'Ariel'," *VIA Ariel*, accessed 28 December 2014. <http://www.via-ariel.ru/index1.html>

[13] Ibid.

These "stylizations" more often than not contained characteristics of progressive rock. In his book *The Progressive Rock Files,* radio broadcaster and music historian Jerry Lucky proposes the most comprehensive definition of the genre to date. He defines progressive rock as "music that incorporates:

- Songs predominantly on the longish side, but structured, rarely improvised.
- A mixture of loud passages, soft passages, and musical crescendos to add to the dynamics of the arrangements.
- The use of a Mellotron or string synth to simulate an orchestra backing.
- The possible inclusion of a live symphony orchestra backing.
- Extended instrumental solos, perhaps involving some improvisation.
- The inclusion of musical styles from other than a rock format.
- A blending of acoustic, electric and electronic instruments where each plays a vital role in translating the emotion of compositions which typically contain more than one mood.
- Multi-movement compositions that may or may not return to a musical theme. In some cases the end section may bear little resemblance to the first part of the song.
- Compositions created from unrelated parts…"[14]

In addition to folk music, this list makes clear the influence of classical music on progressive rock in multiple realms – all the way from instrumentation to form. These same influences, also found in Ariel's music, do not necessarily tend to manifest themselves in particularly coherent ways. As Kevin Holm-Hudson writes in his introduction to *Progressive Rock Reconsidered,* "In general, it may be more accurate to describe progressive rock as an attempt to merge rock's beat with certain aspects of art music's style, in terms of harmony, metric complexity, or extended form (a 'classical influence' in all three of these areas need not be present)."[15] Again we see a genre emerging from composite stylistic characteristics. Groups like Ariel' were able to dip into established genres such as prog from their safe vantage point of official *estrada.*

Thanks to their self-declared "folk" affiliation – and despite the fact that they were making music inspired by forbidden muses – Ariel' was not only a frequent participant and

[14] J. Lucky, *The Progressive Rock Files* (Burlington, ON: Collector's Guide Publishing, 1998), 120-21.

[15] K. Holm-Hudson, *Progressive Rock Reconsidered* (New York & London: Routledge, 2002), 11.

victor of many Soviet music contests, but one of the few Soviet VIAs allowed to tour far from home.[16] The band was allowed to travel to Western Europe and the United States, beyond the safer realms of Eastern Europe and the GDR. See Figure 1.1 for a photograph of Ariel' performing at a Soviet state-sponsored event, wearing folk costumes. Such was the standard clothing for a rock band that invoked a peasant tradition. These retrospective gestures to "memory" or pre-modern culture enabled a vibrant reinvention of history in the present. While implying that superior values could be found by looking backward, such strategies allowed popular musicians like Ariel' to create their own reality in a space *between* yesterday and today. Ultimately, this creation of the Ministry of Culture enabled unprecedented types of musical production in the USSR. A genre was created, tentatively, on the edge of Western rock's stylistic practice.

Autographic Analyses: The Building Blocks of a Peripheral Register

Progressive rock (and by extension, prog-influenced *estrada*) challenges established methods of musical analysis. This is partly due to its multi-generic affiliations, but more specifically to its ties with both "high" and "low" culture. This multi-dimensionality makes prog and its offshoots difficult objects of analysis. Holm-Hudson continues: "The presence of classical elements in this style has until now invited more traditional theoretical analysis, particularly of harmony and form."[17] An excellent example of this approach can be found in the work of John Covach, who – in his work on Yes, for instance – concludes that "there are a

[16] For an autobiographical history of the group (as well as admissions of being inspired by Western bands), see fronman Valeriy Yarushin's *Sud'ba po imeni "Ariel'"* (Moscow: Russkaia Nov', 2005).

[17] Holm-Hudson, 11.

number of features in the structure of 'Close to the Edge' [1972] that correspond to structural features in Western art music: the piece unfolds a large-scale formal design reinforced by tonal, thematic, and rhythmic return and development."[18] This perspective brings us one step closer to understanding why bands like Yes may have been popular in the Soviet Union; highlighting parameters shared with art music would have undoubtedly appealed to classically trained musicians and aficionados.

Yet these emphases, valuable as they are, were designed to address a musical style in which form and pitch values take precedence over most other parameters. Changing the musical object at stake from score to record, however, can imply a drastic change in analytical approach. As Theodore Gracyk points out in *Rhythm and Noise,* "no specific *sound* belongs to the *Goldberg Variations,* since the timbre of the harpsichord is not essential to it."[19] This music is ontologically thin – requires relatively few signposts in order to establish its identity – since it can be grasped through performances on a variety of different instruments.[20] The "essence" of this piece of music is a sound-structure that can be conveyed in a number of different ways. On the other hand, music that is captured on a record, distributed chiefly in one version, and known by audiences for its specific sonic properties is ontologically thick. As theorized by philosopher Nelson Goodman, such works – works that have specific aesthetic properties and meanings

[18] J. Covach, "Progressive Rock, 'Close to the Edge,' and the Boundaries of Style," *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 22.

[19] T. Gracyk, *Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996), 19. Emphasis in the original.

[20] For a discussion of ontological substance in music, see Stephen Davies, *Musical Works and Performances: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001).

adhering to their sound structures – are also called "autographic," in contrast to ontologically thin, "allographic" works such as the *Goldberg Variations.*[21]

What characteristics of autographic music are most salient for listeners, if not large-scale forms? One key area of sonic quality, more than relevant here, yet often overlooked by Western analysis is timbre. Albin Zak addresses this matter in *The Poetics of Rock:* "The rhetorical aspects of timbre involve the conventional associations the sounds have, which allow them to stand as symbols suggesting dialogues and resonances beyond the boundaries of the track."[22] This is particularly relevant to an inherently polystylistic genre like progressive rock, where pastiche is frequently used as a compositional technique and a particular instrumental or vocal sound can operate as an intertextual reference for the savvy listener. The same holds true for *estrada*, where for instance, the use of a flute over frantic drums (as in the Ariel' track discussed below) instantly recalls the woodwind capers of Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson.[23]

Apart from talking about sonic qualities such as timbre, another analytical approach of use in discussing Soviet *estrada*'s love affair with prog may be to investigate musical aspects commonly referred to as "motion/movement/gesture" – i.e., with any type of spatial metaphor. In "Moving Beyond Motion: Metaphors for Changing Sound," Robert Adlington explores what it really means to understand music metaphorically:

> Musical sound does not literally move, become tense, possess height or grow in fullness, warmth or pressure. To attribute such things to musical sound is to hear it metaphorically... Contrary to the traditional understanding of metaphor as an essentially poetic or figurative linguistic device, [George Lakoff, Mark Johnson and Mark Turner]

[21] For more information about the autographic/allographic distinction as it pertains to music, see Gracyk, 31.

[22] A. Zak, *The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press, 2001), 62.

[23] See Anderson's solo in Jethro Tull, "Locomotive Breath," *Aqualung* (Reprise Records, 1971) for an example. It can be heard at 2:45 in the album version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJkmHQ2q--I.

