Kon School of Higher Musical Education, in honor of the editor of the *Workers' Gazette.*[22]

PERESTROYKA

The results of the Five-Year Plan were disastrous. As the economist Alec Nove notes, "1933 was the culmination of the most precipitous peacetime decline in living standards known in recorded history."[23] With its notorious show trials, the Party leadership tried to shift the blame for all the misery onto local officials and "saboteurs." To regain the support of the intelligentsia, the power of the proletarian organizations was curbed once more. In a decree dated 23 April 1932, the Central Committee of the Communist Party ordered a *perestroyka,* or "restructuring," of literary and artistic organizations. RAPM was dissolved, as were comparable organizations in the other arts. Each artistic discipline was given its own coordinating body. For music, that body was the Union of Soviet Composers, organized first in Moscow and Leningrad, then throughout the land. As a result, the whole of Soviet musical life became centralized. From then on, the Union of Soviet Composers was the only body entitled to commission and publish Soviet music or to present concerts. Composers were obliged to attend meetings at which their work was discussed and criticized while it was still in progress, a practice that gave rise to the typical Soviet phenomenon known as "Bolshevik self-criticism." Composers were expected to allow their work to be constantly examined by colleagues and to take account of their views. Refusal was considered an unconstructive attitude and a sign of bourgeois individualism. From 1933 onward, the findings of such forums were published in the union's journal, *Sovyetskaya muzïka* (Soviet music).

Significantly, the concentration of power in the Union of Soviet Composers lay in the hands of its bureaucrats. Nikolai Chelyapov was named chairman of the Moscow branch and editor of *Sovyetskaya muzïka.* He was not a musician, but a general-purpose bureaucrat who had to answer to the Committee on Artistic Affairs, a division of the Council of People's Commissars. With his appointment, centralized control of music was complete.

At first, the *perestroyka* was greeted with acclaim, the Party resolution by which it was heralded generally praised as an event of historic importance. Feeling that at long last they had been liberated from the yoke of the hated RAPM, most composers viewed the establishment of the Composers Union with optimism. The older ones were allowed to resume their posts in the conservatories. Furthermore, they were given honorable positions in the union side by side with the youngest generation, that is, with the pupils of their pupils.

SOCIALIST REALISM

At the First Congress of Soviet Writers, held in 1934, the official Soviet aesthetic was declared binding and normative. The Party's representative, Andrey Zhdanov, declared that socialist realism was now the common aesthetic of all Soviet writers. Their aim should henceforth be "to depict reality in its revolutionary development."[24] To lend these developments prestige, the authorities invited Maxim Gorky, one of the foremost *éminences grises* of Russian literature, to deliver an address. Gorky, who had just returned from abroad, said, among other things:

> We still do not see reality adequately. Even the landscape of our country has drastically changed: its particolored character has disappeared—a bluish strip of oats, a black patch of plowed land next to it, a golden ribbon of rye, a greenish one of wheat, strips of land overgrown with weeds, altogether—the multicolored sorrow of overall scatteredness [and] disunity. Today huge expanses of land are colored mightily, with one color.[25]

This passage is most revealing. Gorky claimed that Soviet writers still faltered in their perception of reality. A correct view would soon help them to detect the signs of the ideal state toward which reality evolves. That ideal state is characterized by uniformity, which must be seen as a victory over petty divisions. The monochrome landscape thus becomes a picture of heroic greatness, the picturesque and multicolored landscape, by contrast, a symbol of petit bourgeois self-interest.

Applied to art, Gorky's picture comprises two characteristics essential for socialist realism: first, the artist must see reality in its evolution toward the socialist ideal; second, individual creativity must make way for communal and comparable work. The first aspect reflects the difference between socialist realism and nineteenth-century realism: the critical view with which reality used to be observed has become outdated, because reality has moved positively ahead. The second aspect means the rejection of the "l'art pour l'art" principle. Every manifestation of autonomous aestheticism would henceforth be labeled "formalism."

