HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
Ayse Dietrich, Ph.D.

RUSSIAN ART

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PAINTING

Overview   Paintings found on the wall of the caves in which stone age people lived and performed religious rituals are the earliest examples of pictorial art in Russia. From the Paleolithic to the present paintings have served as a means of communication. In the prehistoric period rock paintings and drawings found at numerous sites across Russia (*e.g.* Karelia, the Altai, Transbaikalia, the Urals, Yakutia) recorded the the environment and way of life of the people who made them. With the adoption of Christianity painting, and icon painting in particular, became a vital element in Russian religious life, reminding the faithful of spiritual realities and their link with God. Along with the new religion came growing influence from artistic developments in Europe which would challenge traditional Russian artistic conventions.

ANCIENT PERIOD

Cave Paintings: The Kapova Cave paintings, dated to 12,500 BCE, are the oldest known stone age art in Russia. They depict various Ice Age mammals painted, in addition to abstract signs, pictograph, handprints and hand stencils all painted in red ochre. Near the town of Kislovodsk in the Caucasus red ochre cave painting dating to 3000 BCE have also been found.

Petroglyphs: *Ancient petroglyphs have been discovered at a number of sites across Russia. Ones dating back 10,000 years in the Paleolithic period that depict bison, horses and other animals are found on the Ukok Plateau in the Altai Mountians. Petroglyphs from the Neolithic period have been found at Besov Nos in Karelia. These petroglyphs contain not only images of animals, but also also individuals, activities such as swimming and skiing, battles, religious scenes and geometric shapes.*

Petroglyphs from the late 2nd millennium BCE, in the transition period between the Stone and Bronze Ages, have been found on cliffs at Sagan-Zaba near Lake Baikal. The variety of animals - including deer and swans – depicted has led some scholars to interpret them as tribal totems. In addition, scenes of birth and death, daily life and hunting are also found. Images of a dancing horned man may represent a shaman performing a ritual dance.

Another group of petroglyphs, the Kanozero petroglyphs, dating from the 3rd – 2nd millennia BCE was discovered on Kamenny Island. In addition to the usual images of birds and animals, the petroglyphs also include images that have been interpreted as religious symbols, depictions of household items and typical

activities, along with more enigmatic images such as bird of prey with five talons, a large shaman and a flying crane.

POSTCLASSICAL PERIOD

Icon Painting: Although Byzantine religious icons were brought to Russia after Vladimir I's conversion to Christianity, Russian artists did slavishly follow Byzantine styles of icon painting. Instead, Russian icon painters began to create their own original style by modifying Byzantine models and to form distinctive schools of icon painting.

Kievan School (10th-13thc): As a newly imported art form icons produced in the early Kievan period were still very close to the Byzantine tradition in style. However, many Kievan School icons differed from Byzantine icons in their use of dark, somber colors and in their comparatively large size, a result of being painted on wood that had been hand-cut with an axe.

Vladimir-Suzdal School (12th-13thc): During the second half of the 12th century Kiev was overshadowed as a center of icon production by Vladimir and Suzdal. Icons painted here were distinctive for their harmonious blend of silvery-blue, grayish-purple and pinkish-green colors and use of motifs derived from folk art, while preserving the spirit of Kievan art.

Novgorod School (12th-16thc): Novgorod became the center of Russian icon painting following the fall of Kiev. Frescoes produced here displayed a distinctive Russian style while still retaining clear Byzantine influence. A pivotal figure in the development of both the Novgorod and Moscow schools Theophanes the Greek (Feofan Grek) came to Russia from Byzantium in the late 14th century. Theophanes, after moving to Moscow, began to work with Andrei Rublev of the Moscow School. Their works are characterized energetic drawing, the contrast of large shapes, the use of warm golds and bright yellows, and a simple, economic yet precise style.

Moscow School (16th -18thc): Influenced by the evolving political and religious atmosphere of the period of Mongol rule, the style of painting developed by the Moscow school became the foundation for a national art. From this school the works created by four artists are particularly famous. The works of Theophanes the Greek were known for their skillful, rapid execution, use of monochromatic colors in frescoes, and creation of contour and depth through bright highlights. Andrei Rublev's works were characterized by the use of luminous color, delicate lines, reduction of details to create greater impact, and complex, subtle relationships between forms. Dionysius (Dionisy) created a distinctive style of painting that softer and gentler than that of previous artists, one that downplayed sharp outlines and concentrated on the blend of warm colors. The zenith of baroque icon painting is commonly regarded to have been reached in the works of Simon Ushakov who also head of the icon painters in the tsar's employ. He is credited with bringing icon painting into the real world by depicting sacred figures with faces rendered in style more like that current in the West.

Pskov School (13th-16thc): In contrast to icons from Novgorod, Pskov icons initially displayed greater poetic inspiration, even if less sophisticated in their execution. Over time, Pskov icons adopted some features of the Novgorod style. In particular, Pskov painters adopted the strong outlines of Novgorod painting as well as certain certain topics. Early Pskov icons are characterized by their intense colors, which contrast with the subdued palette of Kievan icons. In addition, what the figures in Pskov icons lack in elegance of proportion is more than compensated for by dynamic nature of their composition. By the 16th century the Pskov school showed clear influence from Western artistic traditions, leading to the charge that Pskov's icon painters were spreading "Latin heresies".

Yaroslavl School (13th-17thc): Among the pioneers in incorporating landscapes into their paintings, fresco painters from the Yaroslavl School used scenes of daily Russian life as the setting for traditional biblical stories.

Stroganov School (16th-17thc): Named for the boyar family that established it, the Stroganov School was established in the late 16th – early 17th century and created a new style of painting known as *parsuna*. *Parsuna* depicted contemporary secular figures rather than religious ones in a style that blended traditions of icon painting with features from secular portraiture. Two of the main representative of this school were Fedor Zubov and Simon Ushakov.

The emergence of both new forms of religious piety and new styles in icon painting is the combined result of several factors. Among these are a noticeable shift towards individual rather than communal forms of religious devotion, the rapid erosion of traditional icon painting styles, and the replacement of traditional icons with official religious painting; all of these developments took place in an intellectual milieu where Renaissance and Western ideas had tremendous influence in the Russian court.

EARLY MODERN PERIOD

Neoclassicism: 18th century neoclassicism incorporates a variety of styles whose ideas are most clearly visible in historical landscape, painting and portraiture. Neoclassicism is characterized by clarity, order, logic and a degree of realism and was, in part, a reaction to the over-refinement of the baroque and rococo styles. In Russia, neoclassicism was associated with the efforts by artists to adopt Enlightenment techniques and styles. Appreciation of Western art was particularly encouraged by four monarchs - Peter the Great, Anne, Elizabeth and Catherine the Great. This appreciation was cultivated by sending students to Europe to study, importing the works European masters, and employing foreign artists in their courts. Initially, some artists produced works that were merely copies of Western models. However, artists such as Dmitry Grigorevich Levitsky, Vladimir Lukich Borovikovsky, Ivan Petrovich Argunov, Aleksei Petrovich Antropov, Fedor Stepanovich Rokotov, Ivan Firsov, Ivan Nikitin, and Andrei Matveev created original works that moved beyond simple mimicry.

***Parsuna*s (Portraits):** Non-religious portraits painted in the style of icons were known as *parsuna*s. Although unintentional, by issuing a ruling in the *Stoglav* on the question of whether portraits of living people were sacrilegious Ivan the Terrible had opened the door for the development of nonreligious art, although it would not be until the reign of Peter the Great that Russia would begin to produce secular art akin to that of the West. In the portraits by Ivan Nikitin, Andrei Matveyev, Ivan Vishnyakov, Alexei Antropov, Dmitri Levitsky and Vladimir Borovikovsky the focus is clearly on the hands and face of the subject with its serious expression. However, it is clear that the artists were attempting to accurately depict the face and clothes (with their all their folds and textures) of a specific individual.

NINETEENTH CENTURY

Landscapes: It was not until the early 19th century that Russian landscape painting became widely popular. There had been artists before this time who had produced fine landscape paintings, among them Fyodor Alexeyev, Maxim Vorobiev, Fyodor Matveyev, and Silvester Shchedrin, but their works were products of the Italianesque romantic tradition. True Russian landscape painting only emerged with the works of Nikifor Krylov, Alexei Venetsianov, and Grigory Soroka. However, artists such as Ivan Ayvazovsky and Mikhail Lebedev continued to paint in the Italianesque romantic tradition. In the field of landscape painting, French Impressionism was a major influence on Russian works in this category.

Religious motives: Works produced by the Wanderers (see below) were noted for an intensity, both psychological and imaginative, that had been lacking in Russian art since the early 19th century during the time of Alexander Ivanov.

Still Life: Objects from daily life constitute the subject matter of still life painting. Ivan Khrutsky was one of the first major artists in this genre whose paintings, like those of Ilya Repin and Mikhail Vrubel in the second half of the 19th century, were influenced by the masterpieces of Dutch still life painting.

Genre Painting: Genre painting came to occupy a firm place in Russian art, despite having been considered less prestigious than other styles of painting. Peasant culture in all its aspects would be the

focus of works by Aleksei Venetsianov, while depictions of the middle class, and even social criticism, would feature in the paintings of Fedotov and other artists.

