Fiona JACKSON

Musical Exchange Between Scotland and the Baltic Republics During the Final Decades of the Soviet Union

Muzikiniai Škotijos ir Baltijos šalių mainai paskutiniais Sovietų Sąjungos dešimtmečiais

University of Bristol, Beacon House, Queens Road, Bristol, BS8 1QU, UK
rp21896@bristol.ac.uk

Abstract
This article examines musical exchange between Scotland and the Baltic republics in the late Soviet period, looking particularly at Scottish relations with Lithuanian and Estonian composers and musicians. This exploration of the relationships between musicians from Scotland and the Baltic republics focuses on activities in the city of Glasgow. It suggests that the Scottish nationalism and devolution debate helped create a sense of shared identity between these regions and provoked greater interest among Scottish artists, opinion formers, and media in relations with composers from the non-Russian Soviet republics, more than was evident from other regions of the United Kingdom. It assesses the possible influence of the significant Lithuanian diaspora within Scotland on musical relations, the impact of an individual émigré musician, Neeme Järvi, and explores how much Britain's *de jure* non-recognition of the Soviet annexation of the Baltic states influenced official responses to cultural exchange.
Keywords: cultural exchange, Baltic republics, non-state actors, Scotland, transition.

Anotacija
Straipsnyje nagrinėjami muzikiniai Škotijos ir Baltijos šalių mainai vėlyvuoju sovietmečiu, daugiausia dėmesio skiriant Škotijos santykiams su Lietuvos ir Estijos kompozitoriais bei muzikantais. Škotijos ir Baltijos šalių muzikantų santykių tyrimas telkiasi į menininkų veiklą Glazgo mieste. Teigiama, kad škotų nacionalizmas ir decentralizacijos diskusijos padėjo sukurti bendrą šių skirtingų regionų tapatybę ir sukėlė didesnį škotų, skirtingai nei kitų Jungtinės Karalystės regionų, menininkų, nuomonės formuotojų ir žiniasklaidos norą megzti santykius su kompozitoriais iš nerusiškų sovietinių respublikų. Straipsnyje vertinama galima nemažos lietuvių diasporos Škotijoje įtaka muzikiniams santykiams, estų muziko emigranto Neeme Järvi įtaka ir tiriama, kiek Didžiosios Britanijos *de jure* sovietų aneksijos Baltijos valstybėse nepripažinimas paveikė oficialias reakcijas į šiuos kultūrinius mainus.
Reikšminiai žodžiai: kultūriniai mainai, Baltijos respublikos, nevalstybiniai subjektai, Škotija, pereinamasis laikotarpis.

Introduction

The Bolshoi Ballet at Covent Garden or Shostakovich at London's Royal Festival Hall may be the image British audiences historically associate with British-Soviet cultural exchange in the 1970s and 1980s, but these formal state-negotiated concert tours, focusing upon music from established and politically acceptable composers, overshadow the extensive musical relations taking place at grassroots level. A more nuanced portrayal of musical exchange demands both recognition of musical performances from the different republics of the USSR, and an awareness that, on an informal level, the countries that made up the United Kingdom did not adopt a uniform approach towards cultural exchange. An exploration of British contemporary arts festivals that featured more experimental new music that trickled out of the Soviet Union from the late 1960s onwards demonstrates that British audiences were able to gain a broader picture of music from the USSR, and reveals different dynamics in how Soviet music was presented in Scotland, compared with in England. Among Scottish musicians, artistic directors, and the media, the earlier and broader presentation of music from the Soviet republics suggests a specific curiosity about music from the non-Russian regions, particularly the Baltics and the Caucasus.

The range of Soviet music presented in Britain had long been hampered by the Russia-centric interest of British audiences and the Soviet government's preference for presenting music abroad from prestigious and publicly recognized composers, predominantly Russian—Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, and later, Shostakovich. Examination of the more limited performances of Soviet contemporary

music, however, can provide a closer insight into the interplay between state-led and grassroots musical relations as the work of composers of 'new music', such as Edison Denisov and Alfred Schnittke, was not included within the Soviet state cultural propaganda machine and these composers encountered obstacles in trying to get their music performed in the West. This new music, when emanating from Soviet-Russian composers, has been termed "unofficial," a label attached to composers such as Schnittke and Denisov, whose music did not conform to the type of Soviet music usually considered suitable for Western export, even though they still belonged to the Soviet Union of Composers (Schmelz 2009, 20). However, in considering the music from the non-Russian republics that was performed in Britain, such as that by Tigran Mansurian from Armenia and by Franghiz Ali-Zadeh from Azerbaijan, the designation "unofficial" is not wholly accurate. These composers' frequent use of inspiration from local music traditions seemed to superficially adhere to the Soviet fondness for ethnographical musical traditions (loosely termed "folklore"), even if national rather than Soviet identity was pushed to the fore and modern compositional techniques were employed. It is fair to say, however, that whilst the contemporary composers from the Baltics and South Caucasus whose music was performed in Britain may sometimes have been prominent within their local Composers' Union, they were not representative of officially promoted "Soviet" music abroad.

Although music from the non-Russian republics received less exposure among British audiences in general than that of Russian composers, British musical relations with composers from Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia were also impeded by the British government's non-acceptance of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states, a position adopted by much of Western Europe and the United States. This legal status of non-recognition prohibited British Embassy officials from liaising with officials in the Baltic republics. While cultural exchange arrangements with any of the Soviet republics were conducted through the Ministry of Culture and the Soviet concert agency, *Goskonsert* in Moscow, British Foreign Office representatives, such as the British Ambassador in Moscow, were forbidden from visiting the Baltics and supporting cultural exchange—as to do so, would have been to legally acknowledge these nations' inclusion within the Soviet orbit. It was not until 1989 that the Assistant Cultural Attaché from the British Embassy in Moscow, Michael Bird, was permitted to visit Lithuania to support the visit of Catholic author Paul Piers Read to a book fair in Vilnius. By contrast, British Foreign Office files contain reports from embassy officials touring Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan while visiting different regions of the USSR.[1]

Although the British government refused to acknowledge the Baltics' absorption into the USSR, this was very much a legal stance rather than *de facto* and one that, in times of smoother diplomatic relations with the USSR, was sometimes a subject of internal discussion within the British Foreign Office, especially after the deaths in office (and non-replacement) of the independent Baltic legations in London.[2] In 1971, British pianist John Lill and cellist Elizabeth Wilson performed in Riga as part of the official Days of British Music festival, although presumably without an official presence. Limited informal exchange was able to take place with the help of Russian intermediaries, such as composer Edison Denisov, who put English composer and pianist Susan Bradshaw in touch with Estonian composer Arvo Pärt; Bradshaw subsequently receiving scores from Pärt in the 1970s. These grassroots relations were also stymied, however, by the lack of official support on the ground from figures such as the British Cultural Attaché, who operated from within the embassy in Moscow, liaising with the Foreign Office and British Council in London.

In this way, despite their proximity to Western Europe and the significant number of émigrés from Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia who had fled to Britain—both at the turn of the twentieth century and again at the time of the Nazi and Soviet occupations—British cultural exchange with the Baltic nations failed to fully reflect these connections. Arvo Pärt was able to participate in the BBC Proms in London in 1979 for the premiere of his *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten*, as his personal attendance had been insisted upon by the Russian conductor Gennady Rozhdestvensky, who was at that time Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra.[3] Yet, other than Pärt, who left Estonia for West Germany in 1980 (and whose music was then distributed by a German record label, ECM), and a successful tour to London in 1984 by The Ganelin Trio, a jazz ensemble from Lithuania, the music of Baltic composers received little visibility in England.

