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## The History of the Saxophone in St. Petersburg, Russia

STACY MAUGANS

Although well-known and respected composers in St. Petersburg, such as Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich, wrote several works that include saxophone, very little is generally known about the instrument and its history in that city. The most extensive bibliography of saxophone literature, compiled by Jean-Marie Londeix, covers approximately five thousand original works for saxophone and includes a mere handful of Russian composers. The edition published in 1971 has about a dozen Russian composers; the 1994 edition, over thirty.<sup>1</sup> The majority of Russian entries contains no information about the composer and/or an incomplete listing of works. In many cases, the Russian composers either wrote before the Soviet period or were able to publish their works in Western Europe or the United States. Thus, many pieces written by composers in the USSR are unknown outside of the former Soviet republics. Russian saxophonists themselves are also generally not known outside of their country, with only two listed in a bibliography of saxophonists: Lev Mikhailov and Anatolii Vapirov.<sup>2</sup> While future articles may contain bibliographies of saxophone music and books and biobibliographies of composers and saxophonists, the present article presents the historical context within which the musicians and their music existed.

This article is organized chronologically within the framework of the political history of the Soviet Union. Perhaps in no other country has the history of an instrument been so inextricably linked to the policies and whims of the government. The saxophone in St. Petersburg has been directly affected throughout the twentieth century by ever shifting attitudes, which often occurred within a single administration. An understanding of the history of the saxophone is only possible within the context of Soviet political history.

As we do begin to understand the difficulties of our colleagues in Russia, we gain a deeper appreciation of the dedication of the musicians—performers, teachers, and composers—who contributed to the development of the saxophone in their country. For in St. Petersburg, surprisingly, there is a rich tradition and deep love for the saxophone dating from the late 1800s to the present. In the midst of great trials, the Russian people often turned to the arts and created some of the world's most beloved treasures in music, ballet, literature, theater, etc. The arts provided an emotional outlet unlike any other. Nowhere is this truer than in the history of the

<sup>1</sup>Jean-Marie Londeix, *125 Ans de Musique Pour Saxophone* (Paris: Leduc, 1971); Jean-Marie Londeix and Bruce Ronkin, eds., *150 Ans de Musique pour Saxophone: Répertoire général des oeuvres et des ouvrages d'enseignement pour le saxophone: 1844-1994* (Cherry Hill, N.J.: Roncorp, Inc., 1994).

<sup>2</sup>Harry Gee, *Saxophonists Soloists and Their Music, 1844-1985: An Annotated Bibliography* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1986).

saxophone in St. Petersburg, Russia. This article traces the history of the saxophone and the politics that shaped its performance, compositions, and pedagogy.

### The Saxophone in Pre-revolutionary St. Petersburg

One of the first references to the saxophone in Russia occurred in 1862 in connection with a woodwind competition in Paris. This competition, served by a jury of such respected musicians as Ober, Kastner, Monnais, and Benois, took place five years after Adolphe Sax began teaching the first saxophone classes at the Paris Conservatory. The St. Petersburg journal *Muzykal'nyi Svet* [Musical World] reported on the two-day competition:

Three first, three second and five third prizes were received by members of Mr. Sax's military class of saxophone. He should be pleased that he succeeded in developing such good pupils. It would be good to name them all, but we will only identify Eykermans, Simon, Géraud, Hausser, Dagard, Gluck, David and Compère. The string quartet which accompanied Sax's students was superb.<sup>3</sup>

The saxophone itself appeared in Russian military and court wind bands soon thereafter, during the 1860s and 70s. This is the same time period in which the saxophone became a member of military bands throughout Europe. In Russia, military bands consisted only of brass instruments. Military ensembles including woodwind instruments were called choirs. The Guard Bands of the Preobrazhensky and Petersburg Cavalry Guard Regiments and the Naval Crew Guard Choir are examples of these separate, large, mixed musical choirs. The saxophone was established within the Navy Choir in Petersburg by the "Statute of drill and port ensembles of the Navy Department" on January 22, 1873.<sup>4</sup>

Although the saxophone entered Russian musical life at such an early time, its activities there were quite sporadic. Its addition to the Navy Band in 1873 was promptly followed by its removal in 1874. Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov agreed with the judgment of conservative musical society that the saxophone was imperfect in construction and did not command sufficient technical and expressive qualities. Rimsky-Korsakov, acting on advice of the trumpet and cornet professor V. Vurm from the St. Petersburg Conservatory, removed the saxophone during the reform of the naval ensembles and wrote that

this instrument will probably soon be entirely eliminated from Russian military ensembles as a result of climatic conditions unfavorable to the saxophone, that is, the cold and dampness while

<sup>3</sup>"Konkurs dukhovykh instrumentov" [Competition of Wind Instruments], *Muzykal'nyi Svet* [Musical World] 10 (St. Petersburg, October 1862): 78.

<sup>4</sup>Vladimir Dmitriyevich Ivanov, *Saksofon* [Saxophone] (Moscow: Muzyka, 1990), 26.

playing the saxophone outdoors affect its harmoniousness and good tone.<sup>5</sup>

The saxophone was reestablished within Russian military bands around the turn of the twentieth century, during the reorganization of military music. In the 1890s the first saxophone class was organized in conjunction with the St. Petersburg Kapella, where classes and wind ensembles met. M. Vladimirov, the well-known conductor of A.D. Sheremetev's band, specifically recommended opening a saxophone class in his proposal for the establishment of a Russian military music school. In a separate proposal, A. Mol, another bandmaster, supported the saxophone in military bands by citing the normal ensemble of saxophones in a band (soprano, two altos, two tenors, two baritones and a bass) established by an international music congress at the 1902 World's Fair in Paris.<sup>6</sup>

These early saxophone classes were taught by Pëtr A. Arkad'ev, first clarinetist of the court orchestra. The program of study under Arkad'ev included transcriptions of works by Bach and Mozart, but also pieces by composers who wrote specifically for the saxophone in Europe, such as Singelée's Quartet No. 1. Both the score and parts for the ensemble are still in the library of the St. Petersburg Philharmonia. After the Revolution of 1917, Aleksandr Berezin, a famous clarinetist, taught saxophone at the Navy Music School until 1922. After this time, there were no official classes of saxophone until the 1970s.<sup>7</sup>

Besides the military bands, the courts of the tsar and local aristocrats patronized the arts and provided the saxophone with performance opportunities quite early in its history. A basic understanding of the patronage of music in pre-Revolutionary St. Petersburg will clarify the role of saxophone within the various ensembles.

The Tsars supported many musical activities, especially during the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881) and Nicholas I (1881-1894). Court choirs, orchestras and theatrical groups were financially supported by the imperial court. For example, the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg was established in 1860 by a decree of the Tsar. The Grand Duchess Helena Pavlovna, aunt of Tsar Nicholas I by marriage, guided a number of important groups in the city. Both the Russian Musical Society (RMS, founded in 1859) and the St. Petersburg Conservatory (formally opened in 1860) were brought into existence through her influence on the Tsar and with the help of Anton Rubinstein. The RMS, active primarily in St. Petersburg, gave concerts and started schools of music. The St. Petersburg Conservatory was modeled on German conservatories and initially employed many non-Russians on the faculty. This conservative, cosmopolitan institution was balanced by the Free School of Music, started by G. Ia. Lomakin and partially funded by its own concert series. Students of the non-aristocratic, merchant class were able to attend. The level of instruction was

<sup>5</sup>Trans. by author. The original handwritten manuscript of N.A. Rimsky Korsakov's report to K.A. Mann, director of the office of the Navy Department, is kept in the Central State Archive of the Navy (Office of the Navy Department, business department, 1873, d. No.21, f.10, quoted in Ivanov, *Saksofon*, 26.

<sup>6</sup>Ivanov, *Saksofon*, 27.

