

Pauline Fairclough

*Myths and Legends of Shostakovich's Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*

Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* is one of the most popular and frequently performed operas of the last century. But the Cold War narrative of martyrdom that has been such a successful aspect of its marketing since Mstislav Rostropovich's landmark EMI recording of 1979 places restrictions upon our understanding of the opera itself. This article outlines a few of the most enduring myths of *Lady Macbeth*, including those established in the Stalin era, as a first step in acknowledging their power over musicians and audiences today.

Philip Ross Bullock

*"Art Made Tongue-tied by Authority": Censoring Soviet Song*

This essay considers the impact of censorship on the work of a range of Soviet song composers. Arguing that song has been relatively little studied in comparison to the supposedly "major" genres of Soviet music (opera, symphony, etc.), it speculates that song may have been less caught up in egregious instances of censorship precisely because its status as a "minor" form protected it from obvious scandal. It also argues that because most composers turned to printed sources when it came to selecting the poetic texts they would set to music, this prior process of official approval also lent song a degree of protection. However, the ubiquity of censorship within the Soviet cultural system meant that song was in no way immune from its influence, and the article details instances of where songs were deemed problematic, as well as noting instances of where composers may have internalised practices of self-censorship that were widespread within Soviet culture. Finally, it notes that until detailed archival studies of the operation of the entire system of Soviet music-making are available, the field remains beset by instances of mythology and misrepresentation.

Rūta Stanevičiūtė

*Nylon Curtain. Exchanges between Lithuanian and Polish Musicians during the Cold War*

The article focuses on the musical exchanges between Lithuania and Poland during the Cold War period through the analysis of vertical (centralised institutions of the USSR) and horizontal (inter-institutional cooperation) cultural

## Abstracts

relations. It identifies the role of the central Soviet institutions – the *Goskoncert* of the USSR (the State Concert Association) and the Union of Composers of the USSR – in controlling international musical exchanges. The synchronisation and discrepancies of political and cultural processes are revealed, and the impact and counteraction of musical exchanges and relations between the Lithuanian SSR and the People's Republic of Poland (PRP) on the contemporary music scenes in the two neighbouring countries are discussed.

**Nicolae Gheorghită**

*Guiding the People's Army Music. Mechanisms of Censorship and Control of Musical Composition Dedicated to Military Bands in Communist Romania*

In communist Romania, military bands were under a double subordination: administratively, logistically and financially they were part of the Army. From a professional point of view, however, the military band leaders wanted the bands to be part of the Union of Composers, in their real desire to professionalise and develop, and this will happen at the end of 1957, when they will become a subsection of the Union. The present paper examines the ways in which the Bureau of the Military Music Subsection controlled, guided, censored and imposed the compositional subjects dedicated to brass bands, according to the ideological directions imposed on the Union of Composers by the Party, as well as the compositional techniques specific to this genre of music that musicians had to adopt in their works. The study is based on archives in the libraries of the Ministry of Defence and on the records of the Subsection of the Military Music.

**Antigona Rădulescu**

*How Communist Censorship Affected Higher Music Education: The National University of Music Bucharest in the 1950s*

Censorship, one of the tools of the communist propaganda and a means of controlling the artistic field, was particularly strict in communist Romania. It manifested as the manipulation, the deformation or the imposition of certain sources of information and knowledge and as the omitting, cutting out, and changing of censored works, scores and various publications on music inclusively. Moreover, in art as well as in literature, publishers and creative unions were under state control, and in their turn watched composers and authors. Education, too, was thoroughly politicized, and the Bucharest Conservatory

(now the National University of Music Bucharest) is but one such example. The 1950s, which I mean to investigate, is part of what was still the first stage of communist government of Romania, when the Party aimed to break completely with the past. Several events prepared or accompanied and encouraged the forms that censorship and control would take: the Censorship of Press and Publications was established (1946); the Royal Conservatory Bucharest became the “Ciprian Porumbescu” State Conservatory (1948); the resolution of the Central Committee of the soviet Communist Party on music is passed (1948); the Society of Romanian Composers became the Union of Composers of the Romanian People’s Republic (1949). These events consolidated the main doctrine lines and the measures to implement them – Marxist-Leninism, socialist realism, the sovietisation of institutions, the show trials, and censorship.