> have stressed the centrality of metaphor to cognition and experience. Metaphor, in other words, rather than being subjective and indeterminately connected to its object, is often necessary and unavoidable… As George Lakoff puts it, 'The locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another…' Metaphor is fundamentally conceptual, not linguistic in nature.[24]

This non-linguistic cognitive connection fits well with Philip Tagg's treatment of music as an alogogenic symbolic system. Throughout his 2012 magnum opus, *Music's Meanings: A Modern Musicology for Non-Musos*, he insists that verbal description is an inadequate approach to a form of art that is non-verbal and non-visual by nature. Instead, he suggests studying the semiotic functions of musical signifiers by using techniques such as interobjectivity and intersubjectivity (comparing different pieces and different listeners' reactions to the same piece), paying attention to musical features such as time, space, timbre, loudness and tonality, and the difference between diataxis/syncrisis (long-term structure v. "now" music).[25]

These are all exciting and productive ways through which to "read" progressive rock music as reemployed in Eastern Europe. However, not all rock music is created equal – unlike its Anglophone counterparts, Soviet *estrada* or light entertainment surfaced in an environment not necessarily geared toward free creative expression. As Gracyk reminds us:

> Rock has characteristic approaches to articulating rhythm and timbre. Still, we must not forget that genres involve cultural conventions and transpersonal rules. Ever evolving, they do not exist apart from the histories of production and use of specific artifacts. Here, we do well to remember rock's specifically American roots, as well as its close relationship to a capitalist entertainment industry.[26]

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[24] R. Adlington, "Moving Beyond Motion: Metaphors for Changing Sound," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 128.2 (2003), 301-302.

[25] For further elaboration on any of these topics, see Philip Tagg's *Music's Meanings: A Modern Musicology for Non-Musos* (New York & Huddersfield: The Mass Media Music Scholars' Press, 2012).

[26] Gracyk, xiv.

In what follows, I would like to distill the particular sound of prog-influenced Soviet *estrada* through an examination of sonic space, playing/singing techniques, and recording style. The observations made in this section will illuminate how popular musicians in the USSR created soundscapes that went on resonating between genres and styles.

Carving Out Sonic Space: Reworking Soviet Notions of Folk Performance

Ariel's 1978 album, *Русские картинки* (*Russian Pictures*) contains a track called "По блюду, блюду серебряному" ("On a Silver Platter"), which bases its melody and lyrics on a Russian folk song traditionally sung at a wedding – to the parents of the groom.[27] We can analyze this song with the aforementioned tools of sonic analysis, while also bringing in Lelio Camilleri's concept of sound and space as "not only…used to transmit the traditional parameters, but…organizational in their own right."[28] He defines sonic space as "a three-dimensional space divided into: localized space; spectral space; morphological space."[29] Localized space refers to where sounds are placed both in terms of stereo and mono windows, and is reflected primarily through a discussion of depth, position, and motion. Spectral space refers to qualities like the timbre of the sound, as well as the spectral content and organization of a particular piece. Morphological space is a time-oriented analytical tool, closely related to Robert Adlington's aforementioned arguments. Each of these facets of sonic space has a particular role to play in this Ariel' track.

[27] See Appendix C for the text of the song and an English translation.

[28] L. Camilleri, "Shaping sounds, shaping spaces," *Popular Music* 29.02 (2010), 200.

[29] Ibid., 202.

"On a Silver Platter" starts out with just the drums panned centrally, the seemingly chaotic use of each part of the drum set making it difficult to hear an established meter.[30] The drum and hi-hat sounds reveal a fairly dry sonic space, with every frequency equally high in the mix. After a few measures of solo percussion, an organ in the left stereo channel joins the drums, stabilizing the music into a triple meter feel. At 0:16, this instrumental introduction is fleshed out by a flute (panned left) and electric guitar (panned right) playing the main theme of the folk song in unison. The introductory section ends in an echoing phrase played first by the flute from the left, repeated by the synthesizer, and echoed last by the electric guitar from the right.

After the introduction, a masculine voice enters singing in a chest-voice baritone range; however, despite the fact that he is singing one line, there is a form of doubling going on – almost an ADT sound.[31] As is characteristic with ADT, the sound is *almost* in unison, but slightly offset. However, that effect soon reveals itself to be nothing more than standard overdubbing as the voice splits apart into harmony, with the lower part taking the left stereo channel and the higher taking the right. This division of right and left adopts a pattern, with high-pitched, more piercing sounds tending to come from the right, more mellow, lower-pitched sounds on the left, with the percussion in the middle tying it all together. Throughout the verse, the electric bass maintains an intense and rhythmic lick which starts with a multi-note upbeat, going on to emphasize the downbeat and the second beat, lending a ONE-TWO-three, ONE-TWO-three accent pattern to the overall groove. The bass appears directly plugged in to the

[30] Ariel'. "Po bliudu, bliudu serebrianomu." *Russkie kartinki.* Melodiya, 1977. The album version of the track can be heard here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SDFD9gbcAc#t=673.

[31] For a more detailed discussion of Artificial Double Tracking and its invention, see "Abbey Road and the Beatles" in Mark Cunningham's *Good Vibrations: A History of Record Production*, (London: Sanctuary Publishing, Ltd., 1988).

recording console, giving it a crisp, round, and well-articulated sound; again, this contributes to the feeling that everything is more or less equally high in the mix.

The first verse is followed by a section starting at 1:06 in which a slightly muted electric bass and the flute play a highly syncopated duet, accompanied by a high-pitched whine from the synthesizer, adding both to the general tension and stretching the spectral space. The voice and subdued percussion enter, at which point the bass is turned way up and loses its muted quality. At the end of each phrase, the percussion is dramatically foregrounded and provides an unmetered fill. After one such fill, the vocal enters again, this time panned to the left with a chorus of high-pitched male back-up singers on the right – continuing the trend of a localized space divided into a mellow left and a more strident right. After this section of heightened tension, there is a triumphant return to the original sonic space of the verse. This is repeated, then followed by a short instrumental outro where the flute and guitar team up again to play the main theme in their respective parts of the localized space. This time, however, instead of passing the ending tag from instrument to instrument, the recording ends with all three forces (flute, synthesizer, and guitar) repeating it together thrice. The track ends with a brief hi-hat resonance; that brevity helps to illustrate the aesthetic preference for a dry recording environment.

Ultimately, the sonic realm created by Ariel' in "On a Silver Platter" consists of a right-left segregated, fairly compressed sound that may well be a reflection of the spectral space of their American and British progressive influences. It might equally mirror the poor quality of bootlegged, black market recordings the musicians encountered (especially in a provincial or far-flung industrial location). A consideration of this uniquely "socialist" soundscape allows us to delve deeper into the Soviet cultural aesthetic; it also enables us to look at a form of musical self-expression from the outside in. It is this same kind of "outsideness" that allows us now to look

back and discern the stylistic DNA of progressive rock in the Soviet Union. Simultaneously, we can use that cultural sphere as a case study for how genre formation operates in a centrally planned society. Artists living and working in 1970s' Moscow were not in a position to define their oeuvre. Most saw themselves, unavoidably, as composers and performers making state-sponsored music, *estrada*, even though a global worldwide progressive rock community may have inspired them. Self-definition was hard work – a balancing act between styles, languages, locations, and prior generations.