Socialist realism is often seen as marking a definite break with avant-garde developments since the Silver Age. Insofar as it involves the rejection of artistic experiments and the underestimation of the creative personality, that view is correct. Yet a connection still exists with the

earlier principle of *zhiznetvorchestvo:* the belief that art influences life. Gorky's picture bears traces of the futurist dream that the human will can shape the world. Such thinkers as Nikolai Chuzhak and Sergey Tretyakov constituted the links between symbolism and futurism, on the one hand, and socialist realism, on the other. Both had tried to combine Solovyov's theory with Marxism. They dethroned the artistic ego of the symbolists and futurists and assigned the role of artistic demiurge to the masses. Chuzhak called the Russian proletariat "the Pygmalion who brought to life the Galatea of Futurism and turned the evolutionary tasks of art into the task of creating revolution."[26] Tretyakov, for his part, specified the kind of reality the Soviet artist must come to grips with: "Not *bït* [life] in its inertia and dependence on an established pattern of things, but *bïtiye*—a dialectically perceived reality that is in a state of perpetual formation—reality understood as progress toward the commune, which is not to be forgotten for a single minute."[27] The vague symbolist idea of the future was now given a clear shape: that of communism.

Socialist realism was both the consequence and the negation of avant-garde trends. It held fast to the aesthetic utopia of Russian modernism, in which art played an active role in the creation of life; at the same time, it curbed the ambitions of art. At issue was a clear delimitation of the terrain in which art was allowed to operate. Artists were no longer permitted to concern themselves with the practical aspects of the construction of the new life. The Party had appropriated that role and brooked no competition. It alone was the supreme arbiter of what shape society must adopt, and by what means. What art could do was help the process along and pass the message on to the masses.

Since the time of PROLETKULT, the Party had been apprehensive about competition from artists. In his study of the totalitarian art of Stalinism, Boris Groys suggests that suspicion was the probable explanation for the artistic repression to come: "There would have been no need to suppress the avant-garde if its black squares and transrational poetry confined themselves to artistic space, but the fact that it was persecuted indicates that it was operating on the same territory as the state."[28] Art was now subordinated to the Party and was set the task of training the people along the right lines. Writers had to become "engineers of the human mind," in accordance with a slogan attributed to Stalin, but which in fact went back to Tretyakov's definition of the artist as "psycho-engineer" and "psycho-constructor."[29]

The subordination of art to the objectives of the Party was labeled

partiynost', while ideological correctness was given the name of *ideynost'*. These two criteria were combined with a third, *narodnost'*, close ties with the people, reflecting the demand that art must be understood by all. The insistence on direct accessibility involved a conservative element, which amounted in particular to a renewed bond with the national tradition. Stalin summed this ideal up with the slogan "National in form, socialist in content."

The combining of all aesthetic norms into a common denominator had typically Russian antecedents: it seemed like the sovietization of the Official Nationality of Nicholas I. The concepts of "autocracy" and "orthodoxy" were absorbed into the new ideology of socialism, and *narodnost'* was retained.

The similarity of socialist realism to Official Nationality was not its only link with the Russian past. The underlying theory also reflected Lev Tolstoy's aesthetic. In his later, moralizing, period, Tolstoy resolutely subordinated form and style to content, proclaiming that the unification of mankind was the real objective of art. According to him, beauty was naturally comprehensible and needed no explanation. Similarly, socialist realism evaluated art by its content and comprehensibility, rather than by its formal refinement or stylistic originality.

The application of socialist realism to music was a far from self-evident step. The relationship between music and reality has always been a thorny question. Originally, realism was projected into music in the most simplistic and lucrative manner by association and paraphrase. That state of affairs caused Shostakovich to protest vehemently in 1933 in his article "Soviet Music Criticism Is Lagging": "When a critic writes that in such-and-such a symphony, Soviet civil servants are represented by the oboe and the clarinet, and Red Army men by the brass section, then you want to scream!"[30] A more satisfactory relationship between musical expression and verbal explanation was put forward by Boris Asafyev. In his two main works, *Musical Form as a Process* (1930) and *Intonatsiya* (1947), he lays a useful theoretical basis for the verbal exegesis of music. Asafyev distinguishes two concepts for linking music to the phenomenal world: "*intonatsiya*" and "musical picture." The first signifies every possible sonorous effect in the phenomenal world, from the sound of raindrops to the thunderous noise of an explosion. A musical *intonatsiya* appears when such sound effects from the real world are used in a musical phrase: the music retains from the original effects precisely those qualities that convey a meaning or elicit an emotion. The combination of "intonations" into a coherent whole then determines the "musical pic-

ture" of a work. By means of an inner musical logic, the composer rearranges affective phenomena connected with the world of human emotions. The musical picture has the power to evoke feelings, ideas, and associations in the listener. Asafyev's theory has retained its vitality. Stripped of all the doctrinal implications of socialist realism, it is today an important source of inspiration, even in Western musicology, for taking a fresh look at musical semantics.[31]