<sup>7</sup>Andrei Iur'evich Bol'shiianov, interview by author, tape recording, St. Petersburg, Russia, 12 June 1998.

not at a high, professional level, especially outside of the choral department, but the concerts given by this school provided an important performance venue for contemporary works by Russians. When Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov became involved in the instrumental programs, there was much more crossover among activities of the Free School, St. Petersburg Conservatory, and the RMS.<sup>8</sup>

The Court Wind Band, which performed for festive ceremonies and balls of the Tsar in St. Petersburg, used saxophone in its instrumentation. Saxophonists who played in this ensemble were graduates of Arkad'ev's saxophone class: Nikolai Kalistratov, Vladimir Potashinskii, Dmitrii Levshin, Nikolai Bovurin, Pëtr Timofeev, Nikolai Myshonchuk and others.<sup>9</sup> Levshin and Bovurin continued to play in a quartet together, teach saxophone, and play as a few of the first saxophonists in a Big Band for a few years after the Revolution.

Another important patron of the arts in St. Petersburg was Mitrofan Petrovich Beliaev (1836-1904). He helped to fund the publishing of music, concerts and various instrumental groups. The Beliaev Circle included the composers Aleksandr Glazunov, Liadov, Rimsky-Korsakov and later Kryzhanovskii, Nikolai Cherepnin (father of Aleksandr Cherepnin), and Zolotarev. The musicians in this group all ended up affiliated with the St. Petersburg Conservatory, the RMS, or both.<sup>10</sup>

An additional active musical organization in St. Petersburg, "Evenings of Contemporary Music," began sponsoring concerts in 1901. The renowned student of Liadov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, Sergei Prokofiev, was able to have several of his earlier compositions performed on a number of their concerts.<sup>11</sup>

In the early 1900s Prince Felix Iusupov, the young aristocrat notorious for the legendary murder of the monk Rasputin in 1916, maintained a private orchestra which performed at the family's palace on the Moika Canal in St. Petersburg. Although the saxophone had already "gained notoriety as the ill-bred harbinger of new social mores,"<sup>12</sup> Iusupov did not hesitate to introduce a section of six saxophones to his orchestra. He and his wife were known for their enjoyment of dancing to the new ragtime music from the United States.

The cakewalk, tango, fox-trot, and other jazzy dances were popular at certain venues in Russia by the 1910s. Ragtime could be heard all the way from new public dance halls to the court of Tsar Nicholas II. At the same time, the musical establishment denounced it as vulgar and totally lacking in artistic merit. Such statements by music critics in St. Petersburg actually echoed those of critics in Europe and the United States. The difference between the denouncements in Russia and those of other countries was that in Russia, the critics also reported that the reaction of the general public was unfavorable toward jazz. Ostrovskii, a St. Petersburg music

<sup>8</sup>Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v. "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

<sup>9</sup>Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv [Central State Historical Archive], f. 500, on 1, d. no. 728/35 (lists of students of Court Kapella), as cited in Ivanov, *Saksofon*, 27.

<sup>10</sup>Stanley D. Krebs, *Soviet Composers and the Development of Soviet Music* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1970), 21.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>12</sup>S. Frederick Starr, *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union 1917-1991*, 2d ed., Limelight Editions (New York: Proscenium Publishers, 1994), 21.

critic, wrote that audiences of students, artists, working people, and soldiers that he observed in cabaret restaurants and public concert halls reacted to ragtime music with indifference or disgust.<sup>13</sup> Such a report in the face of ragtime's popularity for the lucrative dance halls as well as for the aristocratic courts foreshadows the later Soviet denunciations of Western music in general and the saxophone in particular while this music was, in fact, popular with a large number of people.

Thus the saxophone entered the Russian musical world in a number of ways. The military bands, imperial court ensembles, orchestras of certain aristocrats, and even a few independent groups playing the recent jazzy tunes in dance halls provided Russians with an introduction to this new wind instrument. The reception of the saxophone was already quite varied, from enthusiastic approval to a foreboding disapproval. Such a dichotomy would continue past the Revolution of 1917 and into the Soviet Period.

### The Saxophone in Soviet Leningrad

#### *Early Soviet Period: 1917-1935*

During the early and middle Soviet period, the general opinion towards saxophone held that it was either a somewhat trivial instrument, suitable only for light, entertaining music, or a capitalistic instrument, dangerous in and of itself. A well-known saying stated "Ot saksofona do finskogo pozha—odin shag" [From the saxophone to a Finnish sword is one step].<sup>14</sup> Another common adage concerning jazz, with which the saxophone was closely identified, was "Segodnia on igraet dzhaz, a zavtra rodinu prodast" [Today he plays jazz, and tomorrow he will betray the motherland].<sup>15</sup> Although no longer reflecting the current attitude toward saxophone, these sayings are still well-known among contemporary musicians.

While the basis for these adages took root during Stalin's reign, the seeds of concern about the saxophone were sown in the early Soviet period. During that time, all aspects of the culture were in a state of flux as the government struggled to carve out a distinctively Soviet culture. For the saxophone, this meant that it alternately surged in popularity and faced its first attempted ban. Soviet composers began to include it in ballet, concert, and film music, as it also continued to be the center piece for jazz, which was trying to find its own niche in Soviet culture.

In the first ten years after the Revolution, the saxophone in both classical and jazz idioms was sufficiently tolerated. Aleksei Kozlov, a musician in Petrograd who had bought a silver tenor saxophone before the Revolution, established a quintet in 1924. His group played a variety of jazz and Western pop tunes during the 1920s.<sup>16</sup> Groups like this that played early forms of jazz did not cause even as much

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>14</sup>Bol'shianov, interview.

<sup>15</sup>Aleksei Alekseevich Korabanov, interview by author, St. Petersburg Navy Band Office, Russia, 26 June 1998.

<sup>16</sup>Aleksei Batashev, *Sovetskii dzhaz; istoricheskii ocherk* [Soviet jazz; an historical essay] (Moscow, 1972), 14.

controversy as that found in the United States. Lenin's New Economic Policy furthered the toleration of jazz for a few more years, until 1928, shortly before Stalin became the head of state.<sup>17</sup>

During this time of sanctioned activity, the Leningrad pianist Leopold Teplitskii brought several saxophones into the Soviet Union from the United States. After hearing Sam Wooding's band on its tour of the Soviet Union, Teplitskii traveled to Philadelphia to play and listen to jazz and collect music and instruments. With generous funds from the Commissariat of Public Enlightenment, he returned to Leningrad in 1927 with recordings, music (especially arrangements by Paul Whiteman) and over forty musical instruments, including six saxophones for the three saxophonists in his newly organized First Concert Jazz Band. The musicians in the group were from Leningrad orchestras and the Leningrad Conservatory. Although this new band was started as an enthusiastic experiment in jazz, the musicians had no instruction in or introduction to improvisation or creative initiative within the context of this new style of music. The program for the premiere held at the State Academic Capella was a mix of jazzed-up classics (e.g., pieces adapted from Liszt, Rubinstein, Rimsky-Korsakov), pop, and jazz tunes (e.g., "Yes, Sir, That's My Baby," tunes by George Gershwin and Irving Berlin).<sup>18</sup>

At the premiere of the First Concert Jazz Band, the featured speaker was Joseph Schillinger,<sup>19</sup> a successful pianist and composer, graduate of the St. Petersburg Conservatory and member of the board of directors of the Leningrad Association of Modern Music. In his lecture he championed the new jazz music while telling about the history of jazz, its instruments (including the relatively new saxophone), repertoire, etc. While admitting some of its negative connotations, he acknowledged the unequivocal popularity of jazz with the people and ironically upheld jazz as the true realization of the "Music for the masses," which the Communist party needed to accomplish its goals.<sup>20</sup>

Rimsky-Korsakov, who had established his assessment of the saxophone as early as 1874 by removing them from the military bands, condemned the views of his former student, as did the authorities that interrogated Schillinger the following year. In 1929 Schillinger went to the United States as the representative of the Leningrad Association of Modern Music, remained there as an emigrant, and subsequently influenced composers such as George Gershwin, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, and Glenn Miller (*Moonlight Serenade* was written as an exercise for a class with Schillinger).<sup>21</sup>

The banning of the saxophone in the Soviet Union was attempted at various intervals through the Soviet period. The first attempt was the result of the Association of Proletarian Musicians (i.e., a group of musicians who sidled up to the current

<sup>17</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 52-53.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 65-68.