On the Wave of My Memory: **An Album Grounded in Themes of Recollection**

In addition to – and sometimes in tandem with – the music of VIAs, there were also individual composers working to create rock or avant-garde popular music, and thus further confuse stylistic and generic labels under the official aegis of *estrada.* More conservative songwriters such as Aleksandra Pakhmutova and Raimond Pauls (discussed in Chapter One) contributed works to the VIA canon. Slowly these partnerships moved away from prudishness. Indeed, the very first ensemble to be created this way in 1966 – Poyushchie Gitary (The Singing Guitars) – ended up collaborating with professional composer Aleksandr Zhurbin to perform the first Soviet rock opera, *Orpheus and Eurydice* almost a decade later.[32] In short, there were highly-trained composers who devoted their time and energy to writing restrained and respectful *estrada* music, whether in direct and regular collaboration with specific ensembles, or just working with performers who were more generally involved in the VIA scene. The lines between classical, mainstream, and rock would become blurred.

[32] The creation of this opera and bringing *estrada* to the stage is addressed in Chapter Four.

One such figure straddling these realms is David Tukhmanov, who – now in his sixth decade of actively composing – occupied a unique position in the USSR. Both an "insider" and an "outsider," Tukhmanov belonged to the official Union of Composers, which granted him privileges most rock musicians could not dream of under the Soviet regime. Yet as we shall see, his interests frequently lay outside the realm of the government sponsored agenda. Born in Moscow, 1940, to an engineer and music teacher, Tukhmanov was educated in the capital's most prestigious music school in the years immediately after Stalin's death. He was, in other words, very much a child of the "Thaw" – Khrushchev's fondly remembered liberalism. After Khrushchev's "secret speech" in February 1956, Soviet music and literature breathed a collective sigh of relief. The gross failings of Stalinism were admitted in public; storytelling, filmmaking, and music turned *away* from dogma and reconsidered socialist culture all over again. Tales of "social" enterprise were taken away from army battalions, factory crews, and other loud collectives. Culture was filled instead with stories of private romance, childhood, and families. Social existence was to be remade from the ground up.

Graduating from the Gnesin Institute of Music in 1963, Tukhmanov's final thesis portfolio included an oratorio set to the poetry of Aleksandr Tvardovskiy (a key writer and literary editor of the time), as well as a cycle of ballads and romances setting Russian poets' translations of Heinrich Heine, whose lyric poetry was so frequently set to lieder by composers such as Schubert and Schumann.[33] Nonetheless, for all that dedication to lofty verse, he penned a nationally popular hit song just after his military service (where, incidentally, he served as band leader). Using the lyrics of Mikhail Nozhkin, it is very much in the spirit of the time. Called

[33]"Biografia," *D. Tukhmanov: Neizvestnoe ob izvestnom…* (2006). <http://www.tuxmanov.ru/biograf.html>

"The Last Train," (Posledniaia Elektrichka), it tells of a young man so enamored of his girlfriend that he – yet again – has missed the train home:

> *There's silence all around, not a soul in sight;*
> *Only the railway lines sigh with fatigue.*
> *There's only the moon, running behind me [on the way home],*
> *The moon is my sleepless comrade.*

The language painting this intimate scene is minor, sentimental, and – as it turns out – hugely popular. Although Tukhmanov wrote the song in 1961 at the age of twenty-one, it was absurdly lambasted by radio censors for "promoting unsafe behavior" (walking on train tracks!), and was only performed on television five years later.[34] All of a sudden, the young composer had to consider a bigger audience – and larger issues of "proper" craftsmanship – as the aesthetic and political benchmarks were both lifted.

The 1970s indeed saw a corrective shift, toward all things civic. In 1972, he wrote one of his most consequential songs, "My Address is 'The Soviet Union,'" performed by the VIA Samotsvety (The Gemstones). It relates the sensation of a "yearning heart," that of a hardworking, travelling citizen whose "phone numbers are scattered across cities." The lyrical tone of the '60s persists, but the chorus now resounds: "My address is neither a home, nor a street. My address is 'The Soviet Union.'" A sentimental spirit finds home both somewhere and everywhere; its limits are quite literally mapped. These efforts garnered him acceptance in the official Union of Composers, an affiliation that would enable his future career.

In the same year, Tukhmanov published the influential LP *How Lovely is this World,* arguably a proto-concept album that linked a range of poetic and musical compositions as a

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[34] *DOstoianie REspubliki.* 1-yi kanal, 6 October 2013. <http://www.1tv.ru/sprojects_edition/si5765/fi25949>. This 2013 broadcast of the television show "DOstoyanie REspubliki" ([Pride of the republic], where the initial letters DO and RE are meant to reference solfege) was dedicated to celebrating the life and art of David Tukhmanov.

thematic whole. The sleeve notes contained some telling observations from colleague-composer Yan Frenkel' (1920-1989): "Having begun with predominantly lyrical texts, [Tukhmanov] then develops his imagery in order to broaden it. He creates songs in which a civic spirit dovetails with private themes; he interweaves humor with lyricism, everyday topics with fantasy."[35] The distance to progressive rock was slowly lessening. This process came hand in hand with his exposure to music from Western Europe and America. In an interview with Arkadiy Petrov, musicologist and one of the very first proponents of jazz in the USSR, Tukhmanov reminisces about some of those influences: "I was raised on the traditions of nineteenth century Russian classical music, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, and Scriabin; jazz unexpectedly captivated me. I found records and cassette tapes, listened to jazz programs on the radio, and tried to play jazz on the piano."[36] Any movement toward popular registers would always be "dignified" by profoundly cultured connections to the canon, classical traditions, and/or state institutions.

Jazz was not the only form of Western music captivating Tukhmanov (together with the rest of the USSR). Beginning in the mid-1960s, beat music – epitomized, of course, by the Beatles – became an enormous cultural phenomenon in the Soviet Union. As Artemy Troitsky writes in *Back in the USSR*, "The Beatles' role in the genesis of Soviet rock is impossible to overestimate…The Beatles' happy, harmonious vocal choir proved to be just the voice for which our confused generation was waiting, but was unable to create for itself."[37] As black market discs trickled into the USSR, the state recording industry was under increasing pressure to offer its

[35] Y. Frenkel', liner notes, *Kak prekrasen etot mir,* D. Tukhmanov (Melodiya, 1972).

