

Russian and American Differences and Similarities **in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970**

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

The period of the 60-70's in America and Russia were full of necessary social and global chaos, beginning with the election of President John F. Kennedy, while in Russia, Khrushchev never received an apology from then President of the United States of America Eisenhower, for the downing a U-2 spy plane and shortly after, the Berlin Wall was rectified in 1961, although one cannot definitely say if the raising of the Berlin Wall was in response to Eisenhower's failure to provide an apology¹ The beginnings of the 1960 until 1964 saw the gradual undoing of Khrushchev as his political influence became muddy and his policies and revisions became increasingly more scrutinized by political opposition and public alike.² 1962 saw John F. Kennedy's infamous speech of space travel, 1963 saw his promise for a Civil Rights Bill, his "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech, and his death in November of that year. These events not only impacted the respective culture in which they occurred in, but they also had a musical impact as well, shaping the course of the musical scene through oppositions movements, crackdowns, reformations and stylistic changes. The stars of the 50's were disappearing from the consciousness of America and being replaced with Motown and music infused with the resurgence of the folk tradition in America by composers like Paul Seeger, Odetta and more.³ Jazz saw its mainstream decline in the mid to late 1960's with the death of notable Jazz artists like Nate King Cole and John Coltrane in 1967. This period of ten years saw the rise of many political and

¹ Information sourced from....

-“1960s.” Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, December 10, 2019. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1960s>.

-“Khrushchev Thaw.” Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, December 3, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khrushchev_Thaw.

-“1960 U-2 Incident.” Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, December 11, 2019.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1960_U-2_incident.

² Khrushchev was ousted by Brezhnev in a relatively unassuming coup, but what is startling is Khrushchev's thoughts, depicted in a quoted phone call with Presidium colleague Anastas Mikoyan, *“I'm old and tired. Let them cope by themselves. I've done the main thing. Could anyone have dreamed of telling Stalin that he didn't suit us anymore and suggesting he retire? Not even a wet spot would have remained where we had been standing. Now everything is different. The fear is gone, and we can talk as equals. That's my contribution. I won't put up a fight.”* The fact that Khrushchev was aware, in some regards, to the governmental scrutiny he was facing in regards to his lenient and 'liberal' reforms on media, government, and music is comforting in some ways. Brezhnev secured the support of the members of the Central Committee before continuing with the coup, thus reinforcing the coup's success.

Taubman, William (2003), Khrushchev: The Man and His Era, W.W. Norton & Co., ISBN 978-0-393-32484-6

³ The term 'disappearance' is referencing the decline of rock 'n' roll groups in the style of a more raw, eccentric style, ie., Little Richard, who's last major hit, "Good Golly, Miss Molly," signaled the effectual end of his music career. Music saw the rise of polished, commercially successful artists like The Beatles, who scored 6 hits on the Billboard Hot 100 list for 1964, the genre of Surf rock, whose music induced beach-like ease, a traditional pop sound, and amplified guitar-reverb which utilized multi-track recording, created by Les Paul in/around 1948. The 1960's saw shifts in musician's styles, ie., Ricky Nelson's, who transitioned from rock 'n' roll to a countrified rock/'California sound' (surf rock), although he didn't land a hit until 1970. The rise of soul infused pop saw successful groups emerge like The Supremes, landing songs on the Billboard Top 100 chart quite frequently from 1964- 1969 (where my research discontinues)

"Hot 100 55th Anniversary: Every No. 1 Song (1958-2013)". Billboard. August 2, 2013. Retrieved August 23, 2014. No. 1 hits from 1958–69

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

civil-rights movements in America, many that are still being advocated for today such as the LGBT rights, women's rights, and anti-discrimination rights. During this time, due to the rise of political advocacy and human rights activism, events such as The Civil Rights Act's passing in 1964 by the House with a 69-31% vote was hailed as a landmark in the socio-political environment as the tumultuous America was still coming to grips with the concept of freedom of 'all' citizens and the unfortunate treatment of African-Americans persons. The gravity of the American situation was not only seen in the political sphere but was mirrored through the music used and created around the time of these movements.

Music during pre-1960's time was characterized as, "lovers yearning in an unreal world."⁴ Pining for that love, just out of reach, a world in which reality is halted, as if one had entered a parallel dimension of love devotee's in all their glory. All this changed and in post-1960's America, content of music became more politically charged, as music was now dealing with concepts only talked about through closed door discussion, ie., interracial marriage, voting, wars at home and abroad, open sexual indulgence, and drug use. Robert A. Rosenstone refers to this vantage point as 'the real world.' Bob Dylan's song, "Ain't Gonna Grieve," in my initial reading of the text, informed by the struggles of civil rights felt like a call to action in the pursuit of justice for our "brothers and sisters." "The text called for listeners to stand up and be strong in the face of adversity, which at the time was racism and prejudice on the basis of skin colour. The song mentions in the second verse, interspersed with the chorus, 'Ain't a-gonna grieve no more, no more.'"