Slavic Revival: This artistic movement rejected Western subject matter and turned its attention to depictions of Russian culture, particularly as seen in peasant life. The works of Viktor Vasnetsov and Mikhail Nesterov depict heroic episodes of Kievan history and scenes related to the Orthodox Church, and, in general, strive to reflect the richness of Medieval Russia's artistic heritage.

Realism: In the second half of the 19th century Realism was the predominant artistic trend. As a reaction to what they regarded as an excessively restrictive artistic tradition, painters such as Ivan Kramskoi insisted on depicting life realistically in their art. Kramskoi and other like-minded artists would come to be known as the Wanderers due to their travelling exhibitions of their art.

Wanderers (Itinerants-*Peredvizhniki*): The Academy of Arts witnessed a student revolt in 1863 in which a group of students did not follow the Academy's recommended themes, but used themes of their own. The Academy refused to accept this, leading to the resignation from the Academy of one sculptor and thirteen painters. The leading figures of this group were Ivan Kramskoi, Vladimir Stasov, Vasily Stasov, Ilya Repin, Vasily Surikov, and Vasily Perov. Travelling throughout Russia, society members inspired by the *narodniki* (Populists) held exhibitions of the art that they had produced during their travels and espoused political reform. In keeping with their realist tendencies, formal achievements for these artists were less important than the political and social aspects of their work.

The World of Art (*Mir Iskusstva*): The artistic movement World of Art was established by the avant-garde writers and artists based in St. Petersburg in 1899. It was also the name of their art magazine. Nikolai Roerich, Alexander Benois, Lev Bakst, Evgeny Lancere, Konstantin Somov and Sergei Diaghilev were among the founders of this society that was focused on popularization of Russian history and folk art. Despite the diverse characters of the artists in this movement, they were united by three important principles – their emphasis on individual experience, the concept of "total art work" (*gesamtkunstwerk*), and the aesthetic that art was self-justified.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

Symbolism: Across Europe and Russia in the late 19th-early 20th centuries Symbolism had spread as both an artistic and an intellectual movement. In Russia Symbolism dominated the artistic scene for approximately two decades and two generations of artists. The first generation was active between 1890 to 1900, and the second, known as the Blue Rose Movement, from 1900 to 1910. Symbolist artists such as Alexandre Benois, Konstantin Somov, Mikhail Vrubel and Mikhail Nesterov attempted evoke emotion or create a mood by using traditional elements of Symbolism or through their use of color. For these painters their art was an esthetic experience.

Avant-garde: Avant-garde is an umbrella term for a number of distinct, but closely related artistic movements that were current in the early 20th century, among them Constructivism, Cubism, Cubo-Futurism, Rayonism, Neo-primitivism, Suprematism. Russian avant-garde artists did not simply mimic European artistic styles, they introduced their own innovations into them and in the process created new interpretations of these styles. Modern art of the early 20th century would be profoundly influenced by a number of artistic movements pioneered by Russian artists.

Constructivism: Constructivism was established by Vladimir Tatlin in 1915 and was based on an emphasis of both an object's material properties and the space it occupied. Constructivist artists put their talents to use in the service of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, in particular by applying their artistic theories to the fields of advertising and fashion. Tatlin used paper, wood, metal or glass to create distinctive three-dimensional works that expressed his artistic vision. For him, the form of his works was dictated by the *faktura* (texture) of the material being used to create them.

Cubism: Cubism sought to depict forms through the use of basic geometric shapes – cubes cylinders, spheres and cones – and used color freely, without being restricted to depicting forms naturalistically. Although the subject of cubist paintings is still visible, it has been reduced to simpler forms, generally lacks depth and borders on being abstract. Cubism remained popular only up to the 1920s, but its influence on avant-garde art was deep. Wealthy collectors such as Shchukin and Morozov were responsible for introducing Russia to Cubism by purchasing Cubist works and then publicly displaying them in Russia. Among the most famous Russian Cubist painters were of Malevich, Popova, and Udal'tsova.

Cubo-futurism: Cubo-futurism differs from Cubism in having more dynamic compositions that incorporate words or letters into them. Originally a French artistic movement, Cubo-futurism developed around 1910 in Russia and soon became one of the most influential movements in Russian art of the early 20th century. Inspired by *lubok* (Russian prints of popular stories with simple pictures) and traditional icons, two of the first Cubo-futurist artists, Larinov and Goncharova, merged elements of Russian folk art and modern French art in their effort to preserve Russian folk art.

Neo-primitivism: Founded by Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova, Neo-primitivism was a short-lived movement active from 1907 to 1912. While Neo-primitivism took inspiration from a number of diverse sources, such as the *lubok* and peasant crafts, but icon painting served as the main source. Neo-primitive painters such as Tatlin, Kandinsky, Malevich, Goncharova, Chagall and Larionov incorporated a number of typical characteristics of icons – one-dimensionality, bold colors, lack of perspective, etc. – into their own works. Line and color were used to create harmony in compositions whose figures were often rendered in either an almost childish fashion, or distorted like figures in a dream.

Rayonism (Luchism): Another short-lived Russian artistic movement of the early 20th century was Rayonism which combined Cubism's fragmented forms with Futurism's sense of movement and Orphism's use of color. Created by Mikhail Larionov, Rayonist works were produced primarily by Larionov and his companion Natalia Goncharova, and the movement came to an end when they emigrated from Russia. Paintings in the Rayonist style are characterized by a mass of slanting lines, generally painted in pure blues, reds and yellows, that represent beams of light that transit and converge across the plane of the canvas.

Suprematism: In 1915 Kazimir Malevich established the Suprematist movement. Malevich sought a means to express an artist's feelings without being limited to realistically depicting everyday objects' normal appearance. Since both objectivity and the concepts of the conscious mind were considered to be insignificant, Suprematist art utilized basic geometric forms such as rectangles, lines, squares and circles and a limited number of colors.

Discussion/Questions

1. Icons had long served in Orthodox practice as devotional aids that portrayed sacred figures, and whose familiar images were associated with the concept of "legitimacy". Can the political posters that appeared during the Bolshevik revolution be regarded as using themes and elements inspired by Russian Orthodox iconography, such as lighting etc., to legitimize both the revolution and its leaders, despite the new state's avowed atheism?

2. What was the aim of the World of Art Movement (*Mir Iskusstva*) in Russia? What were their key achievements?

3. What is the origin of the Wanderers (*Peredvizhniki* -Itinerants)? How was a relatively minor incident at the Imperial Academy of Arts transformed into an artistic movement that would have a profound impact on Russian society and culture?

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SCULPTURE

Overview   Sculpture can have a number of roles in society, from ritual functions to representations of national figures who remind citizens of significant events in their country's history. Being three-dimensional works, sculptures often have a greater emotional impact on people than two-dimensional art forms.

The history of sculpture in Russian can be traced back to the Stone Age, and was later a part of the religion of the early pagan Russias who worshipped the sun, the earth, fire, water, stones and trees. With the introduction of Christianity in 988 the pagans were now considered 'sinners', their idols and sacred sites were destroyed, and churches built in their place. The Orthodox Church's prohibition of statuary remained in place until the late 17th century when sculpture in the style of Western Europe appeared again.

ANCIENT PERIOD

Paleolithic:

Venus of Zaraysk: Named after the site southeast of Moscow where it was discovered, this figure was found buried in a storage pit in next to a group of Kostensky-style hollowed out earth dwellings dating from the last Ice Age.

Venus of Kostienki: Carved from a mammoth tusk, this figure of a tall, pregnant, and possibly older woman, was discovered near Voronezh on the the west bank of the Don River.

Avdeevo venus: This work depicts adult women in differing stages of human reproduction and was discovered near Kursk, at Avdeevo on the Sejm River.

Bison Sculpture: One of the largest Ice Age sculptures ever discovered, this figure of a bison was carved from a mammoth tusk and tinted with red ochre.

Mesolithic Period:

Shigir Idol: Discovered in a peat bog in western Siberia near Yekaterinburg in the Middle Urals and radiocarbon dated to between 9500 and 11,000 years, the Shigir Idol is the oldest known wooden sculpture in the world.

Zbruchsky Idol: This three-meter tall, limestone statue was found near the town of Gusyatin on the Zbruch River. The statue was carved in a square column with three levels depicting from top to bottom the realm of the gods, the world of men and the underworld.

POSTCLASSICAL PERIOD

Due to Orthodox Church's ban on statuary, there are almost no examples of large-scale sculpture from this period. However, miniature sculpture was not included in this ban and was highly developed. Scenes from the Gospels and representations of saints with backgrounds of hills, trees and buildings were created by Russian artists using figures that were generally less that 1 ½ inches high.

EARLY MODERN PERIOD

Sculpture in Russia revived during the reign of Peter the Great who brought sculptors and casters from Western Europe to teach Russian artists their methods. Despite Peter's efforts, sculpture remained an art dominated by foreigners during his reign and that of his successors. Sculpture was taught at the Academy of Sciences during the reign of Catherine I, but royal court's demand for statuary was still being met by foreign artists, such as the Rococo artist Counut Carlo Bartolomeo Rastrelli. Sculptors in Catherine's reign were employed primarily to produce mannerist busts and monuments in marble.

