



UNIVERSITÉ PARIS-SORBONNE

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

ÉCOLE DOCTORALE V

Laboratoire de recherche IREMUS

THÈSE

pour obtenir le grade de

DOCTEUR DE L'UNIVERSITÉ PARIS-SORBONNE ET UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

Discipline : MUSIQUE ET ETUDES SLAVES

Présentée et soutenue par :

Michelle ASSAY (ESHGHPOUR)

le : 23 janvier 2017

***Hamlet in the Stalin Era and Beyond:
Stage and Score***

**Les mises en scène et mises en musique d'*Hamlet*
à l'ère stalinienne et après**

Sous la direction de :

Mme Michèle BARBE – Professeur émérite, Université Paris Sorbonne

M. Evgeny DOBRENKO – Professeur, University of Sheffield

Membres du jury :

Mme Michèle BARBE – Professeur émérite, Université Paris Sorbonne

Mme Katerina CLARK – Professeur, University of Yale

M. Evgeny DOBRENKO – Professeur, University of Sheffield

M. Walter ZIDARIČ – Professeur, Université de Nantes

***Hamlet* in the Stalin Era and Beyond:
Stage and Score**

**Les mises en scène et mises en musique d'*Hamlet* à l'ère
stalinienne et après**

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank first and foremost my distinguished supervisors, Professor Michèle Barbe at the Université Paris Sorbonne and Professor Evgeny Dobrenko at the University of Sheffield, for their continuous belief in this project, for their commitment, encouragement, intellectual rigour and support. I express my gratitude to the members of the jury and the external examiners for taking the time and care to read and assess my work and to attend my viva voce.

I would like to extend my thanks to Professors Kristine Horner and Craig Brandist, Ms Lottie Mohindra, Claudia Villa Gutierrez and Claire Ryckmans as well as the rest of my PhD team at School of Languages and Culture of the University of Sheffield and at the Ecole Doctorale V and Maison de la Recherche of the Université Paris Sorbonne for supporting me throughout this project. I am truly indebted and thankful to Ms. Claire Leavitt (Sheffield) and Mr Igor Bratusek (Maison de la Recherche) for their patience and most generous support during many obstacles of this journey.

The adventure of completing this project included several trips to Russia, which was made possible by grants and financial assistance from several organisations and institutions to which I would like to express my gratitude: Conseil régional d'Île de France, Santander, Petrie Watson Exhibitions, CEELBAS, the Learned Society of the University of Sheffield, and the International Shakespeare Association, as well as the research development funds of the Universities of Sheffield and the Sorbonne.

I also owe most sincere and earnest thanks to the members of the staff at the archives and libraries I visited – in Moscow: RGALI, Dmitri Shostakovich Family Archives, Vakhtangov Theatre Archives, VTO Library and Archives, Moscow Art Theatre Museum, Glinka Museum, Bakhrushin State Theatre Museum, Russian State Library and Russian Composers' Union; in St Petersburg: TsGALI, Manuscript Department of NLR, State Theatre Library and Alexandrinsky Theatre.

I am obliged to a great many people and friends for sharing their expertise and knowledge, without which this dissertation would not have been possible. I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to (in alphabetical order and without titles): Alexei Bartoshevich, Yan Brailowsky, Philip Bullock, the late Iurii Butsko, Olga Digonskaia,

Marina Frolova-Walker, Boris Gaydin, Dmitri Gorbatov, Mehdi Hosseini, Natalia Khomenko, Liudmila Kovnatskaia, Alexander Kozintsev, Nelly Kravetz, Sergei Kudriavtsev, Vakhtang Machavariani, Vladimir Makarov, Irena Makaryk, Mariia Malkina, Simon Morrison, Vladimir Orlov, Béatrice Picon-Vallin, Roberto Polastri, the late Irina Prikhodko, Serge Prokofieff Jn., Sergei Radlov, Marina Raku, Aleksei Semenenko, Laurence Senelick, Irina Shostakovich, Sergei Slonimsky, Anatoly Smeliansky, Maia Turovskaia, Dmitri Urnov, Marina Zabolotniaia and Nikolai Zakharov, Ales' Zamkovskii. I am also grateful to Kim Axline Morgan, Jill Warren, Anastasia Kim, Erik Heine and Sen Suddhaseel for sharing their PhD dissertations with me, to Laetitia Debrez, Elke Albrecht and Pierre Chamaraux for their help and support, to James Hume for last-minute assistance with formatting, to Andrey Sidorenko for hospitality in Moscow, and to Carine Gutlerner for inspiration and music.

There are four people that I simply cannot find words that would express my gratitude to them, for without them, their support, love and care, not only would this project not have happened but it would have had no sense. They are my lodestars: my parents Haydeh and Farshid, my brother Arash, and the love of my life, David Fanning. To them I dedicate this work and address Shakespeare's words: 'I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks; and ever thanks'.

Note on Transliteration, Abbreviations and Sources

Throughout this dissertation I have used the Library of Congress system of transliteration of Russian words, without diacritics. Names appear in this way unless they are already known in the West, in which case they are given in their Anglophone forms (Francophone for the substantial summary/résumé substantiel). If a name is part of bibliographical information, it appears according to the Library of Congress rules, unless that information itself uses a different form; thus, for example, the main text refers to Meyerhold throughout, but as part of a Russian title or Russian bibliographical entry the same name appears as Meierkhol'd.

All quotations are reproduced with their original spelling and transliteration.

All translations from secondary sources are the author's own unless otherwise indicated.

Abbreviations

The standard format of Russian archival description is f. (*fond* or collection), op. (*opis* or file or register), ed. or ed. khr. (*edinitsa khraneniia*, item or file) or d. (*delo*, item) or no. (number). Verso is used to indicate a sheet's reverse side and corresponds to the Russian ob. (*oborot*).

MKhAT: Moskovskii khudozhestvennyi (akademicheskii) teatr [Moscow Art Theatre]

NLR: Otdel rukopisei Rossiiskoi natsional'noi biblioteki, St Petersburg [Manuscript department of the National Library of Russia]

R: Rehearsal number (in musical scores)

RGALI: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i isskustv, Moscow [Russian State Archive of Literature and the Arts]

TsGALI: Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstv, St Petersburg [Central State Museum of Literature and Arts]

VTO: Vsesoiuznoe teatral'noe obshchestvo [All-Soviet Theatre Society]

Sources

The source used for the English text of *Hamlet* is the Arden Shakespeare, Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (eds.), *Hamlet*, rev. edn., London, Bloomsbury, 2016 (orig. pub. 2006).

Résumé substantiel

L'idée de ce projet remonte à ma première rencontre avec Shakespeare : au début des années 1990, lors d'une séance à 'Asr-é Djadid' – un petit cinéma 'underground' à côté de l'Université de Téhéran – j'ai vu la version cinématographique d'*Hamlet* par Grigori Kozintsev avec la musique de Chostakovitch. Le film était doublé en persan et partiellement censuré pour être en accord avec les règles imposées par le régime islamiste. Deux jours plus tard, j'y retournais pour voir le film une seconde fois. Je remarquais alors que la scène de folie d'Ophélie était plus courte, plus censurée, et que la musique de film de Chostakovitch était très fragmentée. Je n'avais donc d'autre choix que de chercher cette musique ainsi que le texte de Shakespeare pour m'en assurer. Des années plus tard, après mes études à l'Académie Nationale de Musique d'Ukraine à Kiev - quand j'ai enfin pu comprendre le film en langue russe directement - j'ai pu mieux apprécier le travail du réalisateur, du traducteur (Pasternak) et du compositeur. À partir de ce moment, je ne pouvais plus lire le texte d'*Hamlet* sans revoir, dans mon imagination, les scènes du film et sans entendre la musique de Chostakovitch. Une question se forma dans mon esprit : aurais-je si fortement aimé *Hamlet* si je ne l'avais pas découvert au travers du prisme russe/soviétique ? Est-ce *Hamlet* de Shakespeare ou l'appropriation russe de cette pièce qui m'a autant troublée ? L'*Hamlet* russe est-il une entité à part et indépendante de l'*Hamlet* de Shakespeare ?

Ainsi est né le projet d'une recherche sur la performance d'*Hamlet* en Russie en privilégiant la question de l'interprétation et de l'identité nationale russe. Mes formations en musique et en théâtre et mes connaissances de la langue et de la culture russe, me permettent d'étudier les mises en scène et mises en musique d'*Hamlet* qui forment la ligne directrice de mes recherches. Cependant, lors d'un premier séjour de recherches en Russie en 2012, je compris que le sujet était beaucoup trop vaste à aborder en détails. Sans une limitation du corpus dans un contexte historique plus étroit et sans choisir des cas de figure représentatifs, mon projet risquait de devenir un simple catalogue non-exhaustif. Encore une fois, c'était la musique en général et celle de Chostakovitch en particulier qui m'ont servi de guide. Ainsi, je décidais de retenir pour ma thèse la première création de Chostakovitch sur le texte de Shakespeare, sa musique pour la mise en scène scandaleuse d'*Hamlet* par Nikolai Akimov au Théâtre Vakhtangov de Moscou en 1932, et d'y ajouter la rencontre de Prokofiev avec cette tragédie à

travers sa musique pour l'*Hamlet* de Sergei Radlov à Leningrad en 1938. Le contexte historique devint ainsi évident : l'ère stalinienne. Mon projet devait donc prendre en compte le rôle de la musique vis-à-vis du texte, de la mise en scène, ainsi que le climat politico-culturel de l'époque. Mais il fallait d'abord situer ce projet dans un contexte plus large en donnant un aperçu du rôle de la musique dans les drames de Shakespeare, et des œuvres musicales dont les textes de Shakespeare ont été la source d'inspiration

La musique dans Shakespeare et notamment *Hamlet*

Bien qu'une partie de la musique inspirée par Shakespeare constitue une part importante du répertoire de concert, les études qui traitent spécifiquement ce sujet – 'Shakespeare et la musique' – sont étonnamment peu nombreuses.

Les travaux existants se divisent en deux catégories distinctes : premièrement, ceux sur la musique au temps de Shakespeare ou sur divers aspects de la musique dans les œuvres de l'auteur anglais (y compris son imagerie et son imagination musicales) ; et d'autre part, celles qui se concentrent sur la musique inspirée par les œuvres de Shakespeare, composée à partir de thèmes shakespeariens ou directement pour les pièces de Shakespeare. En bref : la musique dans Shakespeare et Shakespeare en musique. Les études sur le premier thème sont principalement effectuées par des spécialistes de musiques anciennes et par des historiens, et sont nettement plus nombreuses que celles du second thème. Elles comprennent des dictionnaires, des catalogues, des recueils de chansons, une base de données qui tente d'identifier chaque référence musicale dans les pièces de théâtre, des histoires critiques, des analyses en profondeur de l'imagerie musicale chez Shakespeare et enfin des études relatives aux particularités du théâtre de Shakespeare. Ces dernières explorent l'idée que le Barde a créé des mondes avec des sons, des mondes qui, à leur tour, contiennent des paysages sonores entiers en leur sein.

Wes Folkerth dans son ouvrage *The Sound of Shakespeare* montre que, pour le public de Shakespeare l'audition n'était pas une simple source d'informations complémentaire à la vision mais plutôt une dimension différente et même supérieure, en ce que l'audition donnait accès à une vérité intérieure : les processus psychologiques, les motivations, le royaume invisible de l'esprit. La vision était simplement un conduit au monde matériel.¹ Dans la même veine, Bruce Johnson dans son article « *Hamlet: Voice, Music, Sound* »² suggère qu'en tant

¹ Wes Folkerth, *The Sound of Shakespeare*. Londres, Routledge, 2002, 7.

² Bruce Johnson, « *Hamlet: Voice, Music, Sound* », dans *Popular Music*, 24/2 (mai 2005), 257-267, ici à 257.

qu'acteur, Shakespeare écrivait pour le résultat sonore, « pas pour les livres, et il a écrit pour un public habitué à une sémiologie auditive finement accordée » pour une société en transition et qui vivait « une tension, entre deux modes de connaissance : visuelle et auditive ». Ainsi Johnson observe que le paysage sonore d'*Hamlet* est « un porteur important de significations ».

Dans *Hamlet*, il y a plusieurs moments de musique instrumentale : Claudius utilise des canons pour ses beuveries (I/4), les trompettes, en plus de leur fonction royale et de routine, introduisent l'arrivée des comédiens (II/2) et la flûte prend un rôle important dans une scène (et le discours) avec Hamlet (III/2), ce que Kozintsev considéra comme le point culminant et spirituellement le plus élevé de la tragédie (voir chapitre 5).

Dans ses études sur la musique dans les tragédies de Shakespeare (*Music in Shakespearean Tragedy*), Frederick Sternfeld³ nous rappelle que les tragédies élisabéthaines (suivant les traditions de Sénèque) étaient sans chansons. Shakespeare faisait alors figure d'exception dans son utilisation de chansons dans ses tragédies, et notamment dans *Hamlet*, *Othello* et *Troilus*. Dans ses méthodes novatrices, Shakespeare « assigne des chansons aux personnages principaux, il imprime les textes de ces chansons, et il fait des références spécifiques à des passages de ce texte dans les dialogues autour des chansons en les utilisant en tant que composants importants de la structure tragique. » L'auteur anglais utilisa non seulement des chansons tragiques en soi, mais présenta également des chansons de comédie apparemment incongrues comme partie intégrante de la tragédie. La chanson du Fossoyeur dans *Hamlet* en est un exemple frappant, dont le sens macabre ainsi que la langue non raffinée, brute, renforce le contraste entre les attitudes du personnage et celle d'Hamlet envers la mort.

Sternfeld note le génie de Shakespeare en ce qui concerne les chants d'Ophélie et de Desdemona : ici les chansons créent « une concordance subtile entre l'intrigue et le personnage ». Ophélie et Desdemona, toutes deux, commencent en chantant de vieilles chansons familières, mais, en proie à leurs maux, leurs angoisses et leurs pressentiments progressent graduellement d'un fragment lyrique à l'autre. Malgré la dissemblance des circonstances de leur destin, la mort et la transfiguration de chaque héroïne est associée à

³ Frederick Sternfeld, « The Use of Song in Shakespeare's Tragedies », dans *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 86 (1959), 47.

l'image d'un saule⁴. L'observation de Sternfeld concernant les similitudes entre Ophélie et Desdemona renvoie à l'interprétation que fit Sergei Radlov de ces deux héroïnes, qu'il décrivit à Prokofiev lors de son travail sur la mise en scène d'*Hamlet* en 1937-1938 (voir chapitre 3).

À l'instar de Radlov, en se référant à l'étiquette élisabéthaine et aux restrictions concernant la performance musicale dans les salons, Sternfeld affirme que « le fait qu'Ophélie chante devant une assemblée de la cour est en soi un symptôme du dérangement et de la folie. » De plus, Shakespeare évoque l'état lamentable de l'esprit d'Ophélie par son « alternance entre prose et vers, en parlant et en chantant, et le manque de continuité et de congruence. »

Une étude comme celle de Sternfeld révèle également la grande complexité de la traçabilité des chansons de Shakespeare, jusqu'à leur source et leur mélodie originale. La musique élisabéthaine originale, étant, pour la plupart des chansons d'Ophélie, perdue, les chercheurs ont opté pour divers compromis, y compris le recours à la tradition orale.

Shakespeare en musique

Concernant l'héritage musical de Shakespeare, l'ouvrage de Julie Sanders *Shakespeare and Music : Afterlives and Borrowings* (2008) reste la seule étude disponible offrant un aperçu des différentes réponses musicales à Shakespeare allant de la musique de film au répertoire de concert, du jazz aux comédies musicales. Sa tentative d'aborder un éventail aussi large dans les limites d'une étude de 197 pages empêche cependant toute analyse ou interprétation au-delà d'une description superficielle et d'hypothèses communes. Dans un article plus récent (« Shakespeare and Classical Music ») Sanders opte pour une mise en pratique plus approfondie des méthodes de critique littéraire dans ses interprétations et sa sélection du répertoire shakespearien⁵. Sa recherche explore l'ensemble des dialogues « entre la poétique et la musique », l'étalage des « contacts interculturels et inter-historiques entre Shakespeare et la musique classique. » Malgré leurs limitations, l'article et l'ouvrage de Sanders contiennent de nombreux concepts et termes utiles dérivés de la critique littéraire, ainsi que l'observation perspicace que non seulement « notre texte-source de Shakespeare », mais

⁴ Mis à part son association avec la notion de deuil (Psalme 137), le saule symbolise chez Shakespeare l'amour abandonné. Pour plus de renseignements voir « Willow » dans Vivian Thomas et Nicki Faircloth, *Shakespeare's Plants, Gardens and Landscapes: A Dictionary*, Londres, Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.

⁵ Julie Sanders, « Shakespeare and Classical Music », dans Mark Thornton Burnett, Adrian Streete et Ramona Wray (éds.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Shakespeare and the Arts*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2011, 169-184.

également les « morceaux de musique classique qui répondent à ces textes » ont créé, à leur tour, de nouvelles réponses artistiques.

Je me suis inspirée, concernant les textes de Shakespeare à l'opéra, de l'essai de Winton Dean, « Shakespeare and Opera » dans *Shakespeare in Music* (1964), de l'ouvrage *Musicking Shakespeare* (2007) de Daniel Albright (qui étudie les œuvres de Shakespeare ayant inspiré Purcell, Britten, Verdi et Berlioz) et du récent volume dans la série des Grands Shakespeariens, *Berlioz. Verdi. Wagner. Britten* (2012). Bien que ce dernier réexamine des noms familiers et des œuvres canoniques, chaque étude de cet ouvrage explore – par le biais de l'analyse ainsi que des preuves historiques et biographiques – l'impact de Shakespeare sur chaque compositeur ainsi que leur compréhension, leur interprétation et leur appréciation de l'auteur anglais. Ainsi, par exemple, David Trippett dans « Individuation as Worship : Wagner and Shakespeare »⁶, examine les écrits de Wagner, et ses changements d'attitude envers le Barde tout au long de sa vie, ainsi que les particularités de son unique opéra sur un sujet shakespearien, *Das Liebesverbot* (1836). Mais, alors que les exemples de Wagner et de Verdi suggèrent, selon l'éditeur de ce volume, que « l'imitation de Shakespeare a conduit les compositeurs à atteindre des effets audacieux, d'amplitude et un certain étalement », l'étude des rencontres de Berlioz avec l'auteur anglais révèlent que Shakespeare inspira à ce compositeur « une concentration farouche de l'affect, un retour à l'essentiel, dans le dépouillement ».

Winton Dean étudie la relation compositeur-librettiste dans des opéras moins connus ou oubliés de Verdi, en analysant la nécessaire distillation et la concentration des textes de Shakespeare comme rôle déterminant dans le succès de chaque opéra. Publiée pour l'année anniversaire de Shakespeare en 1964, la collection d'essais édités par Phyllis Hartnoll (historien de théâtre), *Shakespeare in Music*⁷, à laquelle la contribution de Dean appartient, est un exemple rare d'un ouvrage qui essaye de couvrir à la fois « la musique chez Shakespeare » et « Shakespeare en musique », mais avec une inclination évidente pour ce dernier. Le chapitre d'introduction de John Stevens (spécialiste de musiques anciennes) nous montre que Shakespeare hérita et améliora une tradition de musique de théâtre qui était utilisée non seulement pour l'embellissement mais aussi pour évoquer une palette d'émotions et d'associations symboliques. Le reste de l'ouvrage examine la postérité musicale de

⁶ David Trippett, « Individuation as Worship: Wagner and Shakespeare », dans Daniel Albright (éd.), *Berlioz. Verdi. Wagner. Britten*, Great Shakespeareans, vol. 11, Londres et New York, Continuum, 2012, 135-157.

⁷ Phyllis Hartnoll (éd.), *Shakespeare in Music*, Londres, Macmillan, 1964.

Shakespeare au travers de chansons, d'œuvres de concert (y compris la musique de ballet, de cinéma et la musique de scène) et de l'opéra. Chacune de ces sections offre une approche différente : une histoire critique des chansons écrites sur les paroles de Shakespeare, une approche esthétique, les aspects pratiques d'une adaptation du texte de Shakespeare pour un opéra, une analyse détaillée de *Roméo et Juliette* de Berlioz en retraçant sa source d'inspiration (qui était en fait l'adaptation de Garrick et non le texte original de Shakespeare.)

***Hamlet* en musique**

En ce qui concerne les créations musicales sur *Hamlet*, c'est le personnage d'Ophélie et en particulier ses chansons et sa mort qui présentent la principale attraction de la tragédie. Ces moments sont mis en exergue à la fois dans les recherches générales sur Shakespeare et dans des études plus spécialisées. Le plus souvent, les études portent sur la relation entre la folie, la musique et les femmes chez Shakespeare en faisant valoir que « les chants d'Ophélie sont peut-être le plus célèbre exemple de la relation entre la folie et le chant et reflètent un discours plus large sur la folie dans la culture anglaise ancienne, avec ses associations persistantes entre la musique, l'excès, et le féminin. »⁸ Par conséquent, les études concernant la mort d'Ophélie et ses caractéristiques musicales dans les adaptations cinématographiques d'*Hamlet* comprennent plusieurs études féministes⁹ où l'analyse perspicace et les observations sont ensuite infléchies afin de tenir compte des programmes féministes.

Les scènes de folie et la mort d'Ophélie ainsi que l'art de Shakespeare pour juxtaposer musique, mots, mouvement et paysage, ont suscité de nombreuses réponses d'artistes de différentes disciplines à cet épisode court mais sémantiquement chargé de cette tragédie. On pourrait dire qu'en exportant la mort d'Ophélie hors scène avec seulement la description visuelle de Gertrude, Shakespeare appelle à l'imagination créatrice de son auditoire (et plus tard des artistes) pour visualiser ce moment tragique. La célèbre représentation de la mort d'Ophélie par John Everett Millais (peint en 1851-1852) a elle-même acquis une signification symbolique et une survivance riche y compris dans les films et la musique pop. Les musiciens ont également répondu à l'appel, principalement, mais pas exclusivement, par des chansons : la folie et la mort d'Ophélie sont évoquées musicalement par de nombreux compositeurs tels que Berlioz (« La Mort d'Ophélie », 1848), Frank Bridge (« Il y a un

⁸ Leslie Dunn, « Ophelia's Songs in *Hamlet*: Music, Madness, and the Feminine », dans Leslie Dunn et Nancy Jones (éds.), *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, 50-64, ici à 52.

⁹ Par exemple Kendra Preston Leonard, *Shakespeare, Madness, and Music: Scoring Insanity in Cinematic Adaptations*, Lanham, Toronto et Plymouth, Scarecrow Press, 2009.

saule, » Impression pour petit orchestre, 1928), et Hans Werner Henze (*Première Sonate sur des Caractères de Shakespeare*, « Ophélie », 1975-1976), ainsi que Brahms et de Strauss, entre autres, dans des chansons.

À l'instar de la plupart des pièces de Shakespeare, *Hamlet* a généré un large éventail de réponses musicales. Comme on le verra dans le chapitre 1, le XIX^e siècle a vu s'épanouir le culte de Hamlet et le Hamlétisme parmi les compositeurs romantiques en Europe et en Russie. Dans l'opéra, comme Albright l'observe, la relation entre les conventions à l'époque de Shakespeare et celles de l'opéra ont tendance à mettre l'accent sur des moments tout à fait différents¹⁰. Ce fut certainement le cas d'*Hamlet* d'Ambroise Thomas (1868). Mis à part sa fin heureuse inattendue, Thomas réduit « être ou ne pas être » au strict minimum, tout en faisant de la romance entre Hamlet et Ophélie l'intrigue centrale. La scène de folie d'Ophélie est l'une des scènes les plus longues et des plus élaborées dans tout l'opéra français. L'*Hamlet* de Thomas reste encore la version opératique de cette tragédie la plus souvent mentionnée et a éclipsé les réalisations par le Letton Jānis Kalniņš (1936), par le Géorgien soviétique Alexi Machavariani (1964) et par le Russe Sergei Slonimsky (1991), dont je fais mention dans le chapitre 5 de cette thèse. Winton Dean remarque, dans son aperçu des opéras inspirés par Shakespeare et leur libretti (qui est antérieur à l'œuvre de Slonimsky et n'aurait pas connu celle de Machavariani), qu'*Hamlet* a « tenté les anges, mais qu'uniquement des êtres inférieurs s'y sont rués »¹¹. Ces « anges » incluent des compositeurs comme Schumann, Berlioz, Chostakovitch et Prokofiev qui, tous, à un moment donné, ont voulu composer un opéra inspiré d'*Hamlet*.

Pour Berlioz, le texte de cette tragédie, sa musique et sa performance devint un leitmotiv presque obsessionnel de sa vie. Bien que le compositeur créa plusieurs œuvres à grande échelle d'après des pièces de Shakespeare (*Roméo et Juliette*, *Le Roi Lear* et *Béatrice et Bénédicte*), Peter Bloom¹² montre que ce fut *Hamlet* (et seulement plus tard *Roméo et Juliette*) qui occupa une place centrale et toute personnelle dans la vie et l'œuvre de Berlioz, peut-être parce que le compositeur rencontra sa future épouse, l'actrice anglo-irlandaise Harriet Smithson, quand elle jouait Ophélie au Théâtre de l'Odéon en 1827. En outre, Berlioz cite régulièrement Shakespeare – et *Hamlet* en particulier – dans ses lettres, ses articles et les entrées de son journal intime. Les citations d'*Hamlet* (et de *Roméo et Juliette*) sont même

¹⁰ Daniel Albright (éd.), *Berlioz. Verdi. Wagner. Britten*, 1.

¹¹ Winton Dean, « Shakespeare and Opera », dans Phyllis Hartnoll (éd.), *Shakespeare in Music*, Londres, MacMillan, 1964, 163.

¹² Peter Bloom, *Berlioz*, dans Daniel Albright (ed.), *Berlioz, Verdi, Wagner, Britten*, 7-76.

parfois des épitaphes pour des œuvres non-shakespeariennes du compositeur, comme c'est le cas pour *Huit Scènes de Faust* (1829). D'autres réflexions sur Hamlet apparaissent dans la suite de sa *Symphonie fantastique*, initialement intitulée *Le Retour à la vie* (1831-1832), puis révisée en *Lélio ou le Retour à la vie* (1855-1857), ainsi que dans deux mouvements de *Tristia* (« La Mort d'Ophélie », en 1848, et la « Marche funèbre pour la dernière scène d'Hamlet », achevée en 1844). Berlioz n'a cependant jamais fait un portrait musical complet de la tragédie comme certains autres compositeurs romantiques tels que Joseph Joachim (ouverture *Hamlet* Op. 4, 1853), Niels Gade (ouverture *Hamlet*, Op. 37, 1861) et Franz Liszt (poème symphonique de 1858, et dans sa forme définitive en 1876).

Pour ce dernier, comme Jonathan Kregor le fait remarquer, « Liszt tenta de saisir une approche spécifique dérivée d'une mise en scène particulière. »¹³ Le travail du compositeur sur son dernier poème symphonique coïncidait avec son amitié pour l'acteur allemand d'origine polonaise, Bogumil Dawison, connu pour son style mélodramatique et pour dépeindre un Hamlet qui était en contradiction marquée avec le prince faible à la Goethe. Ce nouvel Hamlet de l'acteur Dawison n'était pas un rêveur mais « un homme d'action attendant le bon moment pour agir ».

Pour Tchaïkovski, également, un acteur, Lucien Guitry, fut le catalyseur de son *Hamlet*, Overture-fantaisie, Op. 67 (voir chapitre 1). Contrairement à Liszt, la musique de Tchaïkovski engage moins un approfondissement psychologique que des images spécifiques. Quand Lucien Guitry demanda ensuite à Tchaïkovski de composer la musique pour sa mise en scène de la pièce, le compositeur trouva la tâche plus difficile et moins satisfaisante (voir chapitre 1). *L'Hamlet* de Tchaïkovski ont moins retenu l'attention académique que son *Roméo et Juliette* ; cependant, il a bénéficié d'une postérité particulièrement riche et ont été utilisés à plusieurs reprises pour diverses adaptations d'*Hamlet* pour le ballet (voir chapitre 5) et pour des musiques de film, notamment pour la version moderne d'*Hamlet* par Michael Almereyda (2000).

Comme Sanders l'a noté, un fil conducteur majeur existe entre les diverses réponses musicales à Shakespeare : « la majorité de ces œuvres ont trouvé leur inspiration d'une certaine façon dans un contexte théâtral. »¹⁴ La plupart des compositeurs mentionnés ci-dessus ont été sollicités pour composer une musique pour une mise en scène, et cet

¹³ Jonathan Kregor, *Program Music*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015, 53.

¹⁴ Julie Sanders, *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings*, Cambridge, Polity, 2013, 194.

engagement à son tour a eu un impact important sur leurs rencontres ultérieures avec les œuvres de Shakespeare. Lorsqu'ils ne répondent pas directement à une commande, ils sont inspirés, comme dans les cas de Berlioz et de Liszt, par des performances et des acteurs particuliers.

Comme on le verra dans le chapitre 2, la première rencontre créative de Chostakovitch avec *Hamlet* se fit également grâce au monde du théâtre. Son travail sur la mise en scène d'Akimov en 1932 s'avéra être un moment déterminant : le compositeur reviendra à cette tragédie tout au long de sa vie. Les musiques de Chostakovitch pour les adaptations théâtrales et cinématographiques d'*Hamlet* sont devenues des œuvres indépendantes non seulement dans le cadre du répertoire des salles de concert, mais aussi (comme avec Tchaïkovski) pour des adaptations d'*Hamlet* pour le ballet et autres mises en scène. Ceci constitue une fascinante étude de cas : la façon dont la musique scénique, qui, en dépit de sa nature spécifique liée au contexte d'une mise en scène particulière, peut continuer à vivre dans des formes altérées, séparées des besoins pratiques et pragmatiques de leur contexte d'origine et des « impulsions esthétiques et créatives » du réalisateur/metteur en scène ou de la société pour laquelle la musique avait été composée. Ceci est probablement le niveau le plus complexe d'appropriation et de transformation du texte de Shakespeare, car il a été soumis à plusieurs étapes de traduction, d'appropriation et d'adaptation. Cependant, il reste encore une autre étape, celle de la réception du public soumise au contexte de l'époque de la performance. Elle est également repérable – bien que partiellement – à travers des revues et des études universitaires.

***Hamlet* et la Russie**

Malgré les conflits récurrents entre la Russie et l'Occident, Shakespeare, pour les Russes, a été et reste presque aussi sacré que leurs propres auteurs. Comme Irena Makaryk l'observe : « Shakespeare offre une fenêtre sur la culture russe et son attitude envers l'Occident. »¹⁵ Inspiré, peut-être, par la célèbre description de Saint-Pétersbourg comme une « fenêtre sur l'Europe »¹⁶, cette image apparaît également dans le titre de l'ouvrage d'Eleanor Rowe sur *Hamlet* russe (*Hamlet : A Window on Russia*). En ce qui concerne la présence d'*Hamlet* dans le contexte socio-politique russe, on retrouve de nombreuses autres métaphores alternatives : le masque, le récipient, et – suivant les conseils d'Hamlet aux acteurs de mise en abîme – le

¹⁵ Irena Makaryk, « Russia and the former Soviet Union », dans Michael Dobson et Stanley Wells (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, 474.

¹⁶ Voir Robert Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2001, 5, n.1.

miroir : « jouer comme si vous teniez un miroir face à la nature » (III/2/17-24). Bien que ce soit l'addition de chacune de ces images qui permette de suggérer l'importance d'*Hamlet* en Russie, leur utilité dépend plutôt de la signification que les commentateurs leur attribuent. Pour Rosenberg, l'idée de « masque » implique qu'*Hamlet*, en tant que personnage, n'est pas une entité fixe. Ainsi seul un artiste/comédien, à titre individuel, peut déterminer quel masque *Hamlet* doit porter. L'idée de « récipient » évoquée par Aleksei Semenenko implique qu'en tant que texte canonisé, *Hamlet* devient un cadre et un récipient rempli d'un nouveau contenu à chaque fois qu'il est interprété. Enfin l'image largement utilisée du « miroir » suggère que les publics russes ou soviétiques pouvaient à tout moment lire, dans ce qui se passe sur scène, les caractéristiques de leur propre société. Ces concepts et images sont à la base d'une partie de cette thèse. Ils sont ensuite affinés et nuancés selon les résultats détaillés de mes recherches.

Les études récentes dans le domaine de l'appropriation transculturelle de Shakespeare tant au niveau global qu'au niveau local, ont fait valoir que l'œuvre du Barde ne reflète pas seulement les discours sociaux, politiques et culturels d'une société, mais qu'elle a également un rôle dans leur formation. Un tel « effet boomerang shakespearien (Boomerang Shakespeare) », comme Alexa Huang le note, est symptomatique de la globalisation économique et des développements culturels internationaux¹⁷. Aucune des notions de l'appropriation « globale » ou « locale » ne sont des nouveautés dans le domaine de la shakespearologie. Déjà, dans son poème dédicatoire dans l'édition Folio de 1623, Ben Jonson évoque l'universalité de Shakespeare. Mais, dès 1623, comme Leah Marcus l'observe, le « Shakespeare universel » était une notion opposée aux performances localisées du Barde. La vague de nouvelles études depuis les années 1990, cependant, s'éloigne de cette opposition binaire entre un Shakespeare global et un local. Dennis Kennedy va encore plus loin en suggérant que « certaines des appropriations étrangères [de Shakespeare] peuvent avoir un accès plus direct à la puissance des pièces. »¹⁸ À cet égard, il est largement reconnu que l'Europe de l'Est offre un cas particulièrement intense¹⁹. L'influence de Shakespeare sur le monde slave, comme Kennedy le souligne, réintroduit une compréhension occidentale du Barde. En tant que tel, *Hamlet*, par exemple, qui « pour l'Ouest libéral » est « une expression

¹⁷ Alexa Huang, « Boomerang Shakespeare: Foreign Shakespeare in Britain », dans Bruce Smith (éd.), *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare Vol. 2: The World's Shakespeare, 1660-Present*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016, 1094-1101.

¹⁸ Dennis Kennedy, « Introduction: Shakespeare without his Language », dans Kennedy (éd.), *Foreign Shakespeares*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, 5.

¹⁹ Constantine Bida, « Shakespeare's Entrance to the Slavic World », *Proceedings of the Third Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*, La Hague et Gravenhage, Mouton, 1962, 340.

de l'esprit individuel » devient une menace pour une société oppressive²⁰. L'ouvrage *Shakespeare notre contemporain* de Jan Kott (publié en polonais et en français en 1962 et en anglais en 1964), en est un exemple révélateur. Cette étude très antistalinienne est devenue « le livre le plus lu de la critique shakespearienne depuis *La tragédie shakespearienne* par A.C. Bradley. »²¹ Que ce soit de manière locale ou globale, l'appropriation de Shakespeare permet de garder ses textes vivants. Ainsi, par exemple, l'adaptation postmoderniste par Salman Rushdie révèle ironiquement comment la longue présence littéraire de l'auteur anglais et son statut iconique dépendent des révisions et des adaptations de ses œuvres.

Le festival « Globe to Globe » en 2012 inaugura une nouvelle vague de débats et d'études autour du phénomène de l'influence et de l'appropriation de Shakespeare, ainsi que de la complexité à définir ces termes dans la pratique moderne. À cette occasion, Dennis Kennedy nous rappelle que c'est bien la flexibilité plutôt que l'universalité des textes de Shakespeare qui sert comme facteur principal de sa popularité mondiale²². Pour démontrer l'importance globale et l'universalité d'*Hamlet* en particulier il suffit de rappeler qu'un projet primé du « Globe to Globe » fut le projet de « Globe to Globe *Hamlet* ». Ce dernier reprit le spectacle d'*Hamlet* par le Théâtre du Globe (réalisé par Dominic Dromgoole et Bill Buckhurst) dans différents pays en l'espace de deux ans. De toutes les pièces de Shakespeare, *Hamlet* est sûrement la plus profondément liée à l'identité nationale russe, au point qu'il a été suggéré qu'on puisse concevoir l'essence de chaque période de l'histoire russe (depuis l'arrivée d'*Hamlet*) rien qu'en observant l'interprétation de cette tragédie par les contemporains de cette époque. Ce ne sont pas seulement les réactions positives à cette pièce qui sont révélatrices ; les arguments contre *Hamlet* et les réponses créatives anti-Hamletiennes sont tout aussi importants pour faire de cette pièce « un miroir qui montre avec une précision extraordinaire l'évolution de la société et la culture russe. »²³ Curieusement, en dépit de l'attitude hostile exprimée par Lev Tolstoï envers Shakespeare et *Hamlet*, c'est après une lecture de *Guerre et Paix* que William Morris écrit le 1^{er} mars : « Hamlet [...] aurait dû être un Russe, et non pas un Danois », confirmant que l'affinité entre les Russes et le prince danois a été reconnue au-delà des frontières du pays.

²⁰ Dennis Kennedy, « Introduction: Shakespeare without his Language », 8.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Dennis Kennedy, « Flexible Shakespeare », dans les notes de programme pour le Théâtre du Globe, *Globe to Globe*, 2012, 3, cité dans *Shakespeare beyond English*, Susan Bennett and Christie Carson (éds.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, 8.

²³ Alexei Bartoshevich, « *Hamlet* for Russia and the Russian Hamlets now », communication non-publiée à *ISA Annual Conference*, Stratford-upon-Avon, 2014.

L'appropriation de Shakespeare et d'*Hamlet* en Russie a déjà été l'objet de plusieurs études : la plupart étant en russe et /ou par des chercheurs russes (voir la bibliographie). En outre, il existe des recherches telles que celle d'Aleksei Semenenko qui étudie les traductions de la tragédie en russe, et *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, par Eleanor Rowe²⁴, qui, bien qu'ayant été publié il y a près de quarante ans, offre une vue d'ensemble de la présence d'*Hamlet* dans la littérature et le théâtre russes. Cependant, des études spécialisées sur les mises en scène soviétiques/russes d'*Hamlet*, que ce soit en Occident ou en Russie, sont rares et peu connues²⁵. Par conséquent, l'examen critique et la contextualisation de tous ces travaux constituent une partie nécessaire de la méthodologie de ce projet.

Les problèmes et les vides signalés ci-dessus fournissent le contexte et, en partie, la motivation de cette thèse, mais ils ne sont pas exclusivement son objet.