This could be referencing a collective one-track and how we, as a collective society, have gotten this far and now there is not going back. This is especially poignant because the Back-to-Africa movement, which dealt with the reverse colonization attempt started in the 1800's, advocated for the abandonment of a country that enslaved them and then actively tried to suppress their rights and

⁴ Rosenstone, Robert A. 1969. "The Times They Are A-Changin'": The Music of Protest." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 382 (March): 131-44. This view, that before the 1960's, American popular music relied on love tropes for content, keeping the listener suspended in a utopian world where love was the only discussable topic. This point is corroborated with the excerpt from *Rock and Roll, CRT, and America in the 1950s Musical Counternarratives in the Jim Crow South*, "Chuck Berry wrote songs beyond the pop norm of his day which were basically songs about love and romance. Instead, he took on musical themes and tropes unheard of in his time." "In fact, his questioning is fairly broad—he questions radio programming, the lists used by DJs, and the significance of some genres over others. In other words, Chuck Berry subverts the norms of high and low culture and all the trappings of elitism in a song."

Martinez, Theresa A. "Rock and Roll, CRT, and America in the 1950s Musical Counternarratives in the Jim Crow South." *Race, Gender & Class* 22, no. 3-4 (2015): 195-215.

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

freedoms once free.⁵ It seems as though Bob Dylan is not ignoring the tenacious past of America but choosing to actively rebel against the notion that those aggressors have taken the fighting spirit of those oppressed and those oppressed, rather than give up, calls for them to stand taller, without grieving, and keep the 'song' of freedom alive. This cultural awakening to the role that inequality played as well as oppressive views and treatment of women and the idea that mental oppression was a prevalent issue in American society, weighing down the progress the country could be making, has the possibility of being a catalyst for events such as the infamous Stonewall riots and music festivals, Woodstock.

If we take a shift of observation now to the political culture pervading the two societies, we see grave difference, although some similarities do occur in reference to the overbearing of government oversight as well as political and social freedom of the citizens. During the 1960's in Russia like previously stated Khrushchev was in political office until being ousted in 1964 by Leonid Brezhnev and his rise to power, which interestingly started from a collective ruling and for the most part stayed as a collective rule under Brezhnev and after his passing continued until Yuri Andropov took over. The poignant thing to mention about Khrushchev was his stance on music because under his ruling we see a relaxation of the musical censorship, hence this movement was called the, "Khrushchev Thaw." This 'thawing' of the musical field in Russia aided continual development of the musical culture in Russia. Although little scholarship on the effects of the Khrushchev thaw is available, we do have a Declaration by Khrushchev himself on music in the Soviet Union dating from 1963, one year before he was deposed. In this address he points out that a ban on these varied musical genres is not the goal but to create a rich musical culture, full of music that creates strong feelings and not cacophonous music that creates agitation and one would assume rebellion. Composers listed are regional composers to bigger names like Glinka.⁶ What is interesting is that he touches upon jazz and shares many of the same sentiments that those in West shared around this time and earlier. There is jazz that is acceptable but there are those pieces that 'makes one feel like vomiting and causes colic in one's stomach.' Upon analyzing this quote, I see this more as an allusion to how

⁵ For further reading of the subject, *Kallen, Stuart A. Marcus Garvey and the Back to Africa Movement. Lucent Books, 2006.* One thing interesting to note is the African-American pushback to the movement, as many were not comfortable with the idea of emigrating to a world, foreign to them in every possible sense of the word. "However, at the time few African-Americans were willing to leave the land of their birth for an unknown continent where they did not understand the language or the culture. Throughout the nineteenth century, African American's resisted the idea of returning to Africa."

⁶ Additional reading on Khrushchev's talk about music

Schwarz, Boris (1972). *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1970.* New York, NY: N.W. Norton. pp. 416-439. / Johnson, Priscilla, *Khrushchev and the Arts* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1965), 102.

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

jazz can exacerbate excited energy in the listener which could induce thoughts of riot. He touches upon modern dance, which is described as, ‘an orgy and the devil knows what.’ There is a clear separation being drawn from the West’s so called, “innovations,” and authentic, real artistic renderings that Khrushchev obviously had in mind when making these statements. He goes on to talk about noise and the need for music that inspires and in the style of socialist realism⁷, which was the main compositional style for art, music, and areas of culture alike. American politics were going through a turbulent time as well with John F. Kennedy’s arrival in Office in 1960. He entered office during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Cold War, and the Vietnam War and one could imagine there was a need for clear and concise leadership as well as reforms, both in the political and social fields. The Cold War tensions, by the 1960’s, had tempered a bit with the signing of the Austrian State Treaty, Geneva Accords, and was topped with the ongoing space race involving the Soviet Union and America. Under Khrushchev, the world witnessed the first launching of a manmade object into space in 1957, Sputnik, the first artificial satellite. This advancement in aero-space technology by America’s most formidable opponent both politically and intellectually frightened top officials and thus the race for who could advance as a nation began. This competitive spirit never left both the Russians or the Americans throughout this period. Under JFK, in 1962, NASA began their lunar-landing expedition, which gave credibility to JFK that he was indeed fulfilling what he promised. During this time, although there were vast improvements in the regions of technology and space travel, there were other, more pressing national tensions to come to grip with. Civil rights, voting rights, women’s rights, and the liberation and freedom for every citizen in America could be seen during this time as the number one most important goal, not only for JFK but also for the continuation of progress and social reform.