<sup>19</sup>Schillinger also had a background in mathematics that led him to develop the "Schillinger system" of music theory, which he taught to many American composers, such as Gershwin, who used it most notably in his work on *Porgy and Bess*. Schillinger published his ideas in *Schillinger System of Musical Composition* (1941/77) and *The Mathematical Basis of the Arts* (1948/76).

<sup>20</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 74-75; Allan Ho and Dmitri Feofanov, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Russian/Soviet Composers* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), s.v. "Joseph Moiseevich Schillinger."

<sup>21</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 75-76.

interpretation of Marxist ideology and who were, for the most part, not of proletarian origin) and the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Such organizations worked toward a reorientation of culture (e.g., music, arts, literature) guided by the state in order to remove the perceived pernicious influence of decadent Western culture and the past Russian tsarist culture. Those remnants from the past had been tolerated by the Soviet government for the first decade after the Revolution, but would now no longer be allowed.<sup>22</sup>

The specific targeting of the saxophone as an unauthorized instrument occurred in 1929. Ernst Krenek launched the campaign in response to the performance of the jazz operetta *Jonny spielt auf* at Nemirovich-Danchenko Theater in Moscow.<sup>23</sup> The show was closed, but the saxophone was not successfully banned until twenty years later into Stalin's reign.

As the Cultural Revolution drew to a close, jazz music enjoyed the brief, limited respite in the early 1930s before the full-blown purges began in 1936. With the denunciation of jazz by Hitler,<sup>24</sup> the Soviet Union reversed its own position and redefined jazz as appropriate for the people by dividing it into two categories: bourgeois and proletarian.<sup>25</sup> Music marked as proletarian jazz provided a popular vehicle for the government and gave jazz the opportunity to develop for a few years in the Soviet Union.

The saxophone, ever linked with the rise and fall of jazz, made a few more fleeting appearances as an authorized agent of "Music for the masses." Ferdinand Krishch led the orchestra at the upscale Evropeiskaia Hotel in St. Petersburg. His ensemble was not jazz-oriented, but even he added a saxophone section in the early 1930s.<sup>26</sup> Iakov Skomorovskii presented an even more successful orchestra to the Evropeiskaia Hotel in 1934. His swing band also recorded for Soviet films such as *Tsirk* [Circus] and *Volga, Volga!*<sup>27</sup> In this political climate, Sergei Prokofiev pursued his interest in the latest music by associating with members of the American Embassy.<sup>28</sup>

Leonid Andreevich Utesov (1895-1982) gathered musicians in Leningrad from the Philharmonia, Mariinsky Theater, Mikhailovsky Theater, and Theater of Satire to form a jazz band in 1927. His tenor saxophonist, Arkadii Kotliarskii, modeled his playing after Bud Freeman recordings. While Utesov's band was scoffed at by others in jazz and was compared unfavorably to the band of Tsfasman (a contemporary of Utesov based in Moscow), Utesov was skilled at shifting with the political winds and thus survived through many dangerous times. Stalin liked his band, especially the music they did for a 1934 film *Veselye rebiata* [The happy guys], with music by Dunaevskii.<sup>29</sup> This in itself was enough to call forth scorn from groups

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 84-85.

<sup>23</sup>Volkov-Lannit, *Iskusstvo zapechatlennogo zvuka* [Art of recorded sound], 177-78, as cited in Starr, *Red and Hot*, 85.

<sup>24</sup>"Nazis Reject Jazz," *New York Times*, 18 March 1933, 12; "Hitler Frowns on Jazz," *Literary Digest*, 24 March 1934, 24.

<sup>25</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 103.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 113.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 116.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 120.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 153.



playing more pure jazz pieces. Utesov himself was well aware of the artistic compromises that he made. Much later in his life, he addressed how he felt about the way he had to live during those years:

Do you think we [Soviet musicians] don't know what jazz is? For ourselves, when we're alone, we play in a style that Benny Goodman would envy. Believe me, I'm not bragging; I know what I'm talking about. But for the public we play something different, something "lively." We are forced to pull our left ear with our right hand and our right ear with our left hand. We work as, in ancient times, Comrade Aesop worked. . . . But what else can we do? What can we do when the censor doesn't allow us to breathe; when a certain Apostolov sits in the Ministry of Culture, a creep of a clarinet player; when there is a stone-hearted group of song-hacks and tunesmiths in charge of the Union of Composers? Yes, that is how it is.<sup>30</sup>

Much of the best jazz probably did take place underground. The saxophone itself had to go underground for years off and on throughout the Soviet period, but it did not simply disappear just because it was dangerous. People who played the saxophone often felt a need to do so as an outlet for their emotions as they dealt with extremely difficult times, usually precisely during a time when it was illegal to do so. The popularity of the instrument never waned as it instead became a powerful symbol.

The 1920s also saw the first few Soviet orchestral works to include the saxophone as a member of the orchestra. Reingol'd Glière wrote the ballet *Krasnyi mak* [The red poppy] in 1927. While the subsequent suite did not include saxophone, the ballet itself was performed with a saxophone in the orchestra. Two years later, Sergei Vasilenko wrote the ballet *Syn solntsa* [Son of the sun]. Both scores call for an alto saxophone.<sup>31</sup>

In the early 1930s, the saxophone was most notably included in the works of Dmitri Shostakovich and Isaak Dunaevskii. A few of Shostakovich's works from this time include the ballet, *Zolotoi vek* [Age of gold] with the soprano saxophone, the film score, *Zlatye gory* [The golden hills] with soprano and alto saxophones, and the score for an animated film, *Skazka o Pope i o rabotnike ego Balde* [The tale of the priest and his worker, Balda] with the tenor saxophone. Dunaevskii included a big band saxophone section in his film scores *Tsirk* [Circus] and *Veselye rebiata* [The happy guys]. Such an early introduction of the saxophone into the orchestral world continued throughout the Soviet period. A selected listing of such music would include more than sixty works by thirty-four Soviet composers.

Thus the first two decades of the USSR were times of growth for the saxophone in both jazz and classical music. The early signs of controversy surrounding the saxophone were only a hint of the dark times to come.

<sup>30</sup>Krotkov, *I Am from Moscow*, 5-6, as cited in Starr, *Red and Hot*, 152-3.

<sup>31</sup>Vladimir Dmitrievich Ivanov, "Osnovnye problemy teorii i praktiki igry na saksofone v voennom orkestre" [The fundamental problems of theory and practice of saxophone playing in military bands] (M.M. diss., Leningrad Conservatory, 1988), 220.

*The Height of Stalin's Reign: 1936-1953*

By 1936, Stalin had been in office for seven years and had begun to crack down on all areas of Soviet culture in order to drive out Western influence on the USSR. The saxophone was linked to the West both through its close ties to jazz music of the West and simply through its invention in a Western European country. Those wishing to play it had to learn to walk a fine line set by governmental decrees, which changed radically back and forth. Nevertheless, many saxophonists began their careers through this precarious time and a number of works were written. In the middle of this time period, World War II provided a respite from close governmental controls on music, although this was followed by another crackdown, which lasted until Stalin's death in 1953.