[36] A. Petrov, "Tukhmanov David Fedorovich," *Sovetskoe retro* (1999), accessed 27 December 2014. <http://ussrmusic.narod.ru/articles/autobiog/Tuhmanov_auto.html>

[37] Troitsky, 23-24.

younger citizens *some* formal equivalent. Tukhmanov himself acknowledges the influence of this British invasion on his music – but more importantly, on his musical thinking:

> This ensemble opened up a new dimension of songwriting… first, the principle of ensemble singing. This was the territory of chamber music, the principle of the madrigal, where, let's say, several voices all sing as if from the first person point of view. This musical eventuality was almost completely excluded earlier: if people wanted to sing chorally, the text had to come from the collective… And finally, it was the Beatles who created the predominant principle of "suite" thinking…"[38]

It was this notion of "suite thinking," or "concept album" – at this point also gaining popularity in British prog – that proved to be most important for Tukhmanov in the 1970s. Progressive rock would allow for an academic, dignified approach to popular songwriting that blended "high" and "low" culture in a workable mélange. In this context, one can see the aforementioned *How Lovely is this World* LP as a precursor to the more fully fleshed-out concept of *On the Wave of My Memory*. In stark contrast to his officially sanctioned output, that nationally famous album embodies a unique aesthetic shaped by constant quotations and permutations of Western musical influences. Verbatim quotations of hooks from Beatles' songs and other (chiefly British) Western popular groups are peppered throughout the album. Nonetheless, despite the striking musical allegiances heard virtually non-stop throughout Tukhmanov's magnum opus, it was not only extremely well received by Soviet audiences, but approved by authorities as well. An examination of this album will explore the ways in which room for this aesthetic could exist within Soviet state-approved music, and shed light on the contrary forces that drove musical production and promotion within the USSR.

A 1991 encyclopedia of Soviet rock concludes its entry on progressive rock with the following statement: "In our country, this term does not have a specific application, although

[38] Petrov.

certain features of the 'progressive' worldview were characteristic of many groups of the 1970s."[39] *On the Wave of My Memory* (hereafter OWMM), although the product of one composer rather than a popular group, espouses several of these features. With its penchant for folklore, fantasy, and the kind of structural wizardry accessible only to the finest musicians, progressive rock was a potentially appealing – and sufficiently apolitical – mode for Soviet culture to assimilate. Tukhmanov's album showcases the possibilities of living *vnye,* simultaneously within and on the edge of state approval, and allows us to ruminate on how "genre" and "style" existed and interacted within *estrada* of the 1970s. On this album, *estrada* and rock music intertwine.

At this point, it is helpful to invoke Allan Moore's distinction of "style" as describing *how* a musician makes his/her choices as a creative act, and "genre" as describing *what* that music is doing (the preexisting or institutional "means through which this is to be achieved").[40] To quote Moore directly: "Genre is largely chosen for the musician by virtue of the social circumstances in which s/he finds him/herself, style is chosen by the musician."[41] The former is social, institutional, and a given; the latter is more private, idiosyncratic, and open to change. This distinction between private, audience-directed intention and public expectation/evaluation can also be mapped onto different forms of listening. The subjective link between artist and audience operates according to stylistic considerations. The relationship between artist and state, however, is handled according to generic issues, such as "proper" or "improper" genres. In the world of Soviet Socialist Realism and other system-wide dictates, the gulf between style and

[39] A. Burlaka, *Kto est' kto v sovetskom roke.* (Moscow: Ostankino, 1991), 278.

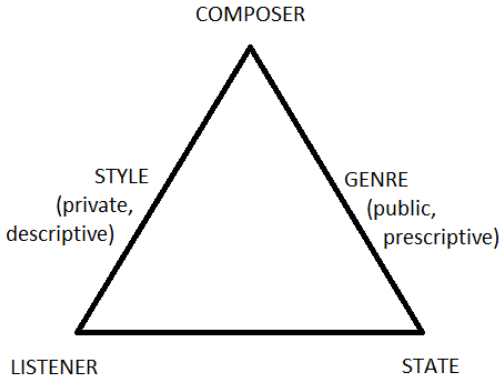
[40] A.F. Moore, "Categorical Conventions in Music Discourse: Style and Genre," *Music & Letters* 82.3 (2001): 432-442.

[41] A.F. Moore, "Style and Genre as a Mode of Aesthetics," *Musurgia* 24.3 (2007), accessed 7 November 2015 at http://www.allanfmoore.org.uk/styleaesth.pdf.

genre can be wide indeed. In the case of Tukhmanov we see somebody operating with apparent fidelity to a genre, yet managing – through clever cross-cultural references – to find stylistic freedoms.

Native theorists structure the style/genre discussion somewhat differently, albeit arriving at similar conclusions. M.K. Mikhailov's 1981 study, *Style in Music*, is representative of Soviet musicology prioritizing style over genre. In works such as these – which necessarily "rely on Marxist-Leninist aesthetics and the scientific methodology of dialectical materialism" – genre and style are understood as heavily interrelated.[42] However, despite the nuances and interdependencies Mikhailov uncovers in his discussion, style is ultimately once more relegated toward the camp of the aesthetic while genre acts as a functional determinant – whether that function is to sell music to the right audience (as in Zatsepin's earlier mention of France), or simply to discuss it more effectively. This distinction between prescriptive and descriptive forms of labeling permeates both Soviet and Western analytical models.

Figure 2.2, The composer-listener-state triangle



[42] M.K. Mikhailov, *Stil' v muzïke* (Music: Moscow, 1981), 4.

The triangular distinction I espouse here will allow me to make the argument that aesthetically and stylistically, rock – in the guise of state-sponsored *estrada* – was alive and well in the Soviet Union even before the advent of underground organizations such as the Leningrad Rock Club in the early 1980s. Tukhmanov jumped through the state's hoops in terms of genre requirements (such as a pre-recording screening with record label officials), but the finished product played to knowing, individual listeners.

Scholars such as Fabian Holt and Franco Fabbri define genre as "a set of musical events…whose course is governed by a definite set of socially accepted rules."[43] Andrew Weintraub puts it differently in his study of Indonesian popular music: "Music genres represent historical continuity and stability, and mark common training, aesthetics, techniques, skills, and performance practices. Genres play a major role in authorizing canons, cultural hierarchies, and decisions about censorship and government support."[44] In other words, genre distinctions have social effects. By delving into the more politically and socially motivated aspects of genre, we will discover how Tukhmanov's album and so much other Soviet *estrada* of this decade has been significantly excluded from being "rock" of any kind by specific musical subcultures formed in the Soviet Union (and persisting today). Rigid notions of genre – from both the state *and* intolerant rock subcultures in the USSR – refused to allow for stylistic similarities between them. The state preferred to use *estrada* to keep tepid, ideologically predictable songwriting at arm's length from rock. At the same time, champions of an underground rock scene refused to admit that publications officially tagged or distributed as *estrada* could possibly contribute anything to

[43] F. Fabbri, "A Theory of Musical Genres: Two Applications," *Popular Music Perspectives*, eds. D. Horn & P. Tagg (Göteborg and Exeter: International Association for the Study of Popular Music, 1981), accessed 26 December 2014 at http://www.tagg.org/others/ffabbri81a.html.

[44] A. Weintraub, *Dangdut Stories: A Social and Musical History of Indonesia's Most Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 12.

the validity of domestic rock. So how does Tukhmanov manage to move deftly between them, satisfying the former camp while actually aiding the latter?