Choix du corpus et problématique (l'époque de Staline)

La question centrale que cette thèse pose est la suivante : est-ce qu'*Hamlet* – une tragédie dont l'histoire de l'interprétation et de la réception en Russie fut liée à des notions de doute et de réflexion sur la question maudite d'« être ou ne pas être » – a pu survivre aux terreurs de l'époque de Staline? La réponse courte est « oui ». La réponse longue, analysant les formes de cette survie, constitue le corps de cette thèse. Pour répondre à cette question, ce projet étudie l'influence d'*Hamlet*, ses interprétations russes / soviétiques et l'essence des activités créatives à cet égard dans un climat politico-culturel étroitement surveillé. Il se concentre sur la conception, la réalisation et la réception de deux interprétations théâtrales d'*Hamlet* dans le contexte de l'ère stalinienne : en 1932 par Nikolaï Akimov avec la musique de Chostakovitch et en 1938 par Sergei Radlov avec la musique de Prokofiev.

Bien sûr, il ne faut pas considérer l'époque de Staline (1928-1953) et ses manifestations comme une entité monolithique. Elle englobe plusieurs phases, en commençant par la fin du pluralisme culturel des années 1920, en passant par diverses étapes de la Révolution culturelle (1928-1932), de terreur (1934-1939), et le relâchement (relatif) pendant la Grande guerre patriotique (1941-1945). Par conséquent, chaque exemple de l'appropriation et de l'interprétation d'*Hamlet* au cours de cette période a inévitablement été le résultat d'une négociation à différents niveaux : entre les artistes, les institutions culturelles, le Parti et ses doctrines, les attentes du public formées par les traditions liées à l'histoire d'*Hamlet* en

²⁴ Eleanor Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, New York, New York University Press, 1976.

²⁵ Par exemple: Il'ia Berezark, *Gamlet v Teatre im. Leningradskogo soveta*, Leningrad et Moscou, VTO, 1940; Laurence Senelick, *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet: A Reconstruction*, Westport, Greenwood, 1982.

Russie. Tout d'abord, on remarque une tradition sur *Hamlet* et la notion d'Hamletisme, qui était depuis longtemps intégrée dans l'identité nationale russe. Ainsi, toute nouvelle tentative d'interprétation d'*Hamlet* a dû faire face à l'image déjà imprimée par cette tradition dans l'esprit du public, des artistes et des commentateurs. Parfois, comme c'était le cas notamment avec la mise en scène de Nikolai Akimov en 1932, cette tradition a joué un rôle au moins aussi décisif que les doctrines officielles dans la détermination de la réception, et donc le destin du spectacle.

La nature collaborative des adaptations de Shakespeare – que ce soit dans le théâtre, le cinéma, l'opéra ou le ballet – entraîne des tensions supplémentaires entre les approches des artistes qui pourraient chacun avoir sa propre vision, affectant les perspectives de succès ou d'échec de l'œuvre finale. Ici aussi l'*Hamlet* d'Akimov, avec la musique de scène saillante de Dimitri Chostakovitch, fournit un exemple révélateur de la façon dont les couches sémantiques ajoutées par une musique de scène partiellement autonome pourraient conduire à une réception complexe du spectacle. À l'opposé, la réalisation de Sergei Radlov en 1938, resta fidèle à l'image d'Hamlet comme le prince des peuples en assurant une coordination étroite entre les composants individuels du spectacle – en particulier entre la traduction par l'épouse du metteur en scène, Anna Radlova, et la musique de scène composée par Sergei Prokofiev. Ainsi ce spectacle s'assura une place dans le répertoire russe et un succès qui fut malheureusement stoppé par le déclenchement de la guerre en 1941 ainsi que le destin complexe et tragique des Radlovs (voir chapitre 4). Ces deux mises en scène, conçues à des moments importants de la politique socio-culturelle de l'ère Stalinienne, ont eu le plus grand impact sur le public et dans la presse parmi les autres *Hamlet* de cette période. Elles occupent, de ce fait, une position centrale dans cette thèse.

Les idées reçues au sujet du climat politico-culturel de l'ère stalinienne, autre facteur important dans la tradition de l'*Hamlet* soviétique, sont le résultat de points de vue réductionnistes sur cette époque qui continuent, encore, à circuler dans la littérature secondaire. Une partie importante de chacun des chapitres consacrés aux mises en scène d'Akimov (chapitre 2) et de Radlov (chapitre 3) est donc réservée à un réexamen de ces distorsions. Un autre cas flagrant concerne le mythe de l'interdiction d'*Hamlet* par Staline. En l'absence de documents officiels soutenant la crédibilité d'une telle interdiction, certains chercheurs sont plus prudents et ont nuancé leur hypothèse par des adjectifs comme « officieux », « pratique » et « tacite ». Cependant, un examen plus approfondi d'une preuve existante, réalisée au chapitre 4, devrait aider à rétablir les faits.

La méthodologie

Il peut être improbable qu'« il y a plus de livres écrits sur *Hamlet* que ceux qui ont été écrits sur la Bible »²⁶. Ce qui est certain, en revanche, c'est que beaucoup d'informations disponibles dans les archives de théâtre, de l'Etat et des familles en Russie n'ont pas été étudiées et incorporées dans la littérature secondaire. Ce projet a donc entrepris un examen et une évaluation approfondie d'une partie de ces matériaux. Il va de soi qu'il en reste encore beaucoup à découvrir.

Plus largement, cette thèse est une étude transculturelle, trans- et interdisciplinaire complexe, qui se situe à un carrefour entre la musique, le théâtre, le cinéma, la danse, la littérature, la traductologie et la politique culturelle, ainsi que les théories associées. Mais c'est en particulier l'élément musical – qui a fourni la motivation initiale de cette recherche – qui est le plus développé. Tout au long de l'histoire musicale et culturelle de la Russie, de l'Union soviétique et de la Russie post-soviétique, *Hamlet* a été à plusieurs fois réinventé, que ce soit sous la forme de musique de scène, d'œuvres symphoniques autonomes, de musiques de film, d'opéras, de ballets, ou de chansons sur les paroles de Shakespeare et les poèmes russes inspirés par *Hamlet* et ses héros. Il faut aussi évaluer tout cela à l'aune de leurs propres contextes musicaux et dans le contexte de l'œuvre de leurs auteurs respectifs²⁷. Cependant, ces pièces doivent aussi être prises en considération dans le contexte idéologique et politico-culturel de leurs créations et de leurs réceptions. Pour comprendre les processus d'appropriation et de réception, surtout pour la période stalinienne, il faut se référer aux débats qui ont eu lieu au plus haut niveau du Parti, entre les créateurs et les représentants du Parti, ainsi que dans la presse, tels que rapportés dans la littérature secondaire et complétés par mes propres recherches sur les documents d'archives.

La méthodologie de cette thèse se compose donc de:

- La contextualisation et l'étude historique de l'époque de Staline au travers de documents et de sources secondaires, en particulier les écrits de Katerina Clark et de Marina Frolova-Walker ainsi que des publications récentes telles que celles de

²⁶ Ces mots appartiennent à un personnage d'une pièce de Mark Rylance, créée en 2007 au festival de Chichester. Cette pièce est aussi publiée: Mark Rylance, *The Big Secret Live 'I Am Shakespeare' Webcam Daytime Chatroom Show! : A Comedy of Shakespearean Identity Crisis*, London, Nick Hern Books, 2012.

²⁷ Cela a été fait, bien que brièvement, dans les études les plus autorisées sur Tchaïkovski, Chostakovitch et Prokofiev, par exemple : David Brown, *Tchaikovsky: A Biographical and Critical Study: The Years of Fame (1878-1893)*, Londres, Gollancz, 1992, 156-161 ; Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2000, en particulier 64, 71, 241, 348-350 ; Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years*, Oxford et New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, 82-86.

Laurence Senelick et Sergei Ostrovsky *The Soviet Theater : A Documentary History* (2014), de Clark et Evgeny Dobrenko *et al.*, *Soviet Culture and Power : A History in Documents, 1917-1953* (2007).

- Les documents d'archives, y compris : des exposés, des comptes sténographiques des discussions et des répétitions, des livrets de metteurs en scène, des manuscrits, des croquis, et des correspondances. Tout cela se trouve dans les archives familiales, les archives d'Etat et les théâtres.
- La présentation et l'évaluation de la littérature secondaire, y compris celle en russe.
- L'analyse des spectacles sélectionnés explorant des interactions entre la musique et le théâtre.

La littérature sur les théories de la mise en scène en Russie est abondante, comprenant des aperçus généraux écrits par des chercheurs tels que Laurence Senelick, Marie-Christine Autant-Mathieu, Nicholas Rzhevsky et Anatolii Al'tshuller²⁸, et des études détaillées sur ou par les figures autoritaires du théâtre russe tels que Konstantin Stanislavski, Vsevolod Meyerhold et Nikolai Evreinov²⁹. Ces écrits sont mentionnés mais ne figurent pas directement dans cette thèse, qui cherche plutôt à rétablir les faits historiques et trouver le bon équilibre entre les différentes interprétations. Beaucoup plus rares sont les études portant sur l'analyse de la performance théâtrale. En outre, je suis convaincue que le rôle de la musique dans les mises en scène du corpus de cette thèse est plus important que le crédit qu'on lui a accordé. Il semble alors essentiel de renforcer cet aspect avec les rares contributions théoriques dans le domaine de la musique et du son pour la scène, notamment au travers des écrits de Patrice Pavis et David Roesner.

Bien que mes analyses des mises en scène et de leur musique ont d'abord été réalisées indépendamment, ma lecture ultérieure de *L'Analyse des spectacles* par Patrice Pavis (1996/2012) a confirmé – et à certains égards nuancé – l'élément analytique dans mon approche générale.

²⁸ Voir par exemple : Laurence Senelick (éd.), *Russian Dramatic Theory from Pushkin to the Symbolists: An Anthology*, Austin, University de Texas Press, 1981; Marie-Christine Autant-Mathieu, *Le Théâtre soviétique durant le dégel (1953-1964)*, Paris, CNRS, 1993; Nicholas Rzhevsky, *The Modern Russian Theater: A Literary and Cultural History*, Armonk, NY, M.E. Sharpe, 2009; Anatolii Al'tshuller, *Ocherki istorii russkoi teatral'noi kritiki*, Léninegrad, Iskusstvo, 1975.

²⁹ Par exemple: Jean Benedetti, *Stanislavski*, New York, Routledge, 1988; Vsevolod Meierkhol'd, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma, besedy*, en 2 vols., Moscou, Iskusstvo, 1968; Gérard Abensour, *Nicolas Evreinov, L'apôtre russe de la théâtralité*, Paris, Institut d'études slaves, 1981.

Pavis reconnaît deux types d'analyse de spectacle: 'l'analyse-reportage' et 'l'analyse-reconstitution'. Le premier type décrit le déroulement du spectacle en éclairant les points forts, etc. Ce type d'analyse se fait au cours du spectacle, ou immédiatement après, et saisit la performance de l'intérieur mais plutôt de manière superficielle en restituant les détails et en faisant l'expérience concrète de ce qui touche le spectateur au moment de la représentation.

Le deuxième type d'analyse, 'l'analyse-reconstitution', s'inscrit dans les traditions de conservation et d'entretiens des monuments historiques/culturels et il est par sa nature *post festum*. C'est ce type d'analyse qui est utilisé pour le corpus de cette thèse.

Elle collectionne les indices, les reliques ou les documents de la représentation ainsi que les énoncés d'intention des artistes écrits pendant la préparation des spectacles et le cas échéant, les enregistrements mécaniques. Pour cette thèse, il faut par ailleurs ajouter les rapports scénographiques, les discussions des comités de censure et de la culture, les exposés des metteurs en scène pour les établissements culturels d'état comme GlavRepertKom (*Glavnyi repertuarnyi komitet*, la commission d'approbation du répertoire des artistes, chargée également de la censure), les correspondances entre le metteur en scène et le compositeur, mais aussi les documents qui décrivent le climat politico-culturel et les doctrines du régime au moment de la préparation du spectacle et de sa création car, comme l'affirme Pavis, une composante majeure de cette analyse est la contextualisation du spectacle. Et même si l'analyse-reconstitution ne peut pas faciliter « une évaluation esthétique objective » de la performance, elle offre les moyens d'une évaluation du concept de l'artiste et de l'effet de l'œuvre finale sur les spectateurs de l'époque.

Insistant sur la nature même d'une performance comme la représentation du texte dramatique, Pavis s'oppose à la segmentation analytique basée sur le texte original et suggère que le processus de découpage soit « en conformité avec l'organisation temporelle du cadre rythmique. »³⁰ Adapté pour le corpus de cette thèse, ce découpage est basé sur des unités observables et audibles (y compris musicales), suivant le rythme de la performance, les mouvements et la composition musicale de la mise en scène, en accordant une attention particulière aux moments où le texte de Shakespeare a été modifié par le traducteur et /ou le metteur en scène et est donc hors de synchronisation avec la structure dramatique de l'original.

³⁰ Patrice Pavis, *L'Analyse des spectacles: théâtre, mime, danse, danse-théâtre, cinéma*, Paris, Nathan, 1996, 11-13.

Parmi les composantes des deux principales mises en scène analysées dans cette étude, il y a des fonctionnalités telles que le jeu d'acteur, sa voix, l'éclairage, les couleurs et les mouvements sur scène qui ne peuvent être reconstruits que partiellement, en utilisant des témoignages rapportés et les écrits des critiques. Cependant, la nature éphémère de la représentation théâtrale signifie aussi que certains éléments auraient pu rencontrer d'autres réactions, d'autres témoignages, lors d'autres nuits de performance. Ces éléments non réellement mesurables seront donc utilisés et rapportés avec prudence et seulement quand il y a un intérêt particulier.

Si les études sur l'appropriation de Shakespeare se réfèrent constamment au cinéma et au théâtre, la musique qui les accompagne est souvent négligée. En fait, la musique de scène est un domaine sous-développé au sein de la musicologie. Les ouvrages sur les théories théâtrales ne la traitent que très partiellement, tandis que les ouvrages musicologiques sur ce thème sont négligeables. Les études musicologiques les plus proches sont celles sur la musique de film (Michel Chion), le théâtre musical ou éventuellement le ballet. Néanmoins, parmi les études dramatiques on peut nommer une thèse de doctorat³¹, un ouvrage récent qui est plutôt un guide pour les compositeurs s'intéressant à la musique de scène³², et enfin les ouvrages de David Roesner qui a enquêté sur ce qu'il appelle la « musicalisation » du théâtre³³.

Pour Pavis, la musique de scène se compose de tous les messages sonores qui atteignent les oreilles des spectateurs ; il insiste sur l'influence de cette « musique » sur la perception globale du spectacle par le fait qu'elle crée une atmosphère qui rend le public particulièrement réceptif à l'événement théâtral. Roesner confirme cette fonction de la musique de scène : « étant donné que la musique est une langue abstraite et souvent non-référentielle, la musicalisation dans le théâtre se traduira également par des changements dans les attentes traditionnelles de l'auditoire de la communication théâtrale. » Mais se fondant sur une affinité entre la musique et le théâtre, Roesner développe davantage la notion de « musicalité » d'une mise en scène et soutient que la musicalisation considère le théâtre au-delà du texte. Ce processus se fonde sur la relation entre musique et théâtre, où la musique

³¹ Kim Baston, « Scoring Performance: The Function of Music in Contemporary Theatre and Circus », thèse de doctorat, La Trobe University, 2008.

³² Michael Bruce, *Writing Music for the Stage: A Practical Guide for Theatremakers*, Londres, Nick Hern Books, 2016.

³³ David Roesner, *Musicality in Theatre: Music as Model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre Making*, Farnham et Burlington, Ashgate, 2014, 214.

devient l'un des déterminants de la structure du spectacle et entre dans une interaction avec le texte dramatique.

L'impact et les implications de la musicalisation, selon Roesner, pourraient être étudiés sur trois niveaux indissociables : au niveau du projet du spectacle, au niveau structurel, et au niveau perceptif.

Ces trois étapes s'appliquent aux deux spectacles du corpus de cette thèse. Pour le premier niveau, il faut prendre en compte les correspondances entre le metteur en scène et le compositeur, les exposés, les déclarations, et les comptes rendus des discussions internes, ainsi que les œuvres et les projets parallèles du compositeur et du metteur en scène ainsi que la place du spectacle dans l'ensemble de leurs œuvres. Le niveau structurel est examiné au travers des livrets de spectacles, des esquisses des metteurs en scène et des décorateurs, des photos et éventuellement des costumes ainsi que des partitions, des manuscrits, des parties d'orchestre, et les autres matériaux qui mettent en relation la musique, la mise en scène et le texte modifié du spectacle. Enfin, pour le troisième niveau, le plus discuté surtout dans les études sémiotiques et sémiologiques, le point de départ se trouve dans les revues de presse, les articles spécialisés, le contexte politico-culturel et son évolution du projet jusqu'au moment de la création, et l'évaluation des attentes officielles et celles de public.

Une performance ne donne tout son sens que lorsqu'on l'analyse en relation avec la musique, et il n'y a guère de sens à commenter la musique d'un spectacle indépendamment de sa mise en scène. Étant donné qu'il n'y a pas d'enregistrements vidéo des deux spectacles, une étape essentielle dans la compréhension de cette phase de 'Shakespearisme' soviétique serait idéalement une reconstruction impliquant mise en scène et musique. Ouvrant cette possibilité, cette thèse vise non seulement à identifier et évacuer les idées reçues dans le domaine de la réception et de l'interprétation, mais également à souligner les éléments principaux que ces reconstructions auraient à prendre en compte. Il serait certainement absurde de tenter une telle entreprise sans incorporer les musiques de Chostakovitch et Prokofiev, qui sont si fondamentales pour les deux mises en scène d'*Hamlet* les plus significatives à l'époque de Staline. Toutefois, si cette possibilité doit être prise au sérieux, elle exige une connaissance raisonnable du contexte dans une interrelation avec la musique chez Shakespeare puis son influence dans les créations ultérieures, ce que la première partie de ce résumé démontre.

Plan détaillé de la thèse et contenus des chapitres

Il serait possible de passer directement de cet aperçu historique de la musique dans *Hamlet* et des préoccupations méthodologiques à la partie centrale de cette thèse, qui se concentre sur la conception, la réalisation et la réception des deux mises en scène les plus importantes d'*Hamlet* à l'époque de Staline. Cependant, ces mises en scène ont émergé au sein de leur propre tradition nationale dont leurs créateurs étaient au fait.

Par conséquent, le chapitre 1 est consacré à l'histoire particulière d'*Hamlet* en Russie et en Union soviétique avant 1932 et au phénomène d'Hamletisme russe. En ce qui concerne la musique, ce chapitre présente un aperçu des réponses musicales russes aux œuvres de Shakespeare en général et à *Hamlet* en particulier. La plus importante de ces réactions musicales fut, sans doute, celle de Tchaïkovski. Ce chapitre retrace les genèses et les héritages des deux œuvres *Hamletiennes* de ce compositeur : *L'Ouverture-fantaisie* et la musique pour une mise en scène d'*Hamlet* avec Lucien Guitry dans le rôle principal. Ce chapitre fournit également un aperçu des mises en scènes les plus importantes d'*Hamlet* en Russie et en Union soviétique avant l'ère stalinienne ainsi que des formations et des expériences créatives des directeurs des *Hamlet* de l'ère stalinienne, à savoir celles de Nikolai Akimov (1901-1968) et de Sergei Radlov (1892-1958). Ces deux directeurs poursuivirent des voies très différentes avant leur *Hamlet*, tout en répondant chacun aux tendances théâtrales et au climat culturel changeant des années liminales avant et après la révolution bolchevique. En outre, toute étude sur le théâtre russe et soviétique serait incomplète sans mentionner, même brièvement, son principal initiateur, Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940). Il travaillait avec ses élèves dans son Studio sur des extraits successifs d'*Hamlet*, comme la scène de la folie d'Ophélie, et c'était ce travail qui devait donner la clé de l'interprétation des tragédies shakespeariennes dans leur ensemble. Pour Meyerhold, *Hamlet* resta un rêve inachevé, mais aussi une présence constante dans son travail de metteur en scène, théoricien et pédagogue.

Les chapitres 2 et 3 se concentrent sur l'étude et l'analyse des *Hamlet* d'Akimov et de Radlov, respectivement.

Lorsqu'en 1932 le jeune artiste Nikolaï Akimov fit ses débuts comme metteur en scène en montant *Hamlet* au Théâtre Vakhtangov à Moscou, personne ne s'attendait à l'un des plus grands scandales de l'histoire du théâtre russe/soviétique. Sa réalisation avait pourtant tous les éléments typiques des œuvres de Vsevolod Meyerhold, y compris une musique de scène excentrique : celle du jeune Dimitri Chostakovitch. Toutefois, même Meyerhold critiqua

sévèrement cette mise en scène. En réinterprétant une Ophélie en prostituée et un Hamlet en bon vivant, la mise en scène d'Akimov suscita des réactions partagées de la part des critiques. Cependant la musique de Chostakovitch fit l'unanimité. Sans avoir pu bénéficier d'un accès aux documents d'archives, les études occidentales sur cette mise en scène sont souvent réductionnistes et rigides. En outre, cette mise en scène fut créée à un moment-clé de l'histoire culturelle du pays, à la suite de la dissolution des organisations artistiques rivales, et coïncide avec l'avènement du réalisme socialiste. Avec le recul, le destin de l'*Hamlet* d'Akimov était prévisible mais encore incertain au moment de sa conception en 1931, période d'expérimentations théâtrales.

On a longtemps cherché à justifier les choix, controversés, d'Akimov pour sa mise en scène cynique, inattendue d'*Hamlet*. Les différentes théories s'étendent d'une simple parodie politique à une influence marquée de Meyerhold. Gerard McBurney, dans son article sur Chostakovitch et le théâtre suggère qu'« Akimov avait l'intention de mettre *Hamlet* à l'envers. »³⁴ Pourtant les articles détaillés du metteur en scène révèlent des choix basés sur une lecture très attentive et intelligente de la pièce et une compréhension des tragédies élisabéthaines : « Les tragédies élisabéthaines, comme nous le savons, se développèrent toujours sur deux plans clairement parallèles : la comédie et la tragédie. »³⁵ Akimov décida donc d'insister sur le côté farce de la pièce, souvent négligé par les metteurs en scène. En effet, il voulait démontrer qu'*Hamlet* pourrait et devrait être interprété autrement que chez Craig/Stanslavski ou Mikhaïl Tchekhov, et il constate qu'« en relisant *Hamlet, le Prince danois*, la pièce ne m'apparut pas du tout une œuvre symbolique comme c'était montré lors de la mise en scène du théâtre MKhAT II... »³⁶.

C'est ainsi qu'Akimov décida d'éviter le symbolisme et le mysticisme à tout prix et de centrer l'action sur la lutte pour le trône. Ainsi Hamlet, à l'aide d'Horatio, simule l'apparition du spectre de son père pour trouver des adeptes. Cette interprétation pour la scène avec le spectre était inspirée par les écrits d'Erasme et surtout par un extrait du 4^e volume des *Colloques*³⁷. En s'appuyant sur les deux identités sociales d'*Hamlet*, Prince et étudiant (à l'université de Wittenberg), Akimov insiste sur la notion d'un Hamlet-humaniste de la Renaissance. Il montre les parties du texte de Shakespeare qui ressemblent à celles des

³⁴ Gerard McBurney, « Shostakovich and the Theatre », dans *The Cambridge Companion to Shostakovich*, Pauline Fairclough et David Fanning (éds.), Cambridge University Press, 2008, 166.

³⁵ Nikolai Akimov, « O postanovke 'Gamleta' v teatre im. Vakhtangova », dans *Teatra'lnoe nasledie*, Léningrad, Iskustvo, 1978, vol. 2, 124.

³⁶ Nikolai Akimov, « O postanovke 'Gamleta' v teatre im. Vakhtangova », 123.

³⁷ Ibid., 131.

Colloques, surtout dans le fameux monologue « Être ou ne pas être »³⁸, qui est mis en scène autour d'une couronne et sous forme d'un dialogue entre Hamlet et Horatio, où Horatio prononce les phrases qui contiennent les doutes, tandis qu'Hamlet déclame les affirmations.

Insistant sur sa vision d'*Hamlet* en tant que pièce d'intrigue pleine d'énergie, Akimov fait un rapprochement entre les scènes où Hamlet fait semblant d'être fou et les comédies *slapstick*. C'est aussi dans ces dernières scènes que nous apprenons la mission principale d'Ophélie : une espionne parmi les espions ! Le destin de la jeune fille est aussi modifié. Après l'assassinat de son père par Hamlet, durant un bal, elle se met à boire, et se noie accidentellement. L'*Hamlet* d'Akimov se voulait certainement provocateur pour ainsi rouvrir la question du traitement des Classiques... Une question qui occupe des académiciens et des artistes depuis très longtemps³⁹.

Malgré l'enthousiasme du public, la réaction de la presse fut négative, avec des critiques acerbes, et le spectacle fut rapidement retiré du Vakhtangov. Cependant la musique de Chostakovitch, contrairement à la mise en scène, reçut des critiques très positives⁴⁰. Certaines estimaient même que la mise en scène les empêchait d'entendre la magnifique musique de Chostakovitch⁴¹. C'est d'ailleurs cette musique qui nous aide à mieux comprendre l'évolution du langage musical du compositeur.

Bien qu'Akimov ait choisi de situer son *Hamlet* au XVI^e siècle, la musique de Chostakovitch n'a pas grand-chose à voir avec cette période. Ici les intonations de la musique de Chostakovitch sont très appropriées au langage musical populaire des années 20 et 30 : excentrique, avec beaucoup d'énergie et de tonus. Le compositeur fait appel aux genres comme le galop, le cancan et même le tango⁴².

La plus grande réussite de Chostakovitch ici est la musicalisation de l'ironie d'*Hamlet*. C'est également pour cette tâche que Tchaïkovski a dit : « la musique ne peut pas trouver de moyen pour révéler l'ironie qui est cachée dans les mots d'Hamlet. »⁴³ En effet, la musique de Chostakovitch représente la mise en scène d'Akimov dans une certaine mesure, cependant,

³⁸ Ibid., 129-131.

³⁹ Pour les discussions officielles au sujet de la mise en scène d'Akimov et le traitement du répertoire classique cf. Viacheslav Ivanov (éd.), *Mnemozina : dokumenty i fakti iz istorii otechestvennogo teatra XX veka*, Moscou, Artist. Rezhisser. Teatr., 2004, 393-425.

⁴⁰ Par exemple: Aleksandr Anikst, « Byt' ili ne byt' u nas Gamletu », *Teatr* 3 (1955), 62-81.

⁴¹ P. Markov, « Gamlet v postanovke N. Akimova », *Sovetskii teatr*, 1932/7-8, cité dans Yelena Zinkevich, « Muzyka k pervomu Gamletu », *Sovetskaya muzyka*, 1971/5, 96.

⁴² Marina Sabinina, *Simfoni Shostakovicha*, Moscou, Muzyka, 1976, 75.

⁴³ Pyotr Chaïkovskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 2, Moscou, Muzyka, 1977, 301.

occasionnellement, elle va à l'encontre des solutions d'Akimov et se rapproche des idéaux shakespeariens. Par conséquent, il y a parfois une sorte de contradiction dans les personnages de la pièce. Le personnage d'Ophélie est un exemple représentatif de cette notion. D'une part, elle est associée aux épisodes musicaux comme « le galop de Polonius et d'Ophélie » qui est sarcastique et très tonique, où la musique de danse, un cancan, est en accord avec la femme légère imaginée par Akimov. Mais d'autre part, il y a des scènes avec une musique très délicate, comme la berceuse, ou encore tragique, comme le requiem.

Une caractéristique qui deviendra par la suite la marque de fabrique du langage musical de Chostakovitch, et qui est pleinement représentée ici, est l'utilisation de la musique quotidienne (en russe *byt*) pour décrire la corruption et le déclin, ici d'Elseigneur, afin de révéler de façon plutôt paradoxale la vraie tragédie⁴⁴. En l'absence d'une véritable tragédie, comme c'est le cas dans la mise en scène d'Akimov, la parodie et la moquerie sont inévitables. Un très bon exemple de cette notion se trouve encore une fois dans le traitement d'Ophélie.

La chanson qu'elle interprète durant le bal qui suit la mort de son père et précède sa propre mort, ressemble aux chansons de cabaret, et ce n'est pas pour rien, car elle chante des paroles pleines de suggestions sexuelles (acte 4, scène 5). Chostakovitch composa la musique d'*Hamlet* parallèlement à son travail sur son deuxième opéra, *Lady Macbeth*, et les deux partitions ont plusieurs points communs. Comparons la scène ci-dessus avec la dernière scène de l'opéra, où Sergei, l'amoureux de Katerina (*Lady Macbeth*), essaie de séduire l'une des détenues, Sonietka. Pour cela il revient vers Katerina et lui demande ses bas. Désespérée, et sachant qu'elle a perdu l'affection de Sergei, elle les lui remet. Elle chante alors le même motif qu'Ophélie lors de sa chanson suggestive.

En m'appuyant sur les sources primaires et les matériaux des archives et en tenant compte du contexte politico-culturel du pays soviétique, je cherche, dans ce deuxième chapitre, à mieux comprendre les intentions artistiques d'Akimov pour son *Hamlet* et à souligner les points de convergences et de divergences avec la musique de Chostakovitch. Enfin, la question se pose de savoir si une musique, dont la fonction est d'accompagner un spectacle, peut le desservir par sa qualité même. Cette observation contribue certainement à une meilleure compréhension de la nature scandaleuse de cette « Shakespérience » d'Akimov et sa chute subséquente.

⁴⁴ Elena Zinkevich, « Muzyka k pervomu Gamletu », 98.

Sept ans plus tard, en 1938, le succès de la mise en scène d'*Hamlet* au Théâtre de Radlov (plus tard Lensovet) à Léninegrad par Sergei Radlov (metteur en scène), Sergei Prokofiev (compositeur) et Vladimir Dmitriev (artiste scénographe) coïncida avec la dernière phase des grandes purges staliniennes. Cette mise en scène semble à bien des égards être à l'opposé de celle d'Akimov. De plus, en mettant l'accent sur l'héroïsme et le positivisme, elle est apparemment en accord avec la doctrine réaliste socialiste. Il n'y a pourtant aucun doute, la carrière créative de Radlov est le résultat de négociations conscientes et inconscientes dans un climat politico-culturel tendu du pays. D'autre part, un grand nombre de tendances réalistes socialistes de Radlov, déjà considéré au milieu des années 1930 comme le metteur en scène par excellence du théâtre Shakespearien soviétique, se sont manifestées avant même l'introduction de la doctrine en 1934.

Tout au long de sa carrière shakespearienne, Radlov publia plusieurs articles dans lesquels il décrit sa méthodologie. Pour lui, il n'existait qu'une seule façon correcte d'aborder les œuvres de Shakespeare et de les mettre en scène : « une interprétation réaliste » (realisticheskaya traktovka)⁴⁵. Ainsi c'est seulement en travaillant sur cette approche essentielle que le metteur en scène serait en mesure de présenter un Shakespeare « authentique ». La première étape de ce processus, selon Radlov, consiste à étudier le temps et la situation historique de l'Angleterre où Shakespeare a vécu et travaillé, ainsi que le profil social de l'auteur dans ce contexte. Par son principe, cette approche était similaire à celle d'Akimov avec sa lecture matérialiste et dialectique du contexte d'*Hamlet*.

Pour Radlov, *Hamlet* était un prolongement naturel de son travail sur les tragédies de Shakespeare, utilisant les nouvelles traductions de sa femme. Son théâtre s'était désormais installé dans des locaux plus grands et sa réputation en tant que « laboratoire de Shakespeare » signifiait que chacune de leurs mises en scène shakespeariennes était un événement très attendu par les critiques et la presse.

En ce qui concerne la musique de scène, la nature même du genre en général et celle de Prokofiev en particulier oblige à une étude à plusieurs niveaux : l'évolution du langage musical de Prokofiev, la pensée et l'approche du metteur en scène, l'essence de la pièce elle-même, et enfin le contexte politico-culturel. Prokofiev composa la musique des quatre spectacles entre 1934 et 1938, une période de transition à la fois pour le compositeur et pour

⁴⁵ Voir par exemple : « Kak stavit' Shekspira », *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 10 février 1935, 4; « Kak ia stavliu Shekspira », dans Aleksandr Gvozdev (éd.), *Nasha rabota nad klassikami*, Léninegrad, Goslitizdat, 1936, 11-71; « Shekspir i problem rezhissury », *Teatr i dramaturgiia*, 1936/2, 57-58.

le pays. Préparant le retour à son pays natal et déjà âgé de plus de 40 ans, Prokofiev tenait à montrer son dévouement à son peuple et aurait utilisé toute occasion de faire connaître sa musique. Dans sa quête pour devenir un compositeur éminent, Prokofiev a profité des projets de collaboration avec les personnalités culturelles les plus connues de l'époque : Natal'ia Sats (*Pierre et le loup*), Meyerhold (*Boris Godounov*), Taïrov (*Nuits égyptiennes* et *Eugène Onéguine*), Radlov (*Roméo et Juliette* et *Hamlet*) et Eisenstein. Malgré la simplification de son langage musical, Prokofiev a pris grand soin de se conformer aux exigences de ses collaborateurs. Selon les demandes des metteurs en scène, sa musique de scène devenait un mélodrame pour *Nuits égyptiennes* et *Eugène Onéguine* ou musique de scène traditionnelle pour *Hamlet*. Il est tentant d'expliquer cette tendance en se référant au contexte politico-culturel environnant chaque performance, l'élévation de l'esthétique stalinienne et le règne du réalisme socialiste. Cependant, une fois les instructions spécifiques de chaque metteur en scène, la nature de chaque pièce et son appropriation prises en compte, il devient clair que chaque œuvre est le produit d'une négociation entre les auteurs, les artistes et la société.

L'analyse approfondie de la mise en scène d'*Hamlet*, présentée dans le chapitre 3, est complétée par de nombreux documents d'archives, y compris les correspondances entre les créateurs du spectacle, ainsi que leurs exposés officiels, des articles et des croquis. Ce chapitre se veut une réévaluation plus objective des intentions du metteur en scène et de ses plans initiaux. Par exemple, la marche de Fortinbras est le mouvement musical le plus élaboré de l'ensemble de la musique Prokofiev pour ce spectacle. En effet, cette marche introduit plusieurs modulations, ce qui pourrait symboliser la liberté acquise avec l'arrivée de la figure rédemptrice de Fortinbras. Pour capturer la tension dramatique et l'évolution du spectacle, la marche ne retourne pas à la tonalité principale (*si b* majeur) et se détourne donc de la forme symphonique prévue et termine en un *do* majeur ensoleillé. Cette coda en *do* majeur est un moment de parfaite harmonie entre l'interprétation du metteur en scène et la musique de scène. L'apothéose édifiante est en accord avec la foi de Radlov dans l'optimisme de Shakespeare et son amour pour la vie. En même temps, elle correspond à la confession choisie par Prokofiev – « Christian Science ». Prokofiev, consciemment ou inconsciemment, conçut un bouquet final qui est comme un hymne à l'esprit humain, manifestation du divin. L'impression finale sur *Hamlet* est celle d'un héros positif, sans aucune ambiguïté, qui a combattu pour un but plus élevé et qui a permis l'évolution vers l'idéal politique et social en ouvrant le chemin pour le jeune Fortinbras. Cette interprétation optimiste est l'exact opposé de celle de Sergei Slonimsky dans son opéra de 1991 (chapitre 5). Pour Slonimsky, Fortinbras

serait encore un autre tyran semblable à Claudius, et la tragédie d'*Hamlet* n'aurait aucune notion d'optimisme, ni aucune lueur d'espoir.

L'étude d'*Hamlet* d'Akimov / Chostakovitch (1932) est basée sur une grande quantité de documents d'archives jusqu'alors inconnus ou négligés, qui servent à clarifier et à fournir de nombreux détails sur la mise en scène, ainsi que sa conception, sa réalisation et sa réception. Pour l'*Hamlet* de Radlov / Prokofiev (1938), les documents d'archives sont moins nombreux. En effet, le livret du metteur en scène et les rapports sténographiques des répétitions n'ont pas été découverts. Les détails du spectacle, sa genèse et son destin ont dû être travaillé sur les documents d'archives existants : les lettres et les écrits de Radlov et de Prokofiev, leur collaboration pour le ballet *Roméo et Juliette*, divers rapports et réminiscences de leurs contemporains à propos d'*Hamlet*, ainsi qu'à partir des revues de presse de l'époque, notamment le compte rendu détaillé d'*Hamlet* par Il'ia Brezark⁴⁶. Il y présente ce qu'il appelle un « portrait du spectacle » et décrit visuellement chaque scène perçue du point de vue du public. Par conséquent, les descriptions scène par scène de ces deux *Hamlet* s'appuient sur des documents de nature différente avec leur propre méthodologie, mais chacune contribue à la compréhension des destins de la mise en scène et de sa musique.

La seconde moitié de l'ère stalinienne (de 1938 jusqu'à la mort du dictateur en mars 1953) ne fut pas seulement une vitrine fascinante pour le statut culturel et politique en évolution du régime, mais a également été marquée par des événements internationaux sismiques, surtout la Seconde Guerre mondiale et les débuts de la Guerre froide. La place d'*Hamlet* dans l'Union Soviétique pendant cette période a été l'objet de beaucoup de spéculations et exige sa propre démythologisation prudente. Ceci est effectué au chapitre 4. Dans ce chapitre, je retrace le parcours extraordinaire de Radlov ainsi que de son *Hamlet* après le déclenchement de la Guerre mondiale. Cette thèse se termine par un chapitre qui contient un aperçu des mises en scène d'*Hamlet* sur les grandes scènes de Moscou et de Léninegrad presque immédiatement après la mort de Staline, et d'un aperçu des adaptations diverses (y compris pour le cinéma) et des mises en musique et danse d'*Hamlet* par la suite (chapitre 5). Ensemble, elles montrent comment le texte de Shakespeare et les esprits créatifs du théâtre, du ballet et de l'opéra ont continué à se diffuser en se confrontant dans un climat politico-culturel en pleine évolution. Ce processus de négociation et de réadaptation constante est la

⁴⁶ Il'ia Brezark, *Gamlet v Teatre im. Leningradskogo Soveta: opyt analiza spektakl'ia*, Léninegrad et Moscou Moscow, VTO, 1940.

raison pour laquelle il serait difficile de suggérer des cas de figures parallèles dans le pays ou même à l'extérieur.

Il y a quelque chose de particulièrement attirante, même dangereuse, à propos des sujets culturels liés à l'époque de Staline : ils exercent un appel au niveau de la *Schadenfreude* à laquelle il peut être difficile d'échapper. En même temps, ils se nourrissent de la tentation du culte du héros : découvrir ou réhabiliter des personnes qui peuvent vraisemblablement être reconnues comme résistants à la tyrannie, et qui nous font fantasmer sur ce que nous aurions fait.

