Introduction

Pauline Fairclough

Since the first volume of *Shostakovich Studies* was published in 1995, research into both Shostakovich and Soviet musical culture has undergone major change. Most obviously, the controversy surrounding the question of Shostakovich's political dissidence has for the most part abated. There are several reasons why this occurred initially, Laurel Fay's scholarship being paramount.[1] But the reasons why any serious debate is unlikely ever to resurface are much broader in focus: a major theme of Soviet social and cultural studies over the last twenty years has been to scrutinize the nature of power relations among Soviet social/political groups, artistic unions and committees. The crude but popular paradigm of top-down power structures in the Soviet Union, especially during the Stalin period, has been decisively dismantled as scholars have sought out more sophisticated ways of understanding the relationship between the Soviet citizen and the faceless 'state', with Stalin (or other leaders) at its head.[2] As a result, the notion of Stalin 'telling' Shostakovich what to compose has not only been comprehensively shattered, but has also been replaced by something far more interesting. In this newer picture of Soviet socio-cultural life, Shostakovich is no longer a fixed entity – the 'great composer' whose relationship with 'Soviet power' is understood in terms of how it affects him and his music (prompting the banal question of whether it was improved or contaminated by political interference), but becomes a manifestation *of* his own culture, to be understood in that culture's own terms. It is primarily due to the superb work by scholars of Soviet culture and politics in analysing the mechanisms of Soviet society and culture that the post-Cold War image of the dissident, anti-communist Shostakovich can so clearly be seen as the 'self-gratifying anachronism' that Richard Taruskin aptly named it in the first volume of *Shostakovich Studies*.[3] Through pioneering work by Leonid Maximenkov and others, we are beginning to understand some of the tortuous processes that underpinned Soviet musical bureaucracy, something that was clearly impossible before 1991.[4] Simo Mikkonen's chapter in this volume is one example of the contribution that historians of Soviet culture bring to understanding Shostakovich's milieu. To those whose primary interest is Shostakovich, the events surrounding *Pravda*'s attacks on him in 1936

signal the start of official interference in his work, causing him distress that remained with him for the rest of his life. But the repercussions – even the initial causes – of those attacks had a harsh impact upon that very 'faceless' bureaucracy that could be considered the chief threat to musical creativity. As Mikkonen shows, it was the fate of Soviet bureaucrats to be dispensable, to be made into scapegoats and to be replaced when their services were no longer required. This was the tragic fate that befell one official in the wake of the Shostakovich affair, providing all concerned with music production in the Stalin period with a horrifying example of exactly how 'dispensable' they really were.

Shostakovich's rise to fame in the 1920s was, as is universally known, meteoric. Yet Levon Hakobian's chapter makes it clear that he could not have achieved that without the blessing of some of the powerful musical groups active in Leningrad and Moscow. Scholars have for a long time acknowledged Shostakovich's connections with proletarian organizations during this period,[5] and here Hakobian not only confirms the public extent of his allegiance in the proletarian press, but also observes a link between Shostakovich's proletarian affiliation of the 1920s and his return to revolutionary themes in the early years of the 'thaw'. This is a fascinating area for future research: the whole period from 1948 to 1959 remains a problematic one in Shostakovich's creative legacy. Hakobian rightly draws our attention to a general slump in Soviet new music in the years immediately following Stalin's death in 1953, but the real hiatus in Shostakovich's output arguably occurred in the wake of the *Zhdanovshchina* of 1948, not in 1953; and the turn towards revolutionary themes coincides with a number of his folk and national song settings (Russian, Greek, Jewish) among which only the politically sensitive *From Jewish Folk Poetry* has gained a secure place in concert repertoire.

It is not only historical and sociological studies that have shifted our perspectives on Shostakovich's life and times. The work of the Archive of D. D. Shostakovich, privately founded by Irina Antonovna Shostakovich after Shostakovich's death in 1975, is producing truly stunning results. Ol'ga Dombrovskaya's detailed account of a simple document like an appointments diary teases out surprisingly insightful results, while the detective work of Ol'ga Digonskaya has produced some of the most impressive results of archival scholarship in the past half-century. Her discoveries of Shostakovich's lost operas of the 1930s *Narodnaya vol'ya* (People's Will) and *Orango* will permanently alter our understanding of the composer's music in that crucial decade. On the analytical front, David Fanning's superb study of the Eighth Quartet has embedded the neo-Schenkerian approaches first taken in his analysis of the Tenth Symphony and taken them to a deeper hermeneutic level.[6] Fanning's plea for renewed work in this field that is