Excluding the music of Arvo Pärt, the participation of the New Music Ensemble of Vilnius in the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival in November 1990 is usually regarded as the first major exposure of British audiences to Baltic contemporary music, prominently featuring the music of Lithuanian composers Osvaldas Balakauskas, Bronius Kutavičius, and Algirdas Martinaitis. Their inclusion has been attributed by the founder and then Director of this North of England festival, Richard Steinitz, as the result of a chance meeting in Brussels between himself and a Lithuanian musicologist, Violetta Tovianskaite, who introduced him to their music (Steinitz 2011, 124). It can't be ignored, however, that the Huddersfield festival took place a year after the Berlin Wall had come down, and seven months after the restoration of Lithuanian independence had been declared by the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet on March 11th, 1990—although formal independence from the USSR was not granted until September the following

year. Baltic musical freedom was already well underway by the time of the Huddersfield Festival.

By contrast, Baltic musical relations with Scotland appeared to develop earlier. This closer relationship between Baltic and Scottish arts cannot be attributed simply to the initiatives of the particularly active Soviet state-funded friendship society in Glasgow, which included a high proportion of Lithuanian émigrés among its members. It is also clearly evident in the performances and recordings of the Scottish Symphony Orchestra in the mid-1980s under Estonian conductor Neeme Järvi, and the groundbreaking New Beginnings: Soviet Arts in Glasgow festival in 1989.

In the 1980s, Scottish interest in Baltic culture—both among artists, festival organizers, and the press—seemed to be encouraged by identification with the Baltic nations' position within the Soviet empire, Baltic calls for the restoration of their independence, and the removal of control by Moscow, arriving at a time when the Scottish nationalist movement itself was becoming more vocal. Preoccupied with Scotland's position within the United Kingdom and its relationship with London, the enthusiasm of some of the Scottish press in profiling the non-Russian republics can be clearly seen in their response to the 1989 Soviet arts festival in Glasgow.

Baltic musical activities essentially seemed to be concentrated in Scotland's second city, Glasgow, however, which in the 1980s was striving to boost its cultural reputation to rival Scotland's capital, Edinburgh, home of the renowned Edinburgh International Festival. The surge of music, drama, and visual arts experienced by Glasgow in the 1980s culminated in Glasgow being made European City of Culture in 1990. For that reason, this article focuses on Baltic cultural events taking place in Glasgow during the latter decades of the USSR.

Cultural Advocates among the Baltic Diaspora in Scotland

The absence of official British representation in the Baltic republics until 1990 meant that British Cultural Attachés were unable to act as the "eyes and ears" in the region, identifying cultural exchange opportunities and interesting events. The successful visit of the Georgian Rustaveli Theatre company to the Edinburgh Festival in 1979 had been identified in this very way—the British Cultural Attaché, having seen them in Tbilisi, then recommended their innovative style to the Edinburgh Festival Director, John Drummond, and facilitated an introductory visit to Tbilisi for the director.[4] The following year Drummond wished to find out more about the Estonian early music group, Hortus Musicus, about whom he had heard good reports coming back from Finland.[5] His request to the British Cultural Attaché to find out more information was, however, unsuccessful, possibly as it was not until 1989 that the first embassy representative obtained permission from the British Foreign Office to set foot in the Baltics. It took a decade for Hortus Musicus to finally appear in Scotland (or elsewhere in Britain), when they finally performed at the Early Music Festival in Glasgow in 1990.

Lithuanian Émigrés in Glasgow

The lack of British official engagement in the Baltic states, or the presence of a personal champion, as Pärt had had in the figure of Rozhdestvensky before he left Estonia, meant that the initial core source of cultural exchange between Scotland and the Baltics was the Soviet-funded Scottish-USSR Society, which had a strong presence in working-class Glasgow. By the 1950s, it was estimated that approximately 10,000 Lithuanians lived in the Glasgow area, predominantly having arrived in Scotland in the 1890s for economic reasons and finding employment in the coal mines of Lanarkshire (*The Guardian* 2006). Although their numbers had declined during the First World War, when many were conscripted by the Russian army (the British government regarded the Lithuanian émigrés as Russian and subject to their military service agreement with Russia), a new wave of Lithuanian émigrés arrived in Glasgow from the Displaced Persons (DP) camps after the Second World War (Gilbert 2017, xviii). It was this smaller group of Scottish-Lithuanian émigrés (estimated at around 400 individuals) that was credited for setting up the Lithuanian cultural center in Belshill in Glasgow, the Scottish Lithuanian Institute—as not regarding themselves as emigrants like the existing Glaswegian-Lithuanian community, they were keen to keep their homeland culture alive until they could return from 'exile' (Global Lithuania). Despite the presence of a large Lithuanian diaspora in Glasgow, however, by the later Soviet period this Lithuanian community does not seem to have exercised such a large cultural imprint as the more recent influx of Latvians in London, who had founded the London Latvian Choir, and whose conductor, composer Alberts Jērums, was instrumental in setting up Latvian song festivals across Britain, and then Europe.

The smaller contribution to musical life by the Scottish-Lithuanians can partly be explained by the fact that the original wave of Lithuanians who settled in Glasgow were not educated, but predominantly agricultural workers who had had to learn new skills to work in industry—the steelworks of Ayrshire, in addition to the coal mines. In contrast, educated and professional people comprised a large proportion of the refugees from the Displaced Person camps after the Second World War, including a significant number of academics, actors, musicians, writers and artists

(Gilbert 2017, 43). As Gilbert explains, such people "had figured disproportionately in the earlier 1941 deportations, having been categorized as enemies of the people by the Soviet regime" and had thus fled from the threat of a second Russian occupation in 1944. There were few professional opportunities available in Britain, and the British government was offering work to the occupants of the DP camps to rebuild the decimated British industrial sector after the war. The lifting of labor controls in 1951, accompanied by the émigrés' growing realization that they would not be able to return to their homeland as they had hoped, resulted in many of the educated Baltic people from the DP camps re-emigrating—this time further afield to Canada, the United States, and Australia, where they hoped there were greater opportunities available to them. A higher proportion of Lithuanians are believed to have re-emigrated than Estonians and Latvians, due to family links with previous emigrants, but the loss of much of the artistic community impacted heavily across the board on the cultural life of the Baltic centers in Britain (Gilbert 2017, 143).

While the reporting of Lithuanian cultural events in Scotland is partly distorted by the tendency of local Glaswegians to classify Lithuanians and Polish people as one (many Lithuanians were referred to as Poles), especially as both were Catholic communities in Presbyterian Scotland, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the cultural bonds of the Scottish Lithuanian community to the homeland was weakened by the 1970s. This can be seen in the files of the KGB-funded and controlled "Association for Cultural Relations with Lithuanians Living Abroad"—"*Tėviškė*". As with the equivalent organizations set up in Estonia and Latvia, *Tėviškė* was set up in 1960 to build Soviet Lithuanian cultural links with the diaspora community, with the aim of weakening their allegiance to émigré communities. This had been predominantly instigated by concern about the growing political influence of Baltic diaspora groups lobbying for independence. These associations distributed Soviet approved music, magazines, books, and other cultural material lauding republic-level Soviet achievements.