Même si ces pulsions viles peuvent être repoussées, d'autres pièges intellectuels doivent être identifiés et traités comme tels. Le mythe de « l'interdiction » posée par Staline sur les mises en scène d'*Hamlet*, discuté au chapitre 4, en est un exemple révélateur. Gagner un peu de clarté sur le statut de ce mythe ouvre la voie à des études plus subtiles sur ce qui motiva les artistes engagés des périodes stalinienne et post-stalinienne. En outre, le fait qu'à l'époque, ce mythe/rumeur fut accepté comme une réalité plutôt que comme une fiction offre un témoignage de la société russe et de sa culture.

De manière plus abstraite, il y a quelque chose de séduisant à propos d'*Hamlet* : c'est un objectif et une quête reconnus pour des ambitions créatives/théâtrales en collision avec une culture de (auto-) censure et contraintes idéologiques. Les artistes impliqués dans les projets de mises en scène d'*Hamlet* avaient-ils assez de la liberté pour mettre leurs concepts en pratique ? Peut-on affirmer la sincérité des documents survivants ? Et si non, comment peut-on les comprendre et tisser des rapports entre eux et leur héritage ?

Répondre à ces questions est l'objet que je me suis fixé dans cette thèse et que j'espère continuer à développer dans des projets de recherche en découlant. Cependant cette recherche ne se fonde sur aucune méthodologie définitive existante, mais bien plus sur une combinaison de plusieurs d'entre elles. J'ai alors pris en compte principalement les théories de Patrice Pavis relatives à l'analyse et à la lecture interculturelle de la performance, les écrits d'Alexa Huang sur un « Shakespeare global », les études d'Aleksei Semenenko sur les traductions d'*Hamlet* en russe, des œuvres de Christopher Wilson sur la musique dans Shakespeare, ainsi que les analyses musicologiques des théories de l'intonation et des topoi (Agawu et al.) et des concepts dramaturgiques tels que la pyramide de Freitag.

Concernant les études historiques et interprétatives existantes sur les *Hamlet* russes, l'ouvrage d'Eleanor Rowe (*Hamlet : A Window on Russia*) permet une bonne entrée dans le sujet. Ma recherche, cependant, nuance l'étude de Rowe en y ajoutant des sources d'archives et propose des matériaux complémentaires, et des détails sur les mises en scène et sur la musique inspirée par *Hamlet*, pour ainsi peindre une image plus précise et complète de l'assimilation d'*Hamlet* (et de son caractère) dans la culture russe.

D'ailleurs, le livre de Rowe (dont l'étude s'arrête dans les années 1970) ne montre pas vraiment comment chaque interprétation d'*Hamlet* en Russie offre un miroir des spécificités de la société au moment de la production. Bien sûr, l'idée d'*Hamlet* en tant qu'un « trope ou miroir culturel » à travers lequel l'âme humaine et la conscience peuvent être examinés est loin d'être exclusif à la Russie, et cette idée a été explorée par des chercheurs ainsi que par des artistes. La mise en scène de 2009 de Gregory Dornan au Royal Shakespeare Company pour la BBC, avec David Tennant dans le rôle principal, use de miroirs omniprésents, y compris des miroirs brisés, et élève cette métaphore à un nouveau niveau. Les miroirs disposés également dans les films de Kenneth Branagh et de Kozintsev sont comme des instruments d'auto-réflexion et de confession intime. Le présent projet a eu pour but de démontrer par une analyse détaillée et par la contextualisation des mises en scène d'*Hamlet* en Russie, en particulier à l'ère stalinienne, que l'image de la tragédie comme un miroir, même trompeur, d'un contexte social est pertinent.

Cependant, les artistes créateurs vont bien au-delà de la simple acceptation passive de telles notions. Ils ont leurs propres personnalités et projets ou desseins, qui à leur tour jouent un rôle important dans la définition et l'utilisation du « miroir ». Ce dernier, déjà façonné de manière significative par les conditions et le climat politique de l'époque de Staline, serait ensuite incliné et facetté par des artistes qui évidemment ont cherché des réflexions d'eux-mêmes et de leurs idéologies. Même si le *Hamlet* russe a toujours cherché à rester, dans les mots de Jan Kott, « notre contemporain », les deux notions de « notre » et « contemporain » sont elles-mêmes formées conjointement par la société et les artistes eux-mêmes. Par conséquent, les contextes culturels et les compositions créatives des metteurs en scène et des compositeurs sont étroitement mis en lien avec les œuvres étudiées dans cette thèse. C'est d'ailleurs ce que j'ai cherché à démontrer d'une manière plus complète que dans les études existantes.

Dans sa tentative de contextualisation des moments cruciaux de l'histoire russe à travers le prisme d'*Hamlet*, la présente étude a des caractéristiques en commun avec l'œuvre « révisionniste » de référence de Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*.⁴⁷ Taruskin identifie diverses études de cas à différents moments historiques, chacune représentant une parcelle différente de l'identité musicale russe, et chacune formant la base, pour ainsi dire, d'une nouvelle. En revanche, mon étude, qui pourrait être sous-titrée prétentieusement *Defining Russia Hamletly*, a un fil conducteur unique mais multicolore, et tente de tisser un seul roman continu. Ce fil se déroule au gré des redéfinitions d'*Hamlet* par l'interaction du tempérament russe et des conditions socio-politiques en vigueur, et cette tradition contribue à clarifier ce qu'est être russe.

On peut certainement apprendre beaucoup sur le tempérament russe à partir de ces aspects de la tragédie qui ont inspiré et résonné avec des artistes et des traducteurs russes, et à partir d'interprétations (ou si on utilise la terminologie de Gaydin, « Hamletisations ») qui ont été approuvées. Ce reflet du tempérament russe a perduré avec les adaptations multi-génériques d'*Hamlet* dans l'ère post-stalinienne, comme mon étude sélective du chapitre 4 l'a démontré.

La place de Shakespeare dans les œuvres de Chostakovitch et Prokofiev

Cette thèse contribue à une compréhension plus complète du développement créatif de deux grands compositeurs soviétiques. Comme dans toute rencontre entre une personnalité créative imposante – Chostakovitch – et une œuvre d'envergure – Hamlet – la musique n'a pu complètement se soumettre à la forme du texte pour évoluer vers une interprétation propre.

La tradition d'*Hamlet* russe ne fut plus tout à fait la même après la rencontre créative de Chostakovitch avec la tragédie, et de même, Chostakovitch resta marqué par son travail sur cette œuvre. Comme je l'ai dit au chapitre 2, le compositeur, en collaboration sur le projet d'*Hamlet* avec de grandes personnalités du monde théâtral de l'Union soviétique, se forma d'une manière qui doit encore être pleinement appréciée. En tant que jeune compositeur prodigieusement talentueux, mais encore sans objectif éthique défini, Chostakovitch était loin d'être complètement formé. Bien qu'il allait par la suite être victime de dénonciations officielles liées à son opéra *Lady Macbeth*, il était d'ors et déjà secoué par des pressions culturelles. La nature multi-facette d'*Hamlet*, accentuée par la fusion tragi-comique qu'en fit Akimov, a donné à la musique de Chostakovitch une sorte de dualité. Alors que le déroulement chronologique de son non moins tragi-comique deuxième opéra, *Lady Macbeth*

⁴⁷ Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, Princeton University Press, 1997.

du district de Mtsensk, reste désespérément obscur, il est clair que cet engagement double a été un marqueur dans sa production créative. La double-voix deviendra un élément fondamental de son profil créatif, et une stratégie d'adaptation créative de choix dans les années à venir. Comme le montre le chapitre 4, le compositeur retourna aux dualités hamlétiennes non seulement dans sa musique de film célèbre pour Kozintsev mais aussi dans ses œuvres ultérieures (les cycles de chansons de Blok et Tsvetaeva), en explorant davantage les aspects de la tragédie qui ont résonné avec sa croissante obsession de la mort. On pourrait donc faire valoir que, parallèlement à Gogol, Shakespeare fut l'une des figures littéraires les plus importantes pour Chostakovitch. Comme les études de Zhitomirskii et Orlov l'indiquent, le thème de 'Chostakovitch et Shakespeare' apparaît dans les études sur Chostakovitch, mais ces études ne font guère justice à la signification de ce thème, et elles sont remarquablement rares.

Par rapport à Chostakovitch, la rencontre de Prokofiev avec *Hamlet* eut lieu à un stade plus avancé de sa carrière, avec une identité créative depuis longtemps établie, et, comme indiqué dans le chapitre 3, après avoir travaillé avec de grandes personnalités théâtrales telles que Tairov et Meyerhold. Malgré cela, son travail sur *Hamlet* coïncide avec une période où il essayait de trouver ses marques dans l'Union Soviétique, ce qu'il était autorisé à faire. Il était également préoccupé à arracher la place de compositeur soviétique le plus éminent à Chostakovitch. Toujours blessé par l'expérience de l'annulation de *Roméo et Juliette*, et malgré le renouvellement de sa collaboration avec Sergei Radlov, la nature du travail sur *Hamlet* était très différente de leur ballet, et son effet sur la production, en termes de sujets philosophiques, fut presque immédiat. Son travail sur *Hamlet* était certainement déjà orienté vers son prochain opus – la collaboration avec Eisenstein sur le film héroïque et patriotique *Alexander Nevsky*.

En effet, à partir de 1939, Prokofiev écrit ses œuvres instrumentales les plus épiques : les Sonates pour le piano n^{os} 6, 7, 8 (1939 à 1944) diffèrent radicalement des précédentes en termes de but moral tout comme ses Symphonies n^{os} 5 (1944) et 6 (1945-1947) se démarquent des pièces antérieures dans leur épopée, leurs qualités héroïques et beethoveniennes, tandis que sa première Sonate pour violon (1938-1946) a été l'une de ses œuvres les plus profondes. Son travail sur *Hamlet* s'érige alors en précurseur de sujets philosophiques, et l'encouragea à créer dans ce genre, territoire connu de Chostakovitch, et donc à rivaliser pour le statut de leader parmi les compositeurs soviétiques. Ainsi, bien qu'*Hamlet* ne semble pas avoir le même rôle dans le développement de Prokofiev que pour

Chostakovitch, cette étude a été alimentée en partie par la conviction que ce rôle fut en réalité plus important que ce qui en est rapporté. La collaboration avec un shakespearologue et un metteur en scène shakespearien du calibre de Radlov était une partie importante du processus de recherche, pour Prokofiev, d'une plus grande profondeur de son langage et d'une image plus sérieuse de lui-même en tant qu'un artiste purgeant progressivement sa personnalité exhibitionniste.

Reconstruction d'*Hamlet* d'Akimov: un projet utopique ou réaliste?

On pourrait faire valoir qu'*Hamlet* d'Akimov fut la mise en scène la plus fondamentale de la tragédie au cours de l'ère stalinienne. Elle fut certainement la plus discutée. Malgré ses défauts supposés, qui, comme le chapitre 2 le démontre, furent le résultat de nombreux facteurs différents, cette mise en scène consolida la réputation d'Akimov, diffusa ses idées, et contribua au retour d'*Hamlet* sur la scène soviétique, ainsi qu'à l'ouverture d'une porte sur la possibilité des futures mises en scène iconoclastes. Cette porte a rapidement été fermée durant les terreurs staliniennes mais jamais définitivement verrouillée et boulonnée. La mise en scène, qui a vu la collaboration de plusieurs personnalités théâtrales et musicales importantes, fut un épiscentre autour duquel plusieurs mouvements artistiques de l'époque se sont réunis.

L'un des objectifs secondaires de ce projet a été de fournir des matériaux dérivés et de travailler à partir de sources d'archives, de critiques de presse et de témoignages ainsi que d'autres sources secondaires qui pourraient contribuer à une reconstruction partielle ou totale de cette mise en scène. Il va de soi que toute tentative de reconstruction est compliquée par des rapports contradictoires qui sont apparus à l'époque, et par les mythes associés avec les personnes concernées. Toutefois, dans le cas de l'*Hamlet* d'Akimov/Chostakovitch, ces rapports, vus à la lumière des sources disponibles, décrivent les idées originales du metteur en scène, et ne font que renforcer l'importance d'une telle reconstruction.

Compte tenu de la résonance de cette mise en scène avec de nombreuses interprétations tragico-comiques post-soviétiques de Shakespeare en général et d'*Hamlet* en particulier, le but d'un tel projet, apparemment utopique, va au-delà d'un simple exercice historique ou d'une restauration d'antiquaire. Cela pourrait être une expérience théâtrale viable.

Cette étude a donc pour but de fournir un compte rendu détaillé des processus de pensée de ses principaux protagonistes (Akimov et Chostakovitch, Prokofiev et Radlov) dans le

contexte des défis imposés par le climat culturel stalinien. Il suggère qu'une convergence de facteurs produisit des solutions créatives qui étaient, certainement dans le cas d'Akimov, iconoclastes / scandaleuses à l'époque, comme aujourd'hui. La démythologisation d'*Hamlet* d'Akimov, proposée au chapitre 2, prouve que les mises en scène sérieuses mais radicales de la tragédie, comme celle par Matthew Warchus au Royal Shakespeare Company (1997) et *Elseneur / Elsinore* par Robert Lepage à Montréal et Toronto (1995/1996), ne sont pas des phénomènes nouveaux. En même temps, on pourrait montrer que l'Occident a de plus en plus tendance à séparer les interprétations expérimentales/radicales de celles sérieuses, surtout en ce qui concerne les œuvres de Shakespeare. La presse, négative, et la réaction populaire à l'idée de déplacer le monologue d'« être ou ne pas être » au début dans la mise en scène de Lyndsey Turner (avec Benedict Cumberbatch dans le rôle principal au Barbican Theatre, 2015) et les commentaires mitigés sur la mise en scène discothèque d'Emma Rice du *Songe d'une nuit d'été* au Globe Theatre (2016) sont des exemples à ce propos. Une reconstruction d'*Hamlet* d'Akimov servirait de rappel qu'un tel radicalisme pourrait aller de pair avec des buts tout à fait sérieux et une recherche d'authenticité.

Quant à Radlov et son *Hamlet*, un résultat important de cette étude a été d'en montrer la genèse de sa double casquette et de sa figure hybride de shakespeareologue et metteur en scène shakespeareien. C'est avec une telle combinaison de théorie et de pratique que Kozintsev y a été associé à partir des années 1960. Retracer les origines de la carrière shakespeareienne de Radlov et la suivre de ses premières mises en scène à l'éclatement de la guerre, renforce l'importance que le théâtre russe / soviétique a accordé à *Hamlet* ainsi qu'à d'autres œuvres de Shakespeare. Pour Radlov comme pour tant d'autres, *Hamlet* ressort comme le point culminant d'une carrière artistique, et pour lequel des années de préparation furent nécessaires.

En mettant ces deux mises en scène en lien avec les appropriations de Shakespeare / Hamlet avant et après l'ère stalinienne, cette étude démontre que, malgré les doctrines les plus strictes et les plus répressives de cette période et de l'histoire culturelle soviétique, les (re)productions d'*Hamlet* n'étaient pas moins créatives, « contemporaines », et tout autant représentatives des problèmes et des caractéristiques de leur temps.

La notion d'*Hamlet* comme pièce politique est davantage considérée comme une caractéristique d'Europe de l'Est que d'Occident. Une comparaison des adaptations cinématographiques d'Olivier et de Kozintsev, par exemple, révèle le contraste fondamental

entre les préoccupations psychologiques d'Olivier et politico-sociales de Kozintsev. Il est difficile de trouver des équivalents occidentaux pour Akimov et Radlov en ce que leurs mises en scène ont délibérément infléchi la tragédie afin de l'adapter à un programme spécifique. En effet, l'influence des *Hamlet* russes / soviétiques dans l'Ouest et la conscience occidentale a été quelque peu inégale et ténue. En comparaison avec l'influence et la diffusion de certaines mises en scène de l'époque pré- et post-stalinienne (telles que celles de Craig et Stanislavski en 1911, ou Lyubimov et Vysotsky en 1971), le caractère fermé de la société stalinienne et le rideau de fer qui a persisté après la mort de Staline ont restreint l'impact international de la Shakespearologie de l'Europe Centrale et de l'Est en général et des mises en scène russes d'*Hamlet* en particulier. Les adaptations asiatiques, par exemple, se sont plus exportées.

Cela représente une des plus grandes occasions manquées du théâtre et du monde Shakespearien. Le fait qu'il n'y ait actuellement aucune étude faisant autorité sur Shakespeare en Europe Centrale et de l'Est sous-entend que nous ne sommes qu'au début d'une nouvelle phase des activités académiques à cet égard. Si les études académiques et leurs implications pratiques pouvaient aller de pair pour combler cet écart, il y aurait un réel potentiel pour des redécouvertes dramatiques.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	5
Note on Transliteration, Abbreviations and Sources	7
Résumé substantiel	9
La musique dans Shakespeare et notamment <i>Hamlet</i>	10
Shakespeare en musique	12
<i>Hamlet</i> en musique	14
<i>Hamlet</i> et la Russie	17
Choix du corpus et problématique (l'époque de Staline)	20
La méthodologie	22
Plan détaillé de la thèse et contenus des chapitres	27
La place de Shakespeare dans les œuvres de Chostakovitch et Prokofiev	36
Reconstruction d' <i>Hamlet</i> d'Akimov: un projet utopique ou réaliste?	38
Table of Contents	41
List of Musical Examples	45
List of Illustrations	47
List of Tables	49
Introduction and Literature Review	51
Mirrors and appropriations	51
Methodology	57
Music and/in Shakespeare	64
Music in <i>Hamlet</i>	69
<i>Hamlet</i> in music	72
Structure of the dissertation	78
Chapter 1 <i>Hamlet</i> in Russia and the Soviet Union: an overview	81
1.1 Origins	81
	41

1.2 <i>Hamlet</i> , Hamletisation and Hamletism in 19 th -century Russia	83
1.3 Russian <i>Hamlets</i> in the second half of the 19 th century	89
1.4 <i>Hamlet</i> in pre-revolutionary Russian music	92
1.5 <i>Hamlet</i> under the Bolsheviks	95
1.6 Towards <i>Hamlet</i> under Stalin – Nikolai Akimov and Sergei Radlov	97
Chapter 2 Conception and Realisation, or How Akimov and Shostakovich’s ‘Shakesperiment’ Blew Up	123
2.1 Introduction	123
2.2 Anatomy of a scandal	124
2.3 Immediate background	127
2.4 Text, translation and adaptation	131
2.5 Meyerhold versus Akimov	133
2.6 Internal debates	135
2.7 Aftermath and reception	143
2.8 Page vs Stage vs Age	151
2.9 Music and reception	154
2.10 Akimov and Shostakovich’s <i>Hamlet</i> : Act-by-act description and analysis	162
2.11 The relationship of Shostakovich’s music to Akimov’s staging	197
Chapter 3 Sergei Radlov’s Shakespearealism	203
3.1 The year 1932: A tale of two productions	204
3.2 Radlov’s Shakespearean productions before <i>Hamlet</i>	206
3.3 ‘How I stage Shakespeare’	212
3.4 Sergei Prokofiev and the theatre	217
3.5 <i>Hamlet</i> (1938): The production as reported	231
3.6 Radlov’s <i>Hamlet</i> : Conclusion	274
Chapter 4 <i>Hamlet</i> in Crisis	275
4.1 Introduction: <i>Hamlet</i> and Stalin	275
4.2 Radlov’s <i>Hamlet</i> and the Shakespeare celebrations of 1939	276
4.3 Pre-war and wartime <i>Hamlets</i> : Radlov’s unfulfilled plans, evacuation and fall	282

4.4 <i>Hamlet</i> in crisis: MKhAT and the Stalin ‘ban’	288
4.5 Post-war <i>Hamlet</i> : The Zhdanov affair and Soviet Shakespearology	296
Chapter 5 Critical <i>Hamlets</i>	301
5.1 <i>Hamlet</i> fever during the Thaw: A tale of three productions	301
5.2 Kozintsev’s concept and Shostakovich’s music (theatre and film)	306
5.3 The Shakespeare celebrations of 1964	311
5.4 <i>Hamlet</i> after the Thaw: a multi-generic affair	314
Conclusion	337
The place of Shakespeare in the works of Shostakovich and Prokofiev	339
Reconstruction of Akimov’s <i>Hamlet</i> : Quixotic or realistic?	341
Bibliography	345
Scores	381
Discography and filmography	382
Webography	382
Appendices	383
Appendix Table 1: Sergei Radlov’s theatre career: An overview	383
Appendix Table 2: Akimov and Shostakovich’s <i>Hamlet</i> – musical numbers	389
Abstracts	401

List of Musical Examples

Ex. 2.1: Shostakovich, <i>Hamlet</i> Act 1, ‘Night Patrol’, opening; b) Symphony No. 10, second movement, opening	166
Ex. 2.2: Shostakovich, <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 1, ‘Funeral March’, bars 16-19	168
Ex. 2.3: Shostakovich, <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 1, ‘Exit of the King and Queen’ (complete)	169
Ex. 2.4: Shostakovich <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 1, ‘Dance Music’	171
Ex. 2.5: a) Shostakovich <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 2, ‘The passage of Hamlet with the boys’; b) <i>Lady Macbeth</i> , Act I, scene 3; c) <i>The Bedbug</i> , ‘The Wedding’	176
Ex. 2.6: a) Davidenko, ‘Nas pobit’ khoteli’; b) Shostakovich <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 2, [Scene with Hamlet and Rosencrantz], adapted from Sheinberg, <i>Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque</i> , 104	179
Ex. 2.7: Shostakovich a) <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 2, [Arrival of the Actors]; b) Symphony No. 3, bars 262-71	180
Ex. 2.8: Shostakovich <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 2, ‘Dialogue of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’	181
Ex. 2.9: a) Shostakovich, <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 3 ‘Introduction [to the actors’ rehearsal]’; b) Shostakovich, <i>The Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District</i> , Act 4; c) Musorgsky, ‘Gnomus’ from <i>Pictures from an Exhibition</i>	183
Ex. 2.10: a) Shostakovich, <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 3, ‘Entrance of the poisoner’; b) ‘Music of the poisoning’	184
Ex. 2.11: a) Shostakovich <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 3, ‘Exit of the Poisoner’; b) <i>Lady Macbeth</i> , Act 2	185
Ex. 2.12: Shostakovich <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 3, Flute scene	188
Ex. 2.13: Shostakovich <i>Hamlet</i> , King’s monologue	189
Ex. 2.14: a) Shostakovich <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 3, ‘Fight’; b) Shostakovich <i>Lady Macbeth</i> , Act 1, Scene 3, R188	190
Ex. 2.15: a) Shostakovich <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 4, ‘Ophelia’s ditty’; b) Shostakovich <i>Lady Macbeth</i> , Act 5, R512	192
Ex. 2.16: a) Shostakovich <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 4, ‘Lullaby’; b) Shostakovich String Quartet No. 1, first movement	193

Ex. 2.17: a) Shostakovich <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 4, ‘Joust’; b) Shostakovich <i>King Lear</i> (1941), Songs of the Fool, No.1	196
Ex. 3.1: Prokofiev, <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 1, Claudius’s March	238
Ex. 3.2: a) Prokofiev, <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 1, ‘The Ghost’; b) Prokofiev, <i>Alexander Nevsky</i> ‘Battle on the Ice’	242
Ex. 3.3: a) Prokofiev, <i>Hamlet</i> , No. 4 (Pantomime); b). Prokofiev, <i>Hamlet</i> , No. 4 (Pantomime), R15	250
Ex. 3.4: Prokofiev <i>Hamlet</i> , No. 5 (Ophelia’s first song), opening	261
Ex. 3.5: Prokofiev, <i>Hamlet</i> , No. 6 (Ophelia’s second song)	262
Ex. 3.6: Prokofiev, <i>Hamlet</i> , No. 7 (Ophelia’s third song), opening	263
Ex. 3.7: Prokofiev, <i>Hamlet</i> , No. 8 (Ophelia’s fourth song), opening	264
Ex. 3.8: Prokofiev <i>Hamlet</i> , No. 9 (Gravedigger’s song) complete	266
Ex. 3.9: Prokofiev, <i>Hamlet</i> , No. 10 (Fortinbras’s March) R8-11	273
Ex. 5.1: a) Shostakovich, <i>Hamlet</i> (1954), ‘Gigue’; b) Shostakovich, <i>Hamlet</i> (1964) Op. 116, ‘Ball at the Palace’	308
Ex. 5.2: a) Shostakovich, <i>Hamlet</i> (1964), ‘The Ghost’; b) <i>King Lear</i> (1941), ‘Approach of the Storm’	309
Ex. 5.3: ‘How should I your true love know?’ (traditional)	311
Ex. 5.4: a) and b): Shostakovich, <i>Blok cycle</i> , No. 1 ‘Ophelia’s Song’	318
Ex. 5.5: a) Shostakovich, <i>Six Poems of Marina Tsvetaeva</i> , No.3; b) Shostakovich, <i>Hamlet</i> , Op. 116, No. 26, ‘Madness of Ophelia’	323
Ex. 5.6: ‘Thematic system’ in Sergei Slonimsky, <i>Hamlet</i>	329
Ex. 5.7: Slonimsky, <i>Hamlet</i> Act II, Prologue	334

List of Illustrations

Plate 2.1: Official Poster for Akimov's <i>Hamlet</i>	141
Plate 2.2: Akimov's Horatio played by Aleksandr Kozlovskii (with the clay pot used for the 'Ghost' scene)	165
Plate 2.3: <i>Hamlet</i> at the Vakhtangov Theatre (1932), first appearance of the Ghost (I/I)	167
Plate 2.4: <i>Hamlet</i> , Vakhtangov Theatre (1932), second appearance of the Ghost (I/5)	173
Plate 2.5: <i>Hamlet</i> , Vakhtangov Theatre (1932), 'To be or not to be'	186
Plate 2.6: <i>Hamlet</i> , Vakhtangov Theatre (1932), Act 3, after 'Murder of Gonzago'	187
Plate 2.7: <i>Hamlet</i> , Vakhtangov Theatre (1932), design for Graveyard Scene	194
Plate 3.1: Stage design for Act 1 Scene 2	239
Plate 3.2: Polonius	245
Plate 3.3: Hamlet welcomes actors	247
Plate 3.4: The spectators of 'The Mousetrap'	252
Plate 3.5: Claudius' prayer scene	253
Plate 3.6: Hamlet confronting his mother	254
Plate 3.7: Actors of Ophelia (from left) T. Pevtsova (1), Y. Iakobson (3) and N. Vladimirova (2)	258
Plate 3.8: The first gravedigger with Hamlet and Horatio	267
Plate 3.9: The scene of the final fight	269
Plate 3.10: Death of Hamlet	270
Plate 5.1: Mikhail Vrubel', <i>Hamlet and Ophelia</i> , 1888	320

List of Tables

Table 1: Principal Archive and Library Collections used in this Dissertation	59
Table 2.1: Shostakovich's Shakespearean works	157
Table 3.1: Prokofiev's music for stage and screen (1934-1938)	218
Table 3.2: Sergei Radlov's <i>Hamlet</i> – Musical Numbers	229
Table 3.3: Hypothetical Musical-dramatic Scenario of Radlov/Prokofiev <i>Hamlet</i>	233

Introduction and Literature Review

Shakespeare has become our flesh and blood ... Is not the picture of Hamlet closer and more understandable to us than to the French, let us say more than to the English?⁴⁸

Mirrors and appropriations

Notwithstanding the recurrent mutual suspicion between Russia and the West, Shakespeare has been almost as sacrosanct to Russians as their own canonical authors, to the extent that, as Irena Makaryk has put it: 'Shakespeare offers a window on Russian culture and its love-hate relationship with the West.'⁴⁹ Inspired, perhaps, by the famous description of St Petersburg as a 'Window on Europe',⁵⁰ this image has also been applied in a narrower Shakespearean context in the title of Eleanor Rowe's influential book on Russian *Hamlets*.⁵¹ In fact, when it comes to considerations of this play in the Russian socio-political context, there is no shortage of alternative metaphors: for example mask, container and - based on Hamlet's advice to the actors in the play within the play - mirror.⁵² Although each of these images helps to suggest the importance of *Hamlet* and its afterlife in Russia, clearly none is sufficient on its own. Indeed their usefulness rather depends on what meaning commentators ascribe to them. For Marvin Rosenberg the idea of 'mask' implies that Hamlet as a character is not a fixed entity, and only the individual performer and even reader can determine his specific design or mask. Semenenko's 'container' implies that as a canonised text, *Hamlet* becomes a framework to be filled with a new content every single time it is interpreted. And the widely used image of the 'mirror' suggests that Russian or Soviet audiences could at any given moment read features of their own society into the action on stage, as could

⁴⁸ Ivan Turgenev, 'Rech' o Shekspire', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v dvadtsati vos'mi tomakh: Sochineniia v piatnadsati tomakh*, Moscow, Akademiia Nauka, 1968, Vol. 15, 50 [originally published in *SPB vedemosti*, No. 89, 24 April 1864], quoted and translated in Eleanor Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, New York, New York University Press, 1976, 65.

⁴⁹ Irena Makaryk, 'Russia and the former Soviet Union', in Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, 474-6, here 474.

⁵⁰ The phrase is said to have been coined in 1739 by an Italian traveller, Francesco Algarotti, though it owes its popularity to Pushkin's use of it in his 1833 poem, 'The Bronze Horseman' - see Robert Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2001, 5, n.1.

⁵¹ Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*.

⁵² See, respectively, Marvin Rosenberg, *The Masks of Hamlet*, London, Associated University Press, 1992; Aleksei Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign: Russian Translations of Hamlet and Literary Canon Formation*, Stockholm, Stockholm University, 2007, 141; *Hamlet*, III/2/17-24: '... playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure'.

commentators after the fact.⁵³ Such concepts underlie some of the interpretative content of this dissertation and will be refined and nuanced according to its detailed findings.

Recent scholarly trends in the fields of Global/Local Shakespeare and trans-cultural appropriation have argued that the Bard's oeuvre not only reflects the social, political and cultural discourses of any given society but also has a role in forming them.⁵⁴ Such 'Boomerang Shakespeare', as Alexa Huang observes, is symptomatic of global economics and international cultural developments.⁵⁵ Notions of 'Global' and 'Local' are not exactly new entries in the field of Shakespeare scholarship. Already in his dedicatory poem in the Folio edition of 1623, Ben Jonson staked Shakespeare's claim to universality ('Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show/ To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe./ He was not of an age, but for all time'). As early as this time, 'universal' Shakespeare was held up in resistance to localised performances of the Bard.⁵⁶ However, the wave of new scholarship since the 1990s has moved away from the binary opposition between Global and Local Shakespeare, concluding that Shakespearean appropriations 'present a view of Shakespeare embedded not only in his own culture but in ours, forcing us to consider both the impact we have on the plays and the impact they have on us.'⁵⁷ Dennis Kennedy even argues that, relying solely on translation, and stripped of Shakespeare's language, 'some foreign performances [of

⁵³ Of course, the idea of *Hamlet* as, in Harold Bloom's words, a 'cultural trope or mirror' – see Lingui Yang, 'Cognition and Recognition: *Hamlet*'s Power of Knowledge', in Harold Bloom (ed.), *William Shakespeare's Hamlet – New Edition*, New York, Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2009, 73-84, here 74 - through which the human soul and consciousness may be examined, is far from exclusive to Russia and has been explored by scholars and creative artists alike. Gregory Doran's 2009 RSC production for the BBC, with David Tennant in the title role and with its omnipresent mirrors, including shattered ones, took this imagery to a new level. Mirrors also feature in Kenneth Branagh's and Kozintsev's films as instruments of self-reflection and intimate confessions. The source of this metaphor is indeed to be found in the tragedy itself. Apart from Shakespeare's own mirror characterizations (Laertes as a mirror-image of Hamlet; Claudius as that of King Hamlet), there are direct references in the text, including the famous advice of Hamlet to the actors to 'hold a mirror up to nature' (III/2/17-24) and Hamlet's confrontation with his mother ('You go not till I set you up a glass / Where you may see the inmost part of you' – III/4/20) when Gertrude sees, through Hamlet's mirror, into her own soul: 'And there I see such black and grainèd spots/ As will not leave their tinct. – III/4/90-93).

⁵⁴ For a full understanding of the connotations of the term appropriation, particularly in the context of Shakespeare, see, for example, Dennis Kennedy (ed.), *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993; Barbara Hodgins, *The Shakespeare Trade: Performances and Appropriations*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998; Sonia Massai (ed.), *World-wide Shakespeares: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance*, London, Routledge, 2005; Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, London, Routledge, 2006; Margaret Jane Kidnie, *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation*, London and New York, Routledge, 2009.

⁵⁵ Alexa Huang, 'Boomerang Shakespeare: Foreign Shakespeare in Britain', in Bruce Smith (ed.), *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare Vol. 2: The World's Shakespeare, 1660-Present*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016, 1094-1101.

⁵⁶ Leah Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and its Discontents*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988, 44.

⁵⁷ Jean Marsden (ed.), *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: post-Renaissance reconstructions of the works and the myth*, New York, St Martin's Press, 1991, 8.

Shakespeare] may have a more direct access to the power of the plays.’⁵⁸ It is widely acknowledged that Eastern Europe offers a particularly intense case in point.⁵⁹ According to Constantine Bida, for example, ‘the question of Shakespeare’s impact on the Slavic world looms in importance above all others dealing with Western influence on the cultural and artistic life of these nations.’⁶⁰ This influence, as Kennedy again points out, feeds back into the Western understanding of the Bard. As such, *Hamlet*, for example, which ‘to the liberal west’ is ‘an expression of individual spirit, to a censor in a more repressive land... is a threat.’⁶¹ Jan Kott’s *Shakespeare our Contemporary* (published in Polish and French in 1962 and in English in 1964), is revealing in this respect.⁶² As Peter Brook has put it, Kott wrote assuming ‘that every one of his readers will at some point or other have been woken by the police in the middle of the night’, his highly anti-Stalinist study became ‘the most widely read book of Shakespearean criticism since A.C. Bradley’s *Shakespearean Tragedy* [first published in 1904]’.⁶³ Whether local or global, appropriation of Shakespeare unarguably helps to keep his texts alive and their spheres of meaning expanding. Thus, for example, Salman Rushdie’s postmodern, meta-fictional palimpsests ironically reveal how Shakespeare’s literary endurance and global iconic status depend upon the revisions, adaptations, and appropriations of his work.⁶⁴

The Globe to Globe festival of 2012 ushered in a new wave of debates and studies around the phenomenon of Shakespeare’s influence and appropriation, and around the definition of these terms in modern practice. On this occasion Dennis Kennedy wisely reminded us that it is the flexibility rather than the universality of Shakespeare’s texts that has been the main contributing factor to his global popularity.⁶⁵ Even more than the universal values they may be taken to represent, it is the flexibility of the text and structure of the plays that has resulted in their adaptations in various media and cultures. A particularly significant offspring of the

⁵⁸ Dennis Kennedy, ‘Introduction: Shakespeare without his Language’, in Kennedy (ed.), *Foreign Shakespeares*, 5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁰ Constantine Bida, ‘Shakespeare’s Entrance to the Slavic World’, *Proceedings of the Third Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*, The Hague, Mouton, 1962, 340.

⁶¹ Kennedy, ‘Introduction: Shakespeare without his language’, 4.

⁶² Jan Kott (1914-2001) was a leading Marxist and literary critic in Poland but later emigrated to the West and became a major dissident.

⁶³ Kennedy, ‘Introduction: Shakespeare without his language’, 8.

⁶⁴ See Parmita Kapadia, ‘Transnational Shakespeare: Salman Rushdie and Intertextual Appropriation’, *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, 3/2 (2008), 1-20, also at <http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/781652/show>, accessed 16 August 2016.

⁶⁵ Dennis Kennedy, ‘Flexible Shakespeare’, in programme booklet for Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre, *Globe to Globe*, 2012, 3, quoted in *Shakespeare beyond English*, Susan Bennett and Christie Carson (eds.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, 8.

festival came in the form of the ‘Globe to Globe *Hamlet*’, a project that took the production of *Hamlet* by the Globe Theatre (directed by Dominic Dromgoole and Bill Buckhurst) in English to (so the festival claimed) ‘every country’ in the space of two years.⁶⁶

Of all Shakespeare’s plays, *Hamlet* is surely the most deeply engrafted to the Russian psyche and national identity, to the point that it has been suggested that ‘to conceive the essence of any period of Russian history [since the arrival of *Hamlet*] you should just find out how people of that time interpreted [the] tragedy of *Hamlet*: then you’ll touch the nerve of the moment.’⁶⁷ Nor is it only positive reactions to the play that are revealing: anti-*Hamlet* arguments and creative responses were just as significant in ‘mirroring with extraordinary precision the evolution of Russian society and culture.’⁶⁸ Curiously, despite Lev Tolstoy’s documented hostile attitude towards Shakespeare and *Hamlet*,⁶⁹ it was after reading *War and Peace* that William Morris, inspirer of the Arts and Crafts movement, wrote in a letter to Georgiana Burne-Jones on 1 March 1888 that ‘Hamlet ... should have been a Russian, not a Dane,’⁷⁰ confirming that the affinity between Russians and the Danish prince was recognised beyond the country’s border.

The specific appropriation of Shakespeare and *Hamlet* in Russia has been examined to a certain extent, most research being in Russian and/or by Russian scholars. In addition there are English-language studies such as Aleksei Semenenko’s *Hamlet the Sign* that deal with translations of the tragedy into Russian, and Eleanor Rowe’s aforementioned *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, which draws mainly on secondary sources and offers an overview of different stages of the presence of *Hamlet* in Russian literature, from the tragedy’s arrival in Russia to the 1970s. Forty years on, Rowe’s book is still a useful reference-point for anyone interested in the history of Russian *Hamlets*. However, when it comes to the arts other than literature, her descriptions are limited to a few fleeting remarks on selected well-known productions (those of Mochalov in 1837, Chekhov in 1924, Akimov in 1932, Radlov in 1938 and Okhlopov in 1954) and Kozintsev’s screen version of 1964. She does not venture into

⁶⁶ See <http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/theatre/whats-on/globe-theatre/hamlet-globe-to-globe>, accessed 30 May 2016.

⁶⁷ Alexei Bartoshevich, ‘*Hamlet* for Russia and the Russian *Hamlets* now’, unpublished paper given at *ISA Annual Conference*, Stratford-upon-Avon, August 2014.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Tolstoy’s comments on Shakespeare and *Hamlet* have been widely quoted and discussed - see for example, Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 95-105.