In 1936 the two newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* carried out a debate on jazz. *Izvestiia*, the voice of the Soviet government, attacked jazz and promoted a ban on the production of saxophones and drums. Interestingly enough, *Pravda*, the newspaper of the Communist Party that had earlier in the year attacked both Dmitri Shostakovich<sup>32</sup> and jazz music, took up the cause of jazz. The Party legitimized jazz, in part, because they announced that they had successfully removed the elements of American jazz from their approved jazz bands. In the end, Stalin, of course, had the last word and, within a month of the last articles on the subject, purged all members of the editorial board of *Izvestiia*. Nevertheless, in Stalin's Great Terror of 1937, many jazz musicians, regardless of their political conviction or lack thereof, were shot or exiled. Most of those were not even targeted for the particular music they played, but rather for their ties to foreigners, no matter how tenuous, or for their previous travel abroad.<sup>33</sup>

In order to provide an example of an officially approved Soviet jazz ensemble that would provide music free from Western influence, the Communist party established the State Jazz Orchestra of the USSR (also referred to as the RSFSR<sup>34</sup> Jazz Band). This ensemble (which played music that only vaguely resembled jazz) was lavishly supported, paid salaries twice that of the best orchestras in the country, and provided jobs for five saxophonists.<sup>35</sup>

One of those saxophonists was Arkadii Mikhailovich Kotliarskii (b. March 21, 1909, Tikhvin of the Novgordosky Province). For most of his career, Kotliarskii performed in the RSFSR Jazz Band under the direction of Utesov (1930-62). In 1962 he joined the Leningrad Jazz Band. He was educated as a clarinetist and saxophonist, graduating from the Leningrad Music Technical School in A. Kozlov's class (1930). During his years of study, he performed as a musician in G. Landberg's Jazz Capella and in the orchestra of the Theater of Musical Comedy.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup>Besides the light fox-trots, Shostakovich used jazz more seriously in both the score for *Hamlet* (1932) and the opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1934). Starr, *Red and Hot*, 162.

<sup>33</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 163-171.

<sup>34</sup>RSFSR = Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic

<sup>35</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 175-6.

<sup>36</sup>Sergei Vasil'evich Bolotin, *Biograficheskii slovar' muzykantov-ispolnitelei na dukhovnykh instrumentakh* [Biographical dictionary of musicians/performers on wind instruments] (Leningrad: Muzyka, 1969), 54, 156.

Orest Oskarovich Kandat (b. January 24, 1908, Vienna) was another one of the saxophonists in Utesov's RSFSR Jazz Band (1934-55) after he completed his studies at the Leningrad Music Technical School (1934-36) in the class of P. Vantrob. His career as a conductor included leadership of the Leningrad ensemble of Lenkontsert soloists (1956-65), musical director of the jazz ensembles of the Baltic Steamship Company (beginning in 1966), and jazz band conductor on the flagship of the Soviet Navy, "Pushkin."<sup>37</sup>

A third nearly career-long member of the RSFSR Jazz Band was Andrei Andreevich Diderikhs (b. July 26, 1911, Sestroretsk of the Peterburg Province), a saxophonist and clarinetist who played a significant role both as a performer and composer in Leningrad. In the realm of classical music, Diderikhs performed the saxophone solo parts in the Leningrad Philharmonic when works by composers such as Ravel, Gershwin, and Prokofiev were presented. As a jazz musician, he arranged and composed many works for jazz band.<sup>38</sup>

Diderikhs began his musical studies with I. Glaser at the Music Vocational School in Pushkin in 1931 and continued with P. Vantrob from 1932 until 1938. During this time he played in the jazz band "Astoria" (1931-33) and began his long tenure (1933-62) with the RSFSR Jazz Band under the direction of L. Utesov. In 1962, he began work in the Office of Musical Ensembles (OMA) of the Lenkontsert. He also performed in the orchestra of the Krasny Theater of Narodnyi Dom for the production of A. Arbuzov's *Bolshaia Zhizn'*.<sup>39</sup>

Throughout the 1930s, Sergei Prokofiev wrote a slew of orchestral works with the saxophone in the orchestra. These range from the famous ballet and suites *Romeo and Juliet* (1936) to lesser known music for the stage, such as *Boris Godunov* (1936). From 1936 to 1945, Prokofiev wrote no fewer than ten orchestral works using the saxophone. While the majority of his music includes the tenor saxophone, some scores call for alto or baritone. It is possible that Diderikhs, the young saxophonist in Leningrad, was the one who led Prokofiev to continue writing saxophone parts in his orchestral works, although no written confirmation of this has been found.

The alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union in the wartime years resulted in a brief period of relative freedom in all of the arts. Nearly any music played by bands to promote the morale of troops was welcomed. Programs included Soviet patriotic songs, jazz numbers, and sentimental folk ballads. The greatest danger was not in the type of music one might play, but in any connection with foreigners. A saxophonist, Pirka Rustambekov, was caught listening to recent recordings with an American journalist in Vladivostok and subsequently arrested.<sup>40</sup>

The wartime years also saw the introduction of the saxophone to national performance competitions. The saxophone appeared as early as 1941 at the All-Union Woodwind Competition. That year Vladimir Kostylev (1905-1941), a member of the USSR State Jazz Band, won fourth prize with a program of *Kontsert* [Concerto] by

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 146.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 35, 146.

<sup>40</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 202-3.

Aleksandr Glazunov,<sup>41</sup> a melody from the opera *Orfeo* by C. Gluck, *Kontsertnyi etiud* [Concert Etude] by Mikhail Petrenko, the waltz *Prekrasnyi Rozmarin* [Beautiful Rosemary] by F. Kreisler, and *Val's* [Waltz] by Volkov-Gaiperin. The three other saxophonists taking part in this competition were E. Lavrent'ev from Leningrad, I. Gutsenko from Novosibirsk and A. Kharat from Rovno. Later that year, Kostylev died along with eight other musician-soldiers when their group encountered a German military unit during the war.<sup>42</sup>

Despite this early and successful entrance into the competitive forum of wind instrumentalists in the USSR in 1941, the saxophone was not a regular entrant in the All-Union and All-Russian woodwind competitions until after the re-establishment of professional instruction, which took place in the 1960s and 70s.

A clarinetist and saxophonist who began his career during the war was Iurii Pavlovich Zhurenkov (b. May 20, 1922, Petrograd). After his student years in the music studio of the Leningrad Palace of Pioneers and the Musorgsky Music School (1935-41) in A. Berezin's class, he served in the navy as a musician in a naval ensemble (1941-45). After military service, Zhurenkov pursued his interest in jazz as a member of the Leningrad Radio and Television Jazz Orchestra (1945-54). He then spent three years in the band of a recording studio. In 1957, Zhurenkov became a soloist of the Lenkontsert and was the first to perform the Glazunov Concerto with the Leningrad Philharmonia.<sup>43</sup>

In 1945 the Evropeiskaia Hotel in Leningrad continued to host bands with saxophones with the dance band of Iosef Vainshtein, but by 1946 a renewed crackdown on culture influenced by any foreign country brought a halt to popular dance and jazz bands.<sup>44</sup> Stalin's postwar paranoia and xenophobia resulted in a renewal of purges of culture and of the people in the Soviet Union until his death in 1953. The State Jazz Orchestra was forbidden to play jazz and was renamed as the State Variety Orchestra. The word *dzhaz* [jazz] itself was illegal to say in public.<sup>45</sup> The saxophone, with its close ties to jazz, was viewed by the government to be the ultimate symbol of Western culture and therefore the antithesis of an appropriate instrument for a Soviet citizen to play. It is sobering to consider that rejecting this idea could result in arrest, exile, and even death. From bizarre reversals in policy to the restraints placed on musicians and, in fact, all Soviet citizens, it is amazing that a number of musicians persevered to create and perform music that included the saxophone and continued its development in the USSR.

#### *Khrushchev and the Post-Stalin Years: 1953-1964*

Despite the lingering effects of Stalin's policies, which continued after his death in 1953, Soviet citizens experienced a slight increase in their freedom to voice opinions

<sup>41</sup>Kostylev appears to be the first saxophonist in the USSR to perform this well-known work by Glazunov.

<sup>42</sup>Ivanov, *Saksofon*, 50-51.

<sup>43</sup>Bolotin, *Biograficheskii slovar'*, 40.

<sup>44</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 207.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 215.

periodically during Nikita Khrushchev's years in office. Leonid Utesov, musician, organizer of musicians and musical events, and long-time leader of the State Jazz/Variety Orchestra, had the courage to write about common perceptions of the saxophone in 1953:

However ludicrous it is, there can still be found people who define a "socialistic" or "capitalistic" sound for one or another instrument. They consider, for example, that the saxophone (which classical writers used!) is the product of a capitalistic way of life and that it is forbidden to perform melodies of Soviet songs on this instrument. It is impossible not to protest against such ignorant views. Of course, the saxophone possesses its own specific timbre in the same way as any other musical instrument does. But is it possible on such grounds to artificially limit the repertoire for a given instrument? Is it possible to mechanically equate the content of music with an instrument? It is perfectly clear that the instrument is the means.<sup>46</sup>

The prevalent attitude, which Utesov criticized, resulted from a lack of knowledge about the instrument itself and its history and the scornful attitude of some Soviet composers who failed to recognize it as a full member of the orchestra. This was despite the fact that many well-respected composers in their own country did, in fact, include the saxophone as a soloist or member of the orchestra and continued to write for it during the 1950s. These composers and their works did nothing to promote the saxophone to a legitimate, in every sense of the word, instrument since the composers themselves were denounced by Andrei Aleksandrovich Zhdanov, Stalin's number-two man. Certainly Prokofiev and Shostakovich suffered from the onslaught of the purges of Soviet culture. In Riga, Prokofiev's *Lieutenant Kizhe* was removed from the repertoire precisely because there was a saxophone in the score, and all saxophones were banned from the conservatory. At the same time, in Moscow, the State Variety Music Agency confiscated saxophones and changed the identification cards of saxophonists to arbitrarily reflect their status as an oboist, clarinetist or bassoonist, regardless of whether they had played the indicated instrument or not. The well-known composer Dunaevskii discontinued the use of saxophone in his works by 1950 and never attempted to reinstate the instrument, even after Stalin's death.<sup>47</sup>

During such difficult years, the saxophone continued to be a popular instrument underground and even surfaced in the media and entertainment world through circuitous means. Utesov practically perfected the means of anti-American satire in theater as a medium for jazz performance. Underground jazz and saxophone playing succeeded because the officials assigned to root it out actually liked it. Some of the best musicians in labor camps in Siberia were given the opportunity to perform the music they loved, reconstructing pieces from memory. These groups played for the

<sup>46</sup>Leonid Utesov, "O pesne i legkoi muzyke" [About song and light music], *Sovetskaia Muzyka* [Soviet Music] 1 (January 1953): 40.

<sup>47</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 216.

parties of prison officials and sometimes even traveled, under guard, to other labor camps.<sup>48</sup>

Although many of the classical Soviet works with saxophone in the orchestra were performed at legitimate public concerts, the general attitude towards the saxophone effectively diminished the educational opportunities of saxophonists. Therefore, the level of performance could be sufficiently poor to further mar the saxophone's reputation. Nikolai Minkh, a famous composer and director, gave a revealing commentary on the state of saxophone playing in 1956:

Let us take, for example, the "long-suffering" saxophone. Saxophonists playing in our stage bands are, for the most part, self-taught, and, of course, by no means do they all meet high professional requirements: with rare exception, their general musical standard is at a low level. When you happen to listen to a saxophone solo in a symphonic concert (*Romeo and Juliet* by Prokofiev, *Symphonic Dances* by Rachmaninov, *Bolero* by Ravel, *Gayne* by Aram Khachaturian, etc.), you feel nervous about whether the solo will be played well. We do not have enough saxophonists. . . It has long since been time that we open classes of saxophone, guitar and accordion, if only in music schools<sup>49</sup> (for the time being it is difficult to count on conservatories, knowing the "academism" of these venerable institutions). . . . In order to be a first-class musician, it is necessary to have a good instrument. . . but unfortunately, we have few and their quality is not high.<sup>50</sup>

The dual disadvantages of nonexistent education and poor-quality instruments perpetuated the problem of public perception of the saxophone. During the early to mid-Soviet period, the USSR neither produced saxophones nor imported them.<sup>51</sup> In the 1930s, Mikhail Lantsman, a pioneering jazz saxophonist in Moscow, had to travel to Kiev before finding a saxophone, which he bought from an old tsarist military bandsman for the exorbitant price of 600 rubles. By the 1960s, the situation had not significantly improved. Mikhail Brantsberg, a saxophonist in Siberia, had to travel all the way to Central Asia where he finally found a French Selmer saxophone, which he bought from a village bandsman in Tashkent.<sup>52</sup>

An instrument factory in Leningrad eventually produced saxophones. These instruments, though not of the highest quality, were at least obtainable for Soviet musicians who wished to play saxophone. Near the end of the Soviet Union, saxophones made in other Soviet republics, such as Czechoslovakia, were available.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 224-5.

<sup>49</sup>Music schools, in this case, refer to primary and secondary institutions, not to music schools (conservatories) at the college level.

<sup>50</sup>Nikolai Minkh, "O legkoi muzyke i ee ispolnenii" [About light music and its performance], *Sovetskaia Muzyka* [Soviet Music] 7 (July 1956): 39-40.

<sup>51</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 118.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 42.

Now, in the post-Soviet period, instruments from various foreign countries are sold, although the price is prohibitive.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the challenges of obtaining an instrument, lack of educational opportunities, and sporadic bans, the saxophone, along with all areas of the arts, suffered from the isolation that occurred even between major cities in the USSR. In the 1950s, Roman Kunsman, a talented saxophonist and jazz musician from Leningrad, was able to travel to Moscow where he was surprised to find that jazz was being played there. Kunsman, who also studied flute, composition and piano, received his saxophone in 1957 from an uncle living in New York.

A fellow saxophonist in Leningrad at this time was Gennadii L'vovich Gol'shtein (b. Jan. 26, 1938, Moscow), who experimented in many styles of music from the jazz of Charlie Parker and Cannonball Adderley to free jazz, from polyphony of the Renaissance to the primitive sounds of the *rozhok*, a peasant horn.<sup>54</sup> Upon graduating from the Leningrad music school in the Kalininskii District (1952), Golshtein played in an independent jazz band for five years and subsequently became a member of Iosef Vainshtein's jazz band (1958-65), for which he also played an important role through his contributions of musical adaptations and arrangements. After playing in E. Rozner's band (1966-68), he joined the concert jazz band of the All-Union Radio and Television in Moscow. Golshtein also distinguished himself as a prizewinner for three consecutive years at the Jazz Festival (Leningrad 1965, Tallinn 1966, Moscow 1967).<sup>55</sup>

International cultural relations opened up in the USSR for a few years at the beginning of Khrushchev's ascent to power in the late 1950s. For example, the Tchaikovsky Competition invited pianists from a number of countries in the West, such as Van Cliburn, an American who won a gold medal in this event. The ban on the word *dzhazz* and the music itself was a thing of the past. On the other hand, the government continued to tightly control all musical activities. Any musician or group that wanted to be listed as available for performing jobs at restaurants, clubs, and parties had to be certified by the Office of Musical Ensembles (OMA). Each group also needed to present a list of pieces to be performed. Since foreign works were still frowned upon, groups often kept one official list for approval and one unofficial repertoire of pieces which they actually played. This office also made it possible for the government to weed out those who were only unofficially in disfavor. In 1962, Roman Kunsman applied to the local OMA, where he was refused certification because he was unable to answer the official's inquiry of where Khrushchev was at the time. The combination of all these pressures pushed most of the best jazz underground, where musicians would gather for informal and private jam sessions.<sup>56</sup>

A year after Khrushchev approved the nation-wide tour of the Benny Goodman band in 1962, he revoked the openness so recently shown toward music and the arts. Once again these areas were viewed as dangerous forms of capitalistic ideology. This caused all the official organs of the government to reverse their position

<sup>53</sup>Bol'shūanov, interview.

<sup>54</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 254-5.

<sup>55</sup>Bolotin, *Biograficheskii slovar'*, 31.

<sup>56</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 265-6.

of recent years as patrons of precisely that music which they had co-opted in order to reach the youth of the time. When Leonid Brezhnev replaced Khrushchev, these reversals were undone, at least for a few years. Foreign radio broadcasts were permitted, and jazz festivals took place throughout the country. But by 1968, a less favorable atmosphere reappeared, and foreign broadcasts, which had been allowed for the past five years, were once again jammed.<sup>57</sup> Such oscillations in the political view concerning foreign countries and the arts and jazz, while not welcomed, at least did not have as negative effect on the saxophone as those changes that took place during the time of Stalin.

During the late 1950s and into the next decade, many Soviet composers wrote orchestral works with the saxophone in the ensemble. Ballets, symphonies, and an oratorio were written by composers such as Nikolai Karetnikov, Moisei Vainberg, Aleksei Machavariani, Aleksandr Lokshin, Andrei Petrov, Eino Tamberg, B. Pishchenko, Aleksandr Adzhemian, and Nury Khalmamedov.

Thus, the years following Stalin's reign brought fewer harsh penalties for proponents of the saxophone, a marginally higher degree of openness for both classical and jazz musicians, and yet continued tight control of the arts by the government. This set the stage for the reinstitution of the saxophone in official educational programs.

#### *Revival of Saxophone Education: 1960s-1991*

In the 1960s and 1970s, official, professional instruction on the saxophone was renewed for the first time since 1922. The Military Conducting department at the Moscow Conservatory and at the Gnesin Music Academy began offering saxophone classes in 1965-67. It was during this time that a few French saxophonists toured the USSR, giving saxophonists their first opportunity to hear some of the classical saxophone repertoire in recital.<sup>58</sup> In 1970, the celebrated French saxophonist Jean-Marie Londeix gave influential recitals in Moscow and Leningrad.<sup>59</sup> Specialized and elective courses in saxophone were soon formed at the Leningrad (1971) and Moscow (1975) Conservatories. In Moscow, Margarita Shaposhnikova (Gnesin Institute) and Lev Mikhailov (Moscow Conservatory) have been instrumental in the development of the saxophone through their pedagogy, transcriptions, compositions, and literature that has been written for or dedicated to them. Other cities that began to offer special saxophone classes included Novosibirsk, Khabarovsk, Bratsk, Saratov, Petrozavodsk, Kazan, and Pskov. Both classical and jazz studies were addressed.<sup>60</sup>

Pavel Nikolaevich Sukhanov (Jan. 22, 1913, Tula-June 3, 1994), clarinetist and teacher, played an important role in the development of the saxophone in Leningrad by becoming a staunch supporter of the establishment of the saxophone

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 271-290.

<sup>58</sup>Bol'shianov, interview.

<sup>59</sup>Gee, *Saxophone Soloists and Their Music*, 219.

<sup>60</sup>Ivanov, *Saksophon*, 49.



class at the Leningrad Conservatory.<sup>61</sup> While studying at the Leningrad Conservatory in the class of A. Berezin, Sukhanov taught at the Leningrad Music School on Vasileostrovskii Prospekt (1934-39) and performed in the orchestra of the conservatory's opera studio and in the orchestra of the Kirov Theater and Ballet (1932-39). After graduating from the Leningrad Conservatory (1937), Sukhanov moved to Kiev where he became a soloist in the Shevchenko Theater of Opera and Ballet (1939-46) and a teacher in the Kiev Music School (1939-41). Upon his return to Leningrad, he began teaching at the Soviet Army Music School (1946-57) and performing in the Leningrad Malyi Theater of Opera and Ballet (1947-64). He returned to the Leningrad Conservatory in 1952 as an instructor in their music preparatory school. He was later promoted to the position of associate professor (1966) and full professor (1982) and also received an award as an RSFSR Honored Figure of Arts.<sup>62</sup>

The saxophone class established with the support of Sukhanov was taught by Anatolii Petrovich Vapirov (b.1946), who was known in the world of both jazz and avant-garde. He was the resident saxophonist of the Leningrad State Symphony Orchestra and the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theater. He also established and played in his own ensemble, made several recordings and collaborated with an American percussionist. Vapirov taught saxophone for about five years in the 1970s at the conservatory from which he graduated with a degree in clarinet as a student of Sukhanov. Students in this new saxophone class at the Leningrad Conservatory could audition into the five-year specialized diploma course in saxophone. Thus, his students included not only clarinetists taking saxophone as an elective, but also degree students.

Vapirov was voted top tenor saxophonist in the USSR and also had a band that performed a fusion of rock and jazz. He was equally committed to jazz and classical playing, as he explained in an interview:

I am not concerned with the differences between contemporary jazz and contemporary classical music, to me it is all fascinating. . . . In my time I have studied classical music, Dixieland, Swing, Mainstream, and Bebop Jazz. However, there came a time when I had to finish with the old ways and begin to experiment, but the basis of my experimental music is classical music and past jazz styles.<sup>63</sup>

After teaching at the conservatory his fortunes changed for the worse. Vapirov moved to Stavrokhal in Kavkaz, where he began to sell audio and video equipment. At some point, the police approached, giving him a choice of handing over all his equipment or going to jail. He ended up in jail for two years. After his release, he was no longer allowed to teach music to Soviet students, so he moved, lived, and worked

<sup>61</sup>Bol'shiiianov, interview.

<sup>62</sup>Bolotin, *Biograficheski slovar'*, 103; Anatolii Vasil'evich Chernykh, *Sovetskoe dukhovoie instrumental'noe iskusstvo: Spravochnik*. [Soviet wind instrumental art: a directory] (Moscow: Sovetskii Kompozitor, 1989), 163, 177.

<sup>63</sup>Colin McCarraher, "Anatoly Vapirov: A Saxophonist in Leningrad," *Clarinet and Saxophone* 7/3 (July, 1982): 5, quoted in Gee, 239.

in various countries throughout Europe, such as Germany, Switzerland and Bulgaria, where he met and married a Bulgarian. He worked in various jobs, including teaching music and running a radio program, *Chas Dzhaza* [Hour of Jazz].<sup>64</sup>

Coinciding with the establishment of saxophone classes in conservatories, the publishing of Russian saxophone methods began in the 1960s and 1970s. Aleksandr Rivchun, Evgenii Andreev and Lev Mikhailov wrote the first Soviet method books.

The earliest of these was Rivchun's *Shkola igry na saksofone* [School of Saxophone Playing], the first part of which was published in 1964 with reprints in 1965 and 1969, and the second part in 1968.<sup>65</sup> Considering that one of the earliest saxophone classes to be reestablished in Moscow began in 1965, Rivchun was quite ambitious and forward-looking. His book was written not only for interested and talented amateurs, but more specifically for teaching and preparing future professional saxophonists. The first part consists of short reports on the history and construction of the instrument, beginning instruction, and elementary music theory. The second part contains systematic explanations and corresponding exercises with sections on fingerings, articulation, meter and rhythm, scales and arpeggios, intervals, ornamentation, solos (no piano parts included), orchestral excerpts, and some patterns of jazz improvisation. As one of the first instrumental methods written by a Russian specifically for the saxophone, *Shkola igry na saksofone* occupies an important place in the development of saxophone teaching in the USSR.<sup>66</sup> As a locally published method, it was much more widely available than any of the foreign methods books and helped many young Soviet saxophonists begin their study of the instrument.

The next important saxophone method book published in the USSR was Evgenii Andreev's *Posobie po nachal'nomu obucheniu igre na saksofone* [Textbook for beginning instruction of saxophone playing] in 1972. This manual became quite popular and greatly supplemented the pedagogical repertoire of saxophonists in music schools at the time. There are sections on scales and exercises, etudes, small ensemble pieces, solos, and duets. Each of these sections are arranged in order of increasing difficulty. Etudes are written by Andreev, A. Rivchun, L. Vigeman, K. Berman and R. Ittel. Solos include a number of original works by foreign and Soviet composers, as well as transcriptions of Russian national songs. This work was quickly respected for its unity of both musical and technical aspects of study through the increasing difficulty of materials.<sup>67</sup>

The broadening demands on saxophonists at conservatories prompted Lev Mikhailov of the Moscow Conservatory to publish *Shkola igry na saksofone* [School of saxophone playing] in 1975. Its importance in the development of the saxophone in Russia lies in the fact that this book not only complemented the works of Rivchun and Andreev, but also introduced ideas based on the work of French saxophonists.<sup>68</sup> The sections in this work include an introduction, fingerings, vibrato, intonation, scales, etudes, solos, orchestral excerpts, and the saxophone in jazz. The solos, both original

<sup>64</sup>Bol'shianov, interview.

<sup>65</sup>Ivanov, "Osnovnye problemy", 162.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 163.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 164.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 165.

works and transcriptions, consist of Russian national songs, classical pieces, solos by Soviet and foreign composers, and pieces in the style of jazz. Music itself, as opposed to simply technical exercises, is emphasized throughout the book as the means to develop the saxophonist both technically and artistically as a musician.

Bronislav Prorvich also published a saxophone method in the 1970s entitled *Osnovy tekhniki igry na saksofone* (1977) [Fundamentals of technique of saxophone playing]. A work of somewhat lesser importance than the previous three, this book focuses solely on the development of technique through scales, exercises, and etudes. It has been criticized for its lack of artistic and musical materials, although it was written not as a comprehensive book for a developing musician, but as a means to focus on technique. As such, it does provide a number of exercises for this purpose. Ivanov also points out that the exercises are not organized according to increasing difficulty, that they lack rhythmic variety and, most importantly, explanations of techniques are inadequate. For example, Prorvich gives instruction concerning articulation as follows:

For this it is necessary to take the mouthpiece in the mouth after placing the reed on the lower exposed lip and taking a breath deeply, slowly and silently, and then to exhale into the mouthpiece. Do this several times, following the course of the air stream through the larynx, mouth, mouthpiece and saxophone.<sup>69</sup>

The works of Rivchun, Andreev, Mikhailov, and Prorvich all played an important role in the establishment of saxophone pedagogy in the late Soviet period. Ivanov concludes that the method by Andreev is the best for beginners, the one by Mikhailov for advanced students, and the methods by Rivchun and Prorvich as auxiliary material.<sup>70</sup> Even with the addition of more recently published Russian method books and the greater availability of foreign saxophone pedagogical works today, these methods from the 1960s and 70s still provide a solid foundation of musical materials for the development of saxophonists in Russia.

Despite the expansion of opportunities during the 1970s, a large number of musicians chose to emigrate as the increasing freedom to emigrate occurred at the same time as continued censorship in the USSR. Saxophonists in this group included Muscovite Mikhail Lantsman, aged seventy-eight, Roman Kunsman from Leningrad, Vladimir Sermakashev, a prize-winning jazz saxophonist, and Vadim Viadro, known for his avant-garde experimentation in Riga. After their emigration, their contributions to the field were dropped from histories and repertoire with which they were connected was prohibited by governmental music agencies, although this did not entirely stop bands from playing such music.<sup>71</sup> Many of these musicians and their works have since been reintroduced in Russian histories and anthologies.

By the end of the 1970s, jazz music began to be viewed more as part of the establishment, just as rock music assumed the role of decadent, unacceptable music.

<sup>69</sup>Bronislav Prorvich, *Osnovy tekhniki igry na saksofone* (1977), quoted in Ivanov, "Osnovnye problemy," 166.

<sup>70</sup>Ivanov, "Osnovnye problemy," 167.

<sup>71</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 290-2.

The acceptance of jazz was reflected in the Contemporary Music Club (avant-garde jazz), the Musorgsky Music School (study of jazz offered to children) and the Leningrad Conservatory (jazz major approved).<sup>72</sup>

Nevertheless, occasional persecution did occur. For example, Vapirov's arrest coincided with this time period and occurred even though he was a respected teacher at the Leningrad Conservatory and not at all outspoken in the political arena.<sup>73</sup>

The number of composers writing solos, chamber music and orchestral works for saxophone proliferated during the 1970s and 1980s. Educational opportunities for saxophonists in music schools and conservatories raised the level of proficiency in the performers. This, coupled with a more favorable political climate, encouraged contemporary composers to write for saxophonists. Furthermore, the personal influence of saxophonists such as Shaposhnikova and Mikhailov in promoting the instrument cannot be underestimated.

In 1979 saxophonists again began to make a statement at the All-Union Woodwind Competition. At this competition, held in Minsk, A. Oseichuk and V. Boiarintsev, both students of Margarita Shaposhnikova at Gnesin in Moscow, shared the second prize.<sup>74</sup> Many students from Gnesin Academy have won such prizes, including S. Pyzantsev (first prize at 1983 All-Union in Odessa and All-Russian in Leningrad), V. Kasatkin (third prize in Odessa and prizewinner in Leningrad), A. Volkov (first prize at 1987 All-Russian in Neva and prizewinner at 1987 All-Union in Khelnitsky). Other cities that have produced prizewinners include Leningrad (Aleksandr Boichuk at 1987 All-Union), Khabarovsk (S. Timchenko at 1987 All-Russian), Alma-Ata (R. Babadzhanov, third prize at 1987 All-Union) and Tallinn (V. Veski at 1987 All-Union).<sup>75</sup>

Aleksandr Boichuk, prizewinner at the 1987 All-Union Competition, studied saxophone with Andrei Bol'shiianov at the Leningrad Conservatory. He worked for a time in Leningrad before moving to Moscow, where he played in a quartet and later a jazz ensemble. He has since played and taught in Switzerland and Germany, where he opened a saxophone studio. He continues to perform concerts, make recordings and teach.<sup>76</sup>

It was not until the 1980s during the rule of Mikhail Gorbachev that many names in Soviet culture and music were rehabilitated. Anthologies and histories of music were published with information about musicians both in the USSR and abroad.<sup>77</sup>

Throughout the turbulent Soviet period, the saxophone succeeded in making its presence known through the military bands, jazz, and classical orchestras providing music for ballets, stage works, films, concert halls, night clubs, and restaurants. Educational and competition opportunities increased. Although officially denounced sporadically through the years, the saxophone managed to remain in the popular, jazz, classical, and academic realms of music to a surprising extent.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 316.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 317.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ivanov, *Saksofon*, 49.

<sup>76</sup>Bol'shiianov, interview.

<sup>77</sup>Starr, *Red and Hot*, 337.

### The Saxophone in Post-Soviet St. Petersburg

After the first saxophone professor, Anatolii Vapiro, left the St. Petersburg Conservatory, the saxophone class was handed over to Andrei Bol'shiianov. Upon graduation, many of his students with the opportunity to travel moved to Estonia, Latvia; Finland, Germany, and France to further their studies and to find work, as there were few prospects in Russia and the transitional economy was in doubt. Bol'shiianov has hope for the future, though, as he sees more opportunities locally and feels that the saxophone in St. Petersburg is on the verge of revival. Military bands alone are employing a good number of saxophonists. Each military unit, of which there are forty to fifty in St. Petersburg, has its own band. There are actually more openings than there are saxophonists to fill them.<sup>78</sup> Uncertainty still exists, though, in the form of the unstable economy and government. Payments to members of the military are anywhere from a few months to a year behind. Pay checks do eventually arrive, but there is no way to tell when one might get paid. Other saxophonists, upon graduation, continue music as a hobby and find employment in other sectors or look for work within the business aspect of music. Opportunities are expanding in the areas from musical instrument sales to organization of cultural tours of the city.

In 1989 the St. Petersburg Conservatory canceled its saxophone class, so Bol'shiianov continued to teach saxophone through the Academy of Culture. Earlier, the Academy of Culture taught mainly amateur musicians who often formed independent chamber ensembles or played in an amateur wind band. Eventually there was a shift in the educational focus, and now the Academy prepares musicians for careers in music. Along the same time line, saxophone was first offered there as a secondary instrument for interested oboists or clarinetists, but now there are students who major in saxophone as their primary and/or only instrument.<sup>79</sup>

Throughout the 1990s, the existence of a saxophone class has been uncertain at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Because of financial difficulties, the course is offered only occasionally. A plan was in place to once again open the saxophone class as a full major at the conservatory, but the future is uncertain.

Therefore, the classes at the St. Petersburg State Academy of Culture have become quite important. A five-year course divided into ten semesters of study has been established for a degree specializing in saxophone. The course of study, developed for the Academy by Bol'shiianov and published in a handbook in 1996, reflects a full curriculum. The goals set forth for this program are: instruction of students in creative independence in work on various technical and performance tasks and methodologically accurate basis of techniques of their work on corresponding musical material, development of artistic performance abilities of young specialists and their professional erudition and world view, and preparation in association with other disciplines for independent professional work with orchestral collectives. Students achieve these goals by developing an arsenal of means in musical performance to discover the main artistic idea of works, combining of technical

<sup>78</sup>Bol'shiianov, interview.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

development with a broadening of general musical performance resources, gaining knowledge of musical literature, developing skills in orchestral and ensemble playing, learning the pedagogy of the instrument, being educated in artistic taste and professional interest in the activities of the conductor of an orchestra, and developing their creative participation, a vital requirement for work and for improving one's knowledge in a field.<sup>80</sup> The importance of individual instruction throughout this process is stressed in the handbook. By graduation, a student should have mastered the scales (major, minor, chromatic, etc.), arpeggios (triad and sevenths in all keys, rhythmic patterns, tempos, articulation patterns, and dynamics), not less than seventy to eighty etudes and exercises in a variety of styles, and not less than twenty-five to thirty pieces of small and large forms, of which seven to eight must be prepared independently by the student and ten to twelve must be memorized. Playing tests are given at the end of the second, fourth, and sixth semesters. The details of the course of study are fleshed out in an outline of the general requirements for each of the ten semesters, followed by an example of a student's specific course of study, including scales (in given forms and tempos), etudes, sight-reading, and literature. At the end of the handbook are literature lists, including both Western and Russian works, of method and etude books, saxophone anthologies, solo pieces for alto and tenor saxophone of both transcriptions and original literature with and without accompaniment, orchestral excerpts for saxophone, and a list of written literature about saxophone-playing published in the USSR or Russia.

Children with an interest in playing saxophone can now begin their studies at a young age in elementary music school. During most of the Soviet period, the education of future musicians took place in the music schools for children, the most prestigious of which was the Music School for Specially Talented Musical Children. Chosen students could enter at age seven. Instruction included a small number of hours in general education, many classes in music and three to four hours daily allotted for practice and/or instruction on an instrument. Seven and Ten-Year Music Schools for children also prepared students for entrance into the conservatory and provided general education. These schools were free to students up until 1938, ninety-six percent free for many years after 1938 and highly subsidized throughout the Soviet period. Music Technicums offered courses for students, age ten and older, who could take an individual subject, rather than a whole curriculum. Children could also participate in amateur performances through Houses or Palaces of Pioneers. The course of study before entering the conservatory takes eleven years, including general and musical studies. For students pursuing a career in music, the course of study in the conservatory is four to five years, depending on the major.<sup>81</sup> A graduate degree takes another two years. Upon successful completion of exams, such a student may become a teacher. The further degree, *doktor nauk* [doctor of sciences], requires a dissertation and is usually pursued at a later time in the career of a teacher.

<sup>80</sup>Andrei Iur'evich Bol'shiianov, comp., *Spetsinstrument saksofon, uchebnaia programma* [Specialization in saxophone, an educational program] (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State Academy of Culture, 1996), 3-4.

<sup>81</sup>Alan Bush, *Music in the Soviet Union* (London: Workers' Music Association, 1943), 3-5.

A teacher at a conservatory begins with the job title of *prepodavatel'*, which is equivalent to the position of assistant professor. The promotion to *dotsent* is the equivalent of associate professor. Such a teacher must have a record of good students, published works, research, performance experience (sometimes as a soloist), and possibly an award such as Honored Figure of the Arts. The title *professor* (i.e., full professor) is awarded to a teacher with not less than ten years of experience (usually much more) who has completed work in some area of research, received the degree *doktor nauk* [doctor of sciences], taught prizewinning students, etc. The teaching load is generally fifteen to seventeen students for a full professor.

Although many children now begin playing wind instruments as young as age seven at elementary music schools, Bol'shiianov started playing the clarinet at about age thirteen. His musical education began with the program at the children's music school connected with the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Saxophone, and jazz, quickly became a favorite hobby of his. In the summer he earned money by playing with a group in hotels and restaurants, although it was very difficult to find adequate reeds and instruments for the ensemble.

In the early 1970s, Bol'shiianov landed a job as a clarinetist with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic. For twenty years, he served as principle clarinetist, after which he began playing the bass clarinet. This current position allows him more time for his teaching. As first clarinetist, he would play about twelve concerts a month, while the bass clarinet may only be required for two, for the same pay. With the extra time, he is able to teach, play saxophone, and continue activities with his quartet. He has also played saxophone with the orchestra for such works as Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances*, Ravel's arrangement of Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Ravel's *Bolero*, etc. Solo works he has played with orchestra include Glazunov's *Concerto*, Villa-Lobos' *Fantasia* on soprano saxophone, and Ibert's *Concertino*.

At the age of eighteen, Bol'shiianov began teaching clarinet at a children's music school. He began teaching saxophone at the conservatory in the 1970s. For more than ten years now (since 1987) he has taught saxophone at the children's music school, where he has fifteen to twenty students. At a specialized music school, he also has about eight clarinet students. At the Academy of Culture, he carries a teaching load of about eight students, and at the Conservatory sometimes about fourteen elective students.<sup>82</sup>

With jobs available as performers in military bands and teachers in music schools, a rise in popularity of the saxophone in the younger generation, and opportunities for education from children's music school up through the Academy of Culture or the St. Petersburg Conservatory, the young saxophonists in the midst of their continuing studies on the saxophone may indeed be witness to and take part in the rebirth of the saxophone in St. Petersburg.

<sup>82</sup>Bol'shiianov, interview.

## Appendix

Transliteration system: U.S. Library of Congress

## Name of the City

1703-1914	St. Petersburg [Sankt Peterburg]
1914-1924	Petrograd (German name replaced by Russian equivalent as WW I began)
1924-1991	Leningrad (in honor of V.I. Lenin, founder of Soviet Communist Party)
1991-present	St. Petersburg

## Leaders of Russia/USSR

1894-1917	Tzar Nicholas II
1922-1924	Vladimir I. Lenin
1924-1953	Joseph Stalin
1953-1964	Nikita S. Khrushchev
1964-1982	Leonid I. Brezhnev
1982-1984	Yuri V. Andropov
1984-1985	Konstantin Chernenko
1985-1991	Mikhail S. Gorbachev
1991-1999	Boris N. Yeltsin
1999-present	Vladimir Putin