OWMM is a concept album both musically and lyrically. Let us begin with the music, which in form and substance contains multiple clever references to Western models. The album is unified sonically through its *Abbey Road* medley-style concept where each song transitions into the next without a perceptible break. And indeed, the British LP – just as Soviet *estrada* – has its roots in music hall and vaudeville traditions. Yet the similarities do not end here; multiple facets of the Beatles' polystylistic, structurally innovative sound from the late 1960s can be heard in Tukhmanov's music, both in terms of content and sonic arrangement. Even in the opening bars of the very first track ("I Mentally Enter Your Study") we hear an allusion to the tremulous, echoic Moog arpeggios of "Because," and shortly thereafter, the song lapses into a soft-shoe groove reminiscent of a hybrid between "Sun King" and the swing section of "You Never Give Me Your Money."[45] Associations with specific songs are called up through not-quite-verbatim quotations, as well as allusions to particular instrumentation and signature rhythmic grooves. Kevin Holm-Hudson calls these types of stylistic references the subtlest form of sonic historiography – in this case, subtle enough to be disseminated into the public (many of whom were surely in on the joke).[46] With these and related games, as we will see, Tukhmanov maintains generic fidelity, yet discovers stylistic liberties.

A snowballing series of non-verbal, Anglophile references does not stop after the first track, and is in fact fundamental to the album as a whole. The aforementioned Beatles fixation

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[45] D. Tukhmanov, "Ya myslenno vkhozhu v vash cabinet," *Po volne moei pamyati* (Melodiya, 1976). The album version of this track can be heard at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eP_gt-JVP4Y. The breakdown I refer to – and the spot where this long, bipartite track is sometimes split into two – occurs at 2:18.

[46] K. Holm-Hudson, "The Future is Now… and Then: Sonic Historiography in Post-1960s Rock," *Genre* 34.3-4 (2001): 243-64.

comes as no surprise – and Troitsky once again offers a few theories. Why choose Liverpool, so to speak, over Memphis?

> It seems to me that Elvis and rock'n'roll were nice, but too exotic for our public. The rough Black rhythm, the fast tempo, the shouted vocals or hypersexual intonations were all magnificent and ideal for new dances, but how could we identify with them? They were as remote as America. The Beatles were closer, not just geographically but also spiritually. The Beatles had melodies, and for the Russian ear this is mandatory. Good rhythm and a strong, full sound are always welcome, but without beautiful, melodic lines the chances of success here are minimal. That's why The Rolling Stones were never rivals to the Beatles here, and The Who generated less interest than The Hollies or even The Tremeloes…[47]

This account of Soviet Russia's attachment to the Beatles, despite its sentimental essentialism, is quite representative of popular opinion among Russian speakers. Whether or not the "Russian ear" really demanded a particular style of music, Soviet listeners certainly welcomed the Fab Four's exuberance, and their hybrid of classical yet youthful sounds hit a sweet spot in the Soviet cultural consciousness in a way the unfamiliar rhythms, tempos, and "hypersexual intonations" of R&B and blues (and Elvis' hips, much maligned even on American television!) could not.

Upon first listen, it might seem evident that British albums were more accessible to Tukhmanov and his peers than American 45s, say. However, when one takes stock of the entire album, there are widespread references to American artists: a touch of Frank Zappa's *Apostrophe*-era percussion antics here, a hint of Billy Joel's "Piano Man"-style luxuriating there – not to mention an entire song setting Goethe to a James Brown-style funk groove. These references, however, are used in a much less foundational way than what he takes from the British artists – or they are otherwise subverted (as explained below). So perhaps, as Troitsky suggests, the style of British music exemplified by the Beatles was simply more familiar or

[47] Troitsky, 23-4.

acceptable to the Soviet ear – and the more "exotic," sexualized, and therefore subversive American sounds were used as filigree. As Sergei Zhuk writes about his experience growing up in a small town of Central Ukraine:

> All my […] classmates began listening to the music of the Beatles and Rolling Stones as early as 1965 and 1966, and they grew up listening to various styles of rock music, ranging from Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix to Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple. Later, when we entered our colleges, we began listening to the more serious music of the 1970s, including Pink Floyd, Yes, Genesis, and Jethro Tull. Paradoxically, we discovered the American roots of our music through our consumption of British rock.[48]

Those stylistic divergences were sufficiently contained so that Tukhmanov could safely stay between acceptance *and* adventure, without threatening the album's generic identity.

Of course, the Beatles aren't the only British band to have made an impression on Soviet songwriters. The entire second half of "I Mentally Enter Your Study"– the breakdown, so to speak, of the aforementioned first track – is sonically quite different. The driving rhythms, alternating time signatures, harsh percussion, and wild soaring guitar sounds create a fierce theatrical pastiche bordering on the operatic. Its jackhammering yet melodic aesthetic could easily found on the albums of artists such as those Zhuk cites above. These varying references, however, are not just discrete chunks of musical material that do not interact. Rather, they melt into one another and create a complex, synchronous whole, which at any given moment can be quoting melodic material from a Beatles song, using a typical Brian May guitar sound, and referencing a rhythm straight from a Zappa album. This song exemplifies Tukhmanov's relationship to his influences – a piecemeal approach which takes varied components from different sounds and weaves them together in a fast-moving (and clearly Western-influenced) semiotic pandemonium. Informed audiences would notice these stylistic changes and see them as an exciting alternative to state-approved *genres.* The fact that official channels published

[48] Zhuk, xiv.

Tukhmanov's album suggests that the layers of bureaucracy to which he was subject were more of a sieve than an iron curtain.

All this was happening at a time when the risk of legal trouble threatened those who were noticed buying forbidden Western records.[49] As Timothy Ryback expounds,

> While rock music [in the USSR] had at first established itself in the 1950s without great difficulty, the authorities sought to proscribe its further spread amongst youth through antagonistic media coverage, the erratic banning of public performances, occasional arrests and other forms of police harassment.[50]

Of course, Soviet citizens were able to acquire certain recordings on the terribly expensive black market, which is not in itself surprising – wherever there are prohibitions, fans will find ways of circumventing them. The real question is, if songs by the same composer were being suppressed for having a slight hint of foxtrot, how did an album like *OWMM* get released on a state-run record label?[51] In a 2002 interview, Tukhmanov himself admitted that:

> By all rights and according to the practices of that [prior] life, this record should never have been released. Let's begin with the fact that I should never have started writing it, understanding beforehand that: first of all, no one needed it; and – second of all – no one would have allowed it. My approach was unfamiliar, non-traditional, and did not fit into the framework of existing standards. For me it was [merely] an experiment I allowed myself.[52]

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[49] A narrative depiction of the social and legal tensions inherent in the fraught act of acquiring Western records during the 1970s can be seen in Karen Shakhnazarov's 2008 film *Ischeznuvshaya imperiya*.

[50] T. Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 25-26.