Yet references to reality were not the most important characteristics of socialist realism in music. An adequate picture of Soviet reality called above all for a monumental approach and an exalted rhetoric based in optimism. In his first article as editor of *Sovyetskaya muzïka,* Nikolai Chelyapov turned monumentality into the new criterion of Soviet music. Wishing to distinguish the aesthetic of the new Union of Soviet Composers from that of the former RAPM, he rejected the pettiness of mass songs in favor of the monumentality of symphonies, program-symphonies, and oratorios. The excesses of the avant-garde of the 1920s were rejected. Composers were expected to return to "healthy and normal" values, which meant chiefly to follow the classical Russian examples. The elevation of the "Russian Classics" to the status of models satisfied the first part of the slogan "National in form, socialist in content." As for the second part, Vladimir Iokhelson put it thus:

> Socialist realism is above all a style of profound optimism. The whole historical experience of the proletariat is optimistic in essence. And we can and must affirm that optimism is intended as an obligatory feature of this style, its very essence. It is a style that includes heroics, but a heroics that is not merely tied to narrow personal interests. Here we mean a heroics of an individual connected with the mass, and of a mass that is capable of bringing forth such a hero.[32]

Socialist realism resulted in a form of provincial conservatism that severed the link between Soviet music and international modernism. Soviet compositions were judged first and foremost by "what," not by "how." The stylistic and technical experiments that continued to flourish in the West were dismissed in the Soviet Union as unnecessary. In their stead, Soviet music kept the monumental forms of the nineteenth century artificially alive, even as the traditional forms were being discarded by the West.

An important aspect of socialist realism in music was the policy of establishing national music centers in the Caucasian and Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union. The project was launched in 1934, just when *Sovyetskaya muzïka* adopted the slogan "National in form, socialist in content." Soviet composers were expected to ensure the proper application of this formula. Only the external form, not the content, was allowed to be national, lest Soviet music lapse into nineteenth-century bourgeois nationalism.

According to the official ideology, the acceptance of national cultures was a strategic step toward the construction of a uniform Soviet culture. As Stalin stated,

> Under the conditions of a dictatorship of the proletariat within a single country, the rise of cultures national in form and socialist in content has to take place, so that when the proletariat wins in the whole world and socialism is a part of ordinary life, these cultures will merge into one culture, socialist both in form and in content, with a common language.[33]

This policy resulted in veritable artistic colonialism as Western musical institutes—conservatories, opera houses, symphony orchestras—were imported into the most remote republics. These were urged to set up their own national operas. Where local composers were not yet active, composers from Moscow and Leningrad were summoned into the breach. They wrote works in a style they deemed appropriate to the required national idiom, which generally meant producing copies of nineteenth-century models.

The results were often bizarre. Uzbek national operas were written by a group of three composers, two Russians and one Uzbek. The group became known under its composite name of Vlasov-Feré-Maldïbayev. Another composer, Sergey Balasanyan, though of Armenian descent and brought up in Turkmenistan, became the Tadzhik national composer. Reinhold Glière composed the first Azerbaijani opera and later placed his art in the service of Uzbekistan. Mosolov and Roslavets specialized in the development of Turkmen music.

The best-known composer to work on this nationalist project was Aram Khachaturyan, who became known as the leading composer of the Armenian nation. Khachaturyan, however, was born in Georgia, lived in Moscow, and based his style on nineteenth-century orientalism modeled on Glinka, Balakirev, and Borodin. Nevertheless, Moscow came gradually to look on Khachaturyan as the musical spokesman of the entire Soviet East.[34]

DMITRY SHOSTAKOVICH: 1926–36

Although the 1920s may be called a decade of intense creativity in the Soviet Union, they yielded little music of lasting value. This was due in