Due to the large size of their Lithuanian communities, it is not surprising that the majority of the *Tėviškė* files concern correspondence with émigrés in the United States and Canada. The organization's correspondence with Lithuanians in Britain shows a high proportion of letters from Lithuanians living in the Glasgow area.[6] These letters are mostly written in English, and include repeated requests for *Tėviškė* not to reply in Lithuanian as the authors did not understand the language and found it hard to get replies from *Tėviškė* translated in Glasgow.[7] This reinforces the impression that by the latter decades of the Soviet Union, many of the Scottish Lithuanians had become integrated into the Scottish community and had lost their mother tongue. The failure of *Tėviškė* to find someone to reply in English contrasts with its Estonian counterpart (*Veksa*), which employed people with excellent English to write and befriend Estonian émigrés in Britain, perhaps indicating that influencing the cultural allegiance of British Lithuanians was not a priority for the Soviet-Lithuanian association.[8]

Despite these caveats, the records of the Soviet friendship society in Glasgow suggest that the Scottish-Lithuanian community did still influence musical exchange events with Soviet Lithuania. The role of the Scottish-USSR Society was to build cultural relations between Scottish citizens and all the Soviet republics, and its records show reciprocal concert exchanges with Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Armenia, and Georgia in the 1970s and 1980s—in addition to two-way tours with Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia. A preponderance of trips to Lithuania, however, is clearly evident, presumably because of interest from the local Lithuanian diaspora.[9]

In 1978, the Scottish concert group tour organized by the Scottish-USSR Society held one concert in Leningrad, one in Moscow, one in Estonia, one in Latvia, and four in Lithuania.[10] The music played was traditional Scottish music and included bagpipe players and highland dancers, the politically influenced friendship society ignoring any contemporary Scottish composers in favor of folk music. In 1979, the society sent another group to Vilnius, to perform Gaelic music, including the ubiquitous Scottish piper. The reciprocal concert group of Lithuanians who came over to Scotland was a more prestigious group, comprising the Dean of Vilnius Conservatoire, soloists of the Lithuanian state opera, ballet dancers, and members of the Lithuanian Folk Instruments company. Their program was typical of the Soviet music exported from its republics, containing a strong element of the "folklore romanticism" genre, the type of music which the Soviet Ministry of Culture encouraged, but which at the same time held an emotional resonance for contemporary Baltic composers whose country was under occupation. Unlike the Scottish performers, the Lithuanian musicians performed music composed since the Second World War, within the Soviet-Lithuanian era. It included music for folk instruments by Jonas Švedas (1908–1971) and Vaclovas Paketūras (1928–2018), and songs by Lithuanian composers Juozas Indra (1918–1968), Antanas Belazaras (1913–1976), and Vytautas Barkauskas (1931–2020). Further research is needed to identify details of the music performed and any press coverage of its reception, but much of the music performed came from contemporary composers. As records suggest that the tours in both directions were paid for by the friendship society, and thus indirectly by the Soviet government, it is highly unlikely that any controversial music was performed. Barkauskas, however, was an unusual choice of composer to be promoted on a Soviet state-funded concert tour, having been described as "one of the most active adherents of avant-garde music and new compositional techniques in Lithuania [in the 1960s]."[11]

A number of Glaswegian-Lithuanians became members of the friendship society, presumably not because of their political affiliations, but so they could take advantage of the Scottish-USSR Society tours to Vilnius (joining the concert groups on the charter boat *Baltika*), where they hoped to meet up with long-distant relatives. Personal accounts show they were often disappointed, however, as on arrival they were not allowed to travel beyond Vilnius. This caused concern among the society that it was causing hostility among members of the diaspora, a cohort they were keen to court.[12] International politics likewise intruded on the efforts of the friendship society as concert tours froze between 1968 and 1973, presumably because of the deterioration of diplomatic and cultural relations between London and Moscow after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.[13] The tours, when they resumed, show that while experimental Lithuanian music may not have made its way to Glasgow before *glasnost,* Scottish-Lithuanians visiting the homeland did get the opportunity to hear innovative groups such as The Ganelin, Tarasov, Chekasin Trio while in Lithuania. Vladimir Tarasov, the jazz band's percussionist, recollects that when they were performing at the Neringa Hotel in Vilnius, numerous Lithuanian émigré groups would be staying there, and listened to the band from one of the booths around the room—booths which were bugged by the KGB, whose headquarters were conveniently located nearby across the street.[14]

Estonian Conductor Neeme Järvi

Individual members of the Baltic diaspora also played a key role in promoting Baltic music within Scotland. The appointment of Estonian Neeme Järvi (b.1937) as Chief Conductor of the Glasgow-based Scottish National Orchestra from 1984 to 1988 (while also Conductor of the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra) encouraged the introduction of Estonian music to Scotland. Formerly conductor of the Estonian Radio and Television Orchestra, the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, and Estonian National Opera, Järvi had left Estonia in 1980, around the same time as Arvo Pärt, for whom he had conducted the premiere of his *Credo* on November 16th, 1968. Based on religious texts (the word "credo" meaning "I believe" in Latin), the composition was quickly banned and the key figures involved in the performance questioned by the authorities for "political provocation."[15] The following month, Järvi's name appeared on the list of the Music Committee of the Estonian Association for Cultural relations with Estonians Living Abroad (*Veksa).*[16] It must not be assumed, however, that this was necessarily the result of a concession Järvi was obliged to make following his participation in *Credo*, as participation in the Baltic 'Culture Committees' such as *Veksa* and *Tėviškė* was also viewed by musicians as offering opportunities to travel abroad and to build cultural relationships with musicians overseas. Irrespective of the reasons behind Järvi's involvement in *Veksa,* he was keen to pursue music in a less restrictive cultural environment, and after his departure from Estonia, he settled in the United States with his family. He found it easier, however, to get his first jobs in Europe, as he was at that stage unknown in the States but had first worked with the Scottish National Orchestra in 1962 (Badel 2012, 180).[17]

Järvi credits Gothenburg's second city status within Sweden in enabling him to work on more interesting repertoire when he first arrived there in 1982—an argument which applies equally to his appointment two years later in Glasgow—and he made recordings of Eduard Tubin, an Estonian composer then living in Sweden. Interviewed in 1990, Järvi explained:

> For me it was some kind of national (sic)—I had to start to show music from my country [...]. I thought we had very interesting composers in Estonia, for example Arvo Pärt and Edward Tubin and Heino Eller, (who until quite recently) were unknown outside Estonia. (Badel 2012, 179).

Järvi's path to introducing new repertoire in his four-year role with the leading Scottish orchestra had been eased by his predecessor, Alexander Gibson's preference for Scandinavian music, especially Sibelius. Although Järvi conducted well-known Soviet composers such as Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Khachaturian, he aimed to introduce their less popular repertoire. He also conducted concerts of contemporary Estonian music at the Henry Wood Hall in Glasgow in 1986 and 1987, followed by a two-volume record compilation with Chandos Records. Although Järvi had formerly recorded Estonian music with Melodiya, the Soviet state record company, he argued that it had not been distributed in the rest of the USSR, not even in Moscow—"that was some kind of local policy: if you do Estonian music, let's keep it in Estonia" (Badel 2012, 179). Järvi's recording with Chandos not only included turn of the century Estonian music from Rudolf Tobias (1873–1918) and Artur Lemba (1885-1963), but Heino Eller's (1887–1970) *Five Pieces for String Orchestra* (1953), Arvo Pärt's *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten* (1977) and Kaljo Raid's (1921–2005) *Symphony No. 1,* first performed in Tallinn in 1944 before the Soviet reoccupation and Raid's subsequent departure to Sweden, then Canada. Järvi also recorded *Overture No.2* (1955) by contemporary Estonian composer Veljo Tormis (1930–2017), the first work from Estonia that had featured at the Warsaw Autumn Contemporary Music Festival in 1961.[18]

Discussing his long-term collaboration with Chandos, Järvi argued smaller record companies were more receptive to new ideas than the bigger labels, which "[repeat] each other" (Bardel 2012, 183). In recording unknown Estonian

music, however, Chandos was taking a financial risk, and their willingness to support the project may also have had something to do with the fact that the recording was funded by the Estonian Music Fund in Canada, which would have reduced Chandos' commercial exposure and presumably widened their market to the large Estonian community in North America.

Commercial concerns of attracting audiences inevitably play their part in orchestral programming decisions, and in the mid-1980s, Baltic music was barely known in Britain, Arvo Pärt being the main representative and yet to gain the high profile he was to go on to achieve in Britain. Where possible, however, Järvi performed Estonian, Latvian, or sometimes Czech music in the encore of his concerts, even if they did not appear on the official program—a policy which was only feasible when working with his own orchestras, such as the SNO, so the orchestra could be fully prepared (Ajzenstadt 1993).