[51] "Istoriya pesni 'Den' pobedy,'" *D. Tukhmanov: Neizvestnoe ob izvestnom*, (3 May 2007). <http://www.tuxmanov.ru/index.php?subaction=showfull&id=1178217722&archive=&start_from=&ucat=&> Despite its patriotic title and the fact that it was set to the words of respected poet and war veteran V.G. Kharitonov, Tukhmanov's song "Victory Day" sounded a little too much like a tango or a foxtrot for the liking of the censors. As a consequence, it was widely suppressed and ignored until its performance at a public concert in 1975 by famous singer Lev Leshchenko.

[52] S. Cheliaev, "David Tukhmanov. Po volne moei pamyati," *Populiarnaia sovetskaia pesnia ot XX do XXVIII syezda KPSS* (October 2002), accessed 27 December 2014. <http://popsa.info/bio/006/006b-1.html>

In order to explain how this kind of artistic activity could exist in the USSR, I would like to return to Yurchak's concept of *vnye.* In my formulation, I extend Yurchak's idea of "contexts that were in a peculiar relationship to the authoritative discursive regime – they were 'suspended' simultaneously inside and outside of it, occupying the border zones between here and elsewhere."[53] Rather than confining the notion of *vnye* to a physically or ideologically peripheral location, I believe it also functioned as a mindset allowing for those same "peculiar relationships" while participating *within* the authoritative discursive regime. In other words, although Tukhmanov was clearly affiliated with official organs (i.e., with the state-run record company Melodiya), the generic determination and stylistic breadth of *estrada* created a space for him to pursue interests counter to those organs. Indeed, many composers and VIAs inhabited such a paradoxical space within Soviet society, between state norms and potential deviance. *OWMM* was able to exist because of the complex, contradictory workings of Soviet musical creation and dissemination. In between them was space for someone like Tukhmanov.

But how exactly does one become *vnye* in a professional setting? What are the processes whereby an artistic agent can exist "simultaneously inside and outside of some [approved] context"?[54] First of all, there were elements of active deception. When asked whether he had ever feared censorship with *OWMM*, Tukhmanov admitted:

> I was able to bamboozle the artistic council. I said that my LP would capture a classical performance – and played things classically [at the studio screening for the censors]. Then the rhythm would be changed… We didn't advertise the album at all; it came out quietly, almostunderground, and began its own independent life.[55]

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[53] Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation,* 127.

[54] Ibid., 132.

[55] Cheliaev.

In another interview, Tukhmanov elaborates, "At the Melodiya studio, I played the songs in a chamber music fashion, minimizing the role of the drums and other rock'n'roll attributes."[56] This telling reference to some dangerous markers of "rock" brings us back to the discussion of private style and public genre. As Gracyk eloquently points out:

> We generally know [rock] music by playing tapes, albums, or compact discs. When rock music is discussed, the relevant musical work is not simply the song being performed. To employ terminology currently in vogue, we can say that recordings are the "primary texts" of this music.[57]

In other words, any recourse to rock percussion in the studio would have recalled concrete artifacts from the black market. Drums (and particular ways of playing them) would have evoked objects of illegal desire, not to mention the presumed generic implications thereof. And so Tukhmanov avoided any suggestions of illicit inanimate objects – in order to make one himself.

If we consider the finished, bound disc as the *sine qua non* of rock music, then Tukhmanov's music certainly became a form of rock. Given its aesthetic or "classical" allegiances, as Tukhmanov himself says, I would argue it is aligned with progressive rock specifically. The crux of the matter here is that the Soviet artistic council – so far from commercial practice – had not yet caught on to the fact that unlike in classical music, the "score" guaranteed or meant nothing. Recordings, in other words *texts,* were the primary objects to be examined and potentially censored. As seen in our earlier discussion of autographic art forms, listening to a composer play through a future *estrada* album on piano gave no information about key notions such as instrumentation or timbre – even as it revealed such gestures as Tukhmanov's verbatim usage of the 6/8 hook from "Here Comes the Sun." The convoluted

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[56] V. Nuzov, "David Tukhmanov: V Moskve ya obrel vtoroe dykhanie…" *Russkiy bazar* 378.30 (17 July 2003), accessed 27 December 2014. <http://www.russian-bazaar.com/Article.aspx?ArticleID=3068>

[57] Gracyk, 21.

system of Soviet arts bureaucracy actually opened up all kinds of possibilities for such unexpected artistic production.

Any ability to "mask" a rock aesthetic on piano aside, *OWMM's* fairly unproblematic release can also be attributed to its aforementioned kinship with Anglophone prog.[58] This classically oriented genre allowed Tukhmanov to dally with lyrical content that sat between learnedness and subversion. In the West, even during its heyday, progressive rock showed a lasting fidelity to complex, even byzantine lyrics that spoke of distant lands and alternative existences. Audiences were expected to be well read; even the Soviet censors would concur with those lofty benchmarks. And so, given that we are dealing with *songs*, how did the lyrical content of this album manage to straddle the distance(s) between tradition and innovation?

Tukhmanov's album undoubtedly set the stage for a poetically aware audience with instruments that would normally be considered more "classically oriented." Most of the songs contain parts arranged for flute and strings; more than one track features a prominent harpsichord part. This is not uncommon, stemming from a particular "high art" aesthetic favored by progressive rock in general.[59] The lyrics perform a similar function. Tukhmanov established an impressive list of poets, representing a global classical canon; the Soviet classroom; and – most importantly – a few heroes of the intelligentsia. Figure 2.3 shows the track listing of *OWMM* in terms of lyricists, along with text publication dates.

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[58] A quick side note on contemporaneous genre labels – when released, Tukhmanov's album was merely called *estrada* by Melodiya. It is still classified this way in the catalogue: http://melody.su/catalog/esetrad/312. These days, most online sources and listeners (with the exception of the community of musicians represented by Troitsky in the beginning of this chapter) refer to it as "art-rock" or simply "rock." The term "prog rock" was not in use in the Soviet Union during the 1970s to describe anything that was happening domestically. It is only recently that listeners have begun to label even Tukhmanov's album by the name they readily give its influences.

[59] For further discussion of prog rock and its aesthetic values, see Edward Macan's *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

***Figure 2.3, Track listing of* OWMM**

Track	Title	Poet
1	"I Mentally Enter Your Study" (1913)	Maximilian Voloshin
2	"From Sappho" (6th century B.C)	Sappho
3	"From Galliardic Verse" (12th century)	Galliardic Verse
4	"L'Invitation au Voyage" (1857)	Baudelaire
5	"Good Night" (1822)	Percy Bysshe Shelley
6	"Sailing the Waves of My Memory" (20th century)	Nicolas Guillen
7	"A Sentimental Stroll" (1866)	Verlaine
8	"Herz, Mein Herz" (1775)	Goethe
9	"Confusion" (1913)	Anna Akhmatova
10	"Dedication in an Album" (19th century)	Adam Mickiewicz

Just as *Abbey Road* is formally a suite, so these texts form a poetic cycle, mirroring each other. They are the core concept of the album, making a unified whole from unrelated texts. This entity, however, does not have a narrative as such. Rather, the main theme here is one of introspection and romanticism, portraying various internal states ranging from uncertainty and doubt about the future ("From Galliardic Verse") to incredible turmoil and excitation caused by the gains and losses of love ("Confusion"). The LP portrays different facets of something that does not change or develop – throughout the entire experience. A thread of stubborn lyricism runs through the album, exposing subjectivity in times and places that had not previously been explored in Soviet *estrada*. Simultaneously, Tukhmanov's magnum opus binds self-realization to complexity, as if actuality is depressingly restrictive. These issues, taken together, imply that self-expression is better effected in realms of retro- and intro-spection, often by way of a flourishing, increasingly

baroque aesthetic. Within the landscape of Soviet Stagnation, where everything was seen in terms of goal-driven, unidirectional planning, the idea of expression for its own sake was simultaneously provocative to the authorities, and hugely appealing to audiences – much like the private, interior relationships explored in *The Irony of Fate* in Chapter Three, or the increasingly personalized *estrada* we saw in Chapter One.