NINETEENTH CENTURY

The first Russian sculptors of note only emerged after the establishments of Arts Academies in St. Petersburg (1757) and Moscow (1832). Most were protégés of the renowned Parisian sculptor Nicolas-François Gillet, and the first to earn fame for his realistic, expressive works was Fedot Shubin. In recognition of his talent the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts appointed Ivan Vitali to the grade of professor, first degree. Other 19th century Russian sculptors included Mikhail Vrubel, Theodore Gordeev, Ivan Martos, Mikhail Kozlovsky, Fedor Shedrin.

House of Fabergé: In 1842 Gustav Fabergé established the House of Fabergé in St.Petersburg. The House of Fabergé was particularly famous for the decorative Easter eggs, intricately designed and decorated with precious jewels, they produced for the Tsars. Management of the House of Fabergé passed to Peter Carl Fabergé in 1882 and continued until 1918 when the Bolsheviks nationalized the company.

Kasli Iron Sculptures: Cast iron sculptures produced by the lost-wax process began to be produced at the Kasli Iron Works in the mid-19th century. Russian and Western European artists such as Eugene Lanceray, Peter Karlovich Klodt, M.D. Kanayev, and N.R. Bakh all produced works at Kasli.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

Cubism: By fragmenting and flattening perspective, Russian sculptors were able to create entirely new types of works in three dimensions. In his sculptures Alexander Archipenko presented several simulataneous views of a figure, creating negative space that presented novel perspectives on the human figure. Vladimir Baranoff-Rossine was noted for his use of color, applying the chameleon process or camouflage techniques in his works. Jacques Lipchitz was one of the most successful sculptors in embodying the principles of Cubism in his sculptures.

Constructivism: Constructivism was the product of the merging of the political fervor of the Russian Revolution with Parisian artistic movements in the early 20th century both before and after World War I. Constructivist artists created works from industrial materials such as glass, metal and plastic. Using these materials Russian Constructivist sculptors such as Anton Pevsner, Konstantin Medunetsky, Alexander Rodchenko and Naum Gabo, in particular, created works that conveyed a sense of space without mass. Among other notable constructivist artists El Lissitzky was known for his non-objective sculptures, Ossip Nevelson for his interpretations of modern expressionism, and Louise Zadkine for her distinctive assemblage art.

Kinetic Art: Referring to art that either need motion to create its effect, or has perceptible motion in it, the Kinetic Art movement developed out of the Russian avant-garde. Naum Gabo's 1920 sculpture "Standing Wave" is considered the first work of the Russian Kinetic Art movement.

Impressionism: The first Russian Impressionist woman sculptor to be awarded the Paris Salon prize was Anna Semyonova Golubkina. She was especially known for her numerous sculptural portaits, including ones of Leo Tolstoy, Andrei Bely, Karl Marx and Alexei Remizov.

Discussion/Questions

1. In the early history of Russia the Orthodox Church banned statuary. Why did the Church accept icons as acceptable devotional objects, but not sculpture, unlike Roman Catholic Church which recognized sculpture's iconographic role?
2. How do politics affect the existance of statues? Why are statues more often treated as dangerous, political objects unlike the paintings? Why makes statues so politically effective?

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ARCHITECTURE

Overview   Surviving architecture is frequently one of the most defining elements of any civilization, and this is equally true for Russian architecture. Throughout its long history architecture has been a mirror of Russia's history, and its people's self-perception and ideals. In addition, over the centuries peoples of diverse religions, origins and cultures have migrated into, invaded and colonized Russia, and Russian architecture reflects this tumultuous history. Russian architecture has taken traditional native forms and combined them with features derived from East Asian, Persian, Indian, Byzantine and Western European architectural styles.

ANCIENT PERIOD

Stone Age:

Dolmens (Burial Chamber): In the north-western Caucasus archeologists found 3,000 megalithic monuments known as dolmens that date to between the end of the 4th millennium and the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE. The dolmens are built with huge stone blocks that look like tables and were supposedly used as burial tombs, however there is no solid evidence to support this theory.

Iron Age:

Kurgans (Tumuli): Scythian and Sarmatian tumulis, burial mounds built over log houses, have been discovered in the area of the Dnieper River, the Strait of Kerch, the Kuban River and the Don River in southern Russia. The tumuli discovered in the region are the Alexandropol (Lugovaya Mogila), Chertomlyk, the Royal Tumulus (Tsarsky kurgan), the Golden Tumulus (Zolotoy kurgan), the Tumuli of the Seven Borthers (Semibratskaya Mogila), Karagodeuashkh, Kelermes, Kostromskaya, as well as many others.

POSTCLASSICAL PERIOD

Kievan Russian Architecture: Kievan architecture can be classified as wooden or stone structures. After the adoption of Christianity in the 10th century, the first examples of monumental church architecture in Kiev appeared during the reign of three Russian princes: St.Vladimir (Church of the Assumption of the Virgin-

Destinnaya Tserkov), Yaroslav the Wise (Cathedral of St. Sophia) and Izyaslav (Monastery of the Caves–Kievo-Pecherskaya Lavra). In the early period, Kievan architecture was under the strong influence of Byzantine architecture. However, from the beginning it also incorporated such Russian features as the preference for multiple cupolas, and, especially in the north, thick walls, small windows, and steep roofs to withstand the inclement weather as seen in the Cathedral of St. Sofia in Novgorod. The ancient Russian Chronicles also contain information about wooden churches built completely without nails, using only an axe.

Cave Structures: Early cave structures were used by hermit monks to hide from persecution, and built to provide parishioners shelter against enemy attacks. Kyiv-Pechersky Lavra, Zverinetsky and Anthony's Caves of the Trinity-St. Elias Monastery are well-known Kievan cave structures. The other most notable examples of the cave structures are Svyato-Spassky Cave Church (12th century) found near the small Russian village of Kostomarovo, Pechersky Ascension male Monastery (13th century) found in Nizhny Novgorod, Pskov-Pechersky cave-monastery (mid-15th century) found in Pskov oblast and Kalachevskaya Cave (late 18th century) used as an underground monastery found in the Voronezh region.

Wooden structures:

Klet' – Used as a summer residence, a *klet'* is simple quadrangular structure made of wood or stone. If the *klet'* has some form of heating it is referred to as an *izba*.

Izba (Khata) is a single-room heated log dwelling in the countryside that lacks a chimney. Instead, the windows are used as an outlet for smoke, and the windows were kept small to protect against the cold and humidity.

Khoromy (mansion) Formed by linking several groups of houses with roofed passageways (*seni*), the structures of a *khoromy* were all located in one yard.

Renaissance Architecture: Renaissance architecture was introduced to Russia by Ivan the Great when he invited a number of Renaissance architects from Italy, like the Bolognese architect Aristotele Fioravanti, to come to Russia. Fioravanti was invited to rebuild the earthquake-damaged Cathedral of the Dormition in Kremlin, where he used traditional Russian style with a Renaissance sense of spaciousness, proportion and symmetry.

EARLY MODERN PERIOD

Muscovite Architecture:

Kremlin Structures: In the 15th century Italian architects were put in charge of designing the Kremlin structures. Instead of Renaissance, they had to use a traditional Russian style of architecture due to the demands of the ruling class. Such cathedrals as the Cathedral of Annunciation, Cathedral of Assumption, Cathedral of the Archangel Michael and the others are grouped around Cathedral Square. Also, the Palace of the Facets in the Kremlin was built by the Italian architect Marco Ruffo as a throne and audience chamber. Near the Kremlin, St. Basil's Cathedral, built in the 16th century to commemorate the conquest of Kazan and the Astrakhan Khanate, combined earlier church architecture with styles from the Tatar east.

Wooden Architecture: From the 17th to the 19th century Muscovite architecture liberated itself from the Byzantine style and modified it by using the traditional Russian style of architecture. Two of the finest examples of wooden structures are located at the Kizhi Pogost site on Kizhi Island which includes the 18th century Transfiguration Church with 22 domes and the Intercession Church with 9 domes.

Tent-type (shatër-Russian Gothic): This style was developed to prevent snow from piling up on the roofs of wooden churches. This type of architecture resembles the Gothic architecture of Western Europe. The Church of St. John the Baptist in Kolomenskoye and St. Basil's Cathedral on Red Square are two prime examples of this type.

Kokoshniks: In Russian church architecture the tent-type structure was replaced with successive rows of curved corbel arches known as *kokoshnik*s. An outstanding example of this style is the Kazan Cathedral on Red Square.

Cube-type structures: Exemplified by the Church of the Intercession and the Winter Church on Kizhi Island, these buildings consists of a square main structure of pine logs supporting an octagonal prizma tower.

Masonry (Stone) Structures: Russian architects used the indigenous forms of wooden church architecture and adapted it to masonry architecture in Novgorod and Pskov. The churches of Kolomenskoye (Church of the Ascension), Ostrovo (Church of the Transfiguration) and Dyakovo (Church of St.John the Precursor) serve as prototypes for these structures.