The contribution Järvi's work at the Scottish National Orchestra (and at Gothenburg) made to the promotion of Estonian music in the 1980s can be traced within the *Veksa* archives. Estonian archives appear to contain no initial written reaction to Järvi's departure from Estonia other than an instant resolution to remove him from *Veksa*'s music committee in January 1980.[19] There seems to be no further written reference to either Järvi or Pärt in either the Union of Composers or *Veksa* files, an almost airbrushed existence - until concern was raised in October 1986 about the propaganda damage being inflicted by Järvi and Pärt's continued work in the diaspora and *Veksa's* failure to mention it.[20] Discussion within the Music Committee about working more with Estonian musicians abroad, alongside bringing in younger Soviet artists to counterbalance their influence, suggests that despite official silence about Järvi's activities in Scotland and Sweden, concern had been mounting that diaspora musical achievements and promotion of Estonian music had undermined their own efforts to sell the Soviet Estonian story. Although the early stages of *glasnost* were underway by Autumn 1986 and figures such as contemporary composer Veljo Tormis now sat on the Music Committee of *Veksa*, the impact of Järvi's achievements cannot be underestimated.

Scottish Advocates of Baltic Cultural Exchange: the New Beginnings: Soviet Arts in Glasgow 1989 Festival

Yet it was not until the New Beginnings: Soviet Arts in Glasgow festival in autumn 1989, a festival spanning five weeks, that contemporary Baltic artists received significant attention in Britain. The brainchild of Chris Carrell, the director of Glasgow's visual arts organization, the Third Eye Centre, the festival took place when Gorbachev's *glasnost* program was already noticeably increasing access to Soviet artists. The festival represented Soviet arts from across the spectrum—theater, film, visual art, dance, puppetry—along with an extensive music program. Over 500 Soviet artists participated in the festival, which attracted an audience of 200,000 over the five-week period (Campbell 1990, 152).

In London, Elizabeth Wilson had included Arvo Pärt's music in concerts at the Almeida Theatre in both 1986 and 1987 and had coordinated a festival of music from the Soviet republics within the Almeida International Festival in summer 1989, which had included music from the Latvian composer Georgs Pēletis—alongside music from Valentyn Sylvestrov from Ukraine, Tigran Mansurian from Armenia and Franghis Ali-Zadeh from Azerbaijan. The title of the festival was, however, "Music from the cities and republics of Soviet Russia," perhaps in recognition of continued audience interest in all things Russian.

Glasgow's New Beginnings festival marked a new direction in cultural exchange in its emphasis on the arts emerging from all the republics of the USSR. The music leaflet for the festival introduced its program with the statement:

> Although Moscow is often thought to be the center of Soviet musical activity, there are many new and innovative groups working throughout the Soviet Union; often incorporating in their music their distinctive national trends.[21]

The festival featured musicians and contemporary composers from across the Soviet Union—not only better-known figures, such as the Russian composers Schnittke, Denisov, and Sofia Gubaidulina, but also British premieres by Edgar Oganesyan, Simon Oganesyan, and other Armenian composers performed by the Komitas Quartet, and by Georgian composer Josef Bardanashvili, performed by the Glasgow-based Paragon Ensemble.

Arvo Pärt's piano piece *Für Alina* also received its British premiere, despite Pärt having sent the score to Susan Bradshaw fourteen years earlier for her to play for his family friend, Alina—daughter of the Lithuanian human rights activist Irena Veisaitė—who was at that time a student in London. Popular music was represented by a rock concert featuring Estonian rock band Ne Zhadali, along with Ukrainian rock group Kollegian Assessor, Russian group Agata Kristie, and Scottish group The Beat Poets.

Armenian music was seen as the flagbearer of the festival's music program, not only through the high profile of the Komitas Ensemble, but also with composer Stepan Rostomyan's collaboration with Scottish composer William Sweeney and the world premiere of his Symphony No. 3 at the festival. Yet Baltic, particularly Estonian, music pervaded the festival as a whole. Alongside Rostomyan, Estonian composer Lepo Sumera (1950–2000) had spent the summer before the festival as composer-in-residence with Glasgow University's Electronic Music Studio. Together

with the Paragon Ensemble and local Glaswegian schoolchildren studying music at the Douglas Academy, Sumera created a new piece to be premiered at the festival, Music for Glasgow. Sumera also performed the British premiere of his *A Play for Wind Instruments,* delighting the press with his "wit and humour" (Tumelty 1989).

The focus of the festival's film program on Baltic cinema similarly introduced new Baltic music to Scottish audiences, including many films for which Sumera had composed the soundtrack, such as *Birdwatcher* and *Games for Teenagers.* British premieres were shown of a number of Lithuanian films, including Algimantas Puipa's classic *Eternal Light* (1988), which highlighted the impact of Sovietization on rural Lithuania (soundtrack by Juozas Širvinskas). Sumera, wearing his dual hats as a film composer and Estonian Minister of Culture, introduced the opening of the film festival.

Lithuanian music received a smaller profile within the concert program, being solely represented by the rector of Vilnius Conservatoire, Vytautas Laurušas (1930–2019), the British premiere of whose organ sonata shared a concert program with Alfred Schnittke and Scottish composer John Maxwell Geddes. Yet Lithuanian theater formed the main focus of the festival's drama section, including two plays, *Pirosmani, Pirosmani* (1981) and Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* (1986), the innovative director of the Lithuanian State Youth Theatre, Eimuntas Nekrošius, bringing to Glasgow his program which had successfully toured the United States the year before. The American tour had been the theater company's first venture outside the Eastern bloc and American playwright Arthur Miller had described *Pirosmani, Pirosmani* (a metaphorical portrayal of the last days of the Georgian artist, Nico Pirosmani), as "one of the best things I had ever seen in my life ... [it is] avant-garde in the best sense" (Greenwald 1988, 562–564). Nekrošius used music as a core part of his productions, and in echoes of Georgian theater director Robert Sturua's relationship with Giya Kancheli, worked closely with leading contemporary composers Algirdas Martinaitis (b. 1950), Faustas Latėnas (1956–2020), and Mindaugas Urbaitis (b. 1952). Martinaitis, known for his "introspective and nostalgic" music and use of "asymmetric sound structures," was responsible for the score accompanying *Pirosmani, Pirosmani*.[22] His music was to receive a higher profile in Britain the following November when his composition *The Life of the Dung Beetle* was to open the Lithuanian strand of the Huddersfield Festival.

Scottish press reviews of the festival reveal a mixed reception to the extensive music program. Reviewing a BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra concert of music by Denisov, Rodion Shchedrin, and Gubaidulina, the music critic of *The Scotsman*, Janet Beat, complained:

> The festival of Soviet music drags on with yet another concert of music which amounted to very little. (Beat 1989, 11)

Yet across the board, Armenian and Estonian contributions to the music program received a warm reception. This could be attributed to enthusiasm among Scottish reviewers of hearing something fresh from the periphery, as the music of Russian composers such as Denisov, Schnittke, and, less extensively, Gubaidulina, had already received significant exposure at festivals in Huddersfield, Bath, Cheltenham, and at the Almeida, and been recorded by the BBC. It could arguably, however, be due to the different types of new music performed by the Armenian and Estonian artists. Trying to pinpoint the difference at the end of the festival, Michael Tumelty of *The Glasgow Herald* observed:

> What was striking [...] was the seriousness, the earnestness with which Soviet (specifically Russian) composers appeared to be pursuing their new freedoms [but] there are few smiles [and] seriousness can become a sombre, inward and uncommunicative affair. I would say to the Russian cerebralists [...] look to your roots. Look to your folk heritage. Look to your satellite states who wear their roots on their sleeves. [...] What came out of [...] Armenia and Estonia was profoundly impressive [because] it acknowledged overtly a source of inspiration other than the intellectual [...] Cerebral music might impress, rarely does it move. What—ultimately—counts most? (Tumelty 1989)