Within the Romantic leanings of this album, it is useful to distinguish as Maxim Gorky does, between active and passive romanticism:

> Passive romanticism endeavors to reconcile man with his life by embellishing that life, or to distract him from the things around him by means of a barren introspection into his inner world, into thoughts of life's insoluble problems, such as love, death and other imponderables … Active romanticism strives to strengthen man's will to live and raise him up against the life around him, against any yoke it would impose.[60]

Or, as David MacFadyen clarifies in his work on Soviet popular song, "Active romanticism desires to alter the world, to employ the lonely rigours of individual effort for future, general good. Passive romanticism is more immobile in social spaces, tending as it does towards reverie or a yearning for the past."[61] Most of Tukhmanov's selections fall squarely within the category of passive romanticism; the poems paint a picture of the microsocial rather than the macrosocial, with decidedly un-Soviet emphases such as ineffable sentiment ("Confusion"), the pleasure of solitude ("A Sentimental Stroll"), or melancholy reverie ("Sailing the Waves of my Memory"). Another everpresent theme evokes both memory and time beyond human control, as with the Guillen track lamenting "Time ran by, losing track of the years/It ran by, throwing me everywhere, here and there." In other words, despite the epic soundscape accompanying its texts,

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[60] M. Gorky, et al., *The Art and Craft of Writing.* trans. Alex Miller (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2000), 10.

[61] D. MacFadyen, *Red Stars: Personality and the Soviet Popular Song, 1955-1991* (Montreal & Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 43.

the lyrical scale of Tukhmanov's album is both modest and persistently intimate – providing a fascinating foil of doubt, confusion, and ambiguity to his frequently aggressive musical gestures.

Some of the poets referenced here certainly had a complicated relationship with the Soviet regime; for instance, Maximilian Voloshin's entry in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia labels his poetry as "burdened by feelings of decadence."[62] Others were lauded for their compatibility with socialist thinking – the poet Nicolas Guillen was a member of the Cuban Communist party, and even an Englishman like Shelley produced a treatise on atheism, which may have lent an air of legitimacy to the composer's choice (even though the text in question is a personal and intimate one lamenting the dangers of separation from a lover). Still other poetic candididates – like the Chinese poet Du Fu – never made it onto the album at all, as Tukhmanov explains, precisely due to political considerations.[63] Ultimately, even the inclusion of Anna Akhmatova, modernist poetess of the Silver Age and one of the most acclaimed writers in the Russian canon, came not too long after her work was finally able to be published in the USSR without major censorship.

The poetic tradition – like classical music – was extremely valorized in the Soviet Union, and a popular song's alleged worth was frequently judged by its lyrical content, i.e., whether or not its lyrics could be considered "poetry." Tukhmanov took this challenge one step further and set his music to pre-existing and often canonical poetry, always chosen strategically. Here, as elsewhere, he toes the line in terms of what is conventional, what is merely allowed, and whatever is a potential or current challenge to the status quo. Put simply, he again locates himself

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[62] V. Briusov, I. Erenburg, A. Danchich, V.L. Orlov, N. Shults, and N. Tsvetaeva,. "Voloshin Maximilian Aleksandrovich." *Great Soviet Encyclopedia Online.* http://bse.sci-lib.com/article006405.html, accessed 09 February 2015.

[63] Cheliaev.

between policy and privacy – and the concept of an album unified by lyrical themes from well-known poets maps the realm in which this tug-of-war takes place.

Tukhmanov's conceptual decisions are almost a caricature of prog rock's usual aspirations to high art. A listener knowing little about music or unfamiliar with the composer's specific reference points might notice instead a catalog of lofty verse and instruments associated with a symphonic orchestra. Even the record cover (Figure 2.4) attempts to present itself as classical in tone, using drawings of musicians playing an upright bass or a piano, together with a Greek statue. In this regard, prog rock was really the optimal Western genre to flourish in the USSR, in spirit rather than in name – and Tukhmanov successfully matched its values of technical virtuosity, keyboard-centrism, classical references, and academicism to the values propagated by 1970s Soviet society. In *OWMM*, he obscured potentially objectionable content and helped it to slip through the growing cracks of Soviet bureaucracy.

***Figure 2.4, Front and back cover of* OWMM**

Concept Album with a Russian Accent

Of course, the choice to set classical poetry to popular music creates some interesting tension between text and sound. Let us briefly discuss one of the tracks on the album: a setting of Goethe's 1775 poem "Neue Liebe, neues Leben" to music that can only be classified as funk. This early Goethe work was set by Ludwig van Beethoven as part of an 1809 song cycle (*6 Gesänge,* op. 75), so Tukhmanov's choice of text carries with it not only the literary associations of Goethe's heady lyricism, but also a nod to *the* canonical Romantic composer. Thematically in keeping with the rest of the album, this poem paints a vivid picture of the narrator's internal state – in this case, a perturbed lover pleading with his own heart to release him from all-consuming passion. The song begins with a clean, percussive rhythm guitar part, which after a few bars is followed by a bass line strongly emphasizing the downbeat and complementary percussion.[64] Aside from slight idiosyncrasies in the mix, the first twenty seconds of the song broadcast several American funk signifiers loud and clear.[65]

Once the voice enters, however, things change. Despite the fact that Aleksandr Lerman – former front-man of VIA Vesëlye Rebyata ("The Jolly Fellows") – is singing in Russian, a savvy listener would still recognize a pastiche. For one, his voice is evidently classically trained; he is not attempting to imitate the percussive, stylized singing manner found in American funk. As the song continues, a similar issue permeates the background music as well. The punctuating brass

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[64] D. Tukhmanov, "Herz mein Herz," *Po volne moei pamyati* (Melodiya, 1976). The album version of the track can be heard here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6kD9EJiuxw. The highly compressed sound quality of this YouTube video is not a feature of the track as it is found on the LP.