Muscovite (Naryshkin) Baroque: Muscovite Baroque was the last original current in Russian architecture, combining traditional Russian architecture with elements of European Baroque architecture. The Novodevichy Convent and Donskoy Monastery are the best examples of structures built in this style.

Petrine Baroque: Petrine Baroque reflects a sharp departure from the influence of Byzantium, which lasted almost a millennium. It was a mixture of Italian Baroque, early French Rococo and Neo-classicism, Dutch civil architecture, and Danish and Swedish styles and movements. The Peter and Paul Fortresses, Kikin Hall and Menshikov Palace are well-known examples of this style. Its chief practitioners were Domenico Trezzini, Andreas Schlüter, Gottfried Schadel, Jean-Baptise Leblond, Niccolo Michetti and Georg Johann Mattarnovi.

Secular Architecture (Western Influence): Russian secular architecture appeared simultaneously with the adoption of Western European styles, such as the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, designed by Bartolomeo Rastrelli in the Baroque style.

NINETEENTH CENTURY

Russian Revival (Russo-Byzantine Style): Russian Revival, or Russo-Byzantine, architecture combines elements of Byzantine architecture with those of pre-Petrine Russian architecture. This style is the Russian interpretation of their architectural heritage that was part of the broader renewal interest in "national" architecture that occurred in Europe in the 19th century. The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, the Grand Kremlin Palace and the Armory in Moscow are well-known examples of Russian Revival structures.

Neo-Byzantine architecture: In the 1850s during the reign Alexander II the Russo-Byzantine style was replaced by the Neo-Byzantine style for new churches. Although new state buildings would again be built in the Russian Revival style during the reign of his successor Alexander III, the Neo-Byzantine style remained popular down to the start of the the First World War. The Cathedral of Saint Vladimir built in Kiev and the Church of Dmitry Solunsky built in St. Petersburg are the first projects utilizing this style.

Eclecticism: In reaction to the strict, limited elements of classicism, Eclecticism attempted to expand the potential of architectural by combining elements taken from earlier styles. Popular until the first years of Nicholas II's reign, Eclecticism utilized elements from Baroque, Renaissance, Neoclassical and Rococo styles. Andrey Stackenschneider's Mariinsky Palace is one of the most prominent examples of this style.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

Art Nouveau (Stil Modern): Exploring the possibilities of metal, glass and new technologies in architecture, Art Nouveau strove to use natural, flowing lines that allowed all elements of the building – balconies, staircases and doors – to be both aesthetic and functional. In the years just prior to the Revolution a number of Art Nouveau buildings were built in St. Petersburg and Moscow, such as the Vitebsk Railway Station and the Hotel Metropol. Now the Maxim Gorky House Museum, the Ryabushinsky House designed by Fedor Shekhtel and the Yaroslavl Railway Station are also prime examples of Art Nouveau architecture.

Constructivism: A purely Russian style, Constructivism emerged in Moscow after 1917 as an offshoot of Functionalism. Constructivist architects took their inspiration from futurism, suprematism, and cubism and argued that efficient structures were beautiful structures. The characteristics, capacities and limits of construction materials defined Constructivist architecture, and the Shukov Radio Tower in Moscow designed by Vladimir Shukov is one of the most prominent examples of Constructivist architecture.

Stalinist Architecture: Stalinist architecture was heavily influenced by the political conditions of its era. Everything from the design stage, through procurement of building materials, construction and final use of the structure was under tight governmental and bureaucratic scrutiny. Architecture was expected to reflect Soviet political ideology, and the massive, monumental style favored by the Soviet government reflected both the Soviet Union's power the promises of Communism. The most prominent of the buildings from Stalin's era, among them the Moscow State University building, were tall structures built in tiers that became known as the "wedding cake" style.

Modernism (Functionalism): Following the First World War a new architectural style emerged that, in contrast with previous architectural styles, advocated simple structures that were unadorned to point of leaving structural elements of the building exposed and undecorated. Critics of Modernist architecture claimed that it lacked imagination and stifled architectural expression. In Russia, the projects for skyscrapers designed by N. Ladovsky and V. Krinsky are examples of this style.

Discussion/Questions

1. What did ancient people depict in cave paintings and petrogliphs? What was their purpose?
2. Compare the Muscovite Baroque and Petrine Baroque. What are the differences between these two styles?
3. Compare Soviet and Post-Soviet architecture and discuss the effect of this architecture on people. What ideals did these architectural styles attempt to convey?
4- Mass production and the cloning of tested patterns were the main approaches to the construction of cities in today's Russia. Mass construction leads to a situation where many people are concentrated in a relatively small territory. What messages does modern Russian architecture convey with these standart structures in comparison to earlier periods? Does it have its own esthetic, or is it simply functional? Why have regional styles of architecture dissapeared? Why has modern architecture become so uniform all over the world? Why have unique artistic styles been lost?

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DANCE

Overview   Like other nations the Russians see dance, an art form that uses the body as its instrument, as a reflection of their lives, culture and history. Ancient Russian dance was religious in nature, a part of organized pagan rituals where dances were performed in honor of the gods. Although dance later lost its religious character, it remained a part of social events such as births, marriages, religious and national holidays, festivals, etc. As one of the Western European art forms being introduced into Russia in the late 17th – early 18th centuries the new dance form, ballet, carved a niche for itself among the existing forms of dance practiced and performed in the country. Russian folk dances vary from region to region, each displaying its own unique characteristics.

ANCIENT PERIOD

Khorovod (Karagod, tanok, krug, ulitsa): This ancient folk dance originated as part of pagan rituals performed both to honor the sun god, Yaril, and to show repentance. The songs and the dances were slow with participants holding hands, generally in the middle of a circle created by three women.

Plyaska: Performed by one dancer, pairs, or numerous dancers, this folk dance is characterized by passionate movements, emphasizing the dancer's individuality. The music for this dance is a traditional instrumental form of music whose origins pre-date Kievan Rus.

Pereplyas: Performed in pairs, this dance takes the form of a competition with each dancer attempting to outdo the other through a display of skill, power and talent.

POSTCLASSICAL PERIOD

Prisyadka (Cossack Dance): Danced by men, this folk dance is characterized by kicks performed from deep squats.

Barynya: A fast, spirited folk dance characterized by squats and stomping, the barynya is accompanied by *chastushka* (folk song) and is improvised, rather than following a set pattern.

Kamarinskaya: This traditional folk dance is characterized by losing oneself in the dance, improvisation, and strong emotion.

Chechotka: Performed by a *bayan* (accordion) player wearing *lapti* (shoes made of birch bark fiber), the chechotka is a tradition Russian form of tap dance.

Mazurka: Of Polish origin, the mazurka was popular at balls in the time of the Russian Empire. It was danced by couples, often four or eight, and involved heel clicks and stamps together with improvised moves.

Pletionka (the Braid): Although similar to a Greek chain dance, in the pletionka while the dancers in the chain perform the same basic steps, the lead will often break free of the other dancers and perform an improvisation.

Troika: Named after the traditional Russian sled pulled by three horses, this dance is performed by one man and two women.

Trepak: Characterized by prisiadka (kicking from a deep squat), this lively Cossack dance is generally performed by men.

Yablochko: Generally considered a sailor's dance, it is performed to accompaniment of chastushka folk songs.

EARLY MODERN PERIOD

Kadril (Rigodon): Generally danced by four couples arranged in a square this folk dance of French origin was often danced competitively.

Lancier: Danced by four couples, this variant of the Quadrille is a form of square dance of French origin.

Ballet: Ballet came to Russia with Peter the Great who made assemblies and balls important social functions in his court. The introduction of classical ballet into Russia was simply one element of Peter's diverse methods to make Russia European. Ballet was prestigious because it was foreign, and Parisian in particular, and was regarded as a form of etiquette rather than an art form. The first imperial ballet school, directed by Jean-Baptiste Landé was established in 1738, and by the 1740s there were three ballet masters. Catherine II's establishment of an imperial theater system in 1756, a directorate of imperial theaters in 1766, the construction of the Bolshoi Theater in 1773, and the establishment of the imperial theater school in 1779 all secured a firm place for ballet in Russia. As the 18th century drew to a close, the ballet school was an element of the imperial theater bureaucracy, and some of the most important European ballet masters and choreographers of this period had worked to create the Russian imperial ballet.

NINETEENTH CENTURY

Polka: With its distinctive three quick steps followed by a hop this dance of Bohemian origin requires a spacious dancefloor for couples as they circle about.

Krakovyak: Directed by the lead male dancer as he sings, this dance of Polish origin is performed by several couples.

Padespan: This rapid ballroom dance for couples took its inspiration from the Spanish Pas d'Espagne.

Romantic Period: Ballet masters in Russia in the 19th century continued to come from abroad; among the most important were Pehr Christian Johansson, Jules Perrot, Charles-Louis Didelot, Marius Petipa, and Arthur Saint-Léon.