In contrast, Tumelty described Sumera's *Music for Glasgow* collaboration as "a joyous, sumptuous hedonism, a wilful flying of intellectual caution to the wind." (Tumelty 1989)

The expectations of Scottish music critics seemed to differ from those of the English arts press, whose reviews had, in general, praised the inventiveness of Schnittke and Gubaidulina's music (though they were less enthralled by the music of Edison Denisov, who first appeared on the British contemporary music scene in 1968). Perhaps, however, the different taste of the Scottish music critics was more a reflection of the different trajectory of Scottish new music, as leading contemporary Scottish (or "adopted Scottish") composers, such as Robin Maxwell Geddes, James McMillan, or Sweeney often chose to embrace Scottish folk music influences within their compositions, while in no way belonging to the "Tartan kailyard" genre closely identified with the Scottish fiddle and bagpipes. In that way, perhaps there was a closer stylistic musical link between some Scottish composers and those of the Soviet peripheries than with the Russian composers. This view is supported by Campbell's comment that it was "essential to offer works which to some degree corresponded with local expectations of 'new music'" (Campbell 1990, 154). Noticeably, advocates of contemporary Scottish music, Alexander Gibson, founder and conductor of the Scottish National Opera in 1962, composer Edward Harper, who founded the New Music Group of Scotland, alongside Maxwell Geddes and Sweeney, all played leading roles within the festival and were involved in helping to select repertoire.

Aims and Outcomes of the Festival

Examining the planning of the festival and how music was selected is key to understanding the thinking behind the festival. As was historically the case in musical exchange with the USSR, even under the greater freedoms afforded by *glasnost,* the festival's music committee was obliged to deal with *Goskonsert* regarding ensembles and soloists, with the Soviet Union of Composers regarding the participation of composers, and *VAAP* (the Soviet copyright agency) concerning the commissioning of new compositions.[23] Music co-ordinator, Stuart Campbell, Professor of Music at Glasgow University, insisted, however, that they had had a high degree of freedom in choosing repertoire "reflecting a change of outlook of some of the relevant organisations" (Campbell 1990, 153). Campbell insisted that the music program would "not just [be] another Soviet package, assembled in Russia and gratefully accepted by the British" (Wilson 1989, 8). In a post-festival report, he confirmed that the Soviet authorities did not hinder in any way the contact and engagement of Soviet artists and that "the Union of Composers were at all times helpful collaborators; they were also highly efficient ones" (Campbell 1990, 154). Both these observations were highly unusual, suggesting a new willingness among the Soviet Ministry of Culture to support the festival.

The overarching aims of the festival were to introduce young and innovative artists to Scottish audiences, to feature composers who were little known in Britain, to engender new commissions, and "to maximise opportunities for both exchange of works and collaborative projects." With this agenda in mind, representatives from Scottish ensembles involved in the project, including the Paragon Ensemble and New Music Group of Scotland, alongside Campbell, all traveled to the Soviet Union to help identify suitable repertoire. Campbell recounts how he traveled three times to the Soviet republics to source artists and composers, each visit a week long, building on previous visits to the USSR (Wilson 1989, 8). The music in Campbell's personal archives suggests he had been collecting scores from the non-Russian republics for at least four years.[24] Although some of the scores Campbell held had been distributed through official channels, via *VAAP*, a great many were photocopies of handwritten scores, suggesting they had been received informally.

The focus on Lepo Sumera as the main representative of Baltic music within the festival raises the question of what Stuart Campbell and the Scottish musicians, who traveled to the USSR to choose the festival repertoire, were looking for to represent new Soviet music. Early drafts of the festival program reveal that Sumera's inclusion was not even anticipated, but that Baltic music was to be represented instead by Pēteris Vasks from Latvia, and Bronius Kutavičius from Lithuania.[25] Ultimately, neither Kutavičius' nor Vasks' music appears on the official program, although Campbell reported that a limited amount of non-scheduled music was performed, but provides no details. Although Armenian music may have dominated the festival, Campbell had collected a far greater number of scores from Baltic composers than from any of the other Soviet republics. He owned at this time around ten of Vasks' compositions, numerous scores from the Estonian composers Jan Rääts and Alo Poldmäe, alongside music from Raimo Kangro, Erkki Sven-Tüür, and several of Sumera's. Among Latvian composers, none of whom were to perform at the festival, in addition to music from Vasks, Campbell had scores from Pēteris Plakidis and Georgs Pelēcis. This suggests that obtaining copies of the music was not a barrier for Campbell, and many of the scores appear in different instrumental parts as if they were being prepared for performance.

Campbell's regret that he could not include all the composers he had wanted to in the festival (including Giya Kancheli from Georgia) is not blamed on Soviet bureaucrats, historically deemed a hindrance in British-Soviet cultural exchange initiatives, but on the British arts scene.

> If one had twelve months to immerse a team of half a dozen musicians in recent Soviet music, five years for planning and an unlimited budget, one could cajole or bribe whom one wished to take part in an ideal season of concerts and music theatre with a range of supporting events. In the British arts world as we find it, compromises of various kinds are unavoidable. (Campbell 1990, 155)

Campbell's observation that he would have included more composers, if Scottish ensembles had had more time to practice the music, reveals just how little music from the Soviet republics had penetrated the Scottish music scene. It may also explain the wide range of Armenian music performed at the festival, as Komitas's willingness to participate in the festival meant they were already closely familiar with a broad repertoire of contemporary Armenian composers. A similar argument could apply to the inclusion of a number of Lithuanian composers at the Huddersfield festival in 1990, for at that event, festival director Richard Steinitz relied on the Lithuanian group the New Music Ensemble of Vilnius, directed by Šarūnas Nakas, to perform the music of Kutavičius, Martinaitis, and Balakauskas. It is possible that Kutavičius' and Vasks's absence from New Beginnings may have been due to the difficulty of finding a Scottish ensemble confident that they had the time to tackle this unknown repertoire. It should be noted that in 1988 Campbell offered the Huddersfield festival the opportunity to feature work from New Beginnings that same month as the festivals ran consecutively.[26] It is not clear whether any of the Glasgow performers appeared at Huddersfield a week later, but Steinitz did not feature any of the Baltic music,

and attributed his discovery of Lithuanian composers the following year to a chance meeting with a Lithuanian musicologist, not the result of collaboration with other festival organizers (Steinitz 2011, 124).

Serendipity as much as strategy may have played its part. Sumera's later inclusion into the festival may have arisen from Campbell's visit to the Tallinn contemporary music festival in October 1988, where he had the opportunity to engage with a number of Estonian composers of new music. At the time the commission and collaboration were arranged with Campbell, Sumera had not, at this stage, been appointed Estonian Minister of Culture. His subsequent appointment handed a golden opportunity to the festival to have both artist and official fully committed to the success of the festival, and Sumera wore both hats at different stages throughout the festival, although he self-mockingly pointed out that he was predominantly at the festival as a composer.

> As Minister of Culture, I'm a bureaucrat too", he told the children (and journalists) at the Douglas Academy, "But I'm here as a composer—look, I have no tie on, and I left my Mercedes in Tallinn. (Tumelty 1989)

Collaboration was one of the main rationales behind the festival. After his return from his residency in Glasgow, Sumera set up the first electronic music studio in Estonia, as did Rostomyan in Yerevan. Observers have commented that a particularly close personal rapport was built up between Sumera and the festival organizers, and after the festival, Sumera put them in touch with the Estonian Early Music group Hortus Musicus, who came to the early music festival in Glasgow in August 1990 (having been sought by the Edinburgh Festival back in 1979). As Estonian Minister of Culture, Sumera also arranged for a Scottish early music group to perform in Tallinn. Sumera's close involvement with the festival and ongoing collaboration demonstrates the importance of personal relationships within British-Soviet musical exchange and the ongoing interrelationship between state-led and personal cultural relations, which had been so marked during the Brezhnev years as grassroots initiatives were obliged to navigate their way through the bureaucratic hurdles of *Goskonsert* and the Soviet copyright agency. The official presence of Sumera, as Estonian Minister of Culture, could have been perceived as a continuation of this entangled nature of British and Soviet state-led and grassroots exchange.