⁷ Socialist Realism can be defined as the synthesis of socialistic ideologies into the public mainstream. Different understandings of this term exist, “a mode of art production that positively portrays socialism and constituents of socialist nations,” “political and historical events result from the conflict of social forces and are interpretable as a series of contradictions and their solutions. The conflict is believed to be caused by material needs.” What can definitely be said is that music and artistic expression, under Marxist-Leninist philosophy, carried political power and with this power, could pro-Soviet idealism be carried to the people in a tangible way, and this ability to make the messages easily accessible was an important factor in Soviet Russia, as seen by the 3 principles of the Soviet aesthetic....

1. Narodnost-people-ness
2. Klassovost-classness
3. Partiinost-partyness

Plamper, Jan. “Abolishing Ambiguity: Soviet Censorship Practices in the 1930s.” *Russian Review* 60, no. 4 (2001): 526–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0036-0341.00189>.

Carpenter, Ellon DeGrief. “*The Theory of Music in Russia and the Soviet Union, Ca. 1650-1950*.” Order No. 8824722 University of Pennsylvania, 1988. Ann Arbor: ProQuest. Web. 13 Dec. 2019.

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

With the Civil Rights Bill being written into law in 1964, we see divisiveness setting in with those holding political office with conservative values and those holding office with exclusivity in mind. The Civil Rights movement during the 1960's was the one of the greatest factors to cause a musical shift in American music as folk music was making a revival, the presence of civil unrest filled everyone's minds and content of songs became more infused with topical references to mainstream problems of the day, environmentalism, wars abroad and at home, conservative values on sex and rights of women and later the LGBT community. During this time, songs heavily dealt with the theme of oppression, both on individuals and as a nation as many during this time saw the United States as a repressive society, forcing conformity down the throats of the youth. Interestingly, aligned with this repressive vision of America, we see the rise of many rock genres, folk rock, surf rock, garage rock, and the rise of many bands whose content of songs were progressive for their time, dealing with the pressing issues of the time, delivering to many youth current events that they wouldn't normally be exposed to. We see Bob Marley in 1963 form his band, "Marley and the Wailers," who, in 1965, released their reggae hit, "One Love/People Get Ready," which words dealt with the unifying of love and the human spirit, posing the question to all who listen if those who sin without remorse have a place? Does one have a place in the heart for those who hurt mankind to save their own beliefs? This message of loving as an action with bias was common for the songs of Bob Marley and others during the age of social reform where set views based on the prejudices of many kinds were attempting to be changed through the use of music and social activism. Another key songwriter during this time, pushing for social change through the use of words was Bob Dylan, an active musician during the 60's whose songs dealt with political, social and philosophical strife in American culture. As a student of Woody Guthrie, he picked up on many of the folk and humanistic elements of his music⁸. In the 1960's, following Woody Guthrie's death, there was a folk revival by the generation of the youth during this time, where we see music take into consideration the issues that were of the day and this revival birthed artists like Bob Dylan, whose lyrics referenced the Cuban Missile Crisis, racial prejudices of the time, and freedom. One of his most notable songs, "A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall," dealt with the apocalyptic circumstances that would befall the nation if the Cuban Missile Crisis was not resolved. If we look at one important stanza of text, this one being from verse 5...

"I'm a-goin' back out 'fore the rain starts a-fallin'

I'll walk to the depths of the deepest dark forest

⁸ For more information regarding Bob Dylan's integration of Woody Guthrie's teachings, Dylan, pp. 244–246.

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

Where the people are many and their hands are all empty
Where the pellets of poison are flooding their waters
Where their home in the valley meets the damp dirty prison
And the executioner's face is always well-hidden
—
And reflect from the mountains so all souls can see it
And I'll stand on the ocean until I start sinking'
But I'll know my song well before I start singing."