guided primarily by our experience as listeners and musicians comes from a scholar who has done more than any other Western analyst to interpret Shostakovich's music with deep-level techniques. That being said, other contributions here demonstrate the richness of alternative approaches. Both Kristian Hibberd's and Philip Bullock's chapters draw on the work of the literary theorist and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, whose theories of authorship, plot and novelistic discourse continue to provide music analysts with useful concepts for fresh discussion. Taking Bakhtin's concept of the 'speech act' as his starting point, Bullock shows that Shostakovich's texted music embodies a subtle dialogue between the poet and composer that challenges the 'monologic' discourse of lyric poetry by asserting the composer's own voice, taking this process of 'dialogization' even further by opening it up to more dialogue with performers.

However much we may sympathize with the Fanning/Gergiev plea to 'see more music in the music', no one could credibly claim that details of Shostakovich's life, career and social context are an irrelevance. Patrick McCreless's chapter in this volume demonstrates the rich potential of this extroversive/introversive mix. His wide-ranging survey of the special function of D minor in Shostakovich's music between 1931 and 1949 makes some bold claims for the significance of that key, and in particular its tortured relations with adjacent tonalities. As with Bullock's readings of the Tsvetayeva songs, McCreless uses a wide frame of musical reference to build a substantial body of evidence that is, I believe, ultimately convincing.

A new, and very welcome, addition to Shostakovich studies is Joan Titus's chapter on the Kozintsev–Trauberg early film *Alone*. Detailed analyses of Shostakovich's film scores have not yet been attempted by film music specialists, despite superb work in this field in recent years.[7] As such, it represents a vast, as yet practically untapped resource for future scholarship that could assume significantly greater importance over the next few decades. Finally, my own chapter offers an insight into the relationship between Shostakovich and the poet Yevgeniy Dolmatovskiy. Dolmatovskiy's last memoir of Shostakovich was written towards the end of his life (he died in 1994) and, though rambling and inaccurate at times, nevertheless touches on a number of important events in Shostakovich's creative biography: his attempt to obtain better translations of the Michelangelo sonnets *after* he had already used Abram Efros's as the basis for his song cycle; his unrealized plans to compose a requiem; his enthusiastic offering of an extra 'American' number for the film *The Meeting on the Elbe*; and, rather tellingly, his extreme dislike of personal memoirs about himself.

What this second volume of *Shostakovich Studies* offers, then, is a collection of essays by scholars from a wide range of specialisms: literary, archival, analytical and historical.

PART I

Archival studies

1 Interrupted masterpiece: Shostakovich's opera *Orango*. History and context

Ol'ga Digonskaya

From the first days of 1932 enthusiastic preparations were getting underway for the major anniversary date of the fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution. At the same time, preparations were beginning for the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the Komsomol and the Red Army. All major theatres and concert organizations were pulled into the whirlpool of festive preparations, and their plans began to be discussed extensively in the press. Announcements were splashed over the pages of periodicals and newspapers: 'We are preparing for the XV anniversary of October',[1] 'Theatres prepare for XV October',[2] 'Dramatists prepare for XV October',[3] 'The capitals prepare for XV October (reports from Leningrad and Moscow)',[4] 'Music for the fifteenth anniversary of October', 'Let us verify preparations for XV October',[5] 'Leningrad composers for October'[6] and so on. Impelled by personal enthusiasm, but also by the invisible but menacingly poised finger of state powers and by the silent question 'And how will *you* greet the fifteenth anniversary of October?', the creative unions nervously began to take steps, and collective reports and personal promises followed.

In this October bacchanalia Shostakovich began to work in several different genres. In January 1932 the Leningrad Malïy Opera Theatre (MALEGOT) made two reports on their plans to stage a Soviet musical comedy for the anniversary festivities, with a text by Nikolay Aseyev and music by Shostakovich.[7] In February 1932 the composer himself publicly declared his intention to write a five-movement symphony 'from Karl Marx to our own days' based on a text by Aseyev and to fulfil a commission from MALEGOT for a 'comic opera in three acts, also on a text by Aseyev. Its subject was to be a Soviet person abroad, in the unusual (for them) environment of capitalist society.'[8] At the beginning of March of the same year MALEGOT again confirmed that 'the fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution will be marked by a Soviet musical play, on which the poet N. Aseyev and the composer Shostakovich are working'.[9] The name of Shostakovich, in partnership with that of the writer Anatoliy Mariengof, is also mentioned among the first three creative brigades formed as a result of the signing of the general agreement between the Leningrad Theatre of Musical Comedy and Vseroskomdram (the All-Russian Society of Comedists