However, this festival was different, not only in allowing seemingly unfettered access to composers and musicians in the spirit of *glasnost*, but by the time the festival started in late October 1989, clear cracks were taking place in the USSR, and the Berlin Wall fell while the festival was underway. The Baltic events at the New Beginnings festival arguably demonstrated a different pattern of state and grassroots co-dependence. Even though Sumera was the (Soviet) Estonian Minister of Culture, the summer after the Glasgow festival, he was to approach the British Embassy in Sweden to request separate cultural exchange between Britain and Estonia, independent of the Soviet Union, and deliberately avoiding the British Embassy in Moscow.[27] Archives from the 'Association for Cultural Relations for Estonians living abroad' showed that the Soviet Estonian state had had little interest in cultural collaboration with Britain, preferring to focus its attention on the more politically sensitive United States and Canada, where Estonian émigrés were organizing high-profile Estonian Cultural Days lobbying for independence. Sumera's change of policy emphasis and decision to court cultural relations with Britain, now that he was Minister of Culture, suggest his priorities lay in Estonian, not Soviet, cultural politics, and he remained Estonia's Minister of Culture after independence. His willingness to be a core participant of the Scottish festival, spending the summer in Glasgow, as well as weeks during the festival in November (at the same time as working as Minister of Culture), perhaps suggests he perceived not only personal but also Estonian cultural benefits to his involvement.

Scottish and Baltic National Identity

While Sumera's invitation to Glasgow may have been fortuitous, the changing mood and events in the Baltic republics in 1989 may also have pushed arts from these republics to the forefront of the organizers' minds, as there was far greater awareness among the Scottish (and British) general public about the independence movements in the Baltic republics. The output of the theater program for the festival was also reshaped, as the early drafts of the festival's program had focused entirely on Russian theater. The emphasis on Lithuanian theater in the final program may have been the result of Nekrošius and his company being invited on the back of their American triumph the previous year, but public and media interest in the Baltics may have helped to propel the Lithuanian performances to the top of the program. In May 1989, Lithuania was the first Soviet republic to declare its sovereignty, and on August 23rd, 1989, a Baltic-wide human chain stretched between the three republics, two million people (approx. a quarter of the combined Baltic population) joining hands between the cities of Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius in protest—both events widely reported in the British press.

Discussion forums were held at the festival to complement the music, theater, and film programs, not simply to increase audience understanding about the arts of the Soviet republics but also to discuss shared experiences between Soviet and Scottish artists. Schnittke and Denisov

participated in a joint forum on Soviet music, as Denisov had also done at the Cheltenham and Bath festivals in 1985 and 1987, but this time they were joined by Rostomyan, and Sumera (in his role as Estonian Minister of Culture)—alongside Scottish composers Thomas Wilson and John Maxwell Geddes, and Soviet musicologists from Russia, Estonia and Armenia. A similar discussion forum was held to discuss the impact of Scotland and the Baltics' "shared periphery position" on film-making, followed by a conference on "Arts and Nationhood" at Glasgow's Tron Theatre to examine Scotland and Lithuania's "qualified" nation status (as the program described it). This debate followed on from a similar theater forum held on Quebec and Scotland the previous year, indicating that the recent escalation of the independence movements in the Baltics may have prompted their inclusion in this comparative debate on Scottish identity, but had not instigated it.

The theater forum discussed how current political developments were being reflected and partly driven by artists. Audiences could not fail to be aware of the topicality of the debate as speakers were supposed to have included a representative from the Lithuanian Council of Ministers, and a Lithuanian USSR People's Deputy, but who cancelled due to political developments back home, developments which were to result in Gorbachev "summon[ing] the leaders of the rebellious Communist Party to an unprecedented meeting with the Soviet Politburo" (Conradi 1989, 14). The issue of national identity within the conference was picked up by the Scottish media, an article in *The Scotsman* reporting:

> Lithuania and Scotland shared the inchoate resentment of small nations that their culture could easily be excluded from the European awareness and that their identity was neglected or denied. There is a hope this is changing, but in the words of Mr Procius [sic], the literary manager of the Lithuanian State Theatre who stepped in for the absent politicians, "Every small nation needs sensitive ears and a sensitive heart." The Tron conferences are a contribution to making the ears more sensitive. (Farrell 1989)

Yet within Britain, theater practitioners had always been more concerned with articulating social and political concerns than musicians. In discussing musical collaboration with Scottish performers who participated in the festival, it is clear that, while they did not feel that the shared issue of nationhood between the Soviet republics and Scotland arose in the music program, the issue of Scottish national identity was embedded in their activities. Scottish musicians perceived their task to be supporting Scottish composers, putting them in the context of the works of other composers around the world. This desire to separate the work of Scottish composers from British composers as a whole was not missed by the press at the festival. Ellie Buchanan's report in *The Scotsman* was a tacit acknowledgement by the critic that issues of national identity struck a chord with Scottish audiences:

> Kollegian Assessor were at pains to point out that they were Ukrainian, not Russian, which drew a cheer when they compared this to the difference between Scotland and England. (Buchanan 1989, 10)

In this way, the festival can, to some degree, be credited with associating the identification of Scottish nationalism with that of the Soviet republics. The New Beginnings festival had emerged in the run up to Glasgow's bid for European City of Culture, which it achieved in 1990, and represented part of the growing attempt of Glasgow to seize the mantle as the cultural capital of Scotland from Edinburgh, which it had held for so long as a result of the Edinburgh International Festival but which had been perceived as dominated by London. Glasgow's emergence as a contender for Scotland's leading cultural center, home to the Scottish National Opera and Scottish Symphony Orchestra, was not simply local civic rivalry, but part of the growth of the Scottish nationalist movement, which had its roots in working-class Glasgow as opposed to more cosmopolitan Edinburgh. The failure of a Scottish referendum and devolution law in 1979 had energized the Scottish nationalist movement with the perception that their chance of a Scottish National Parliament had been unfairly lost, an indignation often reflected in the arts within Scotland. The parallels drawn between Scotland's position and the Soviet republics can be seen not only in the New Beginnings festival forums, but the coverage of the festival within the press.

In the 1980s, the Scottish press could be seen "distancing itself from the British press by becoming strongly anti-Tory and building a new national identity" (Gardiner 2023, 2). Consideration of press coverage of events, however, must take into account that reporting within the two leading and rival Scottish papers, *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald,* cannot be perceived as synonymous. The *Herald,* a paper from working-class Glasgow, often nicknamed the *Glasgow Pravda*, was far more supportive of the union with England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. In contrast, the more cosmopolitan Edinburgh-based *Scotsman* had nailed its colors firmly to the mast of the devolution debate in the run-up to the 1979 referendum. While the separation between arts and political reporting makes this less evident in music reviews, it colored the reporting on the various discussion forums, and it is noticeable that most of the conversation on national identity is to be found within *The Scotsman*.

The leading Scottish weekend paper, *Scotland on Sunday*, the sister to *The Scotsman*, published a comprehensive supplement prior to the festival, leading with a front page feature on Glasgow's revolutionary heritage. The paper did not content itself with simply giving details of the arts to

be featured at the festival, but rather culturally embraced the fifteen republics, with features on different aspects of the republics, including their food. In a feature "Region by Region," the author, Steve Brigg's gave his article the strapline "Russia is not the Soviet Union, but only one of 15 republics within it" (Briggs 1989). Briggs referenced current politics in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which he described as having "been the scene of repeated demonstrations this year with demands for enhanced status in their native language, higher wages and democracy."