Russian School: The Russian school, which came to be regarded as possessing the most well-developed technique of any school, emerged as a synthesis of the French school and the Italian school whose techniques was introduced by Ceccheti. Some of the young Russian dancers trained by Ceccheti in the late 19th century became some of the most famous dancers of the early 20th century – Anna Pavlova, Vaslav Nijinsky and Michael Fokine. Other students of his such as Agrippina Vaganova in Russia and Ninette de Valois in England became founders of their own companies of developed their own teaching systems. These teachers and dancers took the techniques of the Russian school back to France, and from there they spread into other parts of Europe and the world.

Grand Ballet (Age of Petipa): Taken from the French term *ballet à grand spectacle*, Russian grand ballet was developed under Marius Petipa, a French dancer and choreographer who worked more than six decades at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg. Grand ballet, productions that matched contemporary operas in terms of length and storyline, became the favored form in the late 19th century when modern classical ballet reached its peak in Russia. Considered an "art of spectacle" *[zrelishchnoe iskusstvo],* the visual effects of grand ballet overshadowed the music, and even rivalled the dancing itself in importance.

Ballet-Féerie: Popular in the last two decades of the 19th century in private theaters in Russia, *ballet-féerie* was an Italian-based popular derivation of grand ballet which emphasized visual effects at the expense of choreography, flashy performances by the main dancers and set routines for the others. The plots were generally based on fairy tales; the most famous *ballet-féerie* was the 1881 St. Petersburg production of Luigi Manzotti's *Excelsior*.

Bolshoi Ballet: Taking it name from the Bolshoi Theater in 1825, some of the most important choreographers of the 19th century – Arthur Saint-Léon, Marius Petipa and Carlo Blasis – staged their works at this theater. Even during the Soviet period the Bolshoi Ballet was able keep its name.

Mariinsky Ballet (Kirov Ballet): Originally named for the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, the Mariinsky Ballet would be renamed twice in the 20th century. The first was in 1917 when it became the State Academy of Ballet and Opera, and the second in 1934 when it was renamed the Kirov Ballet following Sergei Kirov's assassination.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

The period in the early 20th century between the last works by Petipa and the ballets of Nijinsky, Gorsky and Fokine were a period stagnation and decline for Russian Ballet.

Acmeism: In the 1910s the esthetic elements of Acmeism – clarity of expression and compactness of form – could be seen Russian ballet productions staged in Paris. Mikhail Fokine's *Schéhérazade* and *Polovtsian Dances,* and the works of Vaslav Nijinsky's works all displayed a clarity of forms and a clear emphasis on the tangible world.

Modernist Period: The flight of numerous composers, dancers and choreographers from Russia after the revolution combined with lack of foreign artists entering the country left Russian ballet with no option other than develop it own talent. Russian ballet came to be known as Soviet ballet, and was isolated from outside influence. Although the Central Theatre Committee (*Tsentroteatr*) had assumed control over imperial theaters, including the Maryinsky (Kirov) and Bolshoi, in 1919, independent, experimental choreographers and dance troupes flourished in the 1920s. However, these independent groups and artists were all brought under state control in the early 1930s.

Neo-classical period:

Ballets Russes: Despite its name, Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes (1911-1929), never performed in Russia, instead it used Russian artists to bring its vision of traditional Russian dance merged with new choreography, modern design, contemporary music, and folk art. Two of its dancers, Vaslav Nijinsky and Anna Pavlova, would become household names. Just before the outbreak of World War I, Diaghilev began to collaborate with artists such as Braque, Cocteau, Matisse, Derain, Satie, and Picasso, as well as with Russian modernists such as Goncharova, Naum Gabo, and Larinov to stage avant-garde works.

Balanchine: Originally a dancer in the Mariinsky Ballet, George Balanchine defected from the Soviet Union while on tour in Europe in 1925 and joined Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. In 1933 Balanchine emigrated to the US, later becoming a co-founder of the New York City Ballet.

Discussion/Questions

1. How did the period of Europeanization effect ballet?

2. How were the Russian Avant-Garde and Diaghilev's Ballet Russes linked?

3- During the 19th and 20th centuries what genre changes did Russian ballet pass through?

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MUSIC

Overview   Music plays a fundamental part in human development, and is one of the essential parts of communication, like language, facilitating human interactions within groups and sometimes even creating selfless union. Formal music originally came to Russia from Byzantium through the adoption of Orthodox Christianity in the 10th century. The Russian Orthodox church's dominant position over music in pre-Petrine Russian cultural life continued until the 18th century, and it engaged in a ceaseless war against folk musicians and instrumentalists. With Peter the Great's Westernization process, Russian music adopted the musical traditions of contemporary Western countries and reshaped it by blending traditional Russian music culture with it.

POST-CLASSICAL PERIOD

Early Liturgical Music

When Prince Vladimir converted to Orthodox Christianity in 988 he ruled a land that had not yet become a sovereign state and whose culture was pagan in nature. As a result, the Church moved quickly to become the dominant cultural force in Kievan Rus'. However, Vladimir's decision to convert to Orthodoxy led to Russia's political isolation from its neighbors, and in order to prevent outside religious influences from entering Russia the Russian Church became isolationist. One area of culture in which the Church sought to assert its influence was music, both religious and secular.

Like Orthodox Christianity itself, the music of the Russian Orthodox Church was imported in the 10th century from the Byzantine Empire. Initially, musical instruments were not used in the liturgy, as their use was considered sinful by the Orthodox Church, an attitude which would not change until the middle of the 17th century. Another aspect of this hostility towards the use musical instruments was the church's long, bitter struggle against folk musicians, in particular instrumentalists. This animosity was fueled by the Orthodox Church's rivalry with the Catholic Church, which allowed instrumental music, and by its struggle against Russia's pagan heritage, a heritage which folk instrumentalists were continuing in the church's view.

Liturgical music in the Orthodox Church was sung a capella by all-male choirs who performed a monadic chant in unison. Over time this type of liturgical music began to evolve into new forms that were unlike the Byzantine chants. One of these, developed some time around the 12th century was the Z*namenny chant* (Znamenny raspev). These chants were performed using a system of eight voices.

Traditional Instruments and the *Skomorokhi*

Before the introduction of Christianity the musical instruments found in Russia were similar to those used throughout medieval Europe. Among these were the *svirel*, an oboe-like instrument; the *gusli*, similar to a zither; the *gudok*, similar to a fiddle; and horns. In addition there were tambourines, assorted noise makers, drums, and small bells, instruments more typically associated with shamanic rituals. These instruments

were played during religious and court ceremonies, and for entertainment. They were also associated with the *skomorokhi*, folk musicians in Kievan Rus and Muscovy who often played at weddings.

Skomorokhi: Skomorokhi were the wandering minstrels in Russia; they were singers of freedom, who dared to ridicule the power, the clergy, and the rich and sympathized with the common people. The *skomorokhi* found themselves officially banned during the "Time of Troubles", the period when Muscovite Rus' was being transformed into a secular, centralized state between the 14th – 17th centuries. The reasons for this ban are not entirely clear; they may have been sacrificed to maintain relations between the church and the state, or they may have been regarded as a threat to the state. Whatever the true reason, pressured by the church Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich issued the decree banning the *skomorokhi* in 1648. After having been an integral part of Russian popular culture for over 700 years, the *skomorokhi* found themselves exiled to northern Russia or Siberia, and their instruments destroyed.

EARLY MODERN PERIOD

Secular Music and Western Influence

The Russian tsars saw their position as rulers as having not only a secular aspect, but a spiritual one as well, an attitude that would not change until the late 17th century when Peter I became tsar. The tsars believed that they were the spiritual leaders of an Orthodox state and servants of God as well. For example, Tsar Ivan IV composed a number of church chants and was said to be a talented church musician. As a result of this view of their religious role, the tsars were against secular music, both foreign and domestic. Anyone giving public performances of secular music, like the *skomorokhi*, were treated as criminals.

The hostile attitude towards secular music changed dramatically when Peter the Great ascended the throne. He set in motion a number of reforms to transform Russia from what he saw as a backward society into a modern, Western-style country. In his new capital, St. Petersburg, he held court balls in the manner of Western Europe where his aristocrats attempted to perform unfamiliar European dances. Copying the Germans, he formed "staff orchestras" that played at court ceremonies, and even travelled with his army in the field. Hoping to marry Peter's daughter, the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, Carl Friedrich brought a German chamber orchestra with him to St. Petersburg in 1721. The orchestra played works by a number of contemporary composers, and chamber orchestras soon became a requisite element of aristocratic society. In the years after Peter the Great's reign musicians and composers continued to be brought from Europe and paid well for their talents. Private orchestras and choirs, as well as opera and ballet theaters had become feature of the estates of a number of Russian aristocrats by the end of the 18th century. This trend provided a new opportunity for some former serfs; trained by teachers from Europe they went on to become some of the most famous performers of the day.

NINETEENTH CENTURY

Russian Composers and the Incorporation of Russian Influences

As Russia had no conservatories prior to the 1860's, Russia's first composer, Mikhail Glinka, had to travel abroad to obtain the majority of his musical training. This allowed him to study the folk music of many different countries and to make the acquaintance of many well-known European composers. After his return to Russia Glinka would greatly influence Russian music's development in general, and opera in particular.