⁷⁰ Letter 1479 in Norman Kelvin (ed.), *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, Vol. 2, 1885-1888, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987, 755.

detailed analysis of these and other stagings, or into the realm of *Hamlet*-inspired Russian music. In pursuing the journey of *Hamlet* from Shakespeare's text to Russian text, Rowe finds little or no room for exploring the next level of appropriation, which is from Russian text to Russian stage and music. In fact maintaining a broad historical approach and staying within the confines of literature involves not only side-lining entire art-forms but also devaluing the importance of individual creative artists. Rowe's work is thus essentially a companion to *Hamlet* in Russian literature. Thus, while it was a powerful early inspiration for my research, understanding its limitations helped to motivate the more detailed archival research and analysis of dramatic and musical structures that underpin the central chapters of this dissertation. As for specialised studies of Russian/Soviet *Hamlet* productions, the existing literature, Western or Russian, is sparse and little known.⁷¹ Hence a critical re-examination and contextualisation of all the above will be carried out at appropriate points of this dissertation.

The grand issues flagged so far supply the context and, in part, the motivation for this dissertation, but they are not exclusively or even primarily its subject matter, which is equally about setting the historical record straight. Early in the course of research, as the topic narrowed down to *Hamlet* in the Stalin era, it became apparent that the factual, documentary basis on which views of the play as a kind of barometer for Russian political developments might be challenged and refined was itself less stable than is generally assumed. The necessity for careful archival study became ever clearer, and the central chapters of this dissertation, devoted to the two most famous Russian productions of the time are largely informed by this work.

Did *Hamlet* - a tragedy whose history of production and reception in Russia had long been intertwined with notions of doubt, reflection and the accursed question of 'To be or not to be?' - survive the terrors of the Stalin era? The short answer is 'yes'. The long answer, however, makes up the body of the present study, along with considerations of what form that survival took.

In approaching the answer, this project investigates the tension between individual creative activity and a closely monitored politico-cultural climate. Of course it is folly to regard the Stalin era (1928-1953) in any of its artistic manifestations as a monolithic entity. For one

⁷¹ Examples are Il'ia Berezark, *Gamlet v Teatre im. Leningradskogo soveta*, Leningrad, Moscow, VTO, 1940 and Laurence Senelick, *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet: A Reconstruction*, Westport CT, Greenwood Press, 1982.

thing, it encompassed several phases, starting with the tail-end of artistic pluralism of the 1920s, and going through various shades of Cultural Revolution, Terror, and (relative) relaxation. Any instance of the appropriation and interpretation of *Hamlet* during this period was inevitably the outcome of negotiation at various levels. First of all there was the long-standing pre-Bolshevik tradition of *Hamlet* staging and its offspring concept of Hamletism, which had long since become embedded in Russian national identity, at least as understood by the intelligentsia. Every new attempt at interpretation had to deal with images already imprinted by that tradition in the minds of audiences, performers and commentators. At times, as most notably with Nikolai Akimov's 1932 production, such images played at least as decisive a role as official doctrines in determining the reception, and hence the survival (or otherwise) of the production. The problem here for present-day scholarship is that there is no authoritative, source-based study of Akimov, or of his *Hamlet*, that adequately explains the context, his motivations and their realisation. The collection of essays in the recent volume, *Akimov – eto Akimov* is an attempt to fill this gap.⁷² However, it only provides a patchy account of Akimov's multi-faceted theatrical life. My archive-based study attempts to rectify this shortcoming at least so far as his *Hamlet* is concerned.

The collaborative nature of the work involved in Soviet Shakespeare projects of this era - whether in the theatre, cinema, opera or ballet - entailed additional tensions between the approaches of individual creative artists. Once again Akimov's revisionist *Hamlet*, with Dmitry Shostakovich's vivid incidental music, provides a fine example for how semantic layers added by a partly autonomous score could lead to complexities in reception. At the opposite pole, Sergei Radlov's 1938 *Hamlet* stayed true to the image of Hamlet as a 'People's prince' and by taking care to ensure close coordination between individual components of the production - in particular the translation by the producer's wife, Anna Radlova, and the striking music composed by Sergei Prokofiev - the prospects for a secure place in the repertoire were far brighter, only being aborted by the outbreak of the War and the Radlovs' complicated fate thereafter (see chapter 4.3).

These two productions, each conceived at turning-points in socio-cultural policy under Stalin and had the greatest impact of all *Hamlets* of this era, and they accordingly occupy a central position in this dissertation. Compared to Akimov, Sergei Radlov's creative output has been more closely investigated, by David Zolotnitsky in his book *Sergei Radlov: The*

⁷² Vladimir Zaitsev, *et al.* (eds.), *Akimov – eto Akimov!*, St Petersburg, Rossiiskaia natsional'naia biblioteka, 2006. The title of the book might be translated as 'That's Akimov for you'.

Shakespearian Fate of a Soviet Director.⁷³ However, here the problems, apart from the book's journalist presentation, are the hagiographical tone arising from Zolotnitsky's determination to rehabilitate Radlov's reputation and the lack of detailed analysis of any individual production, including *Hamlet* (see Chapters 3 and 4). Here, too, I have attempted a properly source-based account, again giving full due to the role of the incidental music. However, by contrast with the case of Akimov, for whom *Hamlet* was his directorial debut, the trajectory of Radlov's theatrical and creative output and in particular his previous Shakespearean productions, is clearly germane, and I have tried to do it proper justice.

The Soviet *Hamlet* landscape as it has been passed down to us features several items of received wisdom that reflect reductionist views on the cultural climate of the Stalin era in general. The general syndrome has long since been recognised.⁷⁴ However, neither Akimov's nor Radlov's *Hamlet* has yet been reclaimed from its distorted afterlife in the secondary literature. A significant portion of the chapters devoted to their productions in this dissertation is therefore given over to a re-examination of these distortions. An especially egregious case is the persistent myth regarding Stalin's supposed ban on *Hamlet* productions. The lack of any official document supporting this notion has already led some scholars to nuance it as 'unofficial', 'practical' or 'tacit'. However, a more thorough examination of the existing evidence, carried out in Chapter 4, should help to set the record straight – or at least as straight as it can be at this moment.

Methodology

It may or may not be true that 'There have been more books alone written about *Hamlet* than have been written about the Bible'.⁷⁵ What is certain that there is a vast quantity of information about productions of the play held in Russian theatre, state and family archives that has not been sifted or incorporated into the secondary literature, not even by Russian scholars themselves. The present study has undertaken a thorough examination and

⁷³ David Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov: The Shakespearian Fate of a Soviet Director*, Luxembourg, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981; Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1995; Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2011; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1999; Fitzpatrick, *Stalinism: New Directions*, London, Routledge, 2000.

⁷⁵ Mark Rylance, spoken with deliberate hyperbole by a character called Shakspar in Rylance's 2007 play, *I Am Shakespeare* for Chichester Festival Theatre, also published as Mark Rylance, *The Big Secret Live 'I Am Shakespeare' Webcam Daytime Chatroom Show!: A Comedy of Shakespearean Identity Crisis*, London, Nick Hern Books, 2012.

evaluation of materials that run to several thousands of pages, in the service of an historical study in the spirit of cultural revisionism (as spearheaded by Katerina Clark, Sheila Fitzpatrick *et al.*).

In broader terms, the dissertation is a cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural study of a kind not to my knowledge previously attempted in this field. It incorporates music, theatre, cinema, dance, literature, translation studies, and cultural politics, as well as associated theories where appropriate. In particular the musical element, which provided the initial stimulus for the research, is given more prominence than in any existing study of Shakespeare in Russia. Throughout the country's musical-cultural history, *Hamlet* has been repeatedly re-invented, whether in the form of incidental music, self-standing symphonic/orchestral works, film scores, operas, ballets, or songs to poems inspired by *Hamlet* and its main characters. It is valuable to assess all these in their own music-generic contexts and as part of their respective composer's oeuvres, as has been done, albeit briefly, in the most authoritative life-and-works surveys of Tchaikovsky,⁷⁶ Shostakovich⁷⁷ and Prokofiev.⁷⁸ However, these works also need to be considered within their evolving ideological contexts.

For the Soviet period, essential to the understanding of the processes of Shakespeare appropriation and reception are the debates that took place at the highest levels of the Party, among creative artists and representatives of the Party, as well as in the press, as reported in secondary literature. Here too, thorough archival research is indispensable (see below).

Hence the methodology for this dissertation consists principally of:

- Contextual historical study of the Stalin era through documentary and secondary sources, especially the writings of Katerina Clark and Marina Frolova-Walker, and including as recent publications such as Laurence Senelick and Sergei Ostrovsky's *The Soviet Theatre: a Documentary History* (2014), and Clark, Evgeny Dobrenko *et al.*, *Soviet Culture and Power: A History in Documents 1917-1953* (2007).
- Archival research covering presentations (*doklady*), stenographic accounts of discussions and rehearsals, production books, manuscripts and sketches, and correspondence (see Table 1 for a list of institutions and their relevant contents)

⁷⁶ For example, David Brown, *Tchaikovsky: A Biographical and Critical Study: The Years of Fame (1878-1893)*, London, Gollancz, 1992, 156-161.

⁷⁷ For example, Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, Oxford University Press, 2000, esp. 64, 71, 241, 348-350.

⁷⁸ For example, Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, 82-86.

- Overview and assessment of secondary literature in English and Russian.
- Analysis of selected productions, focusing on the inter-relationship of music and drama.

Table 1: Principal Archive and Library Collections used in this Dissertation

Institution	Place	Section and/or general contents	Specific materials
Alexandrinsky Theatre Archive	St Petersburg	Literature department	Kozintsev's staged <i>Hamlet</i> (1954): orchestral parts of Shostakovich's score, production book
Bakhrushin State Theatre Museum	Moscow	Archive (manuscripts, autographs, private collections)	Photos and sketches (Kozintsev's <i>Hamlet</i>) from collection of Innokenty Smoktunovsky; documents from various unrealised <i>Hamlet</i> projects
Dmitry Shostakovich Family Archive	Moscow	Archive and library	Sketches and (copies of) material for incidental music for Akimov's <i>Hamlet</i> , etc.
GTsMMK (Glinka State Central Museum of Musical Culture)	Moscow	Archive	Photos from costumes and productions of <i>Hamlet</i> ballets
Moscow Art Theatre (MKhAT) Museum	Moscow	Research department	Documents regarding unrealised 1940 production (Meyerhold)
RGALI (Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts)	Moscow	Manuscripts, autographs, private collections	<p>Akimov/Shostakovich <i>Hamlet</i>: Production book, pre-production presentations by Akimov, two letters from Shostakovich to Akimov (autographs).</p> <p>Radlov/Prokofiev <i>Hamlet</i>: Prokofiev's incidental music (autographs); letters to Radlov from various individuals; working materials of Dmitri Dudnikov (actor of title role); Radlov's speeches and presentations, discussions of the production (stenographic reports); official documents.</p> <p>Other: Programme booklets of Okhlopkov's <i>Hamlet</i> (1954); private collections of actors of Okhlopkov's <i>Hamlet</i>; libretto of Slonimsky's</p>

			<i>Hamlet</i> opera (1991)
RGB (Russian State [formerly Lenin] Library)	Moscow	Manuscripts and rare books department	Dissertations; early Shakespeare studies
NLR (National Library of Russia)	St Petersburg	Manuscripts Department	Sergei Radlov collection (including detailed letter to Prokofiev about music to <i>Hamlet</i> , speeches, stenographic reports from rehearsals of <i>Hamlet</i> and other productions; photos, postcard and chess commentaries from Prokofiev; personal copy of translation of <i>Hamlet</i> by Pasternak; Anna Radlova's translation of <i>Hamlet</i> ; personal copy of contemporary Shakespeare studies)
St Petersburg State Theatre Library		Manuscripts and rare books department	Newspaper cuttings and reviews of Radlov's <i>Hamlet</i> ; materials on Radlov's other works; David Zolotnitsky collection (uncatalogued) containing materials for his book on Radlov and drafts of the same; diaries of actors of Radlov's Theatre; photos
TsGALI (Central State Museum of Literature and Arts)	St Petersburg	Archive	Grigory Kozintsev collection (materials on <i>Hamlet</i> and <i>King Lear</i> films and theatre productions, letters, photos, sketches, diary entries); contracts, discussions and official documents related to various productions; private collections of actors and other personalities containing material related to various productions of <i>Hamlet</i>
TsNB STD RF/VTO (Central Library of the Union of Theatre Workers of the Russian Federation / All-Russian Theatre Society)	Moscow	Library and archive	Materials (reviews and analyses) on various productions of Shakespeare's plays, in particular <i>Hamlet</i> – especially useful thanks to extensive analytical catalogue

The literature concerning the theory of dramatic production in Russia is copious, comprising overviews by scholars such as Laurence Senelick, Marie-Christine Autant-Mathieu, Nicholas Rzhevsky and Anatolii Al'tshuller⁷⁹ and detailed studies of or by principal protagonists such

⁷⁹ See, for example, Laurence Senelick (ed.), *Russian Dramatic Theory from Pushkin to the Symbolists: An Anthology*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1981; Marie-Christine Autant-Mathieu, *Le Théâtre soviétique durant le dégel (1953-1964)*, Paris, CNRS Editions, 1993; Nicholas Rzhevsky, *The Modern Russian Theater: A*

as Konstantin Stanislavsky, Vsevolod Meyerhold and Nikolai Evreinov.⁸⁰ These writings do not figure directly or prominently in this dissertation, which concentrates instead on adjusting the historical record and on striking a balance between different interpretative points of view. Much rarer and more germane are studies dealing with the analysis of live theatrical performance.

Furthermore, since it is my conviction that the role of music in such productions is more important than it has been given credit for, it seems important at this point to bolster this aspect with an overview of the very few theoretical contributions in the field of music/sound for the stage, notably the writings of Patrice Pavis and David Roesner. While analyses of production and music in this dissertation were initially carried out independently, subsequent reading of Pavis's *L'Analyse des spectacles* (1996/2012)⁸¹ has confirmed, and in some respects nuanced, the general approach.

Pavis identifies two types of analysis of performances: analysis-reportage and analysis-reconstitution.⁸² The former has the characteristics of sports commentaries, describing events as they unfold on the stage. Such analysis is carried out at the moment of the performance or immediately afterwards. The second type is rooted in the tradition of conservation of cultural/historical monuments and is by its very nature done *post festum*. Such analysis, which is clearly the appropriate type for the current project, consists of collecting and evaluating material and documents about the productions, including presentations of the artists' intentions, their correspondence, reports, critiques, and, where available, any recording media, including photographs.

As Pavis affirms, a major component of such analysis is the contextualisation of the production. Even though the 'analysis-reconstitution' may not facilitate 'an objective aesthetic assessment' of the performance, it offers the means for an evaluation of the artists' concept and the effect of the final product on people of the time. Insisting on the nature of a performance as a 'representation' of dramatic text, Pavis opposes the frequently adopted

Literary and Cultural History, Armonk, NY, M.E. Sharpe, 2009; Anatolii Al'tshuller, *Ocherki istorii russkoi teatral'noi kritiki*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1975.

⁸⁰ Jean Benedetti, *Stanislavski*, New York, Routledge, 1988; Vsevolod Meierkhol'd, *Stat'i, rechi, pis'ma, besedy*, 2 vols., Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1968; Gérard Abensour, *Nicolas Evreinov, L'apôtre russe de la théâtralité*, Paris, Institut d'études slaves, 1981.

⁸¹ Also in English as Patrice Pavis, *Analyzing Performance: Theatre, Dance, And Film*, The University of Michigan Press, 2003.

⁸² Pavis, *L'Analyse des spectacles: théâtre, mime, danse, danse-théâtre, cinéma*, Paris, Nathan, 1996, 11-13; Pavis, *Analyzing Performances*, 9-11.

segmentation of a production in terms of the original text and suggests that the process of segmentation should be ‘in accordance with the temporal organisation of [the production’s] rhythmic framework’. Adapted for the productions studied here, such ‘*découpage*’ is based on observable and audible (including musical) units, following the rhythm of performance, and the movements and musical composition of the *mise-en-scène*, paying special attention to moments where Shakespeare’s text has been modified by the translator and/or director and is hence ‘out of sync’ with the dramatic structure of the original.⁸³

Among components of the two main productions analysed here are such features as the acting, the actor’s voice, lighting and colours and stage movement, which can be partially reconstructed using reported testimonies and critics’ accounts. However, the ephemeral nature of theatrical performance also means that certain elements would have come across differently on different nights of the run. Such non-measurable elements of performance will therefore be referred to with caution and only when of special interest.

Although studies of past and present trends in Shakespeare appropriation, especially in non-Anglophone cultures, continually refer to film and theatre, there is rarely any mention of music. In fact incidental music for the theatre is an underdeveloped area within musicology, and apart from one recent book (which is a practical guide rather than an academic study⁸⁴), individual chapters and part of one PhD dissertation⁸⁵ little has been done that could serve as a model methodology. Nevertheless several studies in the realm of drama theory touch on the subject, among them the works of David Roesner, who has investigated what he terms the ‘musicalisation’ of theatre.⁸⁶ In addition, there are possibilities here for borrowing from film studies, notably those by Michel Chion,⁸⁷ and for adapting Pavis’s theories.

For Pavis, incidental music consists of all the audible messages that reach the viewers’ ears; he insists on the influence of this ‘music’ on the global perception of the production through its creation of atmosphere, what makes the audience particularly receptive to the theatrical event. Roesner confirms this function of incidental music: ‘As music is an abstract, mostly

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Michael Bruce, *Writing Music for the Stage: A Practical Guide for Theatremakers*, London, Nick Hern Books, 2016.

⁸⁵ Kim Baston, ‘Scoring Performance: The Function of Music in Contemporary Theatre and Circus’, PhD dissertation, La Trobe University, 2008.

⁸⁶ David Roesner, *Musicality in Theatre: Music as Model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre Making*, Farnham and Burlington, Ashgate, 2014, 214.

⁸⁷ Michel Chion, *L’Audio-Vision. Son et image au cinéma*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1991, rev. edn., Paris, Nathan, 2005, English edition, ed. and trans. Claudia Gorbman as *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994.

non-referential “language”, it is to be expected that musicalisation in theatre will also result in changes in the audience’s traditional expectations of theatrical communication.’⁸⁸ Drawing on the affinity between music and theatre, Roesner further develops the notion of the ‘musicality’ of a production and argues that: ‘Musicalisation takes theatre beyond the text as a primary guarantor of structure, narrative and sense and beyond the spoken word as the dominant materiality’.⁸⁹

The impact and implications of musicalisation, according to Roesner, could be studied on three inter-connected levels:

- in the devising or rehearsal process.
- as an organisational principle of performance.
- in the process of perception.

These three levels may be applied to the principal productions that are the subject of this project, as follows:

- The correspondence between the director and composer reveals the role of music at the preparatory stages, while their parallel works and projects may offer clues to semantics at the conceptual level.
- The place of music in the structure of the production may be largely traceable through a combined examination of scores, manuscripts, production books, and orchestral parts.
- The perception and reception of the production and its legacy are partially traceable in critics’ reports, in relation to the politico-cultural context of the time, and in the evolution from the conception of the performance to its realisation.

Given that there is, unsurprisingly, no video record of the central productions examined in this dissertation, that (following Pavis) the production only makes full sense when seen in conjunction with the music, and that it makes little sense to comment on the music independently of the production, it follows that a vital step forward in the understanding of this phase of Soviet encounters with Shakespeare would ideally be some kind of performed

⁸⁸ Roesner, *Musicality in Theatre*, 210.

⁸⁹ Roesner, ‘The Politics of the Polyphony of Performance’, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 2008/1, 44-55, here 46.

reconstruction involving both elements. In the hope that this may be feasible at some future point, this dissertation seeks to clear the ground from mis-conceptions and to point towards the main elements such reconstructions would have to take into account.

It would surely be folly to attempt any such thing without incorporating the music of Shostakovich and Prokofiev, which was so fundamental a part of these productions. Nor, I would contend, can the productions themselves profitably be studied without full recognition of the role played by their musical scores. However, if this warning is to be taken seriously, it demands reasonable knowledge of the broad context of music's role in Shakespeare's dramas, and of ways in which those dramas have in turn inspired independent musical works. It is to these contexts that the remainder of this Introduction is devoted.

Music and/in Shakespeare

Despite the fact that at least some Shakespeare-inspired music constitutes an important part of the concert repertoire, scholarship specifically dealing with Shakespeare and music is surprisingly under-developed. Studies in this area are certainly far less numerous than, for example, those dealing with Shakespeare and film; nor is there any overview of existing scholarship.

Existing studies could be divided into two distinct categories: first, those on music in Shakespeare's time or on various aspects of music in Shakespeare's works (including his musical imaging and imagination); and secondly, those dealing with music inspired by Shakespeare's works or composed either to Shakespearean themes or directly for Shakespeare plays: in short, Music in Shakespeare or Shakespeare in Music. It is not always easy to judge the principal thrust of such studies simply from their titles, however, since many offer merely a variant of 'Shakespeare and/in Music'.⁹⁰ Those that venture to comment on music and its role in Shakespeare's plays outnumber those dealing with their musical afterlife and adaptations of and references to the Bard's works and themes/characters. Despite the intrinsic value and historical importance of the latter group, studies here are often conducted by non-musicologists and rarely venture much beyond listing (as is the case of the

⁹⁰ Notable examples are Louis Elson, *Shakespeare in Music*, London, David Nutt, 1901 (on music in Shakespeare's time and plays); Phyllis Hartnoll (ed.), *Shakespeare in Music*, London, Macmillan, 1964 (essays and a catalogue); David Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music*, London, Arden Shakespeare, 2006; Edward Naylor, *Shakespeare and Music*, London, Dent, 1896 (with illustrations from music of the 16th and 17th centuries); Christopher Wilson (the composer, not the present-day musicologist), *Shakespeare and Music*, London, The Stage, 1922; Julie Sanders, *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings*, Cambridge, Polity, 2013.

voluminous but sadly not up-dated five-volume *A Shakespeare Music Catalogue* compiled by Bryan Gooch and David Thatcher).⁹¹ Nor, if they do offer commentary and interpretation, do they cast their net wider than a few celebrated scores,⁹² which, in the case of incidental and film music, are generally studied in isolation from the productions or films they were composed for.⁹³

Julie Sanders' 2008 book is still the only available study to offer an overview of the range of musical responses to Shakespeare, from film music and concert repertoire to jazz and musicals. She argues, for instance, that jazz's 'complex relationship with the source material that it readily quotes but also improves and innovates upon provides a rich template for the multiple ways in which Shakespeare and the Shakespearean canon have signified ... across periods and cultures as well as across different disciplines, including music.'⁹⁴ Despite Sanders' attempt to apply her own acknowledged ground-breaking theories of appropriation and adaptation⁹⁵ to the realm of Shakespeare's musical afterlife, her coverage of such a wide range of works within the limits of a compact 197-page study precludes any analysis or interpretation beyond surface description and recycled common assumptions. In a more recent article Sanders has moved to a more detailed application of methodologies from literary criticism in her interpretations and selection of repertoire,⁹⁶ providing still brief but penetrating readings of certain aspects of symphonic poems by Strauss and Liszt, and of Hans Werner Henze's 'Sonata on Shakespearean Characters'. She seeks to explore the set of negotiations 'between poetics and music', unpacking the 'cross-cultural and cross-historical contacts between Shakespeare and classical music.'⁹⁷ However, the section on incidental and film music is disappointingly cursory, and her passing remark on Grigory Kozintsev's 1964 film and Shostakovich's music for it commits the cardinal error of assuming that Shostakovich's previous score for a 'controversial' production of *Hamlet* – which can only mean his 1932 collaboration with Akimov - was also made for Kozintsev.⁹⁸ Nevertheless

⁹¹ Bryan Gooch and David Thatcher (eds.), *A Shakespeare Music Catalogue*, 5 vols, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991.

⁹² See, for example, Daniel Albright, *Musicking Shakespeare: A Conflict of Theatres*, Rochester, University of Rochester Press, 2007.

⁹³ As is the case in Julie Sanders' otherwise excellent *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings*.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹⁵ See Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, Routledge, London, New York, 2005.

⁹⁶ Sanders, 'Shakespeare and Classical Music', in Mark Thornton Burnett, Adrian Streete and Ramona Wray (eds.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Shakespeare and the Arts*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2011, 169-184.

⁹⁷ Sanders, 'Shakespeare and Classical Music', 173.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 182.

Sanders's article and book contain many useful concepts and terms derived from literary criticism, together with the penetrating observation that not only 'our Shakespearean source-text', but also the 'classical music pieces that respond to those texts' enjoy multiple, plural lives.⁹⁹

Whereas Sanders ventures to examine the ways in which a piece of music 'attempts to adhere to or even suggest a form of the "dramatic"',¹⁰⁰ Adrian Streete's study of 'Shakespeare and Opera' in the same collection confines itself mainly to the well-trodden path of Shakespearean operas by Verdi, Berlioz and Britten. Although he lists, in passing,¹⁰¹ a few lesser-known operas, such as Ernest Bloch's *Macbeth* (1904-6), Reynaldo Hahn's *Le Marchant de Venise* (1935), and Franco Faccio's *Amletto* (1865), the main subject of his study remains Verdi's *Otello* and its performance history.

For more penetrating studies of the subject of 'Shakespeare and opera', we have to turn to Winton Dean's essay for Phyllis Hartnoll's 1964 book, *Shakespeare in Music*,¹⁰² Daniel Albright's *Musicking Shakespeare* (which studies Shakespeare-inspired works of Purcell, Britten, Verdi and Berlioz)¹⁰³ and the recent volume in the Great Shakespearians series: *Berlioz. Verdi. Wagner. Britten*.¹⁰⁴ Although this latter again deals with familiar names and canonic works, each study, through analysis as well as biographical and historical evidence, explores the double impact of Shakespeare on the composer and of the composer on the understanding, interpretation and appreciation of Shakespeare. Thus, for example, David Trippett examines Wagner's writings about, and his changing attitude towards, Shakespeare throughout his life, as well as particularities of his only Shakespeare-themed opera *Das Liebesverbot* (1836).¹⁰⁵ But while the examples of Wagner and Verdi suggest, according to the editor of this volume, that 'the imitation of Shakespeare led composers to reach for bold effects, amplitude and a certain sprawl', studying Berlioz's Shakespearean encounters reveals that the Bard also inspired in this composer 'a fierce concentration of the affect, a paring down to the essential'.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 173.

¹⁰¹ Adrian Streete, 'Shakespeare and Opera', 144.

¹⁰² Winton Dean, 'Shakespeare and Opera', in Hartnoll (ed.), *Shakespeare in Music*, 89-175.

¹⁰³ Daniel Albright, *Musicking Shakespeare*.

¹⁰⁴ Daniel Albright (ed.), *Berlioz. Verdi. Wagner. Britten*, Great Shakespearians, Vol. 11, London and New York, Continuum, 2012.

¹⁰⁵ David Trippett, 'Individuation as Worship: Wagner and Shakespeare', *ibid.*, 135-157.

¹⁰⁶ Albright, 'Introduction', *ibid.*, 4.

The choices that composers and librettists have made in order to accommodate Shakespeare's dramatic structure and complex characters into a new medium, and indeed into new eras and cultures, in turn contribute to a richer, more nuanced reading and understanding of Shakespeare's genius. Shakespeare's texts (as in *Othello*), through their creator's craftsmanship in employing such devices as complex multi-layered plots and double-time schemes, have understandably caused many problems for those attempting musical translation. Their solutions, including such drastic measures as omitting substantial sections of the plays, have themselves resulted in works, which, regardless of their musical value or success, provide gateways into understanding the operatic tradition and aesthetics of the time of their creation.

Musicologist and critic Winton Dean, best known for his work on Handel, explored the composer-librettist relationship in a range of operas from lesser-known and forgotten ones to Verdi's, arguing how the required distillation and concentration of Shakespeare's texts has played a determining role in the success of each respective opera.¹⁰⁷ Published for Shakespeare's anniversary year of 1964, the collection of essays edited by theatre historian Phyllis Hartnoll, to which Dean's contribution belongs, is a rare example of a book trying to cover both 'music in Shakespeare' and 'Shakespeare in music', but with a clear leaning towards the latter. Apart from the introductory chapter by early music specialist John Stevens, which argues that Shakespeare 'inherited and enhanced a tradition of theatre music used not only for embellishment but in the delineation of character and with accepted symbolic associations',¹⁰⁸ the book examines Shakespeare's afterlife in songs, concert hall works, ballet, cinema, incidental music and opera. Each section offers a different approach, ranging from a critical history of songs written to Shakespeare's words, via Dean's aesthetics and practicalities of turning a Shakespeare play into an opera, to detailed analysis of Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* in order to trace its source to Garrick's reworking of the tragedy as opposed to Shakespeare's original text. Notwithstanding Hartnoll's observation that 'it is one of the paradoxes of Shakespearean music that some of its finest examples have no connection with the theatre, and were written by composers who knew no English',¹⁰⁹ apart from obvious names there are no ventures into studying Shakespeare in music even within Europe, and

¹⁰⁷ Dean, 'Shakespeare and Opera', in Hartnoll (ed.), *Shakespeare in Music*, esp. 104-175.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, viii-ix.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, vii.

analysis of Russian Shakespeare-themed repertoire is almost entirely absent.¹¹⁰ Indeed Russian/Soviet musical responses to Shakespeare (apart from Tchaikovsky's and Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliets*) are generally conspicuous by their absence from studies on Shakespeare in music. While this may be partly a simple reflection of their failure to break through into the international concert repertoire, it is surely also to do with the language barrier and other practical difficulties involved in researching this repertoire, even after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the opening up of the archives.

The sizable repertoire of major composers engaging with Shakespeare – to which Shostakovich and Prokofiev would soon contribute – can be traced back in principle to the importance attached to music (and sound) in Shakespeare's own time.

When it comes to studies on music in Shakespeare's time and in his plays, these are mainly conducted by Early Modern music specialists, and historians are more elaborate in their findings as well as offering a wide range of approaches. Such studies include dictionaries,¹¹¹ catalogues and songbooks,¹¹² and a database that attempts to identify every musical reference in the plays and sonnets themselves (stage-directions, songs and part-songs, musical instruments, dance, as well as music theory and emotions derived from experiencing music),¹¹³ as well as critical histories,¹¹⁴ in-depth analysis of the Shakespeare's musical imagery,¹¹⁵ and use of music in specific plays or genres,¹¹⁶ and finally studies related to

¹¹⁰ The book does, however, contain a useful catalogue of Shakespeare-inspired music, including some Russian/Soviet repertoire.

¹¹¹ Alan Dessen and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999; Christopher R. Wilson and Michela Calore, *Music in Shakespeare: A Dictionary*, New York and London, Continuum, 2005.

¹¹² Among recent volumes are Ross Duffin, *Shakespeare's Songbook*, New York, Norton, 2004, and Andrew Charlton, *Music in the Plays of Shakespeare: a Practicum*, New York and London, Garland, 1991. Frederick Sternfeld includes in his bibliography several other catalogues and studies dating from 1700-1967, see Sternfeld, *Music in Shakespearean Tragedy*, rev. edn., London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967, 274-299.

¹¹³ 'Music in Shakespeare' database based at the University of Hull and curated by Christopher R. Wilson, <http://www.shakespeare-music.hull.ac.uk/>, accessed 9 May 2016.

¹¹⁴ Peter Seng, *The Vocal Songs in the Plays of Shakespeare. A Critical History*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1967; Richard Hosley, 'Was there a Music-Room in Shakespeare's Globe?', *Shakespeare Survey*, 13 (1960), 113-23.

¹¹⁵ Christopher R. Wilson, *Shakespeare's Musical Imagery*, London, Continuum, 2011; Tiffany Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, Oxford, Clarendon, 2000.

¹¹⁶ Richmond Noble, *Shakespeare's Use of Song: With the Text of the Principal Songs*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1923; John Long, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: A Study of the Music and its Performance in the Original Production of Seven Comedies*, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1955; Long, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: The Final Comedies*, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1961; Long, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: The Histories and Tragedies*, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1971; Frederick W. Sternfeld, *Music in Shakespearean Tragedy*, rev. edn., London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967

sound in Shakespeare theatre, which explores the idea that ‘Shakespeare created worlds with sounds, worlds that in turn contain whole soundscapes within them.’¹¹⁷

For Shakespeare, music ‘meant performed songs and instrumental cues, and musical terms used as symbolic reference and metaphor.’¹¹⁸ Wes Folkerth argues that for Shakespeare’s audiences, hearing was not merely a supplementary source of information to vision; rather it was a different and even superior dimension, in that it provided access to the inner truth of things: psychological processes, motivations, the invisible realm of spirit. Vision was merely the conduit to the material world.¹¹⁹ In the same vein, Bruce Johnson suggests that as an actor, Shakespeare wrote for sound rather than for print, and ‘for an audience habituated to finely nuanced auditory semiotics.’¹²⁰ As Stevens observes, ‘Shakespeare lived at a fortunate time when the traditional medieval view of music was held in imaginative equipose with another – a Renaissance view’; hence, although music was still considered ‘a *speculum* of the divine Order’ and ‘God-centred, symbolic’, it was increasingly becoming ‘man-centred... a rhetoric of emotions’ and a language that contained and communicated man’s innermost human feelings. The genius of Shakespeare was in drawing strength from both philosophies. Stevens concludes that ‘it is the fascination of the Elizabethan drama that the two elements are for the most part well balanced; and it is the achievement of Shakespeare to weave them both into the dramatic structure and to make them inseparable from it.’¹²¹

Music in *Hamlet*

Whatever in the above is true for Shakespeare in general is arguably especially pertinent to *Hamlet*. Referring to Shakespeare’s writing for a society that was in transition and experiencing ‘a tension, between two modes of knowing: visual and aural’, Johnson contends that *Hamlet*’s soundscape is ‘a major bearer of meanings’.¹²² Stevens similarly observes that Shakespeare’s tragedies more than any other group of plays show his ‘intensely dramatic use’ of musical sources and his ‘mastery of the mirror of sound’.¹²³ In *Hamlet* there are several

(orig. pub. 1963); Irene Naef, *Die Lieder in Shakespeares Komödien: Gehalt und Funktion*, Berne, A. Francke, 1976.

¹¹⁷ Wes Folkerth, *The Sound of Shakespeare*. London, Routledge, 2002, 7.

¹¹⁸ Christopher R. Wilson, ‘Shakespeare and Early Modern Music’, in Mark Thornton Burnett, Adrian Streete and Ramona Wray (eds.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Shakespeare and the Arts*, 119.

¹¹⁹ See Folkerth, *The Sound in Shakespeare*, 48-57

¹²⁰ Bruce Johnson, ‘*Hamlet*: Voice, Music, Sound’, *Popular Music*, 24/2, Literature and Music (May 2005), 257-267, here 257.

¹²¹ Stevens, ‘Music of the Elizabethan Stage’, *Shakespeare in Music*, 48.

¹²² Johnson, ‘*Hamlet*: Voice, Music, Sound’, 257

¹²³ Stevens, ‘Music of the Elizabethan Stage’, *Shakespeare in Music*, 33-4.

moments of instrumental music, sound effects and pomp: Claudius uses cannons excessively for his drinking bouts (I/4); in addition to their routine regal function, trumpets introduce the arrival of the travelling actors, recorders appear in a scene (and discourse) featuring Hamlet,¹²⁴ which Kozintsev regarded as the culmination and highest point of the tragedy (see Chapter 5.2).¹²⁵

Sternfeld's 1959 study of song in Shakespeare's Tragedies remains unsurpassed in its authority. He reminds us that 'Shakespeare's use of instrumental music was not exceptional in terms of an Elizabethan playwright's aesthetics and practice', and although in his case it may have been 'more poignant or more effective,... neither the details of his stage directions nor the amount of instrumental music called for differs from the major English tradition.'¹²⁶ By contrast, given that Elizabethan tragedies, following Senecan traditions, were void of songs, it was Shakespeare's inclusion of them in his tragedies, notably *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Troilus*, that was exceptional. Sternfeld specifies Shakespeare's innovative methods: 'he assigns songs to major characters; he prints the text of these songs; and he makes specific references to single lines from that text in the surrounding dialogue, using the songs as component parts of his tragic design.'¹²⁷ Shakespeare not only used tragic songs *per se* but also featured seemingly incongruent comic songs as an integral part of the tragedy. A conspicuous example is the Gravedigger's Song in *Hamlet*, whose crude dance-of-death flavour and unrefined language reinforce the contrast between the gravediggers' 'prosaic acceptance of, and Hamlet's sophisticated, hyper-sensitive playing with the idea of Death.'¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Stevens questions whether the recorders were actually played during the scene. 'Hamlet, in his exultation at having unmasked the King, calls for music ("Come the Recorders") and some texts have, later, "Enter the Players with Recorders" (Quarto II); the Folio stage directions "Enter one with a Recorder" (from whom Hamlet may have taken the recorder) perhaps shows how the scene was presented when the "players" could not all manage to bear their parts', see Stevens, 'Music of the Elizabethan Stage', 38. The texts of both *Hamlet* and *Othello* were transmitted in unauthorized Quartos (1603, 1604) as well as in an authoritative Folio (1623). For example, the 'bad Quarto' stage-direction 'Enter Ofelia playing on a Lute, and her haire downe singing' does not appear in the Folio. Nevertheless this detail probably represents faithfully the facts of some early performances.

¹²⁵ For a comprehensive list of appearances and references to music in *Hamlet*, see University of Hull, Music in Shakespeare database, <http://www.shakespeare-music.hull.ac.uk/>, accessed 15 August 2016, and also Gooch and Thatcher (eds.), *A Shakespeare Music Catalogue*, 5 vols., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991, Vol. 1, 280.

¹²⁶ Sternfeld, 'The Use of Song in Shakespeare's Tragedies', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 86 (1959), 47.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ The Clown's song is a distorted version of the old song, 'I loathe that I did love' (words attributed to Lord Vaux) - see Stevens, 'Music of the Elizabethan Stage', 39.

Sternfeld notes Shakespeare's mastery in making Ophelia and Desdemona 'integral parts of the plot in a dramatic sense and of the surrounding dialogue'; here song creates 'a subtle concordance of plot and character'.¹²⁹ Both Ophelia and Desdemona start by singing old familiar songs, but their anxieties and forebodings multiply as they proceed from one lyrical fragment to another. And despite the dissimilarity of the circumstances of their fates, each heroine's death and transfiguration is associated with the image of a willow.¹³⁰ Sternfeld's observation regarding similarities between Ophelia and Desdemona points towards Sergei Radlov's reading of the two heroines (see Chapter 3.5.4) when working on his production of *Hamlet* in 1938. Referring to Elizabethan etiquette books and their restrictions regarding musical performance in drawing rooms, Sternfeld argues that 'it is a symptom of Ophelia's derangement that she sings before an assembly of the Court without being encouraged to do so'.¹³¹ Apart from the impropriety of the act of singing in domestic circumstances, Shakespeare's delineation of the pathetic state of Ophelia's mind may be read in his abrupt 'alternation between prose and verse, speaking and singing, and the lack of continuity and congruity'.¹³² These observations are consonant with the view taken up by Sergei Radlov in his 1938 productions, when he discouraged Prokofiev from using any musical device, such as 'wrong' notes, for evoking Ophelia's mental state (see Chapter 3.5.4).