If we now venture into the world of Russian society during this time, we can see political unrest due to inadequate leadership and the continuation and resurgence of musical and artistic censorship ie. the reversing of the Khrushchev Thaw regulations regarding art and media. In the mid 1960's, the ban of Russian sacred music was over, John Cage's was just being introduced to Soviet Russia, and in 1966 the repertoire performed on concert was now, at this point, similar, almost identical, to its Western counterparts.⁹ The only restriction being on avant-garde composers of Western and Soviet upbringing. Because of this, we don't see avant-garde music in Russia being experimented, made, or performed until the 1970's onwards with the introduction of idiosyncratic serial technique by Alexander Vustin, born in the throws of the Soviet Union.¹⁰ (HERE) In Russia, according to musicologists of the early Soviet era, the score was the body which showed healthy or defective styles. This idea that the styles used could show the composer's bio-psychological condition would be an integral part of the censorship under the Soviet leaders, until the USSR's last leader, Gorbachev.¹¹ Because of this fear that music could rally people to rebel and open people's minds to damaging thoughts, music like Schoenberg, Wagner, and other 'modern' European composers, were banned and heavily censored. On the contrary, the music of the French Revolution era was praised and especially Beethoven and Hadyn because of their depiction of class struggle against the capitalist and domineering governments they operated in. Because of Beethoven's deafness, his heroic stature

⁹ Further reading can be found at the sources listed...

-Fairclough, Pauline. "Don't Sing It on a Feast Day": The Reception and Performance of Western Sacred Music in Soviet Russia, 1917–1953." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 65, no. 1 (2012): 67–111.

-Ivashkin, Alexander. "John Cage In Soviet Russia." *Tempo* 67, no. 266 (2013): 18–27.

¹⁰ See bibliography reference, "Winning and Losing in Russian New Music Today."

¹¹ Taylor, James. "Revolutionaries or Delinquents: The Biopsychological Appraisals of Composers and Their Music in Early Soviet Russia." *The Slavonic and East European Review* 97, no. 1 (2019): 39.

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

was boosted in the eyes of Soviet leaders and thus his music was promoted and often performed as well as Mozart as a symbol of a new environment based on simplicity.

Music performed in Russia now heavily consists of mainly Russian composers, with European composers mixed in, and for symphonic and orchestral works, this is seen much more heavily than with their choral and vocal counterparts.¹² If we are to assume that concert program's were identical with the Western counterpart, we can hypothesize that this must have been the case even in the 1960's, although there must have been a bigger emphasis on Russian composers and composers from Europe that were seen as supporting the Soviet's ideals of music. Interesting to note that texts of major choral works were sung in Latin as the latin was seen to have less detectable religious overtones.¹³ This is interesting to note because due to the language being foreign to the audience, they could more easily absorb the music without listening and absorbing the text as well. This idea of censorship and anti-soviet retaliation plays out in the 1960's with the entrance of the first documented anti-Soviet protest song in Russia called, "Vaninsky Port," or Vanino Port, which is a settlement in Khabarovsk Krai which as a port connected to the Tatar Strait.¹⁴ This song was written by an anonymous author in the Gulags of Russia. According to, "One of February, " published by A. Mikhailovich in 2015, Vaninsky Port was the song associated with the prisoners of the Gulags, and the importance of Vanino Port is heavy, as the railroad station there was a place of transport for prisoners from train to ship. In the text, we see 9 unique stanzas, all pertaining to a linear story of a man leaving his wife and children, presumably for the Gulags and his final goodbye to the mainland he once new. This poem is raught with descriptions of the scenery in which he finds himself, void of roads and full of wild beasts, where reindeers can only get to. The poem feels bleak and this bleakness is exactly why this poem must have been labeled as the first anti-Soviet protest song, as it documented, through a facetious but surrealist perspective, a prisoner on his way to the Gulags.

¹² This realization is due to individual research gathered from various Conservatories and classical music groups across Russia, who's program archive were available online for reading purposes. Of the 9 groups researched, I collected composer's performed from the years 2012-2019, the earliest being of 2010. The research collected shows that the affinity for 18-19th century composers is strong with the common usage of Bach, Brahms, Beethoven, and the closer to 20th century composers like Sibelius, Dvorak, and Hindemith. Russian composers frequently used include Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky, Siridov, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Mussorgsky. Most of the sources are compiled here...
"Conservatoires Russia. Music Colleges & Music Schools Russia." *musicalchairs*. Accessed December 11, 2019.
<https://www.musicalchairs.info/russian-federation/conservatoires>.

¹³ See footnote 7, "Don't Sing It on a Feast Day": *The Reception and Performance of Western Sacred Music in Soviet Russia, 1917–1953*

¹⁴ See bibliography reference, *Protest Songs in Russia: A sign of democratic society*

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

“Tovarisch Stalin,”¹⁵ another anti-Soviet piece was published during this time in 1959, which details a man’s dealings with being in the taiga, which is the largest type of forest on earth, which we can assume is where the Gulags are and by the text of the poem we can also infer that he is a prisoner in one of the remote Gulags in Russia. The poem goes on to describe, in clear detail, the conditions, his duties, and Stalin’s going’s on during the night, referencing his apparent duties are harder than those in the camps. The poem’s ‘hopefully’ satirical nature about the hardships of Stalin’s business in the Kremlin late at night and the complete absorption of the Stalinist ideology is apparent throughout the whole piece and paints a scene of dystopian mayhem, where ideology rules over all and the idea of individuality is all but a small-glimmer among the lines of the poem. A quote, this being the last stanza from the poem, summarizes the hold that the Soviet Union, at the height of its power under Stalin, had on even the prisoners and minds of those under Soviet control...