and Dramatists) 'to contract dramatists and composers for the writing of a musical play for the fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution'.[10] The same creative duo promised an October production to the Moscow operetta theatre, whose press report on its forthcoming anniversary season listed five new Soviet operettas including the Mariengof–Shostakovich operetta *The Negro*.[11] At the same time, Shostakovich hastily wrote music to the film *The Counterplan*, whose release was planned and actually occurred on 7 November, the anniversary day itself. Shostakovich was also involved in work on a new march for TRAM (the Theatre of Working Youth),[12] and a TRAM play *Combat Course* to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the Komsomol ('the authors are L'vov, Sokolovskiy and Gorbenko. The play is directed by M. Sokolovskiy and the artist F. Kondratov. The composers are D. Shostakovich and F. Rubtsov').[13] Such was the careless promise Shostakovich made in honour of the anniversary; delivery occurred a month late and in ridiculously scaled-down form. Special attention, of course, was lavished on his beloved opera *The Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*, his main triumph of 1932. However, in spring, at the height of the universal pre-October hysteria, the Bolshoy Theatre made Shostakovich a flattering proposal, which he neither could, nor wanted to, turn down.

Anxious about the future October celebrations, the Bolshoy Theatre began to put together its festive programme from the very first weeks of the anniversary year. On 31 January the directorate of the theatre (the assistant director, Boris Arkanov, and the poet Dem'yan Bednïy) agreed on the creation of a heroic-epic play in five acts, *The Solution* (on the theme of the similar feuilleton of Bednïy),[14] which was to become the basis of the 'musical work for the setting in GABT [the State Academic Bolshoy Theatre] for the XV anniversary of the October Revolution'.[15] Bednïy agreed to submit his text no later than 15 May 1932. Soon press announcements and descriptions appeared: '*The Solution* shows the aspirations of the people, as previously embodied in the fairytale forms of the firebird, magic tablecloths, flying carpets, etc., and which became living heroic reality after the October Revolution. The leading part of the proletariat is emphasized by the introduction into the play of the fairy tale about seven blacksmiths, brother-heroes, who destroy that black terrestrial force, which the peasant-hero could not overcome.'[16]

Conceived on a heroic-epic scale and as the fruit of folk-revolutionary propaganda, *The Solution* had within a month or so drawn Shostakovich into its orbit. On 8 March 1932 he not only stopped work on the score of *Lady Macbeth*, but, as I will explain, signed the contract for the opera *The Solution* in four to five acts, according to which two acts 'must be completely returned for performance for the XV October anniversary. The piano score of these two acts must be submitted not later than 1 August [1932].'[17] In the contract,

the date by which the whole opera must be completed (1934) and a number of guaranteed performances (ten) is specified.

After doing all that was necessary in order to honour the significant date of the new Soviet opera in the spirit of 'the great art of Bolshevism' (so called by Valeryan Bogdanov-Berezovskiy in one of the first programme articles of 1932),[18] the Bolshoy Theatre, at long last, could figuratively draw breath – but only temporarily. On 10 May 1932, five days before the agreed date for delivery of his text, Dem'yan Bednïy confessed in a letter notifiying the theatre of the dissolution of the agreement: 'I have not managed to deliver the work within the agreed period. The fault at the non-fulfilment of agreement is wholly mine.'[19] Leaving aside the reasons why Bednïy was forced to go back on his promises, I note only that for the board of the Bolshoy Theatre his admission was a shocking and unexpected contingency. What was urgently needed now was to replace the play with another by a suitable author whose professionalism and ability to deliver in a short period was not in doubt. Boris Arkanov made the lightning and apparently face-saving decision to approach the prominent writer Alexey Tolstoy (along with his permanent co-author Alexander Starchakov), and by 12 May 1932 he had obtained their written answer: 'I hereby confirm my agreement for the writing of an opera together with D. D. Shostakovich and A. O. Starchakov on the theme of the growth of man in the process of revolution and socialist construction. We propose the following terms: the entire opera – a libretto of four–five acts – must be finished by 1 November 1932. To elaborate: by 1 June of this year, [we will submit] one act, and the rest gradually between 20 June and 1 November of this year. The authors will take the responsibility of presenting one act for the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution.'[20] On the same day, 12 May, Shostakovich also gave his written agreement '*to transform the agreement I have with GABT for writing the opera The Solution into an agreement for writing an opera on a text by Tolstoy and Starchakov. Conditions remain the same.*'[21]