When quoting familiar songs, Shakespeare exploited the audience's memory and introduces sudden departures from their original texts, pointing towards Ophelia's fluctuating thoughts between her lost love for Hamlet and her dead father. As Sternfeld demonstrates, this is best shown in the case of her first song, 'How should I your true love know?', where the first stanza is a variant on the old song, 'Walsingham' (the second stanza of which starts with the exact same words), while the second and third stanzas seemingly turn to her dead father but still contain words and allusions that betray her anxiety for Hamlet's love.¹³³

Sternfeld follows up by a study of these songs and their music, which reveals much about the complexity involved in tracing Shakespearean songs to their sources and matching surviving tunes to popular lyrics whilst taking into account the actual historic evidence. Since the original Elizabethan music for most of Ophelia's songs is unknown, scholars have opted for

¹²⁹ Sternfeld, 'The Use of Song in Shakespeare's Tragedies', 53.

¹³⁰ 'Your sister's drown'd, Laertes... There's a willow grows aslant a brook...', *Hamlet*, IV/7/160-176.

¹³¹ Sternfeld, 'The Use of Song in Shakespeare's Tragedies', 55.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 58.

¹³³ See also Edward Naylor, *Shakespeare Music (Music of the Period)*, London, Curwen, 1913, revised 1928, 35-36, with musical example.

various compromises, including reliance on oral tradition, for instance in the case of Ophelia's 'How should I your true love know?'¹³⁴ and 'Tomorrow is St Valentine's Day'. This tradition is invoked by Charles Knight in his *Pictorial Editions of Shakespeare* (1839-42), which draws largely on the reminiscences of Drury Lane Theatre manager, Samuel James Arnold, who had reportedly noted down Ophelia's airs from an actress's recollection of them after the Theatre's destruction in the fire of 1812.¹³⁵

Ophelia's penultimate song/snatch, 'Bonny sweet Robin', is an example of a different complication: namely, when the music (melody) appears in several printed and manuscript contemporary sources,¹³⁶ but only in instrumental form and without actual text, with the result that it is not clear which fragment of the tune Ophelia's one-liner might have been sung to. According to Sternfeld, 'in Shakespeare's age the popularity of this simple ditty excelled by far that of "Greensleeves"', and this was not only because of the attraction of the melody but also thanks to the 'punning' potential of the word 'Robin'.¹³⁷ It seems likely that Shakespeare was taking advantage of these qualities, in yet another attempt at juxtaposing Ophelia's grief and sexuality.

Hamlet in music

When it comes to *Hamlet's* afterlife in music, Ophelia, and in particular her mad songs and muddy death, again make up the main musical attraction of the tragedy, featuring both in general Shakespeare surveys and in more specialised scholarship. Several studies deal with the relationship between madness, music and women in Shakespeare, arguing that 'Ophelia's singing, perhaps the most famous example of the relationship between madness and song, reflects the broader discourse of madness in early modern English culture, with its persistent associations between music, excess, and the feminine.'¹³⁸ Accordingly scholarship concerned

¹³⁴ While reprinting the melody derived from oral tradition, Naylor described it as 'a striking example of corruption by stage use. It is a badly damaged version of "Walsingham", given by Bull in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*' - quoted in Sternfeld, *Music in Shakespearean Tragedies*, 61. For the original 'Walsingham' see John A. Fuller Maitland and William Barclay Squire (eds.), *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, 2 Vols., Leipzig, 1899; repub. New York 1963, rev. edn, New York, Dover, 1979, Vol. 1, 1.

¹³⁵ See Sternfeld, 'The Use of Song in Shakespeare's Tragedies', 60.

¹³⁶ William Chappell, *Old English Popular Music*, Vol. 1 (second edn.), London, Chappell and MacMillan, 1893, 153.

¹³⁷ Sternfeld, 69; Robin was a colloquial term for penis - see Morris, Harry, 'Ophelia's "Bonny Sweet Robin"', *PMLA* [Publications of the Modern Languages Association of America], 73, 1958, 601-603.

¹³⁸ Leslie Dunn, 'Ophelia's Songs in *Hamlet*: Music, Madness, and the Feminine', in Leslie Dunn and Nancy Jones (eds.), *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, 50-64, here 52.

with Ophelia's afterlife and its musical properties in screen adaptations of *Hamlet* includes several feminist studies.¹³⁹

Shakespeare's art of juxtaposing music, words, movement and landscape has tempted creative artists of different disciplines to respond to this short but semantically charged episode of the tragedy. It could be argued that, given the restricted resources of his theatre, by setting Ophelia's death off-stage and only including Gertrude's pictorial description, Shakespeare was calling on the creative imagination of his audience (and later artists) to visualise this most tragic moment. The famous depiction of Ophelia's death, by John Everett Millais (painted 1851-2), has itself acquired symbolic signification and a rich afterlife in both Shakespeare- and non-Shakespeare-related studies and works, including films and popular music.¹⁴⁰ Musicians have also responded to Shakespeare's creative call, mainly but not exclusively by songs: Ophelia's madness and death is depicted musically by many composers, such as Berlioz ('La Mort d'Ophélie', 1848), Frank Bridge ('There is a willow': Impression for symphonic orchestra, 1928), and Hans Werner Henze ('First Sonata on Shakespearean Characters', Ophelia, 1975-6),¹⁴¹ as well as in songs of Brahms and Strauss, among others.

Apart from Ophelia, as with most Shakespeare plays, *Hamlet* has generated a wide range of musical responses. Some of these references resist any attempt at categorising, as they are mainly subjective associations between *Hamlet* and music. Such is the case with B.H. Haggin's curious book, *Music for the Man who Enjoys 'Hamlet'*,¹⁴² which is in fact a guidebook of music appreciation for 'the reader who understands and enjoys literature but not music'. The author chooses *Hamlet* as his imagined addressee's favourite book and suggests that 'similar insights [to those in *Hamlet*] are conveyed in Schubert's B flat Sonata and Beethoven's Op. 111, but through a different artistic medium.' A reverse pedagogical method has also been suggested, wherein popular culture and associated music would be used for

¹³⁹ See, for example, Kendra Preston Leonard, *Shakespeare, Madness, and Music: Scoring Insanity in Cinematic Adaptations*, Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Toronto, and Plymouth, 2009; Elaine Showalter, 'Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism', in Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, London, Methuen, 1985, 80.

¹⁴⁰ For instance, Laurence Olivier and Kozintsev's *Hamlets* both allude to this painting for their scene of Ophelia's death; the poster for Lars Von Trier's *Melancholia* (2011) is a reworking of it; and the publicity clip for Nick Cave's song 'Where the Wild Roses Grow' (1995) depicts Kylie Minogue imitating Ophelia's pose.

¹⁴¹ See Julie Sanders, 'Shakespeare and Classical Music', 169-171.

¹⁴² Bernard H. Haggin, *Music for the Man who Enjoys 'Hamlet'*, New York, Alfred Knopf, 1944.

teaching Shakespeare.¹⁴³ This idea takes its inspiration, among other things, from 19th-century burlesqued *Hamlets*, which were at one time all the rage in music halls.¹⁴⁴ Studying the published texts of such *Hamlets* reveals how the musical performances, while retaining the main protagonists and their Shakespearean names, combined popular songs and parodied text and actions derived from the plot, in conjunction with some satire aimed at a known figure of the time.¹⁴⁵ By these means, the plotlines and characters of Shakespeare's plays were made accessible and widely known. It could be argued that in their notorious 1932 production, Akimov and Shostakovich's re-interpretation of scenes such the 'the recorder scene' and 'dialogue of Hamlet and Rosencrantz' were in line with the tradition of such burlesqued *Hamlets*, as well as with similar theatrical experiments in pre-Revolutionary Russia (for example, *Daesh Gamleta* [*Give us Hamlet*] in 1923 at Petrograd's Krivoie Zerkalo Theatre). The question of whether Russian theatre activists had any direct contact with the 19th-century Western parodic tradition, however, remains to be answered.

As will be seen in Chapter 1, the 19th century saw a new level of Bardolatry and a cult of *Hamlet* and Hamletism among Romantic composers in Europe and Russia. However, as Shakespeare's longest play, *Hamlet* forced tough choices on composers intending to respond to or draw a musical portrait of the tragedy or its hero (in the same way as with theatre producers, and later, film-makers). When it came to opera, for example, as Albright observes, 'Shakespearean and operatic conventions tend to place the accent on quite different moments of the drama; the awesome strangeness of Shakespeare's patterns and dismemberings of patterns, his figures of speech that tilt the universe of discourse – all may vanish into smooth familiar opera.'¹⁴⁶ This was certainly the case with Ambroise Thomas's *Hamlet* (1868).¹⁴⁷ Apart from famously including a happy ending, Thomas reduced Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' soliloquy to the bare minimum, whilst making the Hamlet-Ophelia romance the central focus and extending Ophelia's mad scene to make it 'one of the longest and most elaborate in

¹⁴³ Kendra Preston Leonard, "'Cheer Up Hamlet!': Using Shakespearean Burlesque to Teach the Bard", *This Rough Magic*, 4/1 (June 2013), 1-20, also available at <http://www.thisroughmagic.org/leonard%20essay.html>, accessed 11 August 2016.

¹⁴⁴ See Richard Schoch, *Not Shakespeare: Bardolatry and Burlesque in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 2002.

¹⁴⁵ See, for example, Charles Carroll Soule, *A Travesty without a Pun!: Hamlet revamped, modernized, and set to music*, St. Louis, G.I. Jones, 1880.

¹⁴⁶ Albright, *Berlioz. Verdi. Wagner. Britten*, 1.

¹⁴⁷ The librettists for Thomas's *Hamlet* were Michel Carré and Jules Barbier, who based their work on a French adaptation by Alexandre Dumas, père, and Paul Meurice.

all French opera'.¹⁴⁸ Among other operatic adaptations of *Hamlet*, Dean refers to Antonio Buzzolla's, composed in the same year as Verdi's *Macbeth* (1847) and Franco Faccio's *Amleto* (1865)¹⁴⁹ based on a libretto by Arigo Boito and Aristide Hignard's *Hamlet* (1888).¹⁵⁰

These distortions, which caused Tchaikovsky to pen his sharply negative review of this opera (see also Chapter 5.4.3, below) are seen by Julie Sanders more neutrally as marks of the 'female-focused' quality of this opera.¹⁵¹ Despite all its arguable shortcomings, Thomas's work is still the most often mentioned, performed and referenced operatic rendition of *Hamlet*, overshadowing later attempts by the Latvian Jānis Kalniņš (1936), the Georgian-Soviet Alexi Machavariani (1964) and the Russian Sergei Slonimsky (1991) (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of Machavariani's and Slonimsky's operas). In his overview of Shakespeare-inspired operas (which predates Slonimsky's work and would not have known of Machavariani's) and their libretti, when it comes to *Hamlet* as an opera Dean remarks that it has 'tempted the angels, but only lesser beings have rushed in'.¹⁵² These 'angels' include the likes of Schumann,¹⁵³ Berlioz, Shostakovich and (reportedly) Prokofiev, who together constitute significant additions to other might-have-been *Hamlets* such as Andrei Tarkovsky's film,¹⁵⁴ the aborted Moscow Art Theatre production in the 1940s (see Chapter 4.4) and Meyerhold's many interpretations, including an envisaged production with Picasso's design and Shostakovich's music (see Chapter 1.6.3).

If for Meyerhold staging *Hamlet* was a lifetime dream, destined to remain unrealised, for Berlioz its text, performance and music became an almost obsessional leitmotif. Peter Bloom's moving account of Berlioz's Shakespearean encounters demonstrates how despite the composer's various large-scale works on other Shakespeare plays (*Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear* and *Béatrice et Bénédicte*), it was *Hamlet* (and only later *Romeo and Juliet*) that

¹⁴⁸ Albright, *Berlioz. Verdi. Wagner. Britten*, 1.

¹⁴⁹ A big fuss was made in May 2016 over Anthony Barrese's supposed 'discovery and reconstruction' of Faccio's opera (see: <http://www.operade.org/amleto-project>, accessed 16 August 2016), evidently in ignorance of its status in the scholarly world.

¹⁵⁰ Dean, 'Shakespeare and Opera', 165-166.

¹⁵¹ Sanders, *Shakespeare and Music*, 101-102.

¹⁵² Dean, 'Shakespeare and Opera', Hartnoll, *Shakespeare in Music*, 163.

¹⁵³ See Eric Frederick Jensen, *Schumann*, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2012 (orig. pub. 2001), 54.

¹⁵⁴ Tarkovsky's plans for a film version of *Hamlet* (in addition to his theatre production of 1977) are documented in his diaries and interviews – see, for example, his diary entry for 15 December 1986, quoted in Neia Zorkaia and A. Sandler (eds.), *Mir i fil'my Andreia Tarkovskogo: razmyshleniia, issledovaniia, vspominaniia, pis'ma*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1991, 176.

occupied a personal and central place in his life and work.¹⁵⁵ Like Alexander Blok, Berlioz first met his wife-to-be as Ophelia. In the Frenchman's case it was the Anglo-Irish actress Harriet Smithson in a performance of *Hamlet* at the Odéon Theatre in 1827. Apart from being an active crusader for Shakespeare's cause, Berlioz regularly cited from the Bard, and from *Hamlet* in particular, in his letters, articles and diary entries. Quotes from *Hamlet* (and *Romeo and Juliet*) even appeared as epitaphs for the composer's non-Shakespearean works, such as the *Huit Scènes de Faust* (1829).¹⁵⁶ Further musings on *Hamlet* include his sequel to the *Symphonie fantastique*, initially titled *Le Retour à la vie* (1831-2), then revised as *Lélio, ou le Retour à la vie* (1855-7), and the two preserved movements of *Tristia* ('La Mort d'Ophélie', which first appeared in 1848, and 'Marche funèbre pour la dernière scène d'*Hamlet*', completed in 1844). These, however, never came close in scale to his other better-known and more widely studied Shakespeare-inspired works, and Berlioz never attempted a comprehensive musical portrait of the tragedy in the way that some other Romantic composers did - such as Joseph Joachim (overture Op. 4, 1853), Niels Gade (overture, Op. 37, 1861) and Liszt (symphonic poem of 1858, first performed in 1876).

As Jonathan Kregor observes, while 'Joachim sought to fit a traditional musical structure to Shakespeare's play'¹⁵⁷ and 'Gade's *Hamlet* was formally innovative in order to reinforce a view of *Hamlet* that was wholly traditional', Liszt attempted to capture 'a specific approach to its performance on stage.'¹⁵⁸ For its high level of character study, theatricality and descriptiveness Liszt's symphonic poem has received a good deal of scholarly attention. The composer's work on this last of his symphonic poems overlapped with his friendship with the Polish-born German actor, Bogumil Dawison, who was known for his melodramatic style of acting Shakespeare and for portraying a Hamlet that was in marked contradiction to the Goethe-inspired weak prince: not a dreamer but 'a clever man of action awaiting the right moment'.¹⁵⁹ It was this new Hamlet that attracted Liszt and fed his musical imagination. Liszt's comments following a meeting with the actor could be used as a description for the depiction of Hamlet in Akimov's 1932 Moscow production. Liszt was captivated by Dawison's Hamlet, who was 'an intelligent, enterprising prince, with high political aims, who

¹⁵⁵ Peter Bloom, *Berlioz*, in Daniel Albright (ed.), *Berlioz, Verdi, Wagner, Britten*, 7-76.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

¹⁵⁷ Kregor, *Program Music*, 53.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁵⁹ Roger Fiske, 'Shakespeare in the Concert Hall', in Hartnoll (ed.), *Shakespeare in Music*, 200.

waits for the propitious moment to avenge himself and to reach at the same time the goal of his ambition, by having himself crowned in his uncle's place.'¹⁶⁰

For Tchaikovsky, too, an actor that was the catalyst for his first engagement with *Hamlet*: the *Fantasia-Overture*, Op. 67, composed in 1888. By comparison with Liszt's, Tchaikovsky engages less with character study and more with specific images, with that of Ophelia proving the most memorable. When Tchaikovsky was later asked to compose incidental music for an actual performance, he found the task more challenging and less fulfilling (see Chapter 1.4). Tchaikovsky's *Hamlet* scores have received much less attention than his *Romeo and Juliet* overture; however, they have enjoyed a rich afterlife of their own, since they have been repeatedly used for adaptations of *Hamlet* as a ballet (see Chapter 5.4.2) as well as in the soundtrack for Michael Almereyda's modern retelling of the tragedy in his filmed *Hamlet* (2000).

As Sanders has noted, one significant connecting thread between the diverse musical responses to Shakespeare is the fact that 'the majority of these works found their inspiration in some way within a theatrical context.'¹⁶¹ Many of the composers mentioned above were commissioned at some point to write incidental music for a Shakespeare performance, and this in turn had an impact on their subsequent encounters with Shakespeare. When not directly commissioned, they were inspired, as in the cases of Berlioz and Liszt, by particular performances and actors.

As will be seen in Chapter 2, Shostakovich's first creative encounter with *Hamlet* was also through the world of theatre, and despite the composer's previous avowed dislike for Shakespeare, his creative work on Akimov's 1932 staging proved to be a turning-point, as he would return to the tragedy throughout his life. Shostakovich's music for theatre and film adaptations of *Hamlet* has enjoyed a rich independent afterlife, not only as part of standard concert-hall repertoire in the form of suites but also, as with Tchaikovsky, as music for independent ballet adaptations. This constitutes a fascinating case study for how some incidental music, despite its context-specific nature, may live on in altered forms, divorced from the practical and pragmatic needs of their original contexts and from 'the aesthetic and

¹⁶⁰ Pauline Pocknell (ed.), *Franz Liszt and Agnes Street-Klindworth: A Correspondence*, New York, Pendragon Press, 1999, 81-2, quoted in Joanne Cormac, 'Liszt as Kapellmeister: The Development of the Symphonic Poems on the Weimar Stage', PhD dissertation, University of Birmingham, 2012, 355.

¹⁶¹ Sanders, *Shakespeare and Music*, 194.

creative impulses'¹⁶² of the director or company for whom the music was composed. While not featured directly in this dissertation, attention is drawn to this phenomenon here because it is probably the most complex level of appropriation and transformation of Shakespeare's text, being subject to several successive stages of translation, appropriation and adaptation. Yet a further stage is the audience's reception, which again is subject to the context of the time of performance. This is traceable – albeit partially – in reviews and academic studies, and is an aspect the dissertation seek to do full justice to.

Structure of the dissertation

It would be possible to move directly from the historical/methodological concerns outlined above into the central area of this dissertation, which is the conception, realisation and reception of the two most important productions of *Hamlet* in the Stalin era. However, those productions emerged in part from their own national tradition, of which everyone involved was more or less aware, and against which they fashioned their various contributions to a greater or lesser extent. Accordingly, chapter 1 is devoted to the specific history of *Hamlet* in Russia prior to 1932. This Chapter also provides an overview of the creative background of the directors of the central Stalin-era *Hamlets*, namely Nikolai Akimov (1901-68) and Sergei Radlov (1892-1958). These two pursued very different paths prior to their *Hamlets*, but each reflected and responded to the changing cultural climate and theatre trends of the liminal years before and after the Bolshevik Revolution. Furthermore, any study of Russian and Soviet theatre would be incomplete without mentioning, however briefly, its major trend-setter, Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940), for whom, *Hamlet* was also a constant presence in his work as theatre director, theorist and pedagogue.

Chapters 2 and 3 move to detailed study and analysis of Akimov's and Radlov's *Hamlets*, respectively. The innovative and highly controversial 1932 production of *Hamlet* by Nikolai Akimov at Moscow's Vakhtangov Theatre, which included the young Shostakovich's eccentric music, was premiered at a turning point in the country's cultural history, in the aftermath of the disbanding of rival artistic factions, and coinciding with the advent of Socialist Realism and tighter control from above. Predictable though the latter developments may seem with hindsight, at the time of the production's initial conception in 1931, it would have been hard to foresee them. This observation certainly helps to account for the scandalous nature of Akimov's staging and its subsequent downfall. However, the closer

¹⁶² Ibid., 33.

examination undertaken in Chapter 2 reveals a myriad of fascinating and still poorly understood strands within this broad narrative.

Seven years on, the successful staging production of *Hamlet* by Sergei Radlov (director), Sergei Prokofiev (composer) and Vladimir Dmitriev (stage designer) fell during the last phase of Stalin's great purges. Even though this production seems in many ways to be at the opposite pole from Akimov's, since it stresses heroism and positivism seemingly in accordance with Socialist Realist doctrine, the in-depth analysis presented in Chapter 3, supports a more objective reassessment of its intentions, realisations and legacy.

The study of Akimov/Shostakovich *Hamlet* (1932) is supported by a large quantity of previously unknown or neglected archive materials. When it comes to the Radlov/Prokofiev *Hamlet* (1938) the archival material, though substantial, is patchier. In particular the production book and stenographic reports of rehearsals have not been uncovered, and an authoritative account of the production, its genesis and fate has had to be patched together using the letters and writings of Radlov and Prokofiev, miscellaneous reports and reminiscences, as well as the press coverage of the time. Hence the scene-by-scene accounts of these *Hamlets* here presented are distinct in nature and methodology from anything previously attempted.

The second half of the Stalin era, from 1938 until the death of the dictator in March 1953, is fascinating not only for the evolving cultural and political status of the regime, but also for the seismic international events that shook it, above all, of course, the Second World War and the beginnings of the Cold War. The place of *Hamlet* in the Soviet Union during this time has been the object of much speculation and requires its own careful demythologising. This is undertaken in Chapter 4. The complementing final chapter continues with an overview of productions of *Hamlet* on the major stages of Moscow and Leningrad almost immediately after Stalin's death, and of a sample of productions and musical renderings of *Hamlet* thereafter. Together these phenomena show how Shakespeare's text and Russian creative spirits in the arenas of theatre, ballet and opera continued to rub up against one another and against changing ideological climates. The resulting process of constant negotiation is one for which it would be hard to suggest parallels within the country, or indeed outside it.

The goals of this dissertation may accordingly be summed up as follows:

- To set the historical record straight regarding the conception, realisation and reception of the two most important *Hamlet* productions of the Stalin era, and to prepare the ground for their possible future reconstructions
- To offer nuanced interpretations of these productions, first and foremost through consideration of previously unresearched archival materials, but also through revised accounts of the careers of their respective directors
- To set these productions in the context of previous and subsequent *Hamlet* stagings in Russia, taking into account ideological pressures such as Stalin's supposed ban (whose problematic status is separately considered in chapter 4)
- To do fuller justice than hitherto to the role of music both in these productions and in independent compositional engagements with *Hamlet*, particularly in Russia
- To offer a critical consideration of the secondary literature, mainly in English and Russian

Chapter 1

Hamlet in Russia and the Soviet Union: an overview

1.1 Origins

Notwithstanding individual Russian diplomats visiting the English court, and continental theatre troupes touring Shakespeare adaptations to Russia, it is generally accepted that Alexander Sumarokov (1718-77), sometimes called the ‘founder of Russian Classical tragedy’, was ‘responsible for introducing both Shakespeare and a version of *Hamlet* into Russia in 1748.’¹⁶³ This is regardless of the fact that Shakespeare’s name appears nowhere in Sumarokov’s *Gamlet-Tragediia*, and that in replying to his arch-rival, Vasilii Trediakovskii, Sumarokov described his *Hamlet* as ‘ha[ving] very, very little in common with Shakespeare’s tragedy.’¹⁶⁴ Even so, Sumarokov’s play did, at least reportedly, enjoy successful staging, its first documented performance taking place on 1 July 1757 in St Petersburg, with Ivan Dmitrevskii in the title role.¹⁶⁵

Sumarokov’s concept of Shakespeare was in fact shaped by the dominating French Neoclassicist model of the time and was particularly close to that of Voltaire.¹⁶⁶ Acknowledging Shakespeare’s ‘good qualities’, despite his ‘vulgarity’, Sumarokov regarded him as an ‘unenlightened’ genius, ‘subject to [i.e. in need of] numerous corrections’.¹⁶⁷ Hence, when in 1932 critics of Nikolai Akimov’s *Hamlet* accused the latter – an avowed champion of Shakespeare’s real intentions - of returning to ‘Sumarokovshchina’, they were ignoring crucial differences between their respective approaches (see 2.7). Such reductionist generalisations could admittedly have been a result of the then under-developed nature of Sumarokov scholarship. Even today, most books assume that Sumarokov’s adaptation of *Hamlet* was worked up from an equally distorted French translation of the tragedy by Pierre

¹⁶³ Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 1.

¹⁶⁴ Aleksandr Sumarokov, *Polnoe sobranie vsekh sochinenii*, 2nd edn., Moscow, Izdanie Novikova, 1787, Vol. 10, 103.

¹⁶⁵ Boris Gaydin *et al.*, ‘Gamlet kak vechnyi obraz russkoi i mirovoi kul’tury’, in Nikolai Zakharov, Valerii Lukov and Boris Gaydin (eds.), *Shekspirovskie shtudii IV*, Moscow, Moskovskii Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2010, 38; see also: Aleksandr Zapadov, *Zabytaia slava: Opasnyi dnevniki*, Moscow, Sovetskiy Pisatel’, 1976, 106-112.

¹⁶⁶ Aleksei Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign: Russian Translations of Hamlet and Literary Canon Formation*, Stockholm, Stockholm University, 2007, 70.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* and Aleksandr Sumarokov, *Polnoe sobranie*, Vol. 1, 337, also in Sumarokov, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, Leningrad, Sovetskii pisatel’, 1957, 117, 129.

Simon, marquis de Laplace. However, documents from the archives¹⁶⁸ reveal that around the time he was working on his *Hamlet*, he borrowed, among other books, the fourth folio edition Shakespeare of 1685, in English, from the library of the Academy of Science.¹⁶⁹ In this connection, Marcus Levitt derives examples from Sumarokov's *Hamlet*, which suggest that he might have referred to Shakespeare's own text, at least on occasion. However, it is only by putting Sumarokov's *Hamlet*, its stage life and reception in the mid-18th century in the context of later Russian *Hamlets* that its full significance emerges. For one thing, since the 'common Russian view of Sumarokov's tragedies stresses their political message, and sees the plays as allegories on good and bad monarchs',¹⁷⁰ it could be argued that his *Hamlet* set the trend for the association of this tragedy with Aesopian political messages. In this light the play's disappearance from Russian stages after 1762, despite its previous successful productions, has been plausibly ascribed to political reasons, namely the parallels between the *Hamlet* plot and Catherine II's coming to power.¹⁷¹

In another parallel with the late Stalin era, lack of performance apparently did not affect Shakespeare's status. In fact he found an advocate in none other than Empress Catherine II herself. Her engagement with the works of Shakespeare, albeit via German translations, came in the form of her quasi-translation and reworking of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1786), which she called *This is what it means to have a basket and linen*¹⁷² and described as 'A free but weak adaptation of Shakespeare'.¹⁷³ *The Spendthrift*, written five months later as a free adaptation of *Timon of Athens*, and between them two historical dramas: *The Life of Rurik* and *The Beginning of the Rule of Oleg*, each of which she described as, 'An imitation of Shakespeare, without observing the usual rules of the theatre'.¹⁷⁴

However, it was Nikolai Karamzin, who, with his translation of *Julius Cesar* from the original in 1787, took the first steps away from Voltaire-dominated Shakespeare criticism in

¹⁶⁸ St Petersburg Branch of Archive of the Academy of Science, f. 158, op. 1/407, 1.9 – see Markus Levitt, 'Sumarokov – chitatel' Peterburgskoi biblioteki Akademii nauk', *XVIII vek*, 1995/ 19, 43-59, here 45-46.

¹⁶⁹ Marcus Levitt, 'Sumarokov's Russianized 'Hamlet': Text and Context', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 38/2, 1994, 319-341, here 319 and 322-323.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 334.

¹⁷¹ See, for example, Mikhail Alekseev, *Shekspir i russkaia kul'tura*, Moscow and Leningrad, Nauka, 1965, 7-30; Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 13; Levitt, 'Sumarokov's Russianized "Hamlet"', 334; and Alexei Bardovskii, who draws specific parallels between the political figures and the characters of the tragedy, in his 'Russkii Gamlet', in Sergei Platonov, A. Presniakov and Iu. Gessen (eds.), *Russkoe proshloe: istoricheskii sbornik*, No. 4, Moscow, Petrograd, 1923, 138.

¹⁷² The title is a free interpretation of Ford's exclamation 'this 'tis to have linen and buck-baskets!' (III/5).

¹⁷³ '...vol'noe no slaboe perelozhenie iz Shekspira', Catherine the Great, *Sochinenie*, Vol. 2, 354, quoted in Ernest Simmons, 'Catherine the Great and Shakespeare', *PMLA*, 47/3, (September 1932), 790-806, here 794.

¹⁷⁴ See Lurana Donnels O'Malley, *Theatre and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Russia*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2006, 121-169.

Russia. Karamzin's fascination with *Hamlet* and with 'To be or not to be' as a formula depicting the ultimate 'accursed question' has been examined by James Billington, according to whom Karamzin's story, *Poor Liza* (1792), depicted an 'Ophelia-like' heroine who 'solved the riddle of being by ending her own life.'¹⁷⁵ Billington argues further that: 'The principal reason for the sustained interest of the aristocracy lay in the romantic fascination with the character of Hamlet himself. Russian aristocrats felt a strange kinship with this privileged court figure torn between the mission he was called on to perform and his own private world.'¹⁷⁶ The choice between the higher 'mission' and the personal 'private world' points to Pasternak's reading of the tragedy, attributing Christ-like qualities to the Danish prince.¹⁷⁷ On the other hand, from the late 18th century, 'To be or not to be' increasingly represented the 'accursed question' of 'to live or not to live', which, according to Billington, came to be known as 'the Hamlet question'.¹⁷⁸

1.2 *Hamlet*, Hamletisation and Hamletism in 19th-century Russia

However, the next important staging of *Hamlet*, which took place in 1810 at Imperial Theatre of St Petersburg with Aleksei Yakovlev in the title role, used Stepan Vyskovatov's adaptation from Jean François Ducis (1769). In some quarters this *Hamlet* was understood as an effort to rehabilitate Alexander I and in line with patriotic feelings of its time.¹⁷⁹ However, it was the arrival of Romanticism and Pushkin's fascination for Shakespeare and Byron,¹⁸⁰ as well as the development of native Russian theatre, that marked the turning point for the popularity of Shakespeare in Russia.¹⁸¹

The German Romantic legacy brought with it Goethe's reading of *Hamlet* in his *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* [*Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*] (1796) as 'A beautiful, pure, noble, and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which makes the hero, [a nature that] sinks beneath a burden which it can neither bear nor throw off.'¹⁸² This, as Boris Eikhenbaum observed, changes the Russian attitude towards *Hamlet* from primarily a political drama to a

¹⁷⁵ Billington, *Icon and Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture*, New York, Knopf, 1966, 354.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 353-354.

¹⁷⁷ The theme of Christ in Pasternak's interpretation of Hamlet and his translation(s) of the tragedy has been widely discussed; see for example: Anna K. France, 'Boris Pasternak's Interpretation of Hamlet', *Russian Literature Triquarterly* 7(1973), 202; Douglas Clayton, 'The Hamlets of Turgenev and Pasternak: On the Role of Poetic Myth in Literature', *Germano-Slavica*, 2/6 (1978), 460; Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 97-98.

¹⁷⁸ Billington, *Icon and Axe*, 354.

¹⁷⁹ Andrei Gorbunov, 'K istorii russkogo "Gamleta"', in Gorbunov (ed.) *Shekspir Gamlet: Izbrannye perevody*, Moscow, Raduga, 1985, 9.

¹⁸⁰ See Viktor Zhirmunskii, *Bairon i Pushkin. Pushkin i zapadnye literatury*, Leningrad, Nauka, 1978.

¹⁸¹ See Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 54-64; Alekseev, *Shekspir i russkaia kul'tura*, 201-315.

¹⁸² Quoted in H. H. Furness (ed.), *William Shakespeare, Hamlet*, New York, J. B. Lippincott, 1877, Vol. 2, 273.

philosophical-historical tragedy.¹⁸³ The development of Russian Hamletiana meant that not only *Hamlet* the play and its plot were evoked in literature, but also its separate motifs and characters, including such iconic images as Ophelia's death, Yorick's skull and the graveyard scene. Pushkin's encounters with Shakespeare, however, took Russian Bardolatry to new levels, not only in allusions to individual works but also in incorporating Shakespeare's dramatic structure, characterizations and use of irony.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, notwithstanding Karamzin's chronological precedence in *Poor Liza* (1792), the role of 'the most original, sophisticated, and controlled use of Shakespeare' in Russia has been credited to Pushkin.¹⁸⁵ According to George Gibian, Pushkin's versatile references to Shakespeare included partial translation in his poem 'Angelo' (1833), a parody remake in *Count Nullin* (1825), and application of Shakespearean themes, methods of construction and characterisation in *Boris Godunov* (1825).¹⁸⁶ Yet Pushkin was unique in dissociating himself from what he saw as the over-interpreted German Romantic view of Shakespeare and Hamlet. As he put it, 'The Germans see in Shakespeare the devil knows what, when in reality he simply said what was on his mind, without any ratiocination and not limited by any theory.'¹⁸⁷

The 1830s also saw new trends in translation, including working from the original Shakespeare text, a task attempted by Mikhail Vronchenko between 1828 and 1833. If Vronchenko's efforts achieved limited circulation, Nikolai Polevoi's translation, which appeared in 1837, would prove pivotal for the stage history of *Hamlet* in Russia. Polevoi's *Hamlet* offers several points of comparison with the translation made by Pasternak more than a century later. Both men were repressed creative writers, using translation of *Hamlet* as a temporary refuge. They both identified with Hamlet and had a clear and determined, albeit subjective, understanding of who Hamlet was and how Shakespeare's tragedy unfolded. If for Pasternak Hamlet was a Christ-like figure, who had to sacrifice his own needs for the mission assigned to him by a greater power, Polevoi, in line with the transitional nature of the time from Neoclassicism to Romanticism, insisted that the cornerstone of the drama was the

¹⁸³ Boris Eikhenbaum, 'K istorii "Gamleta" v Rossii', in Aleksander Anikst (ed.), *Shekspirovskii sbornik*, Moscow, VTO, 1967, 64-65, quoted in Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 28.

¹⁸⁴ For detailed studies of Shakespeare in Pushkin's works see for example, Nikolai Zakharov, *Shekspirizm russkoi klassicheskoi literatury: tezarusnyi analiz*, Moscow, MGU, 2008 and Catherine O'Neil, *With Shakespeare's Eyes: Pushkin's Creative Appropriation of Shakespeare*, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2003.

¹⁸⁵ Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 30.

¹⁸⁶ George Gibian, 'Measure for Measure and Pushkin's Angelo', *PMLA*, 66/4 (June, 1951), 431, quoted in Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 30.

¹⁸⁷ Aleksandr Dymshits (ed.), *Pushkin v vospominaniakh sovremennikov*, Moscow, Gosudarstvennyi Institut Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1950, 370, quoted in Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 33.

tragedy of weakness when facing duty,¹⁸⁸ which he castigated by such means as ‘the epithet *nichtozhni*, meaning “worthless”, “contemptible”, “vain”, “naught”, etc’.¹⁸⁹ In a similar way to Pasternak, Polevoi turned to the task of translation of *Hamlet* as an instrument of ‘self-reflection’, and accordingly the ‘connotations of humiliation and existential fear’ that he introduced to his interpretation of Shakespeare’s tragedy in some measure reflected his own self-image as a repressed author.¹⁹⁰ To convey their personal attitude, each translator modified Shakespeare’s text in different ways: Pasternak, for instance, took out all hints of Ophelia’s sexuality, hence creating the image of purity *par excellence*. Polevoi, on the other hand, did not shy away from freely editing Shakespeare’s text and at the same time ‘Russifying’ it by eliminating foreign elements.¹⁹¹ The most famous words that emerged from Polevoi’s translation and its staging did not belong to Shakespeare: ‘Fearful, I am fearful for man!’ (*Strashno, Za cheloveka strashno mne!*), which Polevoi inserted as a substitute for Shakespeare’s ‘Rebellious hell,/ If thou canst mutine in a matron’s bones,/ To flaming youth let virtue be as wax/ And melt in her own fire...’ (III/4), addressed to Gertrude by Hamlet.

Polevoi’s translation was put on both in Moscow and in St Petersburg, with Pavel Mochalov and Vasili Karatygin respectively in the title role.¹⁹² It was the former staging, which opened on 22 January 1837 in the Maly Theatre, that has attracted the most attention, since it ‘brought home to the Russian public the universality of Shakespeare’s appeal’.¹⁹³ The date has come to be known as ‘a great day’ in ‘the annals of Russian stage’,¹⁹⁴ comparable in importance to the premiere of Glinka’s opera *A Life for the Tsar/Ivan Susanin* on 27 November 1836 in St Petersburg. Apart from the nature of the play, the context and the location of the production, Mochalov’s *Hamlet* owed its success to seminal articles in 1838 by the literary and theatre critic, Vissarion Belinsky: ‘Mochalov as Hamlet’ and ‘Hamlet, Prince of Denmark’.¹⁹⁵ All this contributed to Mochalov’s status as ‘the most powerful

¹⁸⁸ Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 43.

¹⁸⁹ Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 79.

¹⁹⁰ In 1834 Polevoi was banned from continuing his editorial practice for the *Moscow Telegraph*, which was closed down by the authorities.

¹⁹¹ See Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 80.

¹⁹² In St Petersburg *Hamlet* was performed at the Alexandrinsky Theatre. Powerful in his own right, Karatygin’s neoclassical and decorative style of acting appealed more to the noble class, in contrast to the admiration for Mochalov among the intelligentsia.

¹⁹³ Ernest Simmons, *English Literature and Culture in Russia (1553-1840)*, New York, Octagon Books, 1964, 234.

¹⁹⁴ Catherine Schuler, *Theatre and Identity in Imperial Russia*, Iowa, University of Iowa Press, 2009, 115.