Written before the start of the festival, it is apparent, however, that neither Baltic nor Scottish independence was intended to be highlighted in Briggs' article. The article appeared three weeks before the fall of the Berlin Wall, and at that time not only was the disintegration of the USSR not anticipated in Britain, but also the majority of supporters of Scottish nationalism were seeking greater representation, not independence—the dilution of the "Englishing of Scotland" as a Scottish television program described the state of Scottish arts institutions in Scotland (Ascherson 1988). In that way, the parallels the Scottish media found between Scottish and Baltic arts reflected their own desire for greater cultural identity, not the resumption of the autonomy sought by Baltic cultural figures. As the Berlin Wall fell while the festival was underway, it is noticeable that while the front pages of the Scottish press were dominated by the events in Germany, and also covered the simultaneous tensions in Lithuania, the reviews of festival artistic events made no mention of the broader upheaval going on around it at that very time, as if politics and arts operated in separate orbits.

The diplomatic implications of the festival also cannot be ignored. Glasgow University had already expressed a keen interest in holding a Baltic Forum to discuss the future direction of the Baltic republics, a forum in which the government-funded Great Britain-USSR Association took a keen interest and offered financial support.[28] Supposed to provide cultural exchange support while appearing at arms' length from the government, the GB-USSR Association was in close communication with the Foreign Office, which encouraged their support for the Baltic Forum.[29] Anxious about the influence of the Soviet friendship society in working-class Glasgow, who the GB-USSR Association Director John Roberts frequently referred to as "the opposition," it is clear that the more generous financial support than usual the Association gave to the New Beginnings Festival can be attributed to "buying visibility" rather than interest in the artistic merits of individual programs and he deliberately chose to entertain performers coming to Glasgow rather than sponsor an artistic event.[30] The same rationale was given for supporting the Baltic Forum the following year due to the "ongoing need to maintain the Association's profile in Glasgow where the opposition society is endemic." The localized powerplay between the Soviet and British government's representative cultural agents demonstrated how from a state perspective the cultural merits of a project were not to the forefront of priorities.

Conclusion

Research on musical exchange between Scotland and the Baltic nations is very much a work in progress. The presence of a strong Lithuanian diaspora in Scotland seems to have contributed to Soviet-supported musical exchange during the 1970s, but following the introduction of *glasnost,* made little, if any, contribution toward the increasing relationships within the contemporary music scene. My findings have placed a heavy emphasis on the presence of Estonian music within Scotland, music which it is clear has been stimulated by the individual influence of Estonians Neeme Järvi and Lepo Sumera. Within Scottish/Baltic cultural relations, the action of individuals, the result of personal connections, can be seen as far more influential in steering the nature of the musical exchange that took place, rather than the political influence of diasporas or initiatives by Baltic or British authorities. Tellingly, the eventual appearance of *Hortus Musicus* in Britain—in Glasgow, ten years after the Edinburgh Festival first expressed interest—was the result of personal connections established at the New Beginnings Festival between the festival administrator and Lepo Sumera. The importance of local conductors and musicians as intermediaries to musical exchange, possessing familiarity with repertoire from the republics, also cannot not be underestimated.

When considering relations with the Baltics and Scotland in the late 1980s, there appears to be a changing pattern to the distinctions of state-led and grassroots exchange. While a considerable overlap remained, with cultural officials required to facilitate events, the definitions of what is 'official' became more vague when considering the arts from the republics, as can be seen in Lepo Sumera's interchangeable roles as composer and Minister of Culture in opening the Baltic festival events at the Glasgow festival.

In its very definition, the concept of musical exchange implies mutuality. Yet despite Soviet attempts to get British officials to engage within the Baltics, British reluctance, due to their disapproval of the Soviet annexation, meant little contemporary British music seems to have been performed. Whether Scottish music was performed within the Baltics—other than the traditional Scottish folk music pushed by the friendship society—is an area that needs further exploration. While composers from Soviet republics such as Georgia often felt they had to move to Moscow to develop their music, the presumption among Scottish composers that they needed to move to London to progress their career

meant their music was often absorbed into a British rather than specifically Scottish identity. The need to disentangle Scottish from British, and Baltic from Soviet music, is an area that can be further developed in consideration of the new grassroots musical connections after the Baltic republics gained their independence.

References

1 "Journeys made by Western diplomats inside the Soviet Union," FCO 28/2110, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) archives, National Archives, London.
2 Letter to the British Ambassador in Moscow, 19 July 1972, "Policy towards the former Baltic states," FCO 28/3709, FCO archives.
3 Letter from the BBC Controller of Music to the Concerts Manager, March 8th, 1978, "Gennadi Rozhdestvensky 1975–1984," R83/1, 629/1, BBC Symphony Orchestra files, BBC Written Archives.
4 "Correspondence 1979," Acc 10572/56, Edinburgh Festival Archives, National Library of Scotland.
5 Ibid.
6 The archives of the Association for Cultural Relations with Lithuanians living abroad (*Tėviškė)*, Lithuanian Special Archives, Vilnius.
7 Ibid.
8 The archives of the Association for Cultural relations with Estonians living abroad (*Veksa),* National Archives of Estonia, Tallinn.
9 Scottish-USSR Society archives, TD1125/3/6, Glasgow City Archives, The Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
10 Scottish concert groups exchange with USSR, Ibid.
11 Ibid.; commentary on music by the Lithuanian Music Information Centre (LMIC, www.mic.lt).
12 Report of National Council Meeting 6 December 1964, TD1125/1/2, Scottish-USSR Society archives.
13 TD1125/3/6, Ibid.
14 Conversation with Vladimir Tarasov, Vilnius, October 25, 2024.
15 Arvo Pärt Centre, Laulasmaa, Estonia.
16 Minutes of *Veksa* meeting, December 30, 1968, ERA.R. 2249.1.23, "Association for Cultural relations with Estonians living abroad."
17 Royal Scottish National Orchestra, www.rnso.org.uk.
18 Estonian Music Information Centre, www.emic.ee.
19 Minutes of *Veksa* meeting, January 24, 1980, ERA.R.2249. 1.141.
20 Minutes of *Veksa* meeting, October 18, 1986 ERA.R.2249. 1.142.
21 "New Beginnings: Soviet arts in Glasgow 1989" leaflet, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
22 LMIC biography of Martinaitis, www.mic.lt.
23 "Minutes of visit to the USSR of Glasgow delegation," April 1988, "Glasgow Soviet Festival 1989," LRA MS 14992/94/2 Great Britain-USSR Association archives, Leeds-Russian Centre, University of Leeds.
24 Stuart Campbell personal archives.
25 "Minutes of visit to the USSR of Glasgow delegation," April 1988, MS 1499/94/2, Great Britain-USSR Association archives.
26 Ibid.
27 Report of meeting with Lepo Sumera, 20 August 1990, BW 64/137 "Policy Soviet Union and the Republics," British Council Archives, National Archives.
28 Baltic Seminar, MS1499 107, Great-Britain-USSR archives.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.