After the securing of preliminary agreement by both sides, the 'composer' and the 'authors', on 17 May 1932 Boris Arkanov concluded two agreements with them, which guaranteed successful fulfilment by the October anniversary. The 'authors'' agreement prescribed the submission of literary material to the board within their own designated periods. But in addition, in a rare and thus very significant addition to the standard rubric – testifying to the magnitude of the task – the board required them 'to conduct their work in conjunction with the composer D. D. Shostakovich for the purposes of giving the play the best forms for setting it to music'.[22] The 'composer' also promised to prepare the first act of the opera for the fifteenth anniversary of October, and to return the piano score by 1 August and the orchestral score by 1 September.[23] The name of the future opera is not mentioned in any of

these agreements, but its content ('the growth of man in the process of revolution and socialist construction') is formulated, as we see, very provisionally and broadly. Actually Shostakovich could begin work only after 20 June 1932, once he had obtained the first act of the play from the librettists. But the board of the Bolshoy Theatre, not foreseeing further complications with the anniversary events, announced the festive production in advance: 'For the fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution the Bolshoy Theatre is preparing the first act of an opera, commissioned from the writers Alexey Tolstoy and D. [Shestakovich] [sic], fragments from the new opera by Shaporin and Tolstoy *The Decembrists* and Shebalin's symphonic poem "Lenin" (text by V. Mayakovskiy).'[24] In the subsequent press release more complete information was included: in the ten days between the two announcements, the opera had acquired its name, genre and political slant and even its literary source: 'The Bolshoy Theatre of the USSR in the future season [1932/3] will present the new opera-bouffe *Orango*. The authors of the libretto are the writers Alexey Tolstoy and A. Starchakov. The composer is D. Shostakovich. The opera *Orango* is conceived as a political pamphlet directed against the bourgeois press. The theme for the libretto is adapted by A. Starchakov from "The Career of Arthur Christie".'[25] As we can see, the anniversary concept underwent some truly giddy genre transformation – from the fairytale-heroic epic (Dem'yan Bednïy) to the satirical opera-bouffe.

But despite a promising beginning, events again got out of control and began to develop along the lines of the regrettable scenario that we now know. The authors did not keep to the agreed date for the promised play, and the question of the opera and its topical subject was dropped. The directorate of the Bolshoy informed Shostakovich in writing on 11 October 1932: 'In the breach of the conditions agreed on 17 May 1932 by the writers A. N. Tolstoy and A. O. Starchakov, the literary material of the play *Oranga* [sic] has not been submitted. As a consequence you were deprived of the opportunity to begin writing the opera *Oranga* . . . the directorate presently notifies you that, until you receive the libretto of the opera, payment of the agreed monthly sum will be temporarily stopped.'[26] On the notification is added, as required, Shostakovich's personal comment on reading it: 'Agreed. DShostakovich / 15 X – 1932.'[27] And so the composer crossed out the opera *Orango* from his list of pressing matters, and Boris Arkanov threw himself wholeheartedly into the preparation of the new festival programme, which had again proved to be under threat of disruption. In the merciless glare of pre-jubilee searchlights the position seemed truly catastrophic. It was complicated further by the fact that Yuriy Shaporin, despite repeated reminders from the directorate and his own personal promises, also did not meet the conditions of his agreement and did not write even the first act of the opera *The Decembrists*.[28] The Bolshoy Theatre

was deprived of its two publicly announced operatic projects, and on the eve of the October celebrations it in fact proved to be empty-handed.

Nevertheless, the dissolution of the agreement for *Orango* passed off painlessly. Over the same period, Shostakovich and the Bolshoy Theatre concluded an agreement for the 1933 production of the opera *Lady Macbeth*, desired equally by both sides, and it seems that this compensated mutual moral and financial expenses. In the event of success this operatic premiere would soften the bitter aftertaste of the October anniversary fiasco, but first it had to be fought for and won. Into the heated atmosphere of the rivalry of two theatres (the Leningrad MALEGOT and the Moscow Nemirovich-Danchenko musical theatre), both fighting over the premiere of *Lady Macbeth*, now broke a terrible third rival – the GABT.