¹⁹⁵ Vissarion Belinsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 13 tomakh*, Moscow, Akademiia Nauk SSSR, 1953, Vol. 2, 253-345.

signifier' of Russian interwar (i.e. between 1812 and the Crimean War) culture.¹⁹⁶ Placed by critics, and above all Belinsky, in opposition to Karatygin, the 'actor-aristocrat' and his refined technique,¹⁹⁷ Mochalov represented for the intelligentsia and the new Romantic generation the 'actor-plebian'¹⁹⁸ and 'an abstract ideal of primal Russianness'.¹⁹⁹

For Mochalov's revival as ultimate Russian romantic tragedian to happen through his interpretation of a foreign play, the translation had to be appropriate. By its 'adequate nationalization' of the English play as well as by paying special attention to the scenic aspect of the text, Polevoi's translation has been seen as successful in the 'transplantation' of Shakespeare to the Russian soil and its literary/theatrical system.²⁰⁰ His inclination for Romantic acting aesthetics and the associated spoken delivery, as opposed to the Neoclassical tradition of theatrical declamation, was apparently fully realised by Mochalov, whose melodramatic performance was described by Belinsky as 'tempestuous inspiration, ardent, scorching passions, deeply emotional feelings, a wonderful face, a voice either resonant or low but always harmonious and melodious'.²⁰¹ All this was complemented by the incidental music of Alexander Varlamov (1801-1848), whose trumpet fanfare was later used by conductor Gennady Rozhdestvensky in his *Concert Scenario Hamlet*, 'a 32-minute suite of sixteen items culled from Shostakovich's film and stage scores'.²⁰² Although the writings of Belinsky on this production and its Goethe-inspired translation have been partly examined by Russian and Western scholars, Varlamov's accompanying music has received little or no scholarly attention. His songs for Ophelia, which were later conflated and published separately as a single ballad, are the only numbers to have entered the concert repertoire. With their operatic style and developed orchestral accompaniment, Ophelia's songs suggest that Varlamov's score was in line with the production's style, being highly Romantic, yet conforming to Russian taste.

Having attended eight out of Mochalov's ten performances, Belinsky formulated, perhaps for the first time, 'the essence of Hamletism and its universal applicability: "everyone is

¹⁹⁶ Schuler, *Theatre and Identity in Imperial Russia*, 115. For a study of Belinsky's articles see *ibid.*, 115-163.

¹⁹⁷ Belinsky uses thinly veiled references to Karatygin without mentioning his name directly – see *ibid.*; 163.

¹⁹⁸ Anatolii Al'tshuller categorises the actors in this way in his *Teatr proslavlennykh masterov: ocherki istorii Aleksandriiskoy stseny*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1968, 64.

¹⁹⁹ Schuler, *Theatre and Identity in Imperial Russia*, 156.

²⁰⁰ Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 81.

²⁰¹ Quoted and translated in Robert Leach and Victor Borovsky (eds.), *A History of Russian Theatre*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1999, 107.

²⁰² Premiered on 26 January 1993 - see Derek Hulme, *Dmitri Shostakovich: A Catalogue, Bibliography, and Discography*, 3rd edn., Lanham, MD, Scarecrow Press, 2002, 410.

Hamlet”.²⁰³ Russian Shakespeare scholars, inspired by Pushkin’s encounter with Shakespeare and his methods of appropriation of Shakespearean themes and dramatic structures, have inferred two subsequent historical directions: Shakespearianism or Shakespearism (dialogue with Shakespeare) and Shakespearisation (appropriation of Shakespeare).²⁰⁴ Nikolai Zakharov describes Shakespearisation [*Shekspirizatsia*] as: ‘a process emerging in Russian and global culture, which characterizes, on the one hand, an increasing interest in the heritage of Shakespeare (particularly intense in the second half of the 18th century), and on the other hand, the strong influence of the playwright’s creative work on the subsequent development of literature, music, visual arts, theatre and cinema.’²⁰⁵ Parallel to this process is the more complex notion of Shakespearianism [*Shekspirizm*] which implies ‘an ideological and aesthetic trend characterized by a dialogue between cultures of Russia and Europe through the prism of Shakespeare studies and Shakespeare appropriations.’²⁰⁶

Applying the same approach to *Hamlet* and its afterlife in Russian culture, Boris Gaydin has recognised the concept of Hamletisation, which is quite different from the more familiar notion of Hamletism (the former being principally associated with the play, the latter principally with the title character). According to Gaydin, Hamletisation is ‘a principle-process implying incorporation of separate reminiscences, characters, motifs, as well as a part of or the whole plot of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* in a cultural context, i.e. poetics (theatrical production, cinematic version or adaptation).’²⁰⁷ Although it is generally argued that Hamlet in his 19th-century Romantic guise was not Pushkin’s favourite Shakespearean character,²⁰⁸ some of the most original instances of Hamletisation can nevertheless be detected in the poet’s works. In *Hamlet* it was not philosophy or melancholy but irony and Shakespeare’s ability to express terror in laughter that attracted Pushkin. As he commented, ‘Hamlet’s jokes make one’s hair stand on end.’²⁰⁹ Furthermore, Eleanor Rowe argues that many of Pushkin’s

²⁰³ Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 80.

²⁰⁴ Nikolai Zakharov and Vladimir Lukov, ‘Shekspir i shekspirizm v Rossii’, *Znanie. Ponimanie. Umenie*, 2009/1, 98–106.

²⁰⁵ Zakharov, *Shekspirizm russkoi klassicheskoi literatury*, 2008, 29.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁰⁷ Boris Gaidin, ‘Obraz Gamleta na otechestvennom ekrane vtoroi poloviny XX — nachala XXI veka’, *Znanie. Ponimanie. Umenie*, 2013/4, 170–182.

²⁰⁸ Izrail’ Vertsman, *Gamlet Shekspira*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1964, 122, quoted in Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 34.

²⁰⁹ Carl Proffer (ed.), *The Critical Prose of Alexander Pushkin*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1969, 71.

uses of *Hamlet*, including the explicit evocation of Yorick in *Eugene Onegin*, are ‘at least faintly tinged with ironic playfulness.’²¹⁰

As Semenenko observes, the phenomenon of the separation of Hamlet the man from *Hamlet* the play – in other words Hamletism - has been extensively addressed, described and commented upon.²¹¹ According to Reginald Foakes, the term Hamletism seems to have been established by the 1840s, but neither he nor any other scholar has ventured to identify its origins more closely.²¹² Moreover, there appear to be significantly different nuances in the definition of Hamletism and its implications. In scholarly terms, the problem of Hamletism could be described *in nuce* as ‘a tendency to interpret Hamlet the character as a *symbol* (a proper name turns into a common noun) which embodies certain philosophical, social, psychological, or political characteristics and represents a certain type, or behavior’.²¹³ In other words, according to time and place, new symbolic meanings are assigned to Hamlet the character, which in turn influence the interpretation of *Hamlet* the play and thus keep the text alive for the appropriating nation/era. However, some of these meanings have proven persistent (globally or locally) throughout history, provoking oppositions or even at times ‘anti-Hamlets’.²¹⁴ Accordingly, Hamlet as a ‘metaphoric referent’, by common consent includes ‘semantic fields of alienation, opposition, doubt, melancholy, oppression’,²¹⁵ and this is certainly the meaning Akimov, Radlov and other directors had in mind when they referred to Hamletism.

The particular implication of Hamletism that gained currency in the 19th century and proved tenacious thereafter is well described by Foakes: ‘Hamlet, reconstructed as a reflection of a modern consciousness, was thus identified with the problem of the age, and politicized as mirroring those who from weakness of will endlessly vacillate... Hamlet was further abstracted from the play into an embodiment of what came to be known as Hamletism.’²¹⁶

²¹⁰ See examples in Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 31-34.

²¹¹ Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 139.

²¹² Reginald A. Foakes, *Hamlet versus Lear*, 20.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ Gaydin uses this term in his PhD dissertation to describe such negative views as Tolstoy’s and Turgenev’s – Boris Gaidin, *Vechnye obrazy kak konstanty kul’tury (Interpretatsiia ‘Gamletovskogo voprosa’)*, PhD Dissertation, Moscow, 2009, 149-170.

²¹⁵ Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 140.

²¹⁶ Foakes, *Hamlet versus Lear*, 19.

1.3 Russian *Hamlets* in the second half of the 19th century

In the nineteenth-century European view of Hamlet in general and the Russian view in particular, melancholy and struggle with the accursed question of ‘to be or not to be’ became the thematic core of the play and its interpretations. For Russia, Polevoi’s translation and Mochalov’s performance were the most influential pioneering acts. These aspects of Hamletism fuelled a polemic, particularly after Turgenev’s 1860 speech, ‘Hamlet and Don Quixote’. One of the first to react negatively to the Romantic depiction of Hamlet was none other than Belinsky, who by the 1840s was changing tack, seeking ‘to demand that literature make a deliberate and definable social intervention, that it be seen to foreground its political position in relation to contemporary social life’.²¹⁷ Having previously highly praised Polevoi’s translation, Belinsky in 1844 favoured Andrey Kronberg’s new translation of *Hamlet*, which compared to Polevoi’s had a clear orientation towards written rather than theatrical culture.²¹⁸ Towards the end of the 1840s a different landscape dominated Russian culture and society. With the deaths of Mochalov in 1848 and Karatygin in 1853, passionate delivery and emotional virtuosity gradually gave way to more natural and restrained style of acting. The transition from romanticism to the heyday of Russian realism and a corresponding increasing psychological need to affirm men of action led to the melancholic and mourning prince becoming associated with the notion of the ‘superfluous man’ (*lishnyi chelovek*), popularized by, among others, Ivan Turgenev’s *Dnevnik lichnego chelovaka (The Diary of a Superfluous Man)* (1850).²¹⁹ Following this and his *Gamlet Shchigrovskogo uezda (Hamlet of Shchigrovsky District)* (1849 a thumb-nail character portrait of the Hamlet-like roommate of the narrator, included in the collection *Zapiski okhotnika (A Huntsman’s Sketches)* 1847–1852), in 1860 Turgenev delivered his renowned lecture ‘Hamlet and Don Quixote’, wherein he argued that these two figures represented ‘two basic opposite peculiarities of man’s nature – the two ends of the axis on which it turns’. For Turgenev, Don Quixotes embodied total faith in and devotion to an ideal and an existing truth outside oneself, whereas Hamlets represented ‘analysis above all and egoism, and therefore non-belief’.²²⁰ Most accounts of Turgenev’s lecture fall short of exploring its particularities and

²¹⁷ Peter Holland, “‘More a Russian than a Dane’: The Usefulness of Hamlet in Russia”, in Shirley Chew and Alistair Stead (eds.), *Translating Life: Studies in Transpositional Aesthetics*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1999, 322.

²¹⁸ Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 84; for more details on Kronberg’s translation, see *ibid.*, 83-85.

²¹⁹ Interpretation of Hamlet as a weak man had already featured in writings of other influential authors such as Apollon Grigor’ev in his essay ‘*Gamlet na odnom provintsial’nom teatre*’, *Repertuar i panteon*, 1(1846), 37-48 (published under the pseudonym A. Trismechistov). For more on Grigor’ev and other prominent critics of the time, see Schuler, *Theatre and Identity in Imperial Russia*, 179-193.

²²⁰ Ivan Turgenev, ‘Rech’ o Shekspire’, translated and quoted in Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 66.

nuances, which reveal much both about Turgenev himself and about the politico-cultural context of his lecture. Further in the essay derived from the lecture, Turgenev grants that Hamlets may have ‘a bent towards beauty’,²²¹ but by setting ‘Don Quixote’s centrifugal devotion and self-sacrifice’ against ‘Hamlet’s self-regard and self-interest’, he invokes more socio-political connotations, turning the two archetypes into ‘forces of inertia and motion, of conservatism and progress’.²²² Later he relativizes these binary oppositions, admitting that in Nature there are ‘neither thorough Hamlets nor complete Don Quixotes’, just as in life purely tragic and comical are rarely encountered. By this denial of the absolutism of literary archetypes, ‘*Hamlet*, character and play... comes to stand for the limits of tragedy in relation to social existence and the desired model of political engagement. Hamlet’s social uselessness is, for Turgenev, socially useful, a means of charting what social responsibility should be by identifying its opposite.’²²³

The second half of the 19th century saw the burgeoning influence of Shakespeare in general and of *Hamlet*/Hamlet in particular, in all branches of Russian arts and culture. The period between 1861 and 1907 saw at least ten more translations of *Hamlet*, all reacting to and resisting the dual canon (theatre and literature) of Polevoi and Kronberg’s translations.²²⁴ None of these, however, not even the 1899-1901 translation by ‘K.R.’ (i.e. Grand Duke Konstantin Romanov), lavishly published in three volumes with parallel texts in English and Russian, could compete with Polevoi’s, which received 262 performances between 1837 and 1897, or with Kronberg’s (eight performances in 1867-8 and then used in Craig-Stanislavsky’s and Mikhail Chekhov’s *Hamlets* of 1911/12 and 1924, respectively, both of which also incorporated passages from Polevoi’s translation).²²⁵

In literature, and notably for Dostoevsky, Shakespeare was both ‘a prophet sent by God in order to reveal to us the secret of man, of man’s soul’, and ‘the poet of despair’.²²⁶ Based on analysis of Dostoevsky’s texts as well as his sketches and diaries, Zakharov traces the ‘Shakespearianism’ of Dostoevsky in terms of the influence of the author’s interpretation of Shakespearean heroes on his own protagonists.²²⁷ In this vein, Hamlet - or rather, as Foakes

²²¹ Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 66.

²²² Holland, ‘More Russian than a Dane’, 325.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 327.

²²⁴ Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 85-88.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 90.

²²⁶ Both quotes from *Zapisnye tetradi F.M. Dostoevskogo*, Moscow and Leningrad, 1935, 179, quoted by Iurii Levin, ‘Shekspirovskie geroi u Dostoevskogo’, Niko Kiasashvili (ed.), *Gruzinskaia Shekspiriana*, Vol. 4, Tbilisi, Tbilisi University Press, 209-10 and Eleanor Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 83-84.

²²⁷ Zakharov, *Sheskipirizm russkoi klassicheskoi literatury*, 270.

suggests, the problem of ‘contemporary Hamletism’ - lies behind ‘the image’²²⁸ of the central characters of Dostoevsky’s works, such as in *Notes from the Underground* (1864) as an embodiment of mental anguish, despair and noble suffering.²²⁹

Dostoevsky died in 1881, the same year as the coming to power of the reactionary Tsar Alexander III following the assassination of his more liberal father, Alexander II. Writing during the following *fin de siècle* period, Anton Chekhov’s references to Shakespeare and Hamlet are extensive and highly diverse, their topics ranging from irony to fascination at the nature of mankind.²³⁰ If it was Chekhov’s characters (such as Ivanov and Layevsky²³¹) who identified themselves with Hamlet, in Alexander Blok’s case it was the poet himself who wore masks - not only of Hamlet but also of Ophelia. Indeed for the symbolist poets and artists in general, it was the Hamlet and Ophelia sub-plot that appeared most attractive, with Ophelia representing the eternal feminine (see Chapter 5.4.1) for a discussion of Blok and Vrubel’s ‘Hamlet and Ophelia’). The theme of Ophelia’s tragic death and Hamlet’s guilt continued to animate Russian poetry well into the twentieth century.

From the 1860s, productions of *Hamlet* seem to have been overshadowed by increasing interest in Russian dramatists such as Ostrovskii and Turgenev. Lucien Guitry’s farewell show in 1891 as Hamlet at the Mikhailovskii Theatre of St Petersburg retains historical significance only thanks to Tchaikovsky’s incidental music, thus overshadowing a contemporary Russian production of the tragedy at the Maly Theatre (Moscow) with Vasilii Dalmatov (real name Luchich) in the title role and a colourful setting provided by Fyodor Sologub.²³²

By the end of the nineteenth century, Russian stages had already started to welcome active and strong Hamlets. For instance, in 1891 the Alexandrinsky Theatre presented Hamlet (played by Dalmatov) ‘naturalistically, as a rough sarcastically ironic’ man.²³³ Then came the famous collaboration of Gordon Craig and Konstantin Stanislavsky, resulting in the 1911/12

²²⁸ Foakes, *Hamlet versus Lear*, 22.

²²⁹ See Eleanor Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 83-93.

²³⁰ Chekhov’s Hamletian allusions, particularly in *The Seagull*, are the subject of various studies – see Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 107-116; T. Winner, ‘Chekhov’s “Seagull” and Shakespeare’s “Hamlet”: A Study of a Dramatic Device’, *The American Slavic and East European Review*, 15/1 (February 1956), 103-111; N. Kirillova, ‘P’esa Konstantina Trepleia v poeticheskoi strukture “Chaiki”’, in Anatolii Al’tshuller, L. Danilova, and Aleksandr Ninov (eds.), *Chekhov i teatral’noe iskusstvo: sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, Leningrad, LGITMiK [Leningrad State Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinematography], 1985, 97-117.

²³¹ Central characters from *Ivanov* (1887-9) and *The Duel* (1891), respectively.

²³² For a reproduction of Sologub’s design, see Liudmila Guzovskaia, *Russkii teatr: illiustrirovannaia khronika rossiskoi teatral’noi zhizni*, Moscow, Interros, 2006, 74-79.

²³³ Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 126-127.

Moscow Art Theatre's *Hamlet*. Considered as one of the most important productions of *Hamlet* in the twentieth century, the Craig/Stanslavsky *Hamlet* was the first 'to activate the motif of self-sacrifice' for Russian Hamletiada.²³⁴ The production, its genesis, each director's concept and the realisation of that concept have been studied by Laurence Senelick, who, however, omits the incidental music from his attempt at reconstruction. The three published excerpts from Il'ia Sats's score ('Hamlet's loneliness', 'Fortinbras's march' and 'Fanfares') suggest an overall Tchaikovskian and Griegian style and that the composer provided the production with a functional, albeit generic, musical accompaniment, with hints of archaism through the incorporation of parallel fifths in the harmony.²³⁵ The theme of a Christ-like Hamlet and Hamlet as Messiah evoked in this production was to be revived in Pasternak's translations and overall reading of *Hamlet* (see 4.4 and 4.5 below).

1.4 *Hamlet* in pre-revolutionary Russian music

Just as it is odd to comment on Shakespeare's plays as literary texts divorced from their theatrical realisation, so it is unfortunate to discuss the latter without reference to the music that went with them, where this is available, as it is with many of the most notable productions in the 20th century. Moreover, since Berlioz in the 1830s, composers had responded to Shakespeare with self-standing works, generally orchestral, to which tradition Russians made a distinctive contribution in the field of symphonic poems and overtures, sometimes provoking eloquent paeans to their historic significance.

The celebrations of the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare in 1864 included an independent musical event in the shape of a concert on the birthday itself - 23 April. César Cui, a member of the Slavophile-inclined *Moguchaia Kuchka* ('Mighty Handful'), as the group consisting of himself, Musorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and Balakirev would be dubbed by Vladimir Stasov three years later, reported and commented on this concert. Its programme included the March from Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Schumann's *Julius Caesar* overture, the 'Queen Mab' scherzo from Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* and Mily Balakirev's overture and entr'actes to *King Lear*.²³⁶ Cui highly praised Balakirev's contributions, noting their initiative in 'seeking inspiration in profound works of genius...

²³⁴ Ibid., 127.

²³⁵ The excerpts are published in Natal'ia Sats (ed.), *Il'ia Sats: Iz zapisnykh knizhek, vospominaniia sovremennikov*, Moscow, Sovetskii kompozitor, 1968, 229-232. The manuscripts of the incidental music and musical instructions are kept at the Museum of the Moscow Art Theatre.

²³⁶ César Cui, 'A St Petersburg musical chronicle', *St Petersburg Bulletin*, 1864/103 (10 May), 28-31, translated and quoted in Stuart Campbell (ed.) *Russians on Russian Music: 1830-1880 An Anthology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, 178-180.

Are this seriousness and artistry of their direction not one of the guarantees that our hopes for an immediate and great future for music in Russia will be realized?’²³⁷ Cui also used this article to mock Western operatic composers’ ‘caricature’ of Shakespearean subjects, particularly the attempts by Italian composers such as Bellini and Rossini: ‘Can a superficial Italian for whom the subject is merely a pretext for his music, which is also superficial, can he be joined to Shakespeare...?’²³⁸

The leaders of the heated Slavophile-versus-Westernizer disputes, which in music at least were more a case of opposing views regarding professionalization,²³⁹ seem to have found common ground in Shakespeare. In the summer of 1869 Balakirev suggested to Tchaikovsky (who was never as strident an ideologue, but whose extraordinary gifts inevitably gave him a position as figurehead) the idea of a musical treatment of Fantasy-overture *Romeo and Juliet*.²⁴⁰ The idea for Tchaikovsky’s next Shakespeare-themed work, the Symphonic Fantasia *The Tempest*, belonged to the critic and mentor of the Mighty Handful, Vladimir Stasov, this being one of three subjects he suggested to the composer in a letter of 30 December 1872/11 January 1873 (the other two being *Taras Bulba* and *Ivanhoe*).²⁴¹

In July 1876, the composer’s brother, Modest, included *Hamlet* among his suggestions for a new symphonic work, to which Tchaikovsky replied positively but cautiously, as he considered the task ‘devilishly difficult’.²⁴² Although he did not begin composition until 1888, his diary entries and letters indicate that his thoughts regularly returned to the subject. It was, in fact, the French actor, Lucien Guitry, who acted as a catalyst in 1885. So impressed was Tchaikovsky by Guitry’s acting that he wrote to him urging him to take on a Shakespearean theme, promising that in the event that Guitry played Hamlet or Romeo, he would compose an overture and entr’actes tailored to the resources of Moscow’s Mikhailovsky Theatre. In 1888 Guitry reminded Tchaikovsky of this promise, informing him that Grand Duchess Mariia Pavlovna (sister-in-law of Alexander III) was organising a gala charity at the Mariinsky Theatre, where she wanted Act III of *Hamlet* to be staged, with

²³⁷ Ibid., 180.

²³⁸ Ibid., 179.

²³⁹ See Robert Ridenour, *Nationalism, Modernism, and Personal Rivalry in Nineteenth-century Russian Music*, Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1981; Richard Taruskin, *Opera and Drama as Preached and Practiced in the 1860s*, Rochester, NY, University of Rochester Press, 1993 (first pub. 1981).

²⁴⁰ Composed in October and November 1869, and extensively revised between July and September 1870. The final, definitive version of the score dates from August 1880 – see the Tchaikovsky research database: http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/Romeo_and_Juliet, accessed 12 August 2016.

²⁴¹ See http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/The_Tempest#cite_ref-note1_1-0, accessed 12 August 2016.

²⁴² Letter from Pyotr Tchaikovsky to Modest, 7/19 July 1876, http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/Letter_486, accessed 12 August 2016.

Guitry in the title role and with an overture composed by Tchaikovsky. Although Guitry later wrote to Tchaikovsky informing him that the production was cancelled, the composer was already captivated with the composition and proceeded to write his overture-fantasia in the course of the summer, after drafting his Fifth symphony.

Two years later, at Guitry's request, Tchaikovsky developed the overture-fantasia into incidental music for the actor's farewell performance in Russia at the Mikhailovsky Theatre on 9/21 February 1891. For this Guitry had chosen *Hamlet* in the French translation by Alexander Dumas père and Paul Meurice. Guitry enclosed a copy of the play with detailed instructions for incidental music. Tchaikovsky agreed and fulfilled the task, but with little enthusiasm.²⁴³ The incidental music makes extensive use of material from the overture-fantasia, as well as material from other earlier works of the composer, including the *Alla tedesca* movement from his Third Symphony, used for an entr'acte (Act II, No. 5); the Melodrama (Act II, No. 10) which was taken from his incidental music to *The Snow Maiden* and used for another entr'acte (Act III, No. 7); and the Entr'acte (Act IV, No. 9) which was a reworking of the *Elegy* for string orchestra from 1884.

The overture-fantasia was, however, an autonomous work, which aspired not to narrate Shakespeare's plot but to focus on a few key images: Ophelia and her tragic fate, the troubled but noble Hamlet, and the decisive and triumphant Fortinbras. Framed between passages of funeral music at either end, these three images and their respective musical themes make up the core of Tchaikovsky's work. Of these, the melancholic Ophelia theme in B minor on the oboe is the most memorable. Contrasting it with Hamlet's theme in F minor, Tchaikovsky thereby creates a tritonal opposition, suggesting by tonal means the greatest possible distance between the lovers and symbolically alluding to the impossibility of a harmonious future for them. The fact that Tchaikovsky introduces the theme of Fortinbras in the middle of the score rather than saving it for the end suggests that he had his own personal and subjective reading of Shakespeare's play in mind, and that his music went beyond a simple musical parallel to the drama. In addition, by ensuring that Fortinbras's theme has points in common with that of Hamlet, Tchaikovsky suggests that the character of Fortinbras might be interpreted as an alter ego or mirror image of Hamlet.

²⁴³ As Tchaikovsky confessed in a letter to Modest on 11/23 January 1891 - see http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/Letter_4300, accessed 20 September 2016. The score was published in Vol. 14 of the Complete Tchaikovsky Edition (Moscow, Muzgiz, 1962) and reprinted by Edwin Kalmus of New York (no date, c.1974).

When performed together with Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* Symphony on 11 August 1893, *Hamlet* was rated the higher achievement by Hermann Laroche, a critic generally sympathetic to the composer's cause: 'Tchaikovsky's *Hamlet* is to a significant extent more free than his *Manfred* from the ballast of the commonplaces of "programme music"'.²⁴⁴ Be that as it may, Tchaikovsky's overture-fantasia and incidental score have enjoyed a rich afterlife both within and outside Russia, having featured in several ballets (such as Robert Helpmann's 1942 choreography for Sadler's Wells Ballet, London), productions such as Nikolai Okhlopkov's for the Mayakovsky Theatre in Moscow (1954), and even films, such as Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000).

1.5 *Hamlet* under the Bolsheviks

The appropriation of Shakespeare, and especially his tragedies, posed a sharp dilemma for Soviet artists. Theatre directors searched initially for solutions in experimentation and radical re-interpretation, and Shakespearean productions of the immediate post-Revolutionary years mirrored the 'characteristic diversity of direction in explorations of the early Soviet theatre'.²⁴⁵ Unlike in the late Stalinist years, it was *Macbeth* that was staged more often than any other Shakespeare play, arguably since it lent itself so readily to interpretation in the spirit of anti-monarchical Revolution.²⁴⁶ Most notably, the 1924 production by the Ukrainian, Les Kurbas, presented an austere cubist-expressionist staging, incorporating elements of Grand Guignol and pre-Brechtian alienation.²⁴⁷ The same year saw the premiere of Mikhail Chekhov's *Hamlet* at the Second Moscow Art Theatre,²⁴⁸ a highly stylised production that was largely an acting vehicle for Chekhov. This *Hamlet* has been much described in Western scholarly literature, with opinions ranging from its supposedly 'distorted'²⁴⁹ interpretation to reductionist speculation regarding its supposed dissident nature which apparently 'infuriated'²⁵⁰ the communist press.²⁵¹ Although Semenenko argues, more level-headedly,

²⁴⁴ Herman Laroche, 'The concert on 11 August at Pavlovsk: Tchaikovsky's *Manfred*, and *Hamlet*', *Teatral'naiia gazeta*, 1893/7 (15 August), 6; quoted in Stuart Campbell (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music 1880-1917*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, 16

²⁴⁵ Rudnitsky, *Russian and Soviet Theatre*, 109.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

²⁴⁷ See Irena Makaryk, *Shakespeare in the Undiscovered Bourn: Les Kurbas, Ukrainian Modernism, and Early Soviet Cultural Politics*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2004, 65-112; Makaryk, 'Russia and the Former Soviet Union', in Michael Dobson *et al.* (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, 475.

²⁴⁸ Mikhail Chekhov was the actor of the title role, and the production was directed by a team of three directors, a strategy which, according to Rudnitsky, resulted in a lack of coordination among the actors – see Rudnitsky, *Russian and Soviet Theatre*, 113.

²⁴⁹ Boika Sokolova, 'Between Ideology and Religion: Some Russian Hamlets of the Twentieth Century', in Peter Holland (ed.), *Shakespeare Survey Vol. 54: Shakespeare and Religion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, 146.

²⁵⁰ Mike Wilcock, *Hamlet – The Shakespearean Director*, Dublin, Craysfort, 2002, 74.

that this production marked ‘the beginning of the humanistic interpretation’ of Hamlet in Russia,²⁵² in the following years, and particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, Chekhov’s *Hamlet* became a negative benchmark for mysticism and distortion (see Akimov’s remarks, quoted in 2.3). The fact that there is little mention of the music for this production composed by Nikolai Rakhmanov may perhaps be attributed to the traditions of the Second Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre (henceforth MAT II), which placed the musicians behind the main stage and hence reduced the role of incidental music so drastically.²⁵³ The composer’s name appears on posters (albeit sometimes spelled wrongly and confused with Sergei Rachmaninoff) for a reading/mono-spectacle based on *Hamlet* in the 1950s, which would also be the first reading of Pasternak’s translation of the tragedy in Moscow (see Chapter 4.5).

A further production, today largely overlooked by Western scholars, was directed in 1925 by Kote Mardzhanishvili (Konstantin Mardzhanov) at the Rustaveli Theatre in Tbilisi. Mardzhanishvili, who in 1911 had served as Craig’s assistant for the Moscow Art Theatre *Hamlet*, moved away from the theme of the Christ-like Hamlet as portrayed in that production and instead centred on ‘the romantic play of contrasts between dark and light, lofty spirituality and base sensuality, heroism and villainy’.²⁵⁴ To realise his conception, Mardzhanishvili succeeded in creating a harmonious co-ordination between individual components. The simplified visual imagery of Iraklii Gamrekeli’s sets provided a frame for the noble acts of Hamlet, portrayed by Georgia’s greatest actor of the time, Ushang Chkheidze, to the accompaniment of Tchaikovsky’s music. According to Rudnitsky, the overall result, was much more consistent than that MAT II’s *Hamlet* and remained accessible to the Georgian public.²⁵⁵

Meanwhile the Russian *Hamlet* was now taking on local colours of other Soviet republic, as was the case in probably the most radical experiment in these years, which took place at the Azerbaijan State Theatre in Baku in 1926. For the first ever production of *Hamlet* on the Azerbaijani stage, Aleksandr Tuganov transferred the tragedy to an unnamed oriental country

²⁵¹ For a detailed description, see Laurence Senelick, ‘Mikhail Chekhov and Shakespeare’, in Marie-Christine Autant-Mathieu and Yana Meerzon (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Michael Chekhov*, New York, London, Routledge, 2015, 149-155; Alma H. Law, ‘Chekhov’s Russian *Hamlet* (1924)’, *The Drama Review* 27/3 (Autumn 1983), 34-45; V. Ivanov, ‘MKhAT vtoroi rabotaet nad “Gamletom”’. Gamlet - Mikhail Chekhov’, in Alexander Anikst (ed.), *Shekspirovskie chteniia 1985*, Moscow, Nauka, 1987, 216-243.

²⁵² Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 125.

²⁵³ This tradition is reported by Iurii Elagin see: Juri Jelagin, *The Taming of the Arts*, New York, Dutton, 1951, 22-23.

²⁵⁴ Rudnitsky, *Russian and Soviet Theatre*, 114.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 114-115.

and dressed everyone in oriental costumes against a set designed in Turkish/Persian style.²⁵⁶ Apart from Hamlet, acted by the legendary Abbas Mirza Sharifzade, and Ophelia, the other characters were given oriental names with familiar connotations for the Azerbaijani audience; Claudius was Shah, Gertrude became Goharshad, Polonius was called Logman, and Laertes became Sohrab, a name associated with the brave hero of Abu 'l-Qasim Ferdowsi's epic poem, *Shahnameh*, who is accidentally killed by his own father. Tuganov's production enjoyed a long repertoire life, and in 1930 it even toured to Moscow and Leningrad.²⁵⁷ Armenia continued its love-affair with Shakespeare and particularly with *Hamlet* and *Othello* (which had started in the 19th century) thanks to the international status of Vahram Papazian.²⁵⁸

1.6 Towards *Hamlet* under Stalin – Nikolai Akimov and Sergei Radlov

As in the other arts, the Stalin era (1928-1953) marked the end of a period of daring theatrical experimentations. Akimov's production of *Hamlet* in 1932 – a year that marked a crucial turning point in the Soviet cultural climate with the Central Committee's 23 April 1932 Resolution 'On the Restructuring of Literary and Artistic Organisations', dethroning RAPP (the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers) and instituting artistic unions – and Radlov's in 1938, just as the Stalinist terror was subsiding, stand out as the most prominent Stalin-era productions of the tragedy and as case studies for cultural trends of their time. Each of these productions needs to be understood not only in its own immediate context and that of the overall Russian and Soviet theatrical and cultural landscape, but also in terms of the creative path of the artists involved. The following overview of Akimov's and Radlov's artistic lives in the context of shifting cultural trends of the time is intended to set this scene.

1.6.1 Akimov (1901-1968): A theatre director despite himself

'From early childhood I had chosen my profession irrevocably', wrote Akimov, in what he called 'Sketches from an Unwritten Autobiography'. 'I was to become a [visual] artist. I never had any intention of working in theatre. Later everything turned out the other way round.'²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 115, and Mikhail Morozov, *Shakespeare on the Soviet Stage*, 41. According to Rudnitsky no archival materials, apart from a few photos of actors, exist for this production.

²⁵⁷ See http://abbasmirzasharifzade.info/index.php?lang=rus#!/page_ARTICLES, accessed 28 March 2016.

²⁵⁸ Edward Alexander, 'Shakespeare's Plays in Armenia', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 9/3 (1958), 387-394.

²⁵⁹ Nikolai Akimov, 'Otrivki o nenapisannoi biografii', in Akimov, *Ne tol'ko o teatre*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1966, 345.

Nikolai Pavlovich Akimov was born in 1901 in Kharkov (in present-day Ukraine) into a family of railroad workers. In 1910 his father moved with his family to Tsarskoe Selo and then to St Petersburg, where from 1914 the young Akimov started taking drawing lessons from various masters, including artists of the World of Art (*Mir Iskusstva*) circle: Mstislav Dobuzhinskii, Aleksandr Iakovlev and Vasilii Shukhaev. So far as Akimov's 'systematic' artistic qualification goes, the two years spent with these *miriskussniki* are all he could claim. Even so, as Aleksandr Bartoshevich has put it, 'If one cannot really speak of pedagogical influence on Akimov, there is no denial of his professional experience',²⁶⁰ since from the first independent work in the Kharkov Children's Theatre in 1922, 'he functioned not just as an artist in the theatre but as a theatre artist'.²⁶¹ The first instance of working with the giant figure of Vsevolod Meyerhold came with the second play Akimov worked on in Kharkov: *Alinur*, a dramatization of Oscar Wilde's 1892 short story *The Star-Child*. Even in his drawings, whether book illustrations or portraits, Akimov showed great theatrical awareness. As an early biographer put it: 'Akimov directs (*rezhissiruyet*) his pictures'. Describing theatricality (*teatral'nost'*) as 'the expressive transfer with utmost clarity of the ideological essence of the dramatic work', the same author claims that 'Akimov's paintings are structured with the idea that the viewer would not look at them for long. Hence the artist rushes to communicate the most important things in the fastest and shortest way'.²⁶² Indeed Akimov is particularly efficient in his early caricature/portraits and in his theatre posters.²⁶³

In 1923 Akimov joined Vkhutemas (*Vysshie Khudozhestvenno-tekhicheskie Masterskie* - Higher Art and Technical Studios) which was founded in 1920 in Moscow following a decree from Lenin 'to prepare master artists of highest qualifications for industry, as well as builders and managers for professional-technical education'.²⁶⁴ Often compared to the German Bauhaus in its organisation and pioneering role in training modern artist-designers, Vkhutemas was a centre for three major movements in avant-garde art and architecture: constructivism, rationalism, and suprematism. In the workshops, the faculty and students aimed to transform attitudes to art and reality through the use of precise geometry, with an

²⁶⁰ Aleksandr Bartoshevich, *Akimov*, Leningrad, Teakluba, 1933, 23.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Bartoshevich, *Akimov*, 25.

²⁶³ For reproductions of Akimov's works including stage design, posters, book illustrations and caricatures see: Mark Etkind, *N.P. Akimov – Khudozhnik*, Leningrad, Khudozhnik RSFSR, 1960; Mark Etkind, *Nikolai Akimov: stsenografiia grafika*, Moscow, Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1980.

²⁶⁴ 'Vkhutemas' in Aleksandr Prokhorov (ed.), *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, Moscow, Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1970-1981, Vol. 5, 512.

emphasis on space.²⁶⁵ The influence of Vkhutemas on Akimov's work is undeniable, particularly in his use of certain notions of 'constructivism',²⁶⁶ as opposed to decorative style (*dekorativnost'*), and in his special attention to space and objects.

Among other collaborators of Akimov in the 1920s was Nikolai Evreinov, who at this time was collaborating with the Theatre of the 'Krivoe zerkalo' ('Crooked Mirror'). This was one of the so called 'cabaret-theatres' of Saint-Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad which specialized in parodies and small forms. Krivoe zerkalo was founded in 1908 - at the same time as Meyerhold's similar establishment of *Lukomor'e* (The Strand, a Theatre-Cabaret Club) - by editor and publisher of *Teatr i iskusstvo*, Aleksandr Kugel, and his wife Zinaida Khol'mskaia. Considering themselves opposed to, or at least distinct from, Meyerhold's theatre, the members of the 'Distorted Mirror', especially after Evreinov joined them, did not hesitate to produce plays aiming to mock their rivals. One of these parody plays was a production entitled *Give us Hamlet! (Daesh' Gamleta)*, whose dating is somewhat problematic. According to some sources, including the memories of the wife of the founder of the Krivoe Zerkalo, Zinaida Khol'mskaia²⁶⁷ and Akimov scholar Marina Zabolotniaia,²⁶⁸ it was meant to be a reply to Meyerhold's successful 1924-25 show *Daesh' Evropu (Give us Europe!)*. However, the chronology is problematic, since, apart from illustrating a collection of Evreinov's plays for this Theatre, there exists a sketch by Akimov for this production's set dated 1923, which may be seen in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.²⁶⁹

The pre-*Hamlet* theatre career of Akimov can be divided into three chronological periods:

- 1) 1922-1924: First works at the Kharkov Children's Theatre and arrival in Petrograd theatres. This was the period of working on small stages and mainly dealing with small genres (*malye formy*). The influence of leftist artists such as Evreinov was most evident, as is Akimov's talent and limitless imagination, even if his personal characteristics and style were yet to be revealed. At this time Akimov collaborated mainly with two directors: Georgi Kryzhitski and Nikolai Petrov.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁵ See Paul Wood, *The Challenge of the Avant-Garde*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1999, 244

²⁶⁶ For a close study of constructivism in Akimov's early works, see Bartoshevich, *Akimov*, 71-73.

²⁶⁷ Zinaida Khol'mskaia, 'Vospominanie', *Teatral'naia zhizn'*, 2000/4, 15.