[65] Funk – similar to progressive rock – had an interesting liminal existence in the USSR. Closely tied with jazz and also film music, it flourished in the peripheral republics such as Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, as well as the historically more liberal Baltic nations of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. There is currently no scholarship done on funk in the USSR; however, more and more journalistic/blog writing is starting to appear addressing the issue: http://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/magazine/funk-archaeology-russia.

and wailing back-up singers, although frequently found in "authentic" funk music, sound too polished and premeditated. These tiny inaccuracies or oddities render the song a witty translation rather than any direct or crude imitation of funk – one that may, perhaps, have already aped another Soviet group such as the jazz-rock ensemble Arsenal.[66] In terms of text, although themes of tortured love and romantic braggadocio are almost de rigeur in US funk, Tukhmanov leaves the refrain in its original German. He then inserts a baroque interlude complete with Penny Lane-style trumpet solo (beginning at 2:03 in the album version). Tukhmanov is free and easy with his musical quotations; he plays even looser with general sonic references. Rarely does he seem interested in pairing the music with an "appropriate" text.

These observations invite a number of additional questions about reception. What does it mean for so many musical signifiers to challenge a listener so rapidly, all detached from their original contexts? As David Metzer points out:

> When a musician borrows from a piece, he or she draws upon not only a melody but also the cultural associations of that piece. Just as with a melody, a musician can work and transform those associations. Those manipulations provide a means to comment on cultural topics and to reconfigure fundamental cultural relationships.[67]

Tukhmanov's hyperactive borrowing results in a barrage of cultural associations. How much of this music, though, was geared toward (or received by) knowing listeners, and how much of it was meant for the naïve Soviet ear? As Metzer argues, "Once the borrowing is evoked, the exchange between the original and new work central to cultural agency begins. *That exchange, of*

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[66] For autobiographical information and retrospective analysis, see the personal website of Arsenal founder Aleksei Kozlov: http://alexeykozlov.com/. Kozlov is author of *Jazzist* (2011), *Rok glazami dhazmena* [Rock through the Eyes of a Jazz Musician], (2008), and other books documenting his experience in Arsenal.

[67] D. Metzer, *Quotation and Cultural Meaning in Twentieth-Century Music (New Perspectives in Music History and Criticism)* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

course, can start only if the listener can recognize the quotation."[68] Although we cannot know for sure how high listener competence was across the USSR, it is almost certain that recognition ran the gamut from virtually naïve to fully comprehending.[69]

Our chosen theory of living and working *vnye* – in the liminal spaces found between the cracks of officialdom – is reflected here in a number of ways. As we have seen, David Tukhmanov and his contemporaries borrow constantly from Western pop and rock. Yet his creative output – perhaps by necessity – is less dictated by those foreign influences than that of the amateur bands ("*bit gruppy*"/"beat groups") of the 1960s and the underground rock scene of the 1980s. Tukhmanov also draws upon established canonical poetry from Western Europe or further afield, yet prefers retrospective, lyrical narratives. This Soviet take on the genres of both European rock and poetry clearly displays a Russian accent – for reception in a profoundly Russian setting. By way of these intricate, local, and perhaps paradoxical tactics, *OWMM* remains a strong example of personal expression in a realm where such desires were complicated (although clearly not made impossible) by approved values and social structures.

Ultimately, the album's radical exploration of Western texts and genres struck a chord with audiences. The album remains popular today; in fact, it was remastered and reissued on CD in 2005. One example of this enduring importance comes from Petrozavodsk native Viktor Shubin. He informed me of his experience working in a music store there in the early 2000s: "There was an unflagging demand for this disc, even though it cost about 1.5 times as much as a standard issue. [Before it was republished], people still remembered this album, ordered it, and tried to keep it in their collections as much as possible… Then it was reissued and everyone

[68] Ibid., 8. Emphasis mine.

[69] For more on the notion of listener competence, see Kofi Agawu's *Playing With Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

bought that version."[70] Many young listeners have expressed a positive reaction to the album as well; contemporary Russian electronic musician Kornei Kapus has told me that upon discovering this album in today's Moscow, a number of his DJ friends "gleefully picked this work of art to pieces" for their work as beatmakers.[71] Reception among Western listeners, however, remains mixed – a 2009 post on the music blog Mutant Sounds describes the album as a "cavalcade…of Rocky Horror Picture Show camp, blaring big band themes, cop show orchestral funk, weepy baladeering, whizzing synths and varying shades of strident power folk." The blog then recommends, "If your good taste in bad taste has reached an advanced stage, look no further…"[72] Tukhmanov's desire to escape a state register sometimes appears frantic to Western ears.

It may be tempting for Western listeners to see the appropriation of prog as an act of resistance against an oppressive regime. In a 2003 interview with the NY-based newspaper *Russian Bazaar,* Tukhmanov saw matters in a humbler fashion: "There was nothing dissident about the album, the record just didn't fit into the [official] standards of the time."[73] This ambivalence is extremely characteristic of both the problems and *possibilities* created by living in an authoritarian state. After all, as Russian music studies scholar Peter Schmelz writes, "no music in the Soviet Union was allowed to be just music."[74] Additionally, as Susan McClary and Rob Walser once reminded us in the late 1980s as the Soviet Union was starting to unravel:

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[70] Personal communication with the author via e-mail, 20 October 2011.

[71] Ibid.

[72] "David Tukhmanov-Po volne moei pamiati (On the Wave of My Memory), LP, 1975, Russia," *Mutant Sounds* (29 July 2009), accessed 28 December 2014. <http://mutant-sounds.blogspot.com/2009/07/david-tukhmanov-on-wave-of-my-memory-lp.html>

[73] Nuzov.

[74] P. Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music During the Thaw* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 134.

"Rock is a discourse that has frequently been at its most effective politically when its producers and consumers are least aware of any political or intellectual dimensions."[75]

Because of Tukhmanov's complex relationship with the regime, operating between subservience and subversion, his music is rarely included in serious or scholarly discourses of Russian rock. These tend to focus instead on more "underground" musicians who were openly opposed to authority. For that community, "the Soviet state was seen as an enemy, and Soviet mass culture was seen as an alien culture."[76] As we saw amid the observations of Artemy Troitsky, this nationally famous critic remains horrified at the idea of calling anything David Tukhmanov ever produced "rock." His views are both Moscow-centric and as elitist or exclusive as the state genres he once opposed. Ironically, as Groys points out, "Such an unreflective, oppositional stance was, incidentally, easily integrated into the Manichean worldview of the official Soviet ideology, which reserved a special place for its enemies, but not for an outside spectator."[77] As I have demonstrated, there are certainly ways in which this music aligns with other music considered "rock" both in Russia and elsewhere. So – harkening back to Allan Moore – if we were to ask *how* David Tukhmanov created this music, one reasonable answer might be "in a progressive rock style, with a Russian accent." The answer to the other question – *what* is the music doing, and *why* – seems infinitely more complicated.

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[75] S. McClary & R.Walser, "Start Making Sense:' Musicology Wrestles with Rock," *On Record: Rock, Pop and the Written Word,* ed. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (London: Routledge, 1970), 277-92.

[76] B. Groys, "The Other Gaze: Russian Unofficial Art's View of the Soviet World," *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition: Politicized Art under Late Socialism,* ed. A. Ervajec (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 57.

[77] Ibid.