A number of composers after Glinka followed his lead and composed music based on Russian fairy tales; among them were Rimsky-Korsakov, *The Golden Cockerel;* Stravinsky, *The Nightingale*; and Prokofiev, in *Love for Three Oranges*. In the compositions for ballet, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky and Prokofiev would also be influenced by Glinka's use of fairy-tales.

Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Ludmila* which was first performed in 1842 would be the first in a long line of operas based on Russian fairy tales. Glinka's compositions mark a turning point in Russian

music, the point at which Russian music truly becomes a part of European music, while still retaining its folk music traditions.

Russian Musical Society: Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna and the composer Anton Rubinstein established the *Russian Musical Society* in 1859. Its primary aim was to encourage and expand the musical study and performance in the country. Regarded as Russia' first school of music, the Society provided instruction to anyone who wished to study music.

One of the most important events in the growth of Russian music occurred with the opening in St. Petersburg of Russia's first conservatory in 1862.

Balakirev Circle: Mily Balakirev established the Balakirev Circle, a musical group, in St. Petersburg. The Circle studied a wide spectrum of musical traditions to employ in their own compositions: Russian folksongs, classical composers and music from Spain, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Exoticism was becoming as important a part of Russian music as it was in European music. This can be seen in the Middle Eastern influences in *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov, and the Central Asian elements in Borodin's opera *Prince Igor*.

In 1866 Russia's second conservatory was established in Moscow by Anton Rubinstein from St. Petersburg and Nikolai Rubinstein from Moscow. Both brothers would play important roles in making Russian music more professional. Famous graduates of Russia's first two conservatories include Tchaikovsky (St. Petersburg) and Rachmaninoff (Moscow).

Mighty Handful (Moguchaya kuchka): At approximately the same time, five composers from St. Petersburg formed a group which became known as "The Mighty Handful" (or "The Mighty Five"). They shared common political and aesthetic opinions and held that music made by Russians should accurately reflect the people of Russia, and not what was taught by Germans in the conservatory. The group's leader was Balakirev, with Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and César Cui making up the rest of the group.

They advocated the use of Russian elements such as folk music and folklore in compositions, and were disturbed by the predominant position of European music and European musicians. Because of their ability to convey a narrative message they preferred song, symphonic poems and opera over other genres. Despite the group's early solidarity, by the mid-1870s Balakirev and the other members were no longer on good terms and the group was, for all practical purposes, dissolved.

A number of well-known works would composed by members of the Mighty Handful, among them the operas *Sadko* and *The Snow Maiden*, and the symphonic poem *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov; *Khovanshchina* and *Boris Godunov* by Mussorgsky; *Tamara* by Balakirev; and *Prince Igor* by Borodin. All are regarded as masterpieces of romantic nationalism and are inspired, as many of the Mighty Handful's works were, by Russian literature, history and folk stories.

One of the first graduates of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, Pyotr Tchaikovsky disagreed with the Mighty Handful over the composition of classical music, in particular which tradition, Western or Russian, should determine how it was composed. Although Tchaikovsky's interest in nationalistic music grew in the late 19th century, he remained opposed to the Mighty Handful's nationalistic bent. Despite his disagreements with the *Mighty Handful*, Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* shows the influence of Balakirev.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

In the 20th century, the central themes of composers such as Sergei Vasil'evich Rachmaninov, Igor Fedorovich Stravinsky, Sergei Sergeevich Prokofiev and Dmitry Dmitrievich Shostakovich were liturgical and folkloric. Specifically, Mussorgsky in his historical operas *Boris Godunov* and *Khovanshchina*; Rimsky-Korsakov in his *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Fevronia*; and Prokofiev in his score to Sergei Eisenstein's film *Ivan the Terrible*, used Russian folkloric and liturgical music combining the techniques of Western music and the Russian classical music tradition.

After 1917 musicians were subject to extreme pressure from the state to follow aesthetic standards determined by the government. State control over musicians was extended by Stalin in 1932 with the formation of the Union of Soviet Composers. This was a regulatory body whose mandate was to direct all musical activity for the government's own political purposes. One result was that all Soviet composers were compelled to follow very specific regulations concerning the types of music they produced and this also led to the permanent emigration of numerous music composers and musicians, such as Stravinsky, Rachmaninov, and the pianist-composer Nikolai Karlovich Medtner, to Europe and the United States.

Discussion/Questions

1. Discuss the early developments in Russian music. Why would the Skomorokhi be treated as criminals?
2. Discuss Westernization and its effects on Russian music. How were the 19th century Russian composers influenced by Western composers and how did they influence the popular culture of the West?

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THEATRE

Overview   Until the 11ᵗʰ century the early Russian people had primitive forms of entertainment, mostly ritualistic ceremonies, pagan shows with dramatic recitations of fables, tales and proverbs, and singing and dances, performed by *skomorokhi*, traveling minstrels. While in the past the rigid rules of the Orthodox Church made the development of a truly national theater impossible, and *theaters suffered* partial destruction and the persecution of performers, during the Soviet period theaters had to conform to the rigid frames of ideological dictatorship.

ANCIENT PERIOD

Pagan ceremonies in which tales, proverbs and fables were recited, together with the songs and dances of itinerant jesters, known as *skomorokhi*, laid the foundation for the development of Russian theater.

POST CLASSICAL PERIOD

Skomorokhi: The Skomorokhi, based on Byzantine models, appeared around the middle of the 11ᵗʰ century in Kievan Rus and were performers who played musical instruments, sang, danced and even composed the scores for their performances.

The *skomorokhi* were not universally popular in Kievan Rus, and were described in pejorative terms in the *Primary Chronicle*. Both the ruling authorities and the Orthodox

Church viewed the *skomorokhi* as being in league with the devil, and persecuted them for maintaining what they regarded as pagan traditions.

A major reason for the *skomorokhi*'s unpopularity with both the secular and religious leaders was the nature of their art. The *skomorokhi*'s performances were aimed at ordinary people, and often were in opposition to those in power. As a result the clergy and feudal rulers viewed the *skomorokhi* as useless to society at the very least, and politically and religiously dangerous at the very worst.

Both civil and religious leaders subjected the *skomorokhi* to particularly intense persecution during the period of Mongol rule, a period which also coincided with the Orthodox Church's strong advocacy of asceticism.

The *skomorokhi*'s performances continued to be viewed with suspicion during the time of Ivan IV; it was believed that they undermined the authority and interest of the civil and religious leaders. There were even claims that their practices were somehow a form of devilry from the Greeks.

EARLY MODERN PERIOD

16th century: At this time the Orthodox Church was hostile to any kind of performances and allowed only plays that had religious content. Performances were given in city squares or in the streets; spectators were encouraged to take part in them. Occasionally, in the 16th– 17th centuries, groups of *skomorokhi* would join together to form a *vataga* (large group) and put on a performance.

17th century: The *skomorokhi*'s performances were banned by Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich in the mid-17th century for being blasphemous; nonetheless, popular celebrations remained a venue for occasional performances. A number of dramatic performances were given in the royal court in 1640 and 1650. An English merchant, John Hebdon, was ordered to hire German puppeteers in large numbers to perform in Russia in 1660. Significant changes in both Russian theater and Russian society would result from the introduction of Western theater during the reign of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich. Court theatrical performances continued until Alexis' death in 1676, after which they were stopped under pressure of the Patriarch Joachim.

It was not until the 17th century, with the introduction of literary culture, that the concept of a dramatic repertoire became known in Russia. In the 17th century the large number of works translated from western languages and the founding of Russia's first theater were clear indications of Western influence. The degree of this influence grew dramatically with the reforms of Peter I. One result of this increased contact with Western Europe was the attempt to adapt the literary models of Western Europe to Russian writing.

18th century: The 18th century witnessed the end of the *skomorokhi*'s performances, but some aspects of their art survived in the *rayok* (humorous talk shows) and *balagan* (puppet theater). The puppet shows had a long existence, and shows were put on in city and market squares as well as at fairs. Performances were aimed at the lowest classes, with jokes and plot lines being rather bawdy.

A public theater was built in Red Square in 1702 by order of Peter the Great. When completed a German theater troupe came to put on performances. Initially the performances were in German, but by 1705 plays were being translated into Russian and performed. Most of these plays were translations of German and Dutch comedies, or poor adaptations of plays such as Molière's *Le Médicin malgré lui*. Later, both the Moscow Academy and the Moscow Medical School would stage dramas. More surprising, perhaps, was the establishment of a theater in Rostov by its bishop, Dmitrii, which he then used for performances of plays he wrote.

It was not until the latter half of the 18th century that the theater truly became an institution in Russia. The establishment of St. Petersburg's Alexandrinskiy Theater on August 30, 1756 is often taken as the starting point of Russian professional theater. A major innovation was the merging of two theatrical groups – aristocratic students from the Cadet School and a troupe of professional actors from the theater founded by Fedor Volkov – and then giving performances for the public at large. At the same time uniquely Russian drama was emerging in the works of the playwright Alexander Sumarokov. His tragedy, *Khorev*, is regarded as the first Russian drama which depicts the relationship between the monarch and the nobles and includes warnings against tyranny, excessive favoritism, and arbitrary disgrace, and was even performed for the Empress Elizabeth.