²⁶⁸ Marina Zabolotniaia, 'Ironia sud'by, ili oshibka v istorii gamletiyady', *Teatral'naia zhizn'*, 2000/4, 13-14.

²⁶⁹ <http://bibliophilierusse.blogspot.com/archive/2011/03/16/nicolas-evreinov-pieces-du-repertoire-du-miroir-tor-du.html>, accessed 20 September 2016.

²⁷⁰ Bartoshevich, *Akimov*, 64.

- 2) 1924-1926: During this period Akimov went from theatre to theatre, combining small theatrical forms (satire, improvisation, sketch) with more traditional ones, staging dramatic shows, even trying opera (Verdi's *Falstaff* at the Maly Opera Theatre) and operetta. However, an important part of his work of this time was for the major theatres of Leningrad, such as Gosdram (*Gosudarstvennyi Teatr Dramy*), the Bolshoi Dramaticheskii and Bolshoi Mikhailovskii. Aleksandr Bartoshevich frames this period between two productions: *Devstvennyi les'* (*Virgin Forest*) by Ernst Toller, which premiered on 15 November 1924 at the Bolshoi Dramaticheskii Teatr, and the apotheosis of Akimov's early work, *Konets Krivorylska* (*The End of Krivorylsk*), premiered on 2 December 1926 at Gosdram. This second period is characterised by Bartoshevich as one of formation (*stanovlenia*).
- 3) 1927-1932: Thanks to *Konets Krivorylska* whose model (*maketa*) was sent to an international theatre exhibition in Monza, Milan, Akimov had now become recognised as a major theatre artist. It was at this point that the Vakhtangov Theatre in Moscow invited him to work for them. From the beginning of the 1927-8 season it became clear that theatres saw much more in him than merely a stage designer; Akimov not only became artist-designer of productions but also exerted great influence on all elements of productions, practically becoming a co-director, until *Hamlet*, which marked his directorial debut in 1932 (see Chapter 2).

Around the time of *Hamlet* there were already several books dedicated to the life and works of the talented young artist and director, including Bartoshevich's, which divides Akimov's theatrical works into four categories: grotesque; variety of techniques, technical complications and surprises; cinematographic approach; and illusionism. All of these features are applicable in one way or another to Akimov's *Hamlet*, at the same time as overlapping with Meyerhold's theatrical principles. Perhaps that is one reason why many, including Konstantin Rudnitsky, have compared Akimov's *Hamlet* to the output of Meyerhold, despite the latter's negative reaction to this particular staging (for more on the Meyerhold/Akimov connection, see Chapter 2.5).

The venue for Akimov's *Hamlet* was itself at the crossroads of theatrical trends and traditions. Moscow's Vakhtangov Theatre had started off as a student studio in 1913, led by Konstantin Stanislavsky's most outstanding pupil, Evgeny Vakhtangov, then an actor and director at the Moscow Art Theatre. But it was not until 13 September 1920 that the studio

was accepted into the family of Art Theatres as its Third Studio,²⁷¹ and on 29 January 1921 its first major production, Maurice Maeterlinck's *The Miracle of St Anthony*, was staged.²⁷² Despite being loyal to Stanislavsky's psychological approach, Vakhtangov, who had accepted the Revolution quickly and without reservation, was greatly influenced by Meyerhold's theatricality and anti-realism. Impressed by Roman Rolland's book (and its derived concept), *Le Théâtre du peuple* (1903), Vakhtangov, like many others at the time, set himself the task of giving his art a sharper outline, without falsifying its truthfulness to life.²⁷³ A few months after the opening of the Third Studio in its current location on the Arbat came what Rudnitsky describes as 'a genuine theatrical miracle', whose name 'would be recorded for all time in the chronicles of the Russian theatre'.²⁷⁴ Premiered on 28 February 1922 in Vakhtangov's production, Carlo Gozzi's *Princess Turandot* was to outlive its creator, who was too ill to attend the opening night, by many decades. In 1926, four years after Vakhtangov's death from cancer, the Third Studio was renamed after him. What came next was a series of his pupils and assistants each trying their hand at directing this young theatre and making an effort to keep Vakhtangov's tradition alive, at the same time as following the main theatrical trends and the required objectives of the time. Hence, while by the early 1930s Stanislavsky's theatre had become known for its attempts at 'sovietisation', and MAT II was accused of traditionalism and Western bourgeois tendencies, the reputation of the Vakhtangov Theatre seems to have been a fluctuating one, with such risky plays in their repertoire as Bulgakov's *Zoikina Kvarтира* (1926) and Yuri Olesha's *Zagovor Chuvstv* (A Conspiracy of Feelings) – Olesha's dramatization of his novel *Zavist'* (Envy).²⁷⁵ And finally in 1932, the year of the 'scandalous' *Hamlet* also saw one of the most successful productions of the Theatre, in the first 'Soviet' play by Maksim Gorky, *Egor Bulyshev i drugie* (Egor Bulishev and others); this was especially hailed for the performance of its leading actor, Boris Shchukin, who had just played Polonius in Akimov's *Hamlet*.²⁷⁶

²⁷¹ In 1919 under a recognition plan, the Moscow Art Theatre was designated an official State Academic Theatre and hence qualified for governmental subsidises. For this and subsequent changes to the finance of the Theatre, see Sharon M. Carnicke, *Stanislavsky in Focus*, Newark, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999, 39. For more on the studios of the Moscow Art Theatre and Stanislavsky's role and attitude, see Rebecca B. Gauss, *Lear's Daughters: The Studios of the Moscow Art Theatre 1905-1927*, American University Studies, Vol. 29, New York, Peter Lang, 1999.

²⁷² Nick Worrall, *Modernism to Realism on the Soviet Stage: Tairov-Vakhtangov-Okhlopkov*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1989, 102.

²⁷³ Rudnitsky, *Russian and Soviet Theatre*, 52-53.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁷⁵ Senelick, *The Soviet Theatre*, 297.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 305.

Apart from *Hamlet*, the year 1932 saw another Shakespearean production in the shape of Sergei Radlov's *Othello* at his own Theatre Studio (see Chapter 3.1). This was not Radlov's first staging of this particular tragedy. On his way to being recognised as the Russian Shakespeare director *par excellence*, he had already staged *Othello* in 1927 at the Leningrad Academic Theatre (i.e. the Alexandrinsky Theatre, also known as the Pushkin Theatre). An overview of Radlov's theatrical life preceding this production will help to draw a fuller picture of the evolution of his career and aesthetics, leading to his better-known Shakespeare productions in the 1930s. Nine years older than Akimov, Radlov had been involved with Soviet Theatre from the start; of necessity, then, the following overview will be more extensive.

1.6.2 Sergei Radlov (1892-1958): A mirror of Soviet culture

It is difficult to present a linear description of Radlov's theatre life. As a director, he often had several projects in several different genres on the go simultaneously, some of which appear only tenuously related to one another. However, what can be said is that his gigantic output prior to his most celebrated Shakespearean projects in the 1930s was very much in tune with both popular and official demands of the 1920s, and for all the simultaneously layers of his activity there was a perceptible overall shift from experimental, circus and mass spectacles to the classics. Between these two phases, from 1925 to 1934 Radlov was at the head of GATOB, as it was then known (Gosudarstvennyi Akademicheskii Teatr Opery i Baleta - from 1924-35 the Leningrad State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre, from 1935-92 the Kirov, and since 1992 reverted to its pre-Bolshevik name, the Mariinsky) where he was responsible for the introduction of such important recent operas as Franz Schreker's *Der ferne Klang* (1925), Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges* (1926) and Berg's *Wozzeck* (1927), as well as the premiere of one of the first attempts at a truly Soviet opera – Vladimir Deshevov's *Ice and Steel* (1930). Each of these productions features in academic studies as a historic moment for Soviet culture. However, Radlov's name and work seldom receives more than a token mention. With the exception of his collaboration with Prokofiev on the ballet version of *Romeo and Juliet* (see below), his career remains relatively obscure.

To this day David Zolotnitsky's book, which first appeared in a rather poor English translation in 1995, is the only study of Radlov's long theatrical career, which spanned from around 1917 to his death in 1958. As interesting and valuable as Zolotnitsky's work is, its primary goal seems to have been a rehabilitation of its subject; hence it tries to present him in the most favourable light possible. This means that the first part of the book, which deals with

Radlov's early career in the 1920s leading to the foundation of his own Studio Theatre and his most important Shakespeare productions, avoids any political context, thus ignoring Radlov's interest and active participation in the making of the Bolshevik cultural landscape. By contrast, the second part of the book, which moves to the wartime tragedies and Radlov's eventual fall and virtual eradication from Soviet theatrical history uses every possible excuse to present the director as a political victim, avoiding any rumours or facts that might endanger this image, including those concerning the nature of his relationship with the Nazis (see chapter 4.3 below). On the other hand, the complexity of Radlov's career and the diversity of his output do seem to have troubled Zolotnitsky, since his account of Radlov's life and work at times resembles a labyrinth. Table 1 in the Appendix uses the information provided in Zolotnitsky's book and Radlov's own writings as well as contemporary reviews and reports in order to provide an overview of Radlov's theatre career, with only representative productions and theatres included. Diverse though the emergent picture may be, it is evident that Radlov gradually focused his style and interests, progressively devoting his time and energy to his own theatre troupe, which he created in 1928. Originally known as The Youth Theatre (Molodoi teatr), this was renamed in 1934 as the Theatre Studio Headed by Radlov, and again in 1939 as Lensovet (Teatr Leningradskogo soveta). Similarly, his repertoire demonstrates increasing attention to the classics, particularly Shakespeare, and from the early 1930s to the end of his career, his theatre was considered in effect a Shakespeare laboratory.

A full picture of Radlov's theatrical career can only be gained by placing him within the ever-changing socio-political and cultural climate of the USSR, for which there is no better place to turn than the classic study by Katerina Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution*.²⁷⁷ Clark provides a panoramic account of Soviet culture in the decade or so following the Revolution, when all cultural workers, regardless of their political affiliation, 'sought to realize a revolutionary culture that might transform the society'.²⁷⁸ Presenting a non-partisan overview of the nature of what she calls 'a particular cultural ecosystem',²⁷⁹ Clark seeks to suggest possible answers to the 'accursed question' of 'who made "Stalinist" culture? The intellectuals? Particular groups? Popular taste? Or even Western predictable trajectories through the 1920s and 1930s for individual actors in its "making"?'²⁸⁰ Apart from Meyerhold, the usual focus of cultural studies concerning this period of time, Clark chooses

²⁷⁷ Katerina Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1995.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 297.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 296.

as her ““heroes””,²⁸¹ among others, two lesser-known (at least in the West) figures: Adrian Piotrovsky (1898-1938) and Radlov. With a career that repeatedly brought him into prominence, Radlov provides a perfect case study for the twists and turns in the formation of Soviet culture, illustrating Clark’s general point that its evolution was far from unilinear. Hence, applying Clark’s revisionist study and its challenges to common assumptions regarding the provenance of Soviet culture to Zolotnitsky’s account of Radlov’s productions presents a more realistic picture of his prolific and extremely varied career. This in turn should contribute to a richer understanding of his later Shakespearean period, including his 1938 *Hamlet*.

1.6.2.1 The Young Sergei Radlov and the ‘Theatricalisation of Life’

In a similar manner to Akimov, Radlov’s path to the theatre was rather unconventional. Where Akimov started as a visual artist, Radlov’s career stemmed from his academic background and his literary work. It was as a poet that he joined first Nikolai Evreinov at *The Ancient Theatre* and then Meyerhold, after the latter opened his studio at Borodinskaya Street in 1913, which in 1914 generated a new journal, *The Love for Three Oranges (Liubov’ k trem apel’synam)*, subtitled *The Journal of Doctor Dapertutto*. The encounter with Meyerhold, eighteen years his senior, would play a key role in the further development of Radlov’s career. Despite their future mutual hostility, Radlov’s career in certain ways echoed that of his famous older colleague. In the summer of 1918, for instance, following in Meyerhold’s footsteps, Radlov became a member of the repertoire section of the Petrograd Theatre Department (TEO) of the People’s Commissariat of Education and Enlightenment (Narkompros). Artistically, with the question of the relationship between word and music in the air, and given the ‘Wagnerian frame of reference that dominated the theoretical explorations and practical work of the theatre activists in the 1910s’,²⁸² it is not surprising that the philologist Radlov should have become interested and involved in the theatrical activities of Meyerhold’s studio and its further reincarnations (from 1913-1918), including teaching and then managing the Classes for Mastership of Scenic Production (*Kursy masterstva stsenicheskikh postanovok*, or Kurmastsep). This latter was also where in 1918/1919 Biomechanics was first presented and taught as gymnastic exercises for actors; later in the 1920s, Meyerhold would develop this into a ‘system’²⁸³ at the opposite end to

²⁸¹ Ibid., 24.

²⁸² Ibid., 88.

²⁸³ For Meyerhold’s own writings on biomechanics see his *Stat’i, Pis’ma, Rechi, Besedy*, Vol. 2, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1968.

Stanislavsky's naturalistic method as practised at the Moscow Art Theatre, which insisted on emotional memory.²⁸⁴ However, Radlov appears to have had no part in this project.

This and other experimentations of the post-revolutionary years, including those by Radlov himself, represented further steps in the direction of 'theatricality' (*teatral'nost'*) and 'conventionality' (*uslovnost'*) of Russian theatre.²⁸⁵ But such attempts were not new: as early as 1902, Valerii Briusov had argued against traditional realism and the mirroring of life on the stage,²⁸⁶ and in 1908 he explicitly invoked the term *uslovnost'* as a desirable feature of the new Russian theatre.²⁸⁷ Nor were such pronouncements exclusive to Russia. Although it took a particular shape in the Russian context, the renewal of theatre along these lines was part of an international trend that had begun with the ideas of Wagner and Nietzsche in the 1860s and had continued in the writings of such theoreticians as Gordon Craig, George Fuchs and Adolph Appia. 'Theatricality' and 'conventionality', which Clark calls 'banner terms under which a massive overhaul of the theatre was undertaken', were deeply rooted in early 20th-century European movements.²⁸⁸

In any case, being born into an elite St Petersburg family with a tradition of education and high-ranked posts running through several generations, Radlov presents an example of those Clark dubs 'dynastic intellectuals',²⁸⁹ in his case scholars and academics of German descent.²⁹⁰ His father, Ernest Leopoldovich (Lvovich) (1854-1928) was a Russian idealist philosopher, director of the Imperial Public Library and a classics scholar who had a close friendship with the philosopher and poet, Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900). Among Radlov senior's publications was the monograph, *Vladimir Solovyov: Life and Teaching*.²⁹¹ He also

²⁸⁴ See, for example, Jean Benedetti, *Stanislavski and the Actor*, London, Methuen, 1998.

²⁸⁵ For a discussion of confusions created by translations of *uslovnost'* (conventionality, stylization, conditionality, etc.), see Nicholas Rzhevsky, *The Modern Russian Theater: A Literary and Cultural History*, Armonk NY, M.E. Sharpe, 2009, 9-10.

²⁸⁶ Valerii Briusov, 'Nenuzhnaya pravda po povodu Moskovskogo khudozhestvennogo teatra', *Mir Iskusstva*, 1902/4, 67-74; see also Michael Green (ed.), *Russian Symbolist Theatre: An Anthology of plays and Critical Texts*, NY, Ardis, 1986.

²⁸⁷ Valerii Briusov, 'Realizm i Uslovnost' na stsene', in M. Petushkina (ed.), *Teatr: kniga o novom teatre*, St Petersburg, Shipovnik, 1908, 243-253, repr. as 'Realism and Convention on Stage' in Senelick (ed.), *Russian Dramatic Theory*, 171-182.

²⁸⁸ Clark, *Petersburg*, 85; see also Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1989; Dassia N. Posner, 'Life Death and Disobedient Obedience', in Posner, Claudia Orenstein and John Bell (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*, New York and London, Routledge, 2014, 130-143 where the author compares Russian theories in the early 20th century with those of Gordon Craig.

²⁸⁹ Clark, *Petersburg*, 22.

²⁹⁰ The tradition of scholarship still runs in the family: Sergei Radlov's grandson, Sergei Dmitrievich, is an outstanding Shakespeare scholar in St Petersburg.

²⁹¹ See Josef Novák, *On Masaryk: Texts in English and German*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1988, 224.

translated Aristotle's *Ethics* into Russian (1908) and edited the first Russian translation of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* (1913) becoming, after the Revolution, a member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (1920). Similarly to his father, Sergei Radlov studied at the philological faculty of St Petersburg State University, where he and Adrian Piotrovsky were disciples of Tadeusz Zieliński (1859-1944), a prominent Polish classical philologist, historian, translator of Sophocles, Euripides and other classical authors into Russian.²⁹² Despite Zolotnitsky's downplaying of this background, Radlov's education could explain many aspects of his career, particularly his interest in antiquity, which resulted in his organising of several mass spectacles in the spirit of Greek antique theatre in the 1920s.

As Clark observes, the pattern of the son of a professor moving in high circles of the intelligentsia, who was himself a scholar, but who worked both for the revolutionary experimental theatre and as official cultural bureaucrat, can be detected in several prominent cultural figures of the 1910s and the 1920s, including Konstantin Derzhavin and Piotrovsky. Representing 'an Enlightenment', these people acted as 'cultural ecologists' and brought their 'baggage of the cultural elite' into the machinery of Soviet culture.²⁹³ Falling into the same pitfall as certain Western commentators in trying to keep Radlov's reputation 'pure', Zolotnitsky virtually avoids any mention of his administrative and official activities for the Soviet regime, not recognising that in so doing he is glossing over an important catalyst for Radlov's creative career, namely his commitment to a transformative, even revolutionary, approach to theatre.

During the Cold War, and even into the early post-Soviet era, it was common for Western studies to polarize the Russian intelligentsia into those who categorically rejected the Revolution and either emigrated or joined the White Russian resistance, and those who remained but tried to avoid any political commitment. However, the likes of Radlov prove that there was also a category for whom the main driving force was negotiation, and even active involvement, with the direction of the regime. Paradoxically to modern perceptions, many of these intellectuals 'demanded a cultural dictatorship' and 'urged total intolerance for cultural approaches other than their own.'²⁹⁴ Such trends are perhaps best revealed in the writings of Adrian Piotrovsky, including his short but trenchant article, 'Dictatorship' (*Diktatura*) of 1920, in which he advocated 'a policy of artistic enforcement' (*politika*

²⁹² Piotrovsky was the illegitimate son of Zieliński as well as his disciple.

²⁹³ Clark, *Petersburg*, 25.

²⁹⁴ Clark, *Petersburg*, 118-9.

khudozhestvennogo nasiliia).²⁹⁵ Ironically, Piotrovsky himself would fall victim to such ‘enforcements’, when in 1938 he was purged following attacks for his involvement in the doomed ballet, *The Limpid Stream*, in collaboration with Shostakovich.²⁹⁶ Admittedly in the early 1920s, prior to Stalinism and Fascism, ‘dictatorship’ did not hold such negative connotations as it does today.

Clark argues that the theatre activists of post-revolutionary Petrograd had a vision ‘uncannily comparable’ to Plato’s, in that ‘Evreinov, Piotrovsky and others began to talk of instituting a theatrocracy.’²⁹⁷ While Clark’s use of this term is essentially positive in connotation, it may be worth adding that Plato considered theatrocracy to be a source of societal degeneration and held a highly negative opinion of it. As Samuel Weber suggests, while democracy was ‘not the political form of choice for the Athenian (Plato’s pseudonym in his *Laws*)’, it was still preferable to ‘theatrocracy’, which was Plato’s pejorative term for a ‘sovereignty of the audience’ or absolute rule by the people. Indeed Plato reportedly stated: ‘Our once silent audiences have found a voice, in the persuasion that they understand what is good and bad in art; the old sovereignty of the best, aristocracy, has given way to an evil “sovereignty of the audience”, a theatrocracy (*theatrokratia*).’²⁹⁸

On the other hand, Evreinov’s idea of ‘theatrocracy as pantheism’ (*Teatrokratia – panteizm*), which he had advocated in pre-revolutionary years, implied something quite different.²⁹⁹ Already then he had talked about the ‘theatralisation of life’ (*Teatralizatsia zhiz’ni*).³⁰⁰ Hence, despite sharing the term, Evreinov’s theatrocracy, or at least his view of it, bears no more resemblance to that of Plato than does the modern understanding of ‘democracy’ to the ancient Greek definition of the concept. Clark’s argument, however, does contribute to her main point: that the Soviet post-revolutionary so-called avant-garde and Stalinist culture both had their origins in the past. Acting in many respects as traditionalists, the ‘avant-gardists’ were indeed arguably turning the clock back rather than forward.

²⁹⁵ Adrian Piotrovsky, ‘Diktatura’, *Zhizn’ iskusstva*, 1920/ 584-585 (17-18 October), 2.

²⁹⁶ See Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2000, 376-377; Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, 2nd edn., London, Faber, 2006, 560.

²⁹⁷ Clark, *Petersburg*, 120.

²⁹⁸ Plato, *Laws*, 700-701a, quoted in Samuel Weber, *Theatricality as Medium*, New York, Fordham University Press, 2004, 33.

²⁹⁹ Nikolai Evreinov, ‘Teatrokratiia Prigorshnia raz navsegda vsveshennikh slov’, in Evreinov, *Teatr dlia sebia*, Part 1, St Petersburg, Butkovskaia, 1915, quoted in A. Zubkov and Vadim Maksimov (eds.), *Nikolai Evreinov, Demon teatral’nosti*, Moscow, St Petersburg, Letnyi sad, 2002, 117.

³⁰⁰ For instance in his *Teatr kak takovoi*, St Petersburg, Butkovskaia, 1912.

In practice many theatre activists ended up in a paradoxical situation: on the one hand they were trying to bring the theatre back to the masses; on the other they wanted to educate as yet unenlightened audiences. Richard Stites considers the ‘collision and collusion’ between different utopian visions as one of the most distinctive features of the post-Revolutionary period.³⁰¹ Solutions that emerged in response to this situation included Mass Spectacles (or mass festivals) and People’s Theatre (*narodniy teatr*). Both of these had their roots in past forms and trends. Mass spectacles go back as far as the medieval carnivals and mystery plays and were adopted by the French Revolution and later by Tsarist Russia, while the People’s Theatre had its roots in commedia dell’arte and its revival in Russia by the symbolists of the Silver Age, including Alexander Blok in his 1906 play, *Balaganchik*.³⁰² During the early 1920s, Sergei Radlov played an active role in both forms, with the latter represented in his Theatre of Popular Comedy (*Teatr Narodnoi Komedii*) (see Table 1 in the Appendix).

Evreinov’s utopian idea of teatrocracy could only be accomplished if led by such scholar-bureaucrats as Piotrovsky, Radlov and even Anatoly Lunacharsky (the relatively tolerant People’s Commissar of Enlightenment from October 1917 to September 1929), because such figures would take responsibility for directing and determining the cultural taste of the country on behalf of the masses and in the name of the Revolution. Together with Meyerhold, such figures stood, as Clark puts it, at the centre of a host of dialogues: the Party/intellectuals, intellectuals/the masses, Western European cultural trends/ native traditions and dialogue between would-be-avant-gardists and traditionalists.³⁰³ Dual affiliation, encompassing avant-garde experiment and tradition (and ultimately socialist realism), could explain Radlov’s seemingly contradictory, or at least generically highly varied output, which ranged from Theatre of Popular Comedy to highly realist Shakespeare productions, via mass spectacles to productions for Academic theatres and opera productions.

1.6.2.2 Radlov and People’s Theatre

The evolution of the Soviet theatre scene on either side of the Bolshevik revolution is varied and complex. Lars Kleberg provides a simple yet efficient semiotic scheme for Russian theatre from the turn of the century to the early 1920s. He describes this period as ‘a quick

³⁰¹ Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1989, 3.

³⁰² For more on Commedia dell’arte in Russia and the Soviet Union, see Catriona Kelly, *Petrushka. The Russian Carnival Puppet Theatre*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, and J. Douglas Clayton, *Pierrot in Petrograd. The Commedia dell’Arte/Balagan in Twentieth-Century Russian Theatre and Drama*, Montreal, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994.

³⁰³ Clark, *Petersburg*, 26.

successive shift from the dominance of semantics (the relation sign/reality) through the dominance of syntactics (the relation sign/sign) to the dominance of pragmatics (the relation sign/recipient).³⁰⁴ These trends are represented in respectively Stanislavsky's naturalist productions at Moscow Art Theatre, Meyerhold's and Evreinov's theatricality of the 1910s and mass spectacles and People's Theatre such as Radlov's Theatre of Popular Comedy in the early 1920s. There were, of course, instances of overlapping between these trends. For instance, already in the 1910s both Meyerhold and Stanislavsky accorded great importance to the stage/audience relationship. But what made the dominance of pragmatics in the early 1920s more prominent was that it was closely related to socio-political changes and brought forth conscious practical as well as theoretical solutions. Most of these were based largely on utopian hypotheses rather than scientific knowledge, among the former being the theatrical programme of the 'People's Theatre'.

The concept of 'People's Theatre' as a meeting place for the entire population had already manifested itself in different forms in many European countries from the end of the 19th century. It had its roots in German Romanticism and particularly in the revolutionary ideas of Richard Wagner as expressed in his 1849 manifesto *Art and Revolution*.³⁰⁵ Despite its paradoxes and contradictions, which go beyond the limits of this study, Wagner's utopian programme inspired the movement for 'a theatre that would regain its moral and political authority by addressing the entire collective – the nation, the people – which was gathered, or at least represented, in the audience, as it once had been in ancient Greece.'³⁰⁶

In early post-revolutionary years, the utopian concept of People's Theatre became highly influential in Russia and manifested itself in two distinct directions of mass festivals, pageants and professional revolutionary theatre, including those employing circus in the spirit of fairground booth (*balagan*). This duality could be explained by the multiple meanings of *narodnyi teatr*. Gary Thurston argues that although in the 1890s the term implied both literary theatre to educate the public and folk theatre (*balagan*), by the early twentieth century the lines between them had begun to blur.³⁰⁷ However, the dual implications of the concept of

³⁰⁴ Lars Kleberg, 'The Nature of the Soviet Audience: Theatrical Ideology and Audience Research in the 1920s', in Robert Russell and Andrew Barratt (eds.), *Russian Theatre in the Age of Modernism*, London, Macmillan, 1990, 172.

³⁰⁵ Richard Wagner, 'Art and Revolution', in William Ashton Ellis (ed.), *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, New York, Broude, 1966 (orig. pub. 1893), Vol. 1, 21-65.

³⁰⁶ Kleberg, 'The Nature of Soviet Audience', 173. For a study of Wagner reception in Russia see Rosamund Bartlett, *Wagner and Russia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

³⁰⁷ Gary Thurston, *The Popular Theatre Movement in Russia, 1862-1919*, Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press, 1998, 11.

People's Theatre in post-revolutionary Russia seem to have been in line with ideas of another important Western advocate of the movement, Romain Rolland. In his 1903 book *Théâtre du peuple*, Rolland promoted both the artistic People's Theatre in a so-called Wagnerian spirit and the mass fêtes as had been held up by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and practised during and after the French Revolution. Rolland's book proved highly influential in Russia; it appeared in translation first in 1910 and again in a new edition in connection with the new so-called 'theatre epidemic'³⁰⁸ during the years of the Civil War. Later Rolland would win dubious renown for his sympathies with the Soviet Union and Stalin himself (at least during the latter's early years in power).

In any case, the concept of *narodnyi teatr* provided a common ground for all those 'who agitated for cultural change, Party, government, and intellectual'.³⁰⁹ The ambiguity of the term *narodnyi* – which may be translated as 'mass', 'people', 'folk' or even 'state' – meant that it could lend itself to different interpretations by various active groups. As Clark observes, 'in those heady and confused years of War Communism, all manner of interpretations of the term were de facto accepted'.³¹⁰ Thus Radlov's diverse theatre activities of these years (1920-1922) could all be embraced under the umbrella term of *narodnyi teatr*, whether it was open-air mass spectacles or productions at his 'Theatre of Popular Comedy', where he used circus acrobats alongside actors or directed mass spectacles in the Petrograd/Leningrad city streets.

1.6.2.3 Radlov and the Mass Spectacles of 1920

Apart from his famous collaboration with Prokofiev on the *Romeo and Juliet* ballet, Radlov's name features in almost all studies of the post-Revolutionary mass spectacles. And although it is hard to detect their traces in his Shakespearean activities, the mass spectacles (*massovye deistva*) were an important component of the director's theatrical aesthetics and technique. These festivities of War Communism, also called mass festivals (*massovye prazdniki*) since they mainly coincided with Bolshevik public holidays, represented 'the culmination of the movement for a truly mass theatre'.³¹¹ As Robert Leach puts it, they were the apotheosis of the kind of drama created during the Civil War with unpredictable combinations of mystery and buffoonery.³¹² By providing a meeting place for the iconoclastic and the monumental,

³⁰⁸ The term used by Robert Leach in his *Revolutionary Theatre*, London and New York, Routledge, 1994, 36.

³⁰⁹ Clark, *Petersburg*, 108.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid., 123.

³¹² Leach, *Revolutionary Theatre*, 42.

they offered a channel of communication between seemingly opposed cultural activists, as well as presenting crucial references for the historical myth of the Revolution.³¹³ Despite Lenin's favouring of cinema as the best instrument of propaganda, the shortage of film and projectors in the years of War Communism meant that theatre offered a cheaper option. This was all in accordance with those Revolutionary agendas for 'transforming man via theatre', and bringing art back to the people, which resulted in theatre becoming 'the cradle of Soviet culture'.³¹⁴

There have been several studies regarding the true nature, origins and impact of this short-lived but extraordinary phenomenon. Theories are almost as numerous as the performers participating at these spectacles, but they are not directly relevant to the present study.³¹⁵ However, it is worth emphasising that the urban mass spectacles - huge performances outdoors with thousands of spectator-participants, which grew out of grassroots experimentation in Red Army and Proletkult theatre workshops in 1919³¹⁶ and which reached their culmination in 1920 in Petrograd - belonged to a transitional phase in the history of the country. The contradictory reports regarding these events in the context of the ongoing Civil War and nationwide shortages could be explained by the liminal nature of these early revolutionary years.

There is no doubt that the Bolsheviks invested heavily in these festivals 'for the purpose of indoctrinating the population with new ideas and legitimizing the October Revolution.'³¹⁷ But many commentators, including Rudnitsky, have taken the intention as the result and claimed that 'Mass festivals or mass pageants represent the most striking form of propagandist theatre'.³¹⁸ However, as von Geldern argues, such an assumption presupposes 'a systematic consistency' and 'the existence of a single monolithic ideology', which were certainly not present during the confusing years of the Civil War. Von Geldern also observes that dramatization of the Revolution was 'represented by a shift from ritualism' and 'inspired a new mythology of Revolution that was enacted in the mass spectacles'. Drawing a comparison with Shakespeare and Schiller, who turned to the past not to report precisely but

³¹³ James von Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917-1920*, Berkeley and London, University of California Press, 1993, 160.

³¹⁴ Clark, *Petersburg*, 104.

³¹⁵ For further information, see, for example, Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, esp. 93-100; for description and illustrations of many of these spectacles, see Irina Bibikova and N. Levchenko (eds.), *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo: Oformlenie prazdnetstv*, 2 Vols., Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1984.

³¹⁶ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 94.

³¹⁷ Von Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals*, 11.

³¹⁸ Rudnitsky, *Russian Theatre*, 44.

to draw a message from it for the present, von Geldern proposes that the Revolutionary spectacles adopted a similar design in order to ‘define who were the ancestors of the Bolshevik Revolution’.³¹⁹ Clark too agrees that ‘The mass spectacle was an exercise in creating a new identity for the nation by reference to past models.’³²⁰

One of Lunacharsky’s articles, published in 1920, offers some nuance to von Geldern’s arguments. Here he first praises the ‘popular festivals’ as a natural component of ‘any genuine democracy’ and, referring to the French Revolution as a model, states that ‘in order for the masses to make themselves felt, they must outwardly manifest themselves, and this is possible only when, to use Robespierre’s phrase, they are their own spectacle’. But he goes on to counsel against these festivities turning into ‘spontaneous, independent manifestation of the will of the masses. ... This celebration should be organized just as anything else in the world that has a tendency to produce a profound aesthetic impression.’³²¹

The task of organising and directing these festivals fell mainly to artists whose names are paradoxically associated with the avant-garde. These were, among others, Nikolai Evreinov, Iurii Annenkov,³²² Natan Al’tman, Konstantin Mardzhanov (Kote Mardzhanishvili), Piotrovsky and Radlov. The mass spectacles of 1920 took place between 1 May and 8 November, and became increasingly grandiose and large-scale, ending with the famous *Storming of the Winter Palace*, staged by Evreinov for the anniversary of the Revolution.³²³ Years later, reflecting on his participation in two of these spectacles (*The Blockade of Russia* and *Towards a World Commune*), Radlov characterised them as ‘grandiose one-day monuments (*pamiatniki*)’ whose ‘chain of impression stays for a long time’.³²⁴

Based on the academic backgrounds of Radlov and Piotrovsky, Clark suggests that ‘these zealots of Greek revival were the most active of all in the agitational theatre, writing and directing both mass dramas and spectacles, training red Army and Navy recruits to act and direct, writing about spectacles, and serving on various bodies set up to oversee mass

³¹⁹ Von Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals*, 12.

³²⁰ Clark, *Petersburg*, 134.

³²¹ Anatoly Lunacharsky, ‘O narodnykh prazdnestvakh’, *Vestnik teatra*, 1920/62, 13, quoted in Vladimir Tolstoy, Irina Bibikova and Catherine Cooke (eds.), *Street Art of the Revolution: Festivals and Celebrations in Russia 1918-33*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1990, 124.

³²² Iurii Annenkov (1889-1974), Russian artist, illustrator, portraitist and a member of Mir Iskusstva. He also worked for the theatre (including collaborations with Evreinov) and cinema.

³²³ Details of these spectacles, especially *Storming of the Winter Palace*, may be found in, for example, František Deák, ‘Russian Mass Spectacles’, *The Drama Review*, 19/2 (1975), 7-22; Vladimir Tolstoy et al., *Street Art of the Revolution*; and Leach, *Revolutionary Theatre*, 22-58.

³²⁴ Radlov, ‘Oktiabrskaiia instsenirovka na Neve’, in Radlov, *Desiat’ let v teatre*, Leningrad, Priboi, 1929, 239.

propaganda.³²⁵ Clark argues that both directors ‘actually believed they were getting closer to the spirit of their beloved Hellenic Greece with their work on the mass spectacles than they would with any translation of actual Greek texts.’³²⁶ Radlov’s own writings, present an even more complicated picture. Admittedly, the convoluted nature of his prose, as well as many instances of self-contradiction, make any assumption difficult to back up using the director’s own words. Yet his article on mass spectacles, written after the decline of the genre, suggests that he was aware of the danger of ‘naive realism’ and of the impracticalities of presenting these spectacles as a revival with reference to antique Greek theatre.³²⁷

Von Geldern, on the other hand, regards Radlov’s work on mass spectacles as a variation on his on-going project of Theatre of Popular Comedy and asserts he applied the same compositional rules to both genres.³²⁸ According to Radlov himself, the audience for a mass spectacle could benefit from it by watching from a seat; the merging of stage and audience was not at all necessary and would ruin the aesthetic entity.³²⁹ Von Geldern presents an analysis of Radlov’s *The Blockade of Russia*, a show designed by Valentina Khodasevich and Ivan Fomin, which took place on ‘Rock Island’ (*Kamennyi Ostrov*)³³⁰ on 20 June, where the director took advantage of the setting to create an outdoor theatre: ‘the orchestra pit was filled in with water, creating a proscenium that no spectator would think of crossing.’ Noting Radlov’s improvements on the previous mass spectacle, *The Mystery of Liberated Labour*, organised by his rival, Iurii Annenkov, von Geldern points out Radlov’s innovations in terms of management of time and space and his use of characters in the same way as the masks of commedia dell’arte, in order to flatten the psychology and contribute to the intended propaganda.³³¹

1.6.2.4 Radlov’s Theatre of Popular Comedy

The rivalry of Radlov and Iurii Annenkov was only a little less significant than that of Radlov and Meyerhold.³³² It may have stemmed from 1919, when the artist and illustrator staged

³²⁵ Clark, *Petersburg*, 136.

³²⁶ Clark, *Petersburg*, 137.

³²⁷ Radlov, ‘Massovye postanovki’, in Radlov, *Stat’i o teatre: 1918-1922*, Petrograd, Mysl’, 1923, 41-5.

³²⁸ Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals*, 168.

³²⁹ Radlov, ‘Massovye postanovki’, 39-44.

³³⁰ Geldern refers to Rock Island as Vacation Island (*Ostrov Otdykha*) because Radlov’s mass spectacle was to mark the opening of vacation houses on the island, whose name was changed to Ostrov Trudiashchikh from 1920-1989 – see Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals*, 168.

³³¹ Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals*, 172-4.

³³² Zolotnitsky describes several instances of Meyerhold attacking Radlov – see, for example, Meyerhold’s reaction to a production at Radlov’s Experimental Theatre in 1923 and his accusing the young director of plagiarism - Zolotnitsky, *Radlov*, 32.

Tolstoy's *The First Distiller* at Hermitage theatre, using circus performers alongside theatre actors for the first time. Radlov soon adopted the same formula for his Theatre of Popular Comedy, and the success of this theatre meant that many have regarded him as the pioneer of 'circusisation' of theatre.³³³ The influence of Annenkov on Radlov was certainly not unknown to critics of the time such as Viktor Shklovsky, who wrote that 'Radlov had stemmed directly from Iurii Annenkov, passing through Meyerhold's pantomime.'³³⁴ By contrast, passing over Annenkov's influence, Rudnitsky suggests that Radlov soon escaped from Meyerhold's shadow by experimenting in the spirit of detective thrillers with chases.³³⁵

It is not just in connection with Annenkov's influence that Rudnitsky displays lack of precision; his book (or at least the translation of it, which is in effect the major reference tool in this area for the English-speaking world) leads to other misleading conclusions. He argues, for example, that Radlov's Theatre of Popular Comedy was in fact an outcome of the director's theories regarding the importance of the 'actor's verbal improvisation', which would 'transform each performer into an independent creator'. And he quotes Radlov confirming that: 'Here and only here can the living life of the future national theatre take refuge... [L]eaving behind the reconstruction of the style of various past epochs, the irritating pettiness of realism in the portrayal of the present, we shall aspire to sense, to feel and to forge the style of our epoch.'³³⁶ The reference for this quote reads simply: Radlov, *Vremennik TEO Narkomprosa*, vyp. 1, 1918, 30. However, the document from which this phrase is taken belonged to an unsigned creative manifesto of TEO, and Zolotnitsky simply assumes that it was written by Radlov.³³⁷ That assumption could only be valid if the phrase is translated and understood as intended. However, the English translation of 'Ukhodya ot', which reads here as 'leaving behind', should be 'departing from' in the sense of 'based on'. This way the phrase would contribute to the more Radlovian concept that 'the universal repertoire of antique theatre presents an enriching material'.³³⁸ Moreover, Zolotnitsky clarifies that 'by realism here one understands life imitating the quotidian (*bytovizm*), pavilions and wings and in general all theatrical routines...the image of theatre-stadium, theatre of masses was taking

³³³ Rudnitsky, *Russian Theatre*, 57-8.