Bibliography

Ajzenstadt, Michael. *The Jerusalem Post*, December 13, 1993.
Ascherson, Neil. "England Rules Scots Culture." *The Observer*, August 28, 1988.
Badel, James. *Recording the Classics: Maestros, Music and Technology*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1996.
Beat, Janet. "Soviet Music with Little to Commend It." *The Scotsman*, November 29, 1989.
Briggs, Steve. *The Glasgow Herald*, October 22, 1989.
Buchanan, Ellie. "Russian Rock around the Rooftops." *The Scotsman*, December 2, 1989.
Calder, Angus. *Revolving Culture: Notes from the Scottish Republic*. London: Tauris & Co., 1994.
Campbell, Stuart. "Report on New Beginnings: Soviet Arts in Glasgow 1989." *Scottish Slavonic Review* 15 (Autumn 1990): 152–55.
Conradi, Peter. *The Scotsman*, November 16, 1989.
Farrell, Joseph. "A New Beginning for Soviet Culture." *The Scotsman*, November 1, 1989.
Gardiner, Michael. "The Cultural Roots of British Devolution." *Journal of British Studies* 47, no. 2 (2023).
Gilbert, Emily. *Rebuilding Post-war Britain: Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian Refugees in Britain, 1946–1951*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books, 2017.
"Global Lithuania." Accessed at www.global.truelithuania.com/scotland-8802.
Greenwald, Michael L. "Theatre Review of *Pirosmani, Pirosmani*." *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (December 1988): 562–64.
McKerrell, Simon, and Gary West, eds. *Understanding Scotland Musically: Folk, Tradition and Policy*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018.
Schmelz, Peter J. *Such Freedom if Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009.
Steinitz, Richard. *Explosions in November: The First 33 Years of Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival*. Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield Press, 2011.
The Guardian. "Lithuanians in Glasgow: British Identity and Society." January 23, 2006.
Trapons, Jan Arveds, ed. *Towards Independence: The Baltic Popular Movements*. San Francisco, and Oxford, Boulder, 1991.
Tumelty, Michael. "Children Fill in Composer's Windows" / "New Beginnings Music Ends on a Positive Note." *The Glasgow Herald*, November 1989.
Wilson, Conrad. "Russian Music Choice Achieves the Impossible." *The Scotsman*, November 6, 1989.

Archival Sources

BBC Written Archives, Caversham, England.
British Council Archives, National Archives, Kew, England.
CCA (Third Eye Centre) Archives, Glasgow, Scotland.

Edinburgh Festival Archives, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland.
Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Archives, National Archives, Kew, England.
Great Britain–USSR Association Archives, Leeds Russian Centre, University of Leeds, Leeds, England.
Huddersfield Festival Archives, Heritage Quay, Huddersfield, England.
Scottish–USSR Society Archives, Glasgow City Archives, The Mitchell Library, Glasgow, Scotland.
The Association for Cultural Relations with Estonians Living Abroad (*Veksa*), National Archives of Estonia, Tallinn, Estonia.
The Association for Cultural Relations with Lithuanians Living Abroad (*Tėviškė*), Lithuanian Special Archives, Vilnius, Lithuania.

Santrauka

Tyrimai, kuriuose kalbama apie tarpvalstybinių derybų būdu sutartus koncertinius Didžiosios Britanijos ir Sovietų Sąjungos turus užgožė platesnius muzikinius santykius, į kuriuos įsitraukia visuomenė. Didžiosios Britanijos šiuolaikinio meno festivalių, kuriuose nuo 7 deš. pab. buvo pristatoma Sovietų Sąjungoje sukurta eksperimentinė naujoji muzika, tyrimas rodo, kad britų publika galėjo susidaryti platesnį vaizdą apie SSRS muziką nei tas, kurį formavo Sovietų Sąjungos kultūros ministerija, rėmusi politiškai priimtinus kompozitorius. Nors nerusiškų respublikų muzika britų auditorijai buvo menkiau žinoma nei rusų kompozitorių, britų muzikiniams santykiams su Estijos, Lietuvos ir Latvijos kompozitoriais taip pat trukdė ir tai, kad britų vyriausybė *de jure* nepripažino sovietų okupacijos Baltijos valstybėse. Kultūriniai mainai su visomis Sovietų Sąjungos respublikomis vyko per SSRS kultūros ministeriją ir koncertų agentūrą „Goskonsert“, bet Didžiosios Britanijos užsienio reikalų ministerijos atstovai negalėjo lankytis Baltijos šalyse ir taip remti kultūrinių mainų.

Muzikinių mainų paprastų žmonių lygmeniu tyrimas atskleidžia skirtingą sovietinės muzikos pristatymo Škotijoje ir Anglijoje dinamiką. Škotijos muzikantų, meno vadovų ir žiniasklaidos skiriamas didelis dėmesys sovietinių respublikų muzikai rodo ypatingą susidomėjimą nerusiškų, ypač Baltijos ir Kaukazo, regionų muzika.

Padedant Baltijos šalių diasporos atstovams Baltijos šalių muzikiniai santykiai su Škotija, regis, ėmė klostytis anksčiau nei su Anglija. Sovietų Sąjungos finansuojama draugija Glazge tarp savo narių turėjo daug emigrantų iš Lietuvos, kurie dalyvavo liaudies muzikos koncertų mainuose su Sovietų Lietuva. Stipri Škotijos lietuvių diaspora prisidėjo prie sovietų remiamų muzikinių mainų 8 deš., tačiau *glasnost* neturėjo reikšmingos įtakos santykių šiuolaikinės muzikos srityje stiprinimui. Tai, kad estas Neeme Järvi nuo 1984 iki 1988 m. buvo Glazge įsikūrusio Škotijos nacionalinio orkestro vyriausiasis dirigentas, tikrai prisidėjo prie estų muzikos populiarinimo Škotijoje. Järvi dirigavo šiuolaikinės estų muzikos koncertus Glazge ir šiuos pasirodymus įrašė su „Chandos Records“.

Tačiau pirmą kartą daugiau dėmesio Didžiojoje Britanijoje šiuolaikiniai Baltijos šalių menininkai sulaukė tik 1989 m. rudenį vykusiame festivalyje „Nauja pradžia: sovietų menas Glazge“. Šis Glazge vykęs festivalis nubrėžė naują kultūrinių mainų kryptį Didžiojoje Britanijoje, nes akcentavo visų SSRS respublikų menininkų kūrybą. Nors festivalio muzikinėje programoje dominavo armėnų muzika, Baltijos šalių, ypač Estijos, kompozitorių kūryba buvo atliekama itin gausiai. Rengiantis festivaliui, estų kompozitorius Lepo Sumera buvo reziduojantis kompozitorius Glazgo universiteto elektroninės muzikos studijoje, o vėliau įkūrė pirmąją elektroninės muzikos studiją Estijoje. Festivalio Baltijos šalių kino programa supažindino škotų žiūrovus su Lietuvos ir Estijos kompozitorių muzika, o novatoriškasis Lietuvos teatras tapo pagrindiniu festivalio dramos sekcijos akcentu.

Dėl *glasnost* festivalio muzikos komitetas turėjo daug daugiau laisvės sudarydamas repertuarą. Sumeros, kuris dalyvavo festivalyje ir kaip kompozitorius, ir kaip Estijos kultūros ministras, bendradarbiavimas su škotų muzikantais atskleidė asmeninių santykių svarbą muzikiniuose Didžiosios Britanijos ir Sovietų Sąjungos mainuose ir, galima sakyti, parodė kitokį valstybės ir visuomenės tarpusavio priklausomybės modelį nei tas, kuris susiformavo Brežnevo laikais.

1989 m. žiniasklaidoje pasirodę reportažai apie įvykius Baltijos respublikose suteikė škotų visuomenei daugiau informacijos apie šiuose regionuose įsisiūbuojančius laisvės judėjimus. Festivalio metu vyko diskusijų forumai, juose buvo aptariamos bendros sovietų ir škotų menininkų patirtys, taip pat buvo ieškoma Škotijos ir sovietinių respublikų situacijų paralelių. Panašu, kad 9 deš. škotų susidomėjimą Baltijos šalių kultūra skatino tapatinimasis su šių šalių padėtimi sovietų imperijoje, Baltijos šalių reikalavimas atkurti nepriklausomybę ir panaikinti Maskvos kontrolę, nes tuo metu, atšaukus Škotijos decentralizacijos įstatymo projektą, pačioje Škotijoje imta vis garsiau kalbėti apie nepriklausomybę nuo Londono. Taigi Baltijos šalių ir Škotijos meno paralelės, kurias įžvelgė Škotijos menininkai ir žiniasklaida, atspindėjo jų pačių norą stiprinti Škotijos kultūrinę tapatybę, o ne Baltijos šalių autonomijos atkūrimą, kurio siekė šių šalių kultūros veikėjai.

Delivered / Straipsnis įteiktas 2025 04 16