Considered the founder of Russian drama, Alexander Sumarokov blended Russian themes with European dramatic forms in his works. Sumarokov was appointed as the first director of the Russian theater in 1756 by Elizabeth, and directed Russia's first professional public theater between 1756 – 1761; his works would become the basis of the theater's repertoire. His later works included comedies such as *The Troublesome Girl*, *The Imaginary Cuckold*, and *The Mother as Rival of Her Daughte*r; and such tragedies as *Mstislav* and *The False Demetrius*. This last work is ostensibly a tale about a despotic ruler, and has often been interpreted as a criticism of papal power. However, its real significance is as an indirect criticism of Catherine the Great's arbitrary use of power, while at the same time defending legitimate monarchy. *The False Demetrius* is thus the beginning of a long tradition of theater as political criticism. In addition, Sumarokov's plays *The Guardian* and *Khorev* are regarded as the first political comedy and tragedy in Russia.

Catherine the Great, fearful of importation of liberal Western *European thought*, introduced a state monopoly on the Moscow and Petersburg theaters, and the Ministry of Interior supervised actors' registration as members of the civil service, applied strict censorship on the repertoire of the theaters in Moscow and Petersburg, and independent entrepreneurs were allowed to operate only under police supervision.

The major playwright of Catherine the Great's era was Denis Fonvizin. Two of his most famous plays were the neo-classical *The Minor* and *The Brigadier*. Both were satires of the values of the age and attempted to encourage more moral conduct, however *The Brigadier* takes particular aim at the ignorance and moral laxity of the upper classes. Despite the fact that the monarchy often took issue with Fonvizin's works, Catherine the Great was an admirer of them.

NINETEENTH CENTURY

In 1819, the Ministry of the Interior had taken control over theatrical censorship; the severity of its censorship would only increase over time and expand outside of the theaters. In some cases periodicals which made negative comments about actors found themselves the target of the Ministry's displeasure – since actors were civil servants, criticizing them was tantamount to criticizing their employer, the state. However, the effect official censorship was felt most keenly in the theaters in St. Petersburg and Moscow, whose creativity was stifled by government guidelines. Beyond St. Petersburg and Moscow, the situation was slightly better, as independent theaters could put on performances, but still under the watchful eye of the police.

The roles of St. Petersburg and Moscow as the Russia's theatrical centers grew in the 19th century as new theaters were founded. In Moscow in 1824 the Maly (Small) Theater was established, followed in 1825 by the Bolshoi (Big), which was a replacement for the Peter's Theater which had burned down. In 1832 the Alexandrinsky Drama Theater opened in St. Petersburg, and in 1898 the MAT (Moscow Art Theater) established by Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko and Konstantin Stanislavsky opened in Moscow which later renamed the Gorky Moscow Art Theater in 1932.

The MAT proved to be the most influential with their productions of the last four plays written by Chekhov which brought them great fame, and the theater would go on to profoundly influence theater in Russia. Combining their talents, playwright Nemirovich-Danchenko and actor-director Stanislavsky adopted Wagner's approach to play production as high art.

Directors would now determine how a drama would be staged, as well as their atmosphere and style – an innovation in Russian theater. The MAT was saved from financial ruin in its initial season by its sixth production, *The Seagull* by Chekhov which opened on December 17, 1898. Its first performance two years earlier in St. Petersburg had been a disaster, and Chekhov was understandably hesitant to give his permission for a second production of his play. However, Nemirovich-Danchenko's persistent pleading paid off and Chekhov was more than rewarded by the reception his play received from its second production. The following year in 1899 the MAT staged *Uncle Vanya*, and Chekhov wrote his two last plays, *The Three Sisters* and *The Cherry Orchard* with the MAT in mind.

The first half of the 19th century also witnessed the appearance of Russian drama's first masterpieces. Among these works were *Inspector* by Nikolay Gogol, and Alexander Griboyedov's *Woe from Wit*. The plays by Alexander Ostrovsky which appeared around the middle of the century would inspire a new generation of performers. His series of plays on merchant life highlighted the negative qualities of merchants as cheats, tyrannical bosses and fathers, and narrow-minded philistines.

After the emancipation of Russian serfs in 1861, and the abolition of the imperial monopoly during Alexander II gave impetus to the people's theater movement which was

promoted by the *Narodniks* (populists). The theater now began to serve less as a leisure activity than as an educational tool.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

At the beginning of the 20th century there were only six Imperial theaters in Russia administered by the Directorate of Imperial Theaters, and all explicitly served Tsarist propaganda purposes. However, after the first revolution of 1905, the government was gradually easing restrictions on theaters. Theaters were not only sponsored by the Imperial government, there were also intellectuals who organized theaters for peasants and workers throughout the country, and a few touring troupes and-eventually-amateur theaters organized performances for peasants and workers. In addition to the Tsarist government, in many provinces local *zemstva* (local administration) and factory-owners sponsored popular theaters. Theaters began to stage controversial and almost overtly political plays.

In 1909 a commission on village theater was set up under the protection of the Moscow Society of People's Universities as *The Section to Aid in the Establishment of Rural, Factory, and School Theaters*, and in 1915 the Section was joined by the *Russian Theater Society* (RTO). There was a blossoming of theatrical performances as official control of the arts relaxed. A number of private theaters appeared. One of them was Alexander Tairov's Chamber (Kamerny) Theater that opened their doors in 1914 after the end of the government's theater monopoly in 1882.

Shortly after the Bolsheviks seized power in October 1917 they issued a decree of the Soviet of People's Commissars on 9 November 1917 that placed all the theaters under the authority of the arts section of the State Commission for Education, and all served as *agitprop* (agitation and propaganda) theater. The Soviets also opened a theater section (TEO) to monitor the theaters, and appointed Meyerhold as director in 1920, its repertoire was selected by the poet Alexander Blok, and the directing section was run by Evgeny Vakhtangov and Stanislavsky's friends.

Lenin, on 26 August 1919, signed a decree centralizing all the finances and nationalizing all theatrical property. They regularly distributed free tickets to the ordinary people to promote popular education, changing the predominantly urban character of earlier theater.

An experimental artistic institution, the Proletkult was founded in September 1917 by Alexander Bogdanov during the course of the war. Its stated goals were a total break with the bourgeois past, radically modifying existing artistic forms, rejecting all existing professional theater and promoting a new, so-called proletarian culture. However, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party approved a decree on 1 December 1920 which condemned both the institution as a duplication of services that competed with existing bureaucratic systems, like Nakompros, and its hostile idealist philosophy. As a result, Proletkult was integrated into Narkompros.

The full-scale Bolshevik offensive against the theater began during Stalin when all theaters were accused of having purely bourgeois, alien and hostile ideology. For the Soviets the theater should serve as a propaganda tool of Party's orthodox catch-phrases. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party passed a resolution on April 23, 1932, the so-called *On the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations*. There was a terror of persecution and intimidation of art experts and players, many of whom lost their positions, and theaters were closed.

When the Soviets began preparing for WWII, the state turned its attention to the previously condemned Russian past, and to increase patriotism, they used the Russian tsars, princes, military leaders and religion.

After the death of Stalin, the attitude towards theaters was suddenly changed with Khrushchev's Thaw period (1956-1964). Khrushchev's de-Stalinization speech presented at the 20th Party congress in 1956 introduced more freedom and humanism in the theater. During Khrushchev's period, Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Days of the Turbins,* and *Flight,* the dramatisation of his novel *The Master and Margarita* were staged; and three directors, Georgii Tovstonogov at the Gorky Theater in Leningrad; Anatolii Efros and Iuriy Liubimov at the Malaia Bronnaia and Taganka theaters in Moscow directed outstanding plays.

Under Brezhnev, on the other hand, the majority of theaters favored safe plays, and, as a result, theaters played to half-empty houses, continuing to survive due to financial support from the Ministry of Culture.

Gorbachev's new and more liberal approach to the arts showed its effects, and there was a 50% increase in the number of theaters in Moscow in only two years (1986-1988). There were also a number of *Palaces of Culture* (club-houses attached to the factories), which provided auditoria for amateur and semi-professional groups to perform. The control of theaters was removed from the Ministry of Culture and handed over to the independent *Union of Theater Workers* established in 1986 which aimed at freeing all theaters from the Ministry's strict control, allowing theater companies to handle their own affairs, effectively abolishing censorship.

Discussion/Questions

1- Discuss the *skomorokhi* and their importance in the history of Russian theater.
2- Why was theater was used as a weapon during Stalin's time?
3- Why did the theaters served as *agitprop* theater during the Soviet Union? Why did the artists' political inclinations compel them to subordinate art to ideology?
4- What were the motives behind the hostility of the Soviet government toward the creative theaters? What distinguishes the Soviet attitude from the Tsarist attitude against theater?

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CINEMA

Overview   Film was introduced into Russia via Europe. During the Imperial period in addition to foreign films, they began to produce Russian films began to be produced. Film became the most popular form of mass entertainment and was inexpensive and easy to produce for urban cultural life. This art form came to be used as a very effective propaganda tool by the Bolsheviks and later became an important industry influencing the social and political history of Russia.