³³⁴ Viktor Shklovskii, 'Narodnaia komediia i "Pervyi vinokur"', *Khod konia*, Moscow and Berlin, Gelikon, 1923, quoted in Rene Gerra (René Guerra) (ed.), *Iurii Annenkov: Dnevnik moikh vstrech, tsikl tragedii*, Vol. 2, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1991, 39.

³³⁵ Rudnitsky, *Russian Theatre*, 58.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.

³³⁷ The correct reference is 'Teatr eksperimental'nikh postanovok', *Vremennik Teo Narkomprosa*, 1 (November, 1918), 30 - quoted and commented on in Zolotnitskii, *Zory teatral'nogo Oktiabria*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1976, 241.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

over the imagination of the director.’ And this in one way or another suggests that ‘Radlov had accepted the revolutionary reality and was trying to find a way of transferring it to stage.’³³⁹ Evidently the picture is more complex than that reflected in Rudnitsky’s much referenced book.

The repertoire of Radlov’s Theatre of Popular Comedy provides another subject for conflicting readings. Rudnitsky argues that Radlov ‘steered towards a type of comedy where the actor would be entirely free, that is towards clowning comedy’, and that it was only in response to the critics complaining that his ‘circus-theatre was more circus than theatre’ that he started incorporating plays from the classics, including Shakespeare, Molière and Gogol, into the repertoire of his theatre.³⁴⁰ This reading is reasonable and valid, especially given that even Piotrovsky had expressed his concerns about the theatre’s ‘lack of content and connection to the internal affairs of the country’ and with performers being carried away from satire to farce.³⁴¹ However, it could also be argued that the range of the repertoire of Radlov’s Popular Theatre was an outcome of the theatre crisis, which itself emerged from confusion regarding appropriate repertoire for the revolutionary theatre. As Clark observes, one solution that ‘merged with pre-Revolutionary initiatives’ was to stage great classics of the world drama. On the opposing side the solution was to create an entirely new repertoire.³⁴² Radlov’s Popular Comedy, with its combination of classics and improvisation, would present a safe option for these liminal times. The performances took place at the ‘Iron Hall’ of the People’s House, a large club in Petrograd where the bare outlines and grey colours of the stage would contrast with the actors’ loud, bright costumes.³⁴³ The actor/circus-performer was always at the centre, ‘tirelessly demonstrating jumps, tumbling, somersaults, juggling with fire, conjuring tricks, verbal wittiness, musical clowning and other wonders banned from the serious theatre.’³⁴⁴

However, with circus performers starting to leave Radlov’s Popular Comedy Theatre, its decline was imminent. In 1922 Lunacharsky announced that ‘the theatre of buffoonery directed by Radlov, which started out so well, seems to be folding its multi-coloured

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Rudnitsky, *Russian Theatre*, 57-58.

³⁴¹ Piotrovski in *Zhizn’ iskusstva*, 19-20 June 1920, quoted in Rudnitsky, *Russian Theatre*, 59.

³⁴² Clark, *Petersburg*, 109-111.

³⁴³ For a description of some of the productions see Mel Gordon, ‘Radlov’s Theatre of Popular Comedy’, *The Drama Review*, 1975/19, 113-116.

³⁴⁴ Radlov, *Desyat’ let v teatre*, Leningad, 1929, 179.

wings.³⁴⁵ The idea of the ‘circusisation’ of theatre, however, was taken over in Moscow at the hands of Meyerhold and Eisenstein, and in Petrograd by FEKS (The Factory of the Eccentric Actor) founded by Leonid Trauberg and Grigori Kozintsev. The evolution of the creative life of the co-founder of FEKS, Grigori Kozintsev, had much in common with that of Radlov; in that they both abandoned experimental theatre and found their *métier* in Shakespeare scholarship and stage/cinema adaptations (see Chapter 5.2).

1.6.3 Meyerhold’s *Hamlet*: The story of a non-production

Whether in the form of influence or reaction, Meyerhold, despite his professed negative attitude towards both directors, provides the link that connects Akimov and Radlov.

For Meyerhold himself, the dream of staging *Hamlet* was a leitmotif of his entire career. From his first encounter with the Danish prince, as played by the touring actor Nikolai Rossov in 1891 in Penza, that dream repeatedly took shape, never to be realised.³⁴⁶ Alexander Gladkov quotes Meyerhold as saying: ‘Write on my gravestone: here lies an actor and director who never acted and never directed Hamlet.’³⁴⁷

At the same time, the shifts in attitude throughout Meyerhold’s numerous references to the play reveal the evolving nature of his approach to *Hamlet*, and to theatre in general, as well as reflecting changes in the politico-cultural climate of the time and the artists’ obligations to manoeuvre accordingly.

In 1914-15, in his St Petersburg theatre studio for his class of ‘Stage movement’, Meyerhold turned to *Hamlet* as a teaching tool, producing two scenes from the play - the Mousetrap and Ophelia’s mad scene. In a pedagogical and at the same time experimental project, in line with his insistence on the centrality of the actor and the importance of the physicality and musicality of acting, these scenes were played with no words at all but as mime (*pantomima*).³⁴⁸ As a general principle expressed at this same time, Meyerhold believed that:

If the most essential elements of theatricality are well incorporated, any dramatic work could be shown in a full schematic way. Furthermore, even the words that

³⁴⁵ Lunacharsky, *Sobranie sochinenie*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1963-67, Vol. 3, 127, quoted in Rudnitsky, *Russian Theatre*, 59.

³⁴⁶ Nikolai Volkov, *Meierkhol’d*, Moscow and Leningrad, Akademiia, 1929, 26.

³⁴⁷ Aleksandr Gladkov, ‘Master rabotaet’, in Mariia Valentei and L. Vendrovskaia (eds.), *Vstrechi s Meierkhol’dom: Sbornik vospominanii*, Moscow, VTO, 1967, 500-502; Gladkov, ‘Iz vospominanyi o Meierkhol’de’, in Tat’iana Lukina *et. al.* (eds.), *Moskva teatral’naia*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1960, 365-366.

³⁴⁸ For Meyerhold’s notes on the project see Edward Braun, *Meyerhold on Theatre*, 151-153, originally in *Liubov’ k trem apel’synam*, 1915/4-7, 208-11.

decked the skeleton of the script may be temporarily put aside. Yet such schematic and miming theatrical performance can move the audience only because the scenarios of such dramatic works are based on the traditional foundations of theatre as such.³⁴⁹

In his announcement for the second year of his studio, Meyerhold decided to combine ‘exercises from the technique of stage movement’ with ‘excerpts from plays with words: Scene “The madness of Ophelia”’. He insisted that the actress of Ophelia’s part should ‘aim at the naïve simplicity of *balagan*’ and ‘that success can only be achieved by overcoming any tendency to ballet à la Isadora Duncan’. As musical accompaniment for the exercises, he suggested to ‘temporarily use the accompaniment of bamboo sticks tapping on a board’.³⁵⁰

In their pantomime form, the two scenes from *Hamlet* were included in the first public evening of the Meyerhold Studio on 12 February 1915.³⁵¹ Accounts of the evening describe how:

the players jumped constantly from stage to forestage and back, performed clown's tricks or did resounding falls, crawled, climbed under the platform or even feigned to pull out each other's teeth. All this either at unusually high speed or with the slow stateliness of a funeral march (Hamlet, the madness of Ophelia) to the accompaniment on the piano of classical music by Mozart and Rameau or the improvisation of the pianist A.F. Malevinskij.³⁵²

It could be argued that in the early 1920s Sergei Radlov, himself at that time an advocate of circusisation of theatre, was in fact referring to this project of Meyerhold when he wrote: ‘Here’s a question: “what is closer to Shakespeare – scenarios for a mime (*sstenarii pantomimy*) or some sort of a play for reading?” I believe mime, because here the author is dealing with the same material as Shakespeare: the *human being (chelovek)* as actor.’³⁵³

During this time, Meyerhold announced that his studio had set itself the task of staging *Hamlet* ‘without any cuts, either of complete scenes or of individual lines.’ These plans came

³⁴⁹ Meierkhol’d, ‘Studiia’, *Liubov’ k trem apel’synam*, 1914/6-7, 110.

³⁵⁰ Meierkhol’d, ‘Klass Vs. Meierkhol’da’, *Liubov’ k trem apel’synam*, 1915/4-7, 208, quoted in Marjorie Hoover, ‘A Mejerxol’d Method? Love for Three Oranges (1914-1916)’, *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 13/1 (Spring 1969), 23-41, here 30.

³⁵¹ For details of the programme of the evening see Braun, *Meyerhold on Theatre*, 149-151.

³⁵² Anon., *Liubov’ k trem apel’synam*, 1915/1-3, 148-9, as quoted in Marjorie Hoover, ‘A Mejerxol’d Method?’, 33.

³⁵³ Radlov, ‘Slov tvorets ili kormchii chelovekov’, in his *Stat’i o teatre: 1918–1922*, Petrograd, Mysl’, 1923, 32.

to an end with the February Revolution and the closure of his studio in spring 1917.³⁵⁴ However, in 1920 he became the head of a new theatre, which he simply called RSFSR 1; even before the opening of this venture he announced his plans for producing Shakespeare's tragedy, and in his inaugural speech to the company, Meyerhold announced that 'we shall need scenarios and we shall often utilise even the classics as a basis for our theatrical compositions. We shall tackle the task of adaptation without fear, fully confident of its necessity.'³⁵⁵ Once again, however, his plans for *Hamlet* came to naught.

Elsewhere Meyerhold responded to accusations of 'mutilating the classics' by explaining that 'from each work we extract the scenario, sometimes retaining isolated moments of it. But isn't this just how those dramatists worked who since their deaths have become so revered? Wasn't this the method of Sophocles, Shakespeare, Schiller, Tirso de Molina, Pushkin? ... Or were they imbued with holy reverence for dead canons?'³⁵⁶

It was only in 1926 that Meyerhold presented the most coherent realisation of all his concepts when tackling one of the most canonical texts of Russian literature, Gogol's *Inspector General*. This time he took his treatment of dramatic text much further by altering Gogol's original and even adding to it, and thus creating an extended version that included added characters, pantomimes and *tableaux vivants*.³⁵⁷ As in Akimov's *Hamlet*, music played a crucial part in the structure of *Inspector General*. However, here the score was a combination of old and new, including arrangements of 19th-century Russian composers as well as original music composed by Mikhail Gnesin. And unlike Akimov, Meyerhold wrote and spoke extensively about the role of music and 'the musical structure' of the *mise-en-scène*, in which 'the actual music was one element in an overall rhythmical harmony designed to reveal the "subtext" of the drama.'³⁵⁸ The influence of Swiss architect and designer Adolphe Appia and German theatre manager Georg Fuchs can be seen in his use of musical terms to illustrate his 'orchestration' of Gogol's text.³⁵⁹ Thus, through his methodology 'the play-text was taken from the realm of the dramatic into the realm of the theatrical.'³⁶⁰

³⁵⁴ Braun, *Meyerhold on Theatre*, 118.

³⁵⁵ Braun, *Meyerhold on Theatre*, 169-70, originally in *Vestnik teatra*, 1920/72-73, 19-20.

³⁵⁶ Braun, *Meyerhold on Theatre*, 8-10.

³⁵⁷ For a bibliography of some of the literature on Meyerhold's *Inspector General* see Sergei Danilov, *Revizor na stsene*, Leningrad, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1954.

³⁵⁸ Braun, *Meyerhold on Theatre*, 217.

³⁵⁹ For an example of such 'orchestration' see Braun, *Meyerhold on Theatre*, 217-8.

³⁶⁰ Silvija Jestrovic, 'Theatricality as Estrangement of Art and Life in the Russian Avant-garde', *SubStance*, 31/2-3, 2002, 42-56.

Meyerhold's intention of restoring Gogol's farcical elements by amending the text points to Akimov's ultimate goal, which was to free *Hamlet* from the 'Hamletism' that had been thrust upon it (see Chapter 2.3). But the similarities between the two productions are also detectable in more immediate features of their mises-en-scène. Meyerhold's treatment of the Mayor's dialogue in the last act with the merchants, for example which is delivered by the Mayor alone in the form of an address to imaginary tradesmen and the sacks, fish and hams piled up on the table and sofa, chimes with the Ghost scene in Akimov's *Hamlet*, which becomes a monologue by virtue of Hamlet speaking both parts - of the Ghost and himself.

Despite Meyerhold's reinterpretation of Gogol's text, the poet Andrey Bely was so enthusiastic about *The Inspector General* that he wrote in a letter to Meyerhold:

The Inspector General is being seen for the first time; and it might be worth troubling the grave of the late Gogol so that the deceased might rise from the grave and support you by his presence at the performance, because he would support you against the backbiting that for a whole week spewed from mouths in the newspaper columns. ... All your attempts to move *The Inspector General* far in the direction of a screamingly funny revue are only a manifestation of Gogol himself.³⁶¹

In 1927, in his lecture 'About Theatre' at the hall of Leningrad region unions board council for workers of clubs and theatres [*Leningradskogo gubernskogo soveta professional'nikh soiuzov pered rabotnikami klubov i teatrov*], Meyerhold once again spoke of his intentions of staging *Hamlet*, but in a manner that 'each of Hamlet's verbal ripostes (*replica*) should make the audience laugh.'³⁶²

Later the same year, during his speech at the Great Hall of the Leningrad Philharmonia, Meyerhold illustrated his approach to the Classics of theatre repertoire by describing a scene in his 'future' *Hamlet*:

For example, I read *Hamlet* in such a way that in my imagination, two people walk on the stage. And when staging this *Hamlet*, I thought of casting directly two actors for the role of Hamlet. Thus, one Hamlet will be playing one part of the role, and the other actor the other part. Hence we will have such a scene: one Hamlet starts citing 'to be or not to be', and the other Hamlet interrupts him and says: 'But this is my

³⁶¹ Andrey Bely to Meyerhold, 25 December 1926, Moscow – see Meierkhol'd, *Perepiska*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1976, 256-8

³⁶² B. Mazing, 'Meierkhol'd na tribune. (Doklad v zale soiuzov)', *Krasnaia gazeta*, 20 September 1927.

monologue', and burning in anger the other says: 'Well, I'll just sit and eat an orange while you continue.'³⁶³

Here, too, the parallel with Akimov's 1932 staging is striking (see Chapter 2).

Fragments of *Hamlet* featured in Meyerhold's 1931 production of Yuri Olesha's *A List of Assets* (premiered on 4 June), in the former's own theatre and with his wife, Zinaida Raikh, as the heroine of the play Lelia Goncharova, an aspiring actress of role of *Hamlet*, who is torn between 'the past and the future, between Russia and Europe, between feelings and intellect.'³⁶⁴ Olesha's play was, as Rudnitsky observes, 'a new variation on his usual theme' of the incompatibility of 'emotional richness of an individual with a decisive reconstruction of the world.'³⁶⁵ The centrality of *Hamlet* and the topic of touring abroad to the plot of the play have led many, including Rudnitsky and Nikolai Chushkin, to conclude that Olesha's play was in fact inspired by the figure of Mikhail Chekhov, who had left the Soviet Union in 1928 while touring his *Hamlet* to Berlin.³⁶⁶ Gladkov suggests that it was the plot of Olesha's play that later raised rumours regarding Meyerhold's plan for staging *Hamlet* with his wife as the Danish prince.³⁶⁷ In his overview of women as Hamlet, Tony Howard suggests that directors such as Meyerhold would cast actresses as Hamlet to present 'allegorical enchained heroes, half saint-half beast'.³⁶⁸ Based on secondary sources in English, such as Rudnitsky and even Solomon Volkov's discredited *Testimony*, and drawing parallels between Zinaida Raikh's reputation in Moscow as a sexually emancipated woman and her tragic fate due to Stalinist repressions and Goncharova's story, Howard provides an interpretation of *The List of Assets* and Raikh's performance as a semi-autobiographical act.³⁶⁹

Even during the Stalinist purges, Meyerhold's *Hamlet* plans only increased in ambition. In 1936, upon his return from Paris, Meyerhold told his friends that he had spoken to Picasso regarding stage designs for a production of *Hamlet* that also would feature Shostakovich as composer. He had also spoken of his plans for creating a Theatre where the repertoire consisted of *Hamlet* only.³⁷⁰ As Gladkov remembers, when in 1938 Meyerhold was left

³⁶³ Stenographic report, TsGALI, f. 998, op. 1, ed. 646.

³⁶⁴ Rudnitsky, *Meyerhold the Director*, Ann Arbor, Ardis, 1981, 491.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Rudnitsky, *Meyerhold the Director*, 490-491.

³⁶⁷ Aleksandr Gladkov, *Pyat' let s Meierkhol'dom*, Moscow, Soiuz teatral'nikh deiatelei RSFSR, 1990, 157.

³⁶⁸ Tony Howard, *Women as Hamlet: Performance and Interpretation in Theatre, Film and Fiction*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 114.

³⁶⁹ Howard, *Women as Hamlet*, 160-179.

³⁷⁰ Gladkov, *Piat' let s Meierkhol'dom*, 191.

without his Theatre, his thoughts turned to writing a book about the tragedy and his unrealised plans and ideas. *Hamlet: The Novel of a Director* was to be Meyerhold's legacy, so that 'sometime, someone on some nth anniversary of mine would produce the play according to this plan.'³⁷¹ Gladkov here also recalls how Meyerhold shared his idea for the scene of Hamlet's encounter with the Ghost. Although Meyerhold might have indeed retold Gladkov this vision, he had already described this particular *mise-en-scène* four years before the meeting of which Gladkov writes. During a talk at the 'Masters of the Arts Club' in Moscow, while comparing Pushkin's and Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades*, Meyerhold referred to his treatment of the ghost in staging *Hamlet* and Calderon's *Constant Prince*, to explore how 'theatrical horror' could be achieved through 'a combination of the elements of fantasy and reality.'³⁷² The essence of Meyerhold's highly cinematographic interpretation of Hamlet and the Ghost's reunion lay in the duality that Meyerhold had always associated with the tragedy. In this scene, it was explored through the colour of the characters' cloaks and the physical externalisation of their emotions as they embraced: 'we see the father in silver and Hamlet in black, then the father in black and Hamlet in silver.' Meyerhold wanted to blur the boundaries of the real and the supernatural by showing that 'the ghost of Hamlet's father is capable of shivering and of displaying affection, of breathing heavily from exhaustion and of embracing tenderly.' Meyerhold's ghost was one 'on whose cheek a tear of gratitude freezes.'³⁷³

These lines and other rehearsal notes during Meyerhold's work on his other unrealised project, *Boris Godunov*, reveal not only the director's change of priority regarding the Classics ('to stage classics without alteration') and references to his years of work with Stanislavsky, but also, as Rudnitsky observes, point towards Meyerhold's maturity and discovery of 'connections between the theatre of Pushkin and that of Shakespeare.'³⁷⁴ Even in his 1936 speech on Chaplin and Chaplinism, Meyerhold argued that 'whenever Pushkin's remarks on the drama are quoted, one should back them against [sic: presumably meaning 'view them against the background of'] the devices employed in Shakespearean tragedy.'³⁷⁵ Given the context of these speeches at the height of the Stalinist purges, it is difficult to avoid

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Braun, *Meyerhold on Theatre*, 279.

³⁷³ Ibid., 280.

³⁷⁴ Rudnitsky, *Meyerhold the Director*, 536.

³⁷⁵ From a lecture delivered on 13 June 1936 and published in *Iskusstvo kino*, 1962/6, 113-22, as quoted in Braun, *Meyerhold on Theatre*, 317.

interpreting Meyerhold's shifting views as a result of an ongoing artistic and aesthetic negotiation between the director and his increasingly oppressive situation.

At any rate, from his mime experiments to his cinematographic ideas, Meyerhold seems to have been seeking what every other director has sought: the key to the interpretation of *Hamlet*. For Radlov this key was 'realistic reading' (see Chapter 3); for Akimov it was in redressing the balance between the comical and the tragic, between intrigue and philosophy. Each of these approaches, however, was shaped not only by the artist's convictions but also by the constraints of official ideology and its practical ramifications at the time. What artists might have produced in a society free of such constraints will of course never be known. But traditions, the individual background of each creative artist and the changing popular and official taste, as well as practical matters, all have to be taken into consideration when studying any specific appropriation of Shakespeare's tragedy. Only then can individual directors' initiatives be properly understood; and only then can a full understanding emerge of how their particular *Hamlets* held mirrors up to their society irrespective of whether they were intended to.

Chapter 2

Conception and Realisation, or How Akimov and Shostakovich's 'Shakesperiment' Blew Up

The goal of my *mise-en-scène* was to read and show *Hamlet* anew, ridding it from all that has been added to it through the three hundred and more years that separate us from the time of its writing.³⁷⁶

2.1 Introduction

The 1911 production of *Hamlet* at the Moscow Art Theatre, which featured the collaboration of two giants of European theatre, Konstantin Stanislavsky and Gordon Craig, has received much scholarly attention. But it could be argued that Akimov's 1932 *Hamlet* at Moscow's Vakhtangov Theatre qualifies as equally if not more significant, by virtue of its highly unorthodox interpretation, its contested reception and afterlife, and its fraught politico-cultural context. In 1982 Laurence Senelick published what he called a 'reconstruction' of the 1911 *Hamlet*, based on archival materials; yet Ilya Sats's music for that production was barely touched on (see Chapter 1.4). For Akimov's production, quite apart from Shostakovich's vivid score, there is a wealth of virtually unknown material in various archives, which would suggest that a reconstruction of Akimov's *Hamlet* – perhaps even a potentially stageable one – would be a feasible and worthwhile task, in order to complement such studies as Senelick's and to create a fuller picture of the complexity of Shakespeare's reception in Russia before and after the October Revolution. This chapter accordingly opens with a brief account of Akimov's *Hamlet* and its context ('An Anatomy of a Scandal') before moving to detailed study of each of the major issues raised by the production, including the debates before and after the premiere, page versus stage, and Shostakovich's music. The second half of the chapter presents a detailed scene-by-scene analysis of the production.

The period between Stalin's consolidation of power in 1928 and the first mention of Socialist Realism in 1932 is now frequently referred to as the Soviet Union's Cultural Revolution.³⁷⁷ During this time proletarian groups were vocal in their critical attitudes, and yet many theatre

³⁷⁶ Nikolai Akimov, 'O postanovke "Gamleta" v Teatre im. Vakhtangova', in Sergei Tsimbal (ed.), *Teatral'noe nasledie*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1978, Vol. 2, 119.

³⁷⁷ See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1978.

productions continued in the avant-garde spirit of the 1920s.³⁷⁸ With hindsight it is clear that a new era was ushered in by the Central Committee 23 April 1932 Resolution ‘On the Restructuring of Literary and Artistic Organisations’, which dethroned RAPP (the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers) and instituted artistic unions. No significant production of *Hamlet* took place in the preceding transitional period.³⁷⁹ But in 1931 a new production was mooted that would turn into a controversial event in theatre history of the country, caught as it was on the cusp between one social-aesthetic paradigm and another.

Akimov’s *Hamlet* has justly been described as one of the most notorious milestones in the history of Shakespeare theatre productions. It was not just Akimov’s controversial scenic solutions but also Shostakovich’s extrovert music that contributed to this production being designated as a ‘Shakesperiment’, with the music eventually garnering more praise than the production itself, and enjoying a notably more successful afterlife.³⁸⁰ The premiere, which took place on 19 May, marked the beginning of Akimov’s theatre directing career – he had previously worked as a stage designer and artist – and at the same time the end of his collaboration with the Muscovite theatre.³⁸¹

2.2 Anatomy of a scandal

Following the more Meyerholdian side of Vakhtangov, Akimov decided to distance himself as much as possible from the most notable recent production of *Hamlet* featuring Mikhail Chekhov, which had premiered at MKhAT II (Second Moscow Academic Art Theatre) in 1924 (see Chapter 1.5). In Akimov’s conception, Hamlet was no philosopher. Played by Anatolii Goriunov, an actor mostly known as a comedian, he was a chubby, short, witty bon-vivant, a young man fighting for his right to be the King of Denmark. Thus the plot was emptied of its usual enigmas and instead focused on one main intrigue: the struggle for the Danish throne. Horatio’s role was considerably strengthened in order to represent at one and the same time an image of the ‘eternal student’, the failing intellectual and a caricature of Erasmus,³⁸² whose words Akimov incorporated at some length. Acting as Hamlet’s double,

³⁷⁸ The best-known overview of this trend in Russian theatre is Konstantin Rudnitsky, *Russian and Soviet Theatre: Tradition and the Avant-Garde*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1988.

³⁷⁹ See Laurence Senelick and Sergei Ostrovsky, *The Soviet Theatre: a Documentary History*, New Haven, Yale University, 2014, 272.

³⁸⁰ T. Rokotov, ‘“Sheksperiment” realisticheskogo teatra’, *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 19 April 1936. The term was applied by Rokotov retrospectively, in an article that also contained a review of a new production of *Othello*.

³⁸¹ Nikolai Akimov, ‘Otrivki o nenapisannoi biografii’, in Akimov *Ne tol’ko o teatre*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1966, 346.

³⁸² Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus (1466-1536), often known as Erasmus of Rotterdam, or simply Erasmus: Dutch Renaissance humanist, priest, social critic, teacher, and theologian.

Horatio joined him in the ‘To be or not to be’ soliloquy, turning it into a dialogue, in the course of which Hamlet was trying on a papier-mâché crown left over from the actors’ rehearsal. The iconic Ghost scene was completely reinterpreted. Inspired by Erasmus’s *Colloquies*,³⁸³ Akimov evoked a masquerade, where Hamlet pretended to be the ghost and Horatio helped him by making spooky noises with the help of a clay pot, by which means the two men tried to attract more supporters for their cause. The dialogue between Hamlet and his father’s ghost was hence turned into a monologue for Hamlet, in what was effectively a mirror image of Akimov’s dialogued treatment of ‘To be or not to be’.³⁸⁴

The character of Ophelia also underwent considerable transformation, eventually bearing little resemblance to the traditional figure as depicted, for instance, in Pre-Raphaelite paintings (most famously in Sir John Everett Millais’s ‘Ophelia’, dated 1851-1852) or in the poems of Afanasy Fet or Alexander Blok. Akimov’s Ophelia, as played by Valentina Vagrina, an actress renowned for her beauty, was a femme fatale who knew how to enjoy life. According to Akimov there was no real love between her and Hamlet, and her main function was to spy on Hamlet and to report back to her father Polonius. Considering her madness and that of Hamlet unacceptable for the modern audience, Akimov tried to explain each of these phenomena in a more rational way. Hence Ophelia gets drunk at the court ball and drowns accidentally. For his part, Hamlet is only pretending to be mad, and he does so, for example, by wearing a saucepan on his head, holding carrots in his hand, and chasing boys and piglets (Akimov used live animals for his production) in his nightshirt (in Act II, scene 4). As will be seen, Sergei Radlov took a similar view of Hamlet’s ‘madness’ but rationalised it with the help of his reading of English scholarly commentaries (see Chapter 3.5).

The play-within-the-play, known as ‘The Murder of Gonzaga’ or ‘The Mousetrap’, is performed in its entirety as a rehearsal for Hamlet and Horatio (Act III, scene 1). In order to achieve this, the translator, Mikhail Lozinskii, had to make adjustments to Shakespeare’s text, turning a pantomime into verse and adding an ending. Thus the real play-within-the-play is assumed to be performed offstage (Act III, scene 2) and we only see the audience (Claudius, Gertrud, Ophelia, Hamlet and other courtiers) observing it and later Ophelia shouting as she notices the frightened Claudius running down the staircase followed by his 14-metre long red

³⁸³ Akimov, ‘O postanovke “Gamleta” v Teatre im. Vakhtangova’, in Sergei Tsimbal (ed.), *Teatral’noe Nasledie*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1978, Vol. 2, 129.

³⁸⁴ Aspects of the scenario detailed in this paragraph and below are widely attested. See also the production book in RGALI, f. 2737, op. 2, ed. khr. 1.

cloak, in what was one of the most visually astonishing moments of the production (see Plate 2.6 in Chapter 2.10.3).

Even today, despite several homosexual Hamlets or Ian Rickson's *Hamlet* set entirely in a mental asylum (Young Vic, London, 2011), some of Akimov's decisions are controversial enough to raise eyebrows. Recent studies of this production resonate to a degree with 1932 reactions from Shakespeare scholars and critics. In his remarkable synoptic study of Russian Avant-garde Theatre, the theatre historian Konstantin Rudnitsky rather unguardedly states that:

in Akimov's production as soon as Hamlet became a cunning schemer leading the 'power struggle', the tragedy promptly turned into a comedy, and this comedy, stripped of romanticism but burdened by the Shakespearian tragic text, did not turn out at all funny. Akimov's production more than anything else resembled a parody of *Hamlet*.³⁸⁵

This judgment is somewhat remarkable in light of Akimov's efforts precisely to 'unburden' the text by adding excerpts from Erasmus and Nikolai Erdman's³⁸⁶ and Vladimir Mass's³⁸⁷ writings.

Musicologist Gerard McBurney, in a survey of Shostakovich's theatre music, agrees with Rudnitsky's hypothesis regarding the failure of this production: 'it was simply too late for its own time'. McBurney even suggests that 'Akimov's clunkily obvious intention was to turn *Hamlet* on its head'.³⁸⁸ Both studies compare Akimov's *Hamlet* to Meyerhold's theatre productions in the 1920s, when the latter turned to classical repertoire by playwrights such as Gogol and Ostrovsky but deliberately distorted them. However, this approach becomes problematic, once Meyerhold's categorically negative reaction to Akimov's *Hamlet* is taken into account (see below).³⁸⁹

Suspensions of Meyerholdivshchina were not on top of the list of critics' worries at the time of the premiere on 19 May 1932, however. Months before the event, critics, Shakespeare

³⁸⁵ Rudnitsky, *Russian and Soviet Theatre*, 270.

³⁸⁶ Nikolai Erdman (1900-1970) Soviet dramatist, poet and screenwriter.

³⁸⁷ Vladimir Mass (1896-1979), Soviet dramatist and screenwriter.

³⁸⁸ Gerard McBurney, 'Shostakovich and the Theatre', in Pauline Fairclough and David Fanning (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shostakovich*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, 166.

³⁸⁹ With this in mind, Aleksandra Tuchinskaia uses another analogy for Akimov's interpretation, that of Zoshchenko's era – see Tuchinskaia, 'Gamlet, Shut datskii', in *Teatr*, 2011/2, also at <http://oteatre.info/gamlet-shut-datskij/>, accessed 16 August 2016.

scholars and Akimov himself had been debating whether or not there was a need for yet another production of *Hamlet*. Articles questioned the rationale behind returning to classics of the theatre repertoire and tried to recommend solutions to make them more appropriate for the proletarian audience.³⁹⁰ Akimov himself pre-announced intentions that were in most cases in line with the critical consensus.³⁹¹ Thus there were great expectations of this production, which was widely considered to be an organised effort to bring Shakespeare back to ‘Soviet Reality’. However, for several reasons, aspects of Akimov’s conception got lost in the process of realisation, contributing to the production’s short stage life.³⁹²

Akimov’s *Hamlet* is often quoted in the context of formalism and Soviet censorship.³⁹³ This is just one aspect that appeared mainly in later criticisms and studies of the production. In the immediate aftermath of the premiere, however, the general feeling among critics was one of disappointment. Akimov’s new *Hamlet* had proved to be merely a ‘Sheksperiment’, which, as it were, blew up in the laboratory. One of the clearest statements of a perceived gap between conception and realisation is Iuda Grossman-Roshchin’s reminder of Akimov’s promises and their outcomes.³⁹⁴ But in order to understand Akimov’s intentions more fully, we need to dig further back.

2.3 Immediate background

Prior to the premiere of his *Hamlet*, Akimov outlined his plans and the details of his approach in a series of articles in the national press. These were mainly based on the 79-page *doklad* he presented in March 1931 when proposing his project to the then still relatively young Vakhtangov Theatre.³⁹⁵ Here he argued that during the 330 years since the appearance of

³⁹⁰ Al. K-ov, “‘Byt’ ili nye byt” postanovki “Gamleta” v teatre imeni Vakhtangova’, *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 13 May 1932; A. Kut, ‘Nuzhno li stavit’ “Gamleta”? Mozhno li perekinut’ most ot “Gamleta” do sovremennosti?’, *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 12 May 1932.

³⁹¹ Nikolai Akimov, ‘Shekspir, pročitanni zanovo. O “Gamlete” v teatre im. Vakhtangova’, *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 11 May 1932.

³⁹² Akimov’s *Hamlet* only survived one season in Moscow. In personal exchanges with Marina Zobolotniaia in April 2013, she mentioned Iurii Elagin’s memoirs regarding the production’s tour to Leningrad in 1933. However, neither she nor the archivist of the Vakhtangov Theatre could at that point provide any reference or evidence for the tour. In May 2015, I came across a few numbers from the journal *Rabochii i teatr* (1933/10 and 11, back covers) with announcements of forthcoming tours of the Vakhtangov Theatre to Leningrad and a repertoire that included *Hamlet*. Furthermore, *Rabochii i teatr* 1933/13 contains a one-page (21) review of the tour with a mention of this production.

³⁹³ See, for example, Martin Banham, ‘Nikolai Akimov’, *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, 13.

³⁹⁴ Iuda Grossman-Roshchin, ‘Strashnaia mest’’, *Sovetskii teatr*, 1932/6, 7-11.

³⁹⁵ ‘Doklad N.P. Akimova o tragedii V. Shekspira “Gamlet”’, Vakhtangov Theatre Archive, Arkh. No. 526, Sviazka No. 22, op. 1, March 1931. Several versions of this article survive in the Theatre archive and at RGALI, f. 2737, op. 2. As V. Mironova observes (“‘Gamlet” po-akimovski’, in Zolotnitskii, *V sporakh o teatre*, Rossiiskii Institut Istorii Isskustv, 1992, 11), the main points of the ‘doklad’ were published in Akimov’s ‘O

Hamlet's text, each era had interpreted this work in its own way, consciously or unconsciously using the play as a mirror to reflect the ideology of its time.³⁹⁶ Thus, according to Akimov, Hamlet's fate was indeed a tragic story not just within the confines of the play itself, but also since most studies had merely drawn the portrait of their own time using the Danish Prince's image, paying little or no attention to Shakespeare's dramaturgy: 'Throughout the three centuries of *Hamlet*, every new stage of social thinking used Hamlet as a skeleton on which it hung outer covers and muscles of its own philosophy.'³⁹⁷ And he announced that 'the goal of any production of *Hamlet* in our days is to liberate it from such prisons.' The most dangerous of these prisons was, according to Akimov, the problem of 'Hamletism' (see Chapter 1.2 for an examination of this term), which he believed to have been added to Shakespeare's play by the Romantics of the 18th and 19th centuries, and by Goethe in particular.

In his historico-sociological account of *Hamlet*'s interpretations, Akimov accused Goethe of being the first to discard the deeper intrigue from the play and to adapt Shakespeare to the ideological needs of his time by 'turning Hamlet into an affiliate of Wertherism' (with reference to the melancholic-suicidal romantic outsider figure depicted in Goethe's 1774 novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*).³⁹⁸ This 'bourgeois' Hamlet was followed by many other 'falsifications' of the play by those who tried to prove that Shakespeare's Hamlet represents 'the essence of the 19th-century intelligentsia'.³⁹⁹

After declaring war against Goethe's *Hamlet*, Akimov provided an outline of Russian interpretations of Shakespeare's tragedy, particularly the more recent ones at the Moscow Art Theatre by Stanislavsky and Gordon Craig in 1911 and at MKhAT II, starring Mikhail Chekhov in 1924. Akimov believed that 'idealistic philosophy' was at the basis of these productions, which focused on the battle of Spirit and Matter. Craig's was mainly occupied by the sufferings of the Spirit surrounded by Matter, whilst Chekhov's concentrated on the

postanovke "Gamleta" v Teatre im. Vakhtangova v 1932 g.', in Aleksandr Gvozdev (ed.), *Nasha rabota nad klassikami*, Leningrad, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1936, 125-168, and republished in Akimov, *Teatral'noe nasledie*, Vol. 2, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1978, 119-154. Compared to the 'doklad' documents and their sociological, class-war slogans, the two later publications put a greater accent on Akimov's search for the true, authentic Shakespeare as a justification for his interpretative choices.

³⁹⁶ 'Doklad N.P. Akimova', 1; Nikolai Akimov, 'O "Gamlete"', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 3 March 1932, 3 (a summary of the 'doklad').

³⁹⁷ 'Doklad N.P. Akimova', 9.

³⁹⁸ Akimov, 'O "Gamlete"'.
³⁹⁹ Ibid. and 'Doklad N.P. Akimova', 9.

struggle of light with darkness.⁴⁰⁰ Akimov granted that ‘it is not surprising if the symbolists, the idealists or the mysticists didn’t use sociological analysis of *Hamlet*. But it will be most outrageous if we in 1932 were to do things the same way as our predecessors’.⁴⁰¹ So instead of a ‘war of symbols and sources’, he considered *Hamlet* as a realistic work about the life of real ‘living people of the 16th century’.⁴⁰² If his goal still sounded somewhat vague, Marina Zabolotniaia explains that the ambiguity of Akimov’s statement was a normal phenomenon for both RAPP slogans and Russian theatre traditions. The notion of ‘living people’ frequently belongs to the latter, implying the work of actors in a play whose heroes possess adequate life and psychological veracity.⁴⁰³

With these statements we have a clear notion of what Akimov considered *Hamlet* not to be. And all this runs counter to the received wisdom that his motives were iconoclastic or primarily political. He was nothing if not deadly serious. Still, we only have as yet a very general sense of how he considered the play should be understood.

As for the cuts to Shakespeare’s five-hour tragedy, Akimov again confronted previous productions, where, according to him, ‘scenes without Hamlet are thrown away, but the monologues are kept intact, thus making it a play about Hamlet alone.’⁴⁰⁴ His point is fair enough as regards the 1924 production of *Hamlet* at the MKhAT II with Mikhail Chekhov in the title role. So Akimov promised a homogeneously shortened play, where all scenes and