*“Smoke for a thousand years, Comrade Stalin!
And let me die in the taiga
I believe: there will be cast iron and steel per capita quite.”*

The writer, Yuz Aleshkovsky who is most known for his refusal to conform his work to the soviet doctrines of the time.¹⁶ Because of this, he is not widely known nor was his work published in the mainstream during the Soviet Union. He emigrated to the West in 1979 with the hope his work could become more grounded and published. Writers such as Aleshkovsky showcase the internal power struggle and rigid defiance to conform to the Soviet structure and censorship and this was not a minor occurrence either during the 60’s and 70’s in either Russia or America. Interest in rock music in Russia during the 1960’s and 70’s was growing and because of this, we see the influence of European bands on Russia start to take form. The Beatles were a staple of culture in the Soviet Union, and for the youth of the Russian culture of oppression and overt suppression of art and culture, the Beatles brought a fresh, new air to a stogged country, which in turn started to ‘wash away’ the effects of the Soviet Union on the minds of the youth and society brainwashed to fear the

¹⁵ For more information regarding lyrics, Vysotsky, Vladimir. “Vladimir Vysotsky - Tovarishch Stalin (Товарищ Сталин) Lyrics English Transl.” Vladimir Vysotsky - Tovarishch Stalin (Товарищ Сталин) lyrics English translation, n.d. Accessed December 11, 2019.

¹⁶ For more reading, “Yuz Aleshkovsky.” Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, September 19, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yuz_Aleshkovsky.

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

West and its monstrous, corrosive effects.¹⁷ The song, Girls, by the Beatles was heard in Russia in 1967, two years after being released on an album in 1965 in America. The song, "Let it be," similarly was heard in Russia two years after the release in America in 1970.¹⁸ This trend of a separation of musical progress in America versus the Soviet Union is interesting to note, because we can see remnants of this due to a lack of information about music groups classical or otherwise in American mainstream consciousness other than the female group, "Pussy Riot," who in 2014 were attacked for the world to see during the Winter Olympics in Sochi.¹⁹ (HERE)Currently, this group made up of women, is the most predominant punk-rock protest group in Russia at the moment, striking up controversy for their acts of political unrest and songs, like "Smert tyurme, svobodu protestu," or in english, Death to Prison, Freedom to Protests.²⁰ This song title is a farce of the Soviet slogan popular during the days of World War 2, "Death to Fascism, freedom to the People."

The text in this song takes on the form of 3 stanzas with a singular phrase as the bridge, death to prison, freedom to protest. The first stanza's contents deal with the joy that protesting in squares and public spaces bring and this stanza calls for the rising up of minority groups. The second stanza deals with the actions primarily, calling for cops to serve the public good and removal of guns from those cops. The third stanza deals with the future as it could be, calling for the streets and squares to be occupied. The last line, "taste the smell of freedom together with us," feels almost unreachable as it calls for the integration of two senses together, depicting a sense of feeling an effect of the intangible or hypothetical currently in Russia. Pussyriot is an example of the counter-culture started in the 1960's and 70's and their stances on views such as civil society, feminism and LGBT issues mirror its counterparts in America during this time, although in different centuries. LGBT community in Russia still are openly persecuted and although their status was legalized in 1993 officially, there are no discrimination protections in place for those of the LGBT community to benefit from.²¹ *"We were scared - really scared. We were afraid the thaw might unleash a flood, which we*

¹⁷ See bibliography, *For young Soviets, the Beatles were a first, mutinous rip in the iron curtain*

¹⁸ This was corroborated by comparing the release date of the song from data collected from Russia Beyond and research deposited into Wikipedia.

¹⁹ For further reading, Miller, Nick (February 20, 2014). "Cossacks wielding whips and pepper spray attack Pussy Riot members in Sochi". The Age.

²⁰ For more information, *"PUSSY RIOT поют политзекам на крыше тюрьмы ("Pussy Riot sings to political prisoners from the roof of the prison")". YouTube (in Russian). December 14, 2011. Archived from the original on October 27, 2012. Retrieved October 27, 2012.*

²¹ For substantiating information, *Russia: Update to RUS13194 of 16 February 1993 on the treatment of homosexuals". Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. 29 February 2000. Retrieved 21 May 2009.*