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY CINEMA

Foreign films: Russian filmmaking emerged as an offshoot of European films, introduced by Russian film enterprises that had connections with European film companies. The Lumière brothers introduced the first films in Russia in 1896 and their cameraman Camille Cerf produced his first short film in Russia. It was a recording of the coronation of Nicholas II at the Kremlin. Initially, foreign films predominated until the first decade of the 20th century. Several foreign companies, led by Pathe and Gaumont, shot short documentaries and also helped to create a film market in Russia. 90% of the films shown before World War I were foreign made and most of the production companies in Russia were foreign. The first Russian production company was not established until 1907. During World War I, the number of foreign films was reduced as a result of anti-German campaigns and Russian filmmakers began to produce more nationalistic films.

Silent film: Evgeny Bauer was one of the first film producers of silent films. He worked in the genres of social and psychological drama, and directed *Tears*, *After Death* in 1915 and *A Life for a Life* in 1916. Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold created his silent film *The Picture of Dorian Grey* in 1915, using his *biomechanical principles* of acting. There were other popular silent films based on folk tales. Film director Alexander Drankov began his career in Russia while he was working as a photographer for the *The Times* in London, and received most of his financial support and equipment from England in 1907. He produced

his seven-and-a-half-minute, first Russian silent narrative film *Stenka Razin,* a tale of a Cossack hero in 1908. In 1913 new movie theaters were opened in the Russian Empire, 134 in St. Petersburg and 107 in Moscow[i]. Film directors and screenwriters such as Aleksandr Khanzhonkov (who also created stop motion animation) and Vasily Goncharov produced historical war films like *Defence of Sevastopol* in 1912. The main theme of these films was the struggle against foreign imperialistic powers and the strengthening of autocratic power for the Soviet Union's unity.[ii]

Literary classics also became the themes of silent films. Film director and screenwriter Yakov Protazanov produced a biographical film about Lev Tolstoy called *Departure of a Grand Old Man* in 1912, *Nikolai Stavrogin* after Dostoevsky's *The Devil* in 1915, *Queen of Spades* after Pushkin's tale in 1916, and *Father Sergius* after Tolstoy's tale in 1918.

Film director Vladimir Gardin named his film *Home of the Gentry* after Turgenev's novel. He co-directed with Yakov Protazanov a film *Natasha Rostova* in 1915 after Tolstoy's *War and Peace* character Natasha Rostova.

Animation: The first Russian animator, dancer and choreographer, Alexander Shiryaev, using a 17.5 mm Biokam camera, and his hand-made puppets in a toy theatre, recorded the dancers' movements creating first *stop-frame* animation in Russia. Polish-Russian director, Ladislas Starevich directed his animated silent film *Lucanus Cervus* in 1910.

REVOLUTIONARY CINEMA

"The cinema is for us the most important of all the arts"
Lenin[iii]

The Revolution in 1917 made significant changes in the film sector. At the beginning, films, having been considered an educational activity, were placed under the supervision of the People's Commissariat of Education headed by Anatoly Lunacharsky.

Films had to be created and transported to the masses. *Agitka* films which are characterized by their openly didactic content and direct verbal appeals to the audience, such as *Red Army Soldier, Who Is Your Enemy?, For the Red Banner* and *Toward the Bright Kingdom of the Third International* appeared to serve that purpose. They were agitational short films used to train illiterate masses and raise the morale of the Red Army during the Civil war.

Films produced during this era also contained anti-Tsarist themes. The first film produced was a religious film *Father Sergius,* which was based on Tolstoy's novel and was directed by Yakov Protazanov in 1918. In 1919, the film industry was nationalized and the world's first film school *Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography* (the VGIK) was opened in Moscow. On 27 August 1919, Lenin, by signing a relative decree, showed how important the art of cinema was for the newly formed Soviet state. It was in 1922 that state control over cinema production was imposed with the establishment of the official cinema controlling apparatus, the *USSR State Committee for Cinematography* (*Goskino*). From this time until the late 1980s film-makers in the Soviet era were bound to the state and cinema production was planned, financed, censored, and subject to censorship and bureaucratic state control. Cinema was proclaimed a means of propaganda, upbringing and education, with the result that all films become some manifestation of communist ideology.

The first documentaries were shot by two important Soviet directors and theorists, Lev Kuleshov and Dziga Vertov, who developed the "camera-eye" (*kino-glaz*) concept which records what is occurring live.[iv] Lev Kuleshov also was one of the founders of the world's first film schools, the Moscow Film School, and created a montage effect called the *Kuleshov Effect*. Dziga Vertov produced avant-garde films and documentaries, such as *Man with a Movie Camera* in 1929.

Trained as an architect, Sergey M. Einstein moved to cinema in 1924 and his **Strike,** which began as a documentary and presented a portrait of the inequalities of capitalist Russia, was shown in theatres in 1924.

Eisenstein's silent film *The Battleship Potemkin,* released in 1925, depicted the mutiny of Russian sailors on the Potemkin during the first Revolution of 1905. Film director Vsevolod Pudsovkin was another film director who produced a number of feature films depicting inner conflicts and the psychology of people who fought against Tsarist rule during the Revolution of 1905 as in the film *Mother* which was based on Mikhail Gorky's novel of the same name.

Socialist Realism: In 1934 Russia went through a cultural revolution when socialist realism was officially declared the only acceptable form of artistic expression. For Stalin, art had to reflect only the reality that had accepted by the Party, and the "heroic struggle of the world proletariat … the grandeur of the victory of Socialism, and the great wisdom and heroism of the Communist Party".[v] With the consolidation of Stalinist power Soviet film came under almost total state control. For Stalin cinema provided him a window on cultural life and allowed him to control it. Just before World War II, in 1938 Sergey Eisenstein directed a historical drama film *Aleksandr Nevsky*, deliberately using this heroic historical event to associate it with the current political situation, creating Marxist heroes liberating the proletariat from fascist Nazis. His movie was supervised by Party officials, and it received the Stalin Prize. One year after World War II, another film, the first Soviet fantasy and color movie, *The Stone Flower* which depicted the creativity of the Ural miners against cruel landlords and social oppression and directed by Aleksandr Ptushko in 1946 won the Stalin prize.

The Thaw: The Soviet film industry received new impetus immediately following Stalin's death during Khrushchev's de-Stalinization period called "The Thaw". The cinematographer Mikhal Kalatozov's film *The Cranes Are Flying* marked a new beginning for Soviet cinema focusing on personal portraits of ordinary people who suffered from the stresses and cruelty of World War II, winning the Cannes Film Festival's prestigious Grand Prix in 1958.

The Stagnation: After the brief period of "The Thaw" censorship was reintroduced "The Stagnation" occurred under Brezhnev with the film industry becoming more heavily bureaucratized. The Goskino began to hire veteran Communist Party officials who did not have any experience in film. Sergey Paradzhanov had several projects blocked and spent several years in prison on a charge of homosexuality. Aleksandr Askoldov's *Commissar,* released in 1967, because it included strong themes of feminism and motherhood during the Civil War, was not released until 1987 and he was barred from the studios.

The most successful film maker in overcoming barriers and in challenging the socialist realist aesthetic was Andrey Tarkovsky, who directed the films *Ivan's Childhood*, *Andrey Rublev*, *Solaris*, *Mirror* and *Stalker*. Tarkovsky gained a reputation at home and abroad after *Ivan's Childhood*, which conveyed the human cost of war and did not glorify the war experience, and the film *Andrey Rublev*, which was based on the themes of artistic freedom, religion, political ambiguity, and the making of art under a repressive regime, received Prize in Venice 1962 and won at Cannes in 1969. Although Soviet officials attempted to place obstacles in the way of the film festival judges, they were able to obtain the film and it was shown in Russia only after major cuts.

There were World War II dramas **internationally recognized** released in the 1970s and the 1980s which depicted the cruelty of war such as *They Fought for Their Country* directed by Dergey Bondarchuk in 1975, and ***At Dawn It's Quiet Here* directed by Stanislav Rostotsky.** Andrey Konchalovsky was the first film director to release World War II films in Hollywood such as *Maria's Lovers* in 1984, *Runaway Train* in 1985 and *Tango & Cash* in 1989.

Glasnost and democracy: The Fifth Congress of the Filmmakers Union in 1986, leaving behind the heritage of socialist realism, introduced less strict policies into the film industry during the period of *glasnost'* and *perestroika*. The Congress established a Conflict Commission to release previously banned films, and the members of the union established a film museum for the previously suppressed heritage; complete control over the production of films was lifted, and censorship was lessened. The central themes of Soviet films began to cover the problems of ordinary life for the Russian people, and two such films released in 1988. *Little Vera* depicted sexuality and alienation in Soviet society, and the thriller *The Needle* covered the struggle with mafia and drug addiction. Several Soviet films have received Oscars such as *War and Peace*, *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* and *Dersu Uzala.*

1. How was the Russian film industry affected by the Revolution?
2. Under what conditions were films first made in Russia?
3. During the period of "The Thaw", how much freedom did Soviet film makers have?
4. In what ways did Soviet films from the 1980s depict citizens' ambiguous feelings about the Soviet state?

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