Because of space constraints, I will pass over the troubled details of this dramatic non-production, on which previously unknown archive materials shed light. I note only that in the middle of October Shostakovich still hoped for a favourable outcome. Perturbed by the ripening scandal, but animated and urged on by pleasant anticipation and deadlines (in January/February 1933), after a two-month interruption he feverishly began work anew on the composition of the opera *Lady Macbeth*, anticipating the beginning of the draft work on Act IV in the note 'Act 4 / Scene 9', with his personal signature and by the date: 'DShostakovich 15/X 1932'.[29] On the same day, we recall, he signed the cancellation of the unlucky *Orango*, which in actual fact he had neither the opportunity, time, desire nor will to write. The absence of the Starchakov–Tolstoy libretto took all responsibility away from the composer for the frustrated anniversary production; and a new agreement with the Bolshoy Theatre led him to a change of direction.

Let us turn now to the musical and literary sources that have an immediate bearing on Shostakovich's October anniversary operatic project. Among the separate untitled manuscripts in the Glinka Museum folder[30] one is distinguished by its completeness and comparatively large size: outwardly it consists of four double sheets, folded into each other, of music manuscript paper of large transverse size (37.2 × 44.1 cm). The paper is non-standard, without a watermark, with brown staves of different lengths, thirty-five to each sheet. Of the sixteen pages, thirteen are filled in purple ink in Shostakovich's hand. At the end of the last bar there is a double barline, which leaves no doubts about the fact that this is a completed fragment. The author's text is legible, and the paper is in good condition.

This type of manuscript paper is encountered in Shostakovich's manuscripts only in the 1930s. On it are executed some two-line sketches[31] and fragments of the score of the opera *Lady Macbeth*,[32] the piano score of preserved numbers of the opera *The Big Lightning*,[33] sketches for the Twenty-Four Preludes for piano,[34] sketches for the second to fourth movements of the First Piano

Concerto,[35] some sketches and fragments of the musical score of the drama *The Human Comedy*,[36] a sketch of unestablished designation with the caption 'Ally or enemy . . .',[37] many sketches of music for the cartoon *The Tale About the Priest and His Worker Balda*,[38] some sketches for the Fifth Symphony,[39] and also the score for the film *Volochayevskiye Days* (The Far East).[40] Subsequently this type of paper would no longer be found in Shostakovich's writing desk: it is not to be found again in any of his later manuscripts. Therefore it is possible to date Shostakovich's autograph to precisely the mid 1930s.

The autograph score is a fragment (in piano score) of a previously unknown music theatre work by Shostakovich, consisting of ten numbers (including an overture and two ballet scenes) and soloists, singers, a ballerina (introduction of the ballet troupe is not indicated in the manuscript) and a chorus. From captions in the vocal and choral parts the following subject can be discerned:

> A group of foreigners arrives in the USSR. After a chorus glorifying labour – not slavish, as previously ('labour was cursed, the lot of the unhappy slave'), but presented as free ('in the terrible and glorious battle of the slaves the fatherland was found . . . Freed labour is the name of that fatherland') – an Entertainer[41] begins to entertain the guests with the numbers of an amateur company, including dances 'the eighth miracle of light' and the local prima-ballerina Nastya Terpsikhorova. However, the centrepiece of the programme is the man-monkey Orango, who, as another character – a zoologist – explains, 'eats with the aid of a knife and the fork, blows his own nose, plays chizhik and can even pronounce "he-he-he"'. At the command of the zoologist Orango demonstrates his talents, but at the height of universal enthusiasm he unexpectedly rushes to the foreigner Suzanna with aggressive howls of: 'Rrrryzhaya rrrrasputnitsa! Rrrrazorvu! Rrrr . . .' Foreigners in the queue recognize in Orango a husband, son, brother or student. The explanation is that Orango is a hybrid, the result of a biological experiment, and had been in the past a brilliant journalist. But under the influence of worldly and political errors he finally became a beast and was sold to the Moscow zoo. The action closes with the call of the Entertainer to play and present to the people for their edification the past degradation of Orango: 'an amusing history about how the incredible hybrid Orango participated in the war, returned to Paris, what he studied, and what became of him. How, upon his arrival in the USSR he was exposed, married and eventually ruined, and how the management of GOMETS[42] purchased him in Hamburg for one hundred and fifty dollars.' An edifying chorus invites the group to laugh at 'the abortive attempt of a monkey to seize control of his own life'.

The manuscript breaks off at this point. But the literary content and, most importantly, the name of the beastlike 'hero' make it possible to attribute the autograph score as the Prologue (or first act) of the opera-bouffe *Orango* on the libretto by A. O. Starchakov and A. N. Tolstoy.[43]

Thus, the subject of the Prologue of the opera *Orango*, as it follows from the verbal strand of the autograph score, is dedicated 'to the criticism of bourgeois society', already a familiar topic for the author of the ballet *The Golden Age*