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

wouldn't be able to control and which could drown us.”²² This quote by Khrushchev himself could be seen as one of the main reasons the Soviet audience was behind musically and politically in America and because many major Russian composers and artists abandoned Russia such as Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Anna Pavlova, Balanchine, Stravinsky, the scope of Russian musical and artistic innovation became infiltrated with American ideals and ways of thinking rather than the ideals of their homeland, which was in part due to the ever growing censorship facing this artists and the culture of oppressive regulations on their respective artforms if they chose to stay. In 1961, 228 Russians were allowed to visit the United States in reference to their respective professions according to Gorsuch, from her book, “All This is Your World,” yet travel of the typical Russia citizen to America was prohibited but not within Europe.²³ According to Gorsuch, close to half a million Soviet tourists were documented travelling the years of 1955 to 1964. Because of this expansion of knowledge of a world outside the USSR, one could imagine that the barriers and restrictions on thought and action laid in the foundation of Russian society by the Soviet Union would start to crumble. You'd be correct, as in the middle of the 1960's, like previously stated, we see the rise of the bard, a term used in reference to those authors who wrote their own lyrics and poetry outside of the regulated world of the Soviets.²⁴ Bard poetry and their related musical schemes are unique as they were quite simply in the schematic make-up, consisting of simple progressions of chords, thus allowing the importance of the text to be heightened. These songs take on two distinct categories, based on subject matter. They are tourist song and political song, and subsequent subcategories have also been identified. According to Alex Malina, the bard movement in Russia in the late 50's to early 60's started as a movement and quickly became a way of life for those involved.²⁵ This cultural

²² Quote sourced from, *Khrushchev and Gorbachev as Reformers: A Comparison*, although original publication of the quote comes from, *Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeevich, and Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev. Khrushchev Remembers. Boston: Little, Brown, 1970.*

²³ Data can be referenced here, Fosler-Lussier, Danielle. *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015.

²⁴ This act of writing their own lyrics came to be known as author song, *author song* (“авторская песня” *avtorskaya pesnya*). Further isolated reading on the subject of author song is not available, although it is synonymous with the Bard movement and is encapsulated within the Russian genre, Russian chanson. In-depth information is available here, “Russian Chanson.” <https://rateyourmusic.com/>. Accessed December 11, 2019. [https://rateyourmusic.com/genre/Russian Chanson/](https://rateyourmusic.com/genre/Russian-Chanson/).

²⁵ “*The Soviet Underground and the Bard Generation.*” Alex Malina in his article describes the Bard movement as a way of ‘coping’ with the tyrannical environment that the youth of revolutionary Russia grew up in. Underground poetry and musical atmosphere was the way youth could genuinely pursue a better future, full of beauty and freedom. Alex mentions that the

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

revolution of asking more questions about the society in which they life was incredibly important to the youth of Russia during this time as they were seeking to make sense of the oppressive nature in which they were born, only able to publicly express themselves through man-made barriers and artificially created inspirations.

Many of the poems during this time dealt with the tribulations of war, the moral depravity of living in a society where one could not speak freely nor express freely. The Bard's poetry was revolutionary as it touched upon the true hardships of the Soviet Union, it showed to their readers the real Soviet Union, without the mask of forced prestige.²⁶ In the words of Boris Almazov, a bard poet born in 1944 Leningrad...

*"That foolish little boy was happy
In his foolish five years of age;
And from the pubs the disabled ex-soldiers
Sadly watched him go by.." ²⁷*

I would be remiss to not mention one key player in the Bard movement in Russia. Vladimir Vystosky, who is recognized as the leader of the counterculture in Soviet Russia by Alex Malina.²⁸ This is clear to see when one looks at the impact of his musical endeavours and career. He started in life, as some could seem him as, a street kid, but quickly became a trained actor and film star in the Soviet Union in 1959. His first songs were called 'street songs,' pertaining to the content of questionable substances, people, and shady characters. This quickly transformed into more serious content regarding societal turmoils and political warfare. Although suffering from substance and

Bard poets referred to themselves as the Garden Circle, which could have alluded to the defensive fortification in Moscow, similarly named The Garden Ring.

²⁶ Alex Malina references "Wide is My Motherland" (Russian: Широка страна моя родная, tr. Shiroka strana moya rodnaya). The text refers to the lushness and expansivity of Russia in a pseudo-propaganda style, where one is to accept the claim that Russia is 'Where a man can breathe so freely.' (Где так вольно дышит человек / Gdye tak vol'no dyshit chelovek) Propaganda proliferated the official doctrine of hope fed to the people of Russia. But youth were seeing through the veil produced by the Soviet Union, and plainly described in Malina's article is the understanding that not only childhood's were being taken away, but whole lifetimes due to the oppressive authoritarian regime and the constant state of war being propagated by the USSR.

²⁷ Song was published in the 2nd volume of "Pesni Russkikh bardov," (Songs of the Russian Bards) *Pesni russkikh bardov [Songs of the Russian Bards], vols 1-4. Paris, YMCA-Press, 1977-78.*

²⁸ V. Vysotsky, a Russian born actor, songwriter, and poet became a national icon due to his blatnaya pesnya ("outlaw songs") and later in his career, his war songs which depicted, against the norm of the time, the extravagant successes of the State, but rather the, at times, horrific truth of the war's Russia found itself intertwined in. More readings of V. Vysotsky's career can be found here, "Vladimir Vysotsky." *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History*, June 18, 2017. <http://soviethistory.msu.edu/1980-2/vladimir-vysotsky/>.

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

alcohol abuse for much of his adult life, he nevertheless became a symbol of the face of non-conformity to the Soviet Union through his unique stylistic approach, which was reportedly not one of a 'singer'.²⁹ Because of the smoking he engaged in, his voice was deep and rough yet the messages he sent were clear and concise with full intent thrown into them, never seeking approval nor apologizing by weaning off the words. His songs were often times full of commentary on life in the Soviet Union and not usually in praise, which left him a target of surveillance and scrutiny. Because of the anti-Soviet nature of most of his songs, he was refused the ability to be recorded through the main recording agency in the Soviet Union at the time, Melodiya. This only boosted his popularity with the Russian public as his music was accessible via vinyl discs and magnetic tape, which would have been easier for the public to acquire and one could speculate cheaper. Alex Malina describes him as not playing 'kiss-ass' to anyone, a phenomenon seen throughout the Soviet Union by artists and poets alike trying to appease the establishments to gain notoriety. One of his songs worth quoting is from the 1970's...

*"There was plenty of room in the trenches for two,
Time enough for us both to endure,
I've the world to myself now, but still, in my view,
It is I who's not back from the war."³⁰*

(HERE)As we can clearly see, the similarities between the 1960's-70's of American and Russia differed greatly in terms political activities, societal relations, musical acceptance, as well as musical growth. But if we take a closer look, it is not as different as it might seem. The need for freedom of expression is relevant no matter what country you go to. Thus the need for the youth of these two respective countries to find their real voice was one of the most prevalent changes brought about by the conflicts of the time, ie. The Vietnam War, Cuban Missile Crisis, and Civil and

²⁹ Although in itself not related, one can find miniscule parallels between Samuel Barber's alcoholism, towards the late period of his life which would be post-Antony and Cleopatra, and Vysotsky's as both men were masking depression and unhappiness with both music and artistic output but beyond the façade, indulging in states of insobriety. One can read about Samuel Barber's insobriety here, Heyman, Barbara B. *Samuel Barber: a Documentary Study of His Works*, 1989.

³⁰ V. Vysotsky's song, published in 1974, 'He Hasn't Come Back From the War.' (Он не вернулся из боя) In this song, he recounts the death of a soldier, whos is revealed to be the husband of the one who is singing (speaking). The husband never comes from the war, and the guilt is palpable for the one who 'survived'. This would have been very poignant for Russian citizens who got the chance to listen to this as the Cold War was still causing societal tension and unease and this could have caused citizens to question the potential for another more menacing outbreak of global war.

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

Governmental turmoils. For the youth of America, find their voice meant bringing into the public consciousness the reality of civil rights and the consequences of deeply conservative thought patterns of a time well passed. They not only began to question why America was enthralled with international and domestic violence, but what was going to change for the generations ahead, when were these changes going to be felt, and how could they continue if nothing changed? The press and media were lagging culturally behind the times and so youth could not rely on traditional mediums to keep themselves informed of changing attitudes and attitudes not corroborated by those in power. The youth of America went in searching of the answers through music and through their engagement in protest through music, the messages quickly became available to many groups. This use of music to spread a message can be seen in direct parallel in Soviet Russia at the time and as well in the anti-Soviet movements.

In, *"How Social Movements Do Culture,"* William Roy mentions the necessity of using music for social movement's growth, creating a sense of team spirit and increasing solidarity among its members.³¹ In the Soviet Union, emphasis was on the party's goals and ambitions and art, including music, had to be created to further the agenda and ideals of the party, creating a warped sense of we not I. This starting to break with the introduction of the Beatles into the public consciousness, the power struggle of the leaders of the USSR, and the formation of the bard movement and protest songs. Russia saw as well, although in a more strictly regulated sense, its own period of questioning. The youth started to radically alter their perception of what was expected of them and what they could be. Through music like Vladimir Vystosky, The Beatles, the Bard movement, and cultural exchanges, Western ideas of freedom and the life that could be started to creep into the consciousness of the Soviet citizens and long-held harboured thoughts of unhappiness started to be expressed through, albeit small, changes in the musical atmosphere in which Soviet Russia operated. This social change was mirrored in America through the use of music as the ultimate medium of social progress, and through the likes of Bob Dylan, The Beatles, Woody Guthry, Pete Seeger, and

³¹ See, *"How Social Movements Do Culture.* Willaim Roy makes a point to emphasize the role of social change stemming from the inner sanctum of artistic circles and through this process of localized innovation does major social shifting occur. He points out that the growth of social groups, and in this case the political movement which was the Bolsheviks, gained popularity and supporters through the alignment with their support base in terms of beliefs and values. There were 5 issues Lenin mentioned that would contribute to the stabilization and growth of the revolutionary movement of the Bolshevik Party. Number (2) is as follows, "that the broader the popular mass drawn spontaneously into the struggle, which forms the basis of the movement and participates in it, the more urgent the need for such an organisation, and the more solid this organisation must be (for it is much easier for all sorts of demagogues to side-track the more backward sections of the masses). "Bo." *Glossary of Organisations: Bo.* Accessed December 12, 2019. <https://www.marxists.org/glossary/orgs/b/o.htm>.

Russian and American Differences and Similarities
in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970

John Vandevent
00/00/2019

many more political themes started to creep into the musical atmosphere, thus enlightening and striking up a conversation with those who listened about the injustices that were present domestically and abroad. The spark of conversation and questioning is prevalent as a major theme that countered the withered political structures of both America and the Soviet Union and through this use of questioning, the youth was subsequently allowed to engage in the future of their country and the world.³² I conclude with one quote by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus about the inevitable fate of change for all.

“Upon those who step into the same rivers, different and ever different waters flow down.”

³² See, “*For Young Soviets, the Beatles Were a First, Mutinous Rip in the Iron Curtain.*” Leslie Woodhead makes a poignant point referring to the disjunct notion of what the Beatles and their music instigated and the rhetoric in which the youth of Russia was being given. Woodhead says: “*Once people heard the Beatles' wonderful music, it just didn't fit. The authorities' prognosis didn't correspond to what they were listening to. The system was built on fear and lies, and in this way the Beatles put an end to the fear, and exposed the lies.*”

Russian and American Differences and Similarities **in reference to Politics and Music in 1960 to 1970**

John Vandevent

00/00/2019

Bibliography

Shumov, Vasily. "The Rise and Fall of Soviet Folk'n'pop Music." *Russia Beyond*, September 6, 2013. https://www.rbth.com/arts/2013/09/06/the_rise_and_fall_of_soviet_folknpop_music_29563.html.

"1960s." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, November 19, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1960s#Politics_and_wars.

"1960s In Music." 2019. Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation. December 1, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1960s_in_music.

Fosler-Lussier, Danielle. 2015. *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Bratersky, Alexander. 2012. "Russia Remembers The Beatles." *Russia Beyond*. October 5, 2012. https://www.rbth.com/articles/2012/10/05/a_short_history_of_russian_beatlemania_18847.html.

Vulliamy, Ed. 2013. "For Young Soviets, the Beatles Were a First, Mutinous Rip in the Iron Curtain." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media. April 20, 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2013/apr/20/beatles-soviet-union-first-rip-iron-curtain>.

"Rock Music in Russia." 2019. Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation. September 23, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_music_in_Russia#The_early_1960s:_Local_bard_music_and_first_western_influences.

Shumov, Vasily. 2013. "Protest Songs in Russia: A Sign of Democratic Society ." *Russia Beyond*. September 20, 2013. https://www.rbth.com/arts/2013/09/20/protest_songs_in_russia_a_sign_of_democratic_society_29999.html.

Browning, Gary L. 1985. "American and Russian Perceptions of Freedom and Security." *Brigham Young University Studies* 25 (1): 115–27.

Tompson, W. J. 1993. "Khrushchev and Gorbachev as Reformers: A Comparison." *British Journal of Political Science* 23 (1): 77–105. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123400006578>.

Roy, William G. 2010. "How Social Movements Do Culture." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 23 (2-3): 85–98. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-010-9091-7>.

Rosenstone, Robert A. 1969. "'The Times They Are A-Changin'": The Music of Protest." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 382 (March): 131–44.

Sargeant, Lynn M. 2009. "Singing the Nation into Being: Teaching Identity and Culture at the Turn of the Twentieth Century." *History of Education Quarterly* 49 (3): 291–322. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-5959.2009.00210.x>.

Frost, Edgar L. 1998. "WORDS AND MELODIES FROM THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE: Russian-American Songwriters and Their Influence on American Popular Music, 1900-1933." *Russian Language Journal / Русский Язык* 52 (171/173): 281–90.

Malina, Alex. 2009. "The Soviet Underground and the Bard Generation." *Literary Kicks*. December 26, 2009. <https://www.litkicks.com/SovietUnderground>.

"Bard (Soviet Union)." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, May 12, 2019. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bard_\(Soviet_Union\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bard_(Soviet_Union)).

"A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, November 20, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Hard_Rain's_a-Gonna_Fall.

"Bob Dylan – A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall." *Genius*, May 27, 1963. <https://genius.com/Bob-dylan-a-hard-rains-a-gonna-fall-lyrics>.

Quillen, William. "Winning and Losing in Russian New Music Today." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 67, no. 2 (2014): 487–542. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2014.67.2.487>.

Taylor, James. "Revolutionaries or Delinquents: The Biopsychological Appraisals of Composers and Their Music in Early Soviet Russia." *The Slavonic and East European Review* 97, no. 1 (January 2019): 39–72. <https://doi.org/10.5699/slaveasteurorev2.97.1.0039>.

"Back-to-Africa Movement." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, November 29, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Back-to-Africa_movement.

"Khrushchev on Music in Soviet Society." *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History*, September 1, 2015. <http://soviethistory.msu.edu/1961-2/khrushchev-on-the-arts/khrushchev-on-the-arts-texts/khrushchev-on-music-in-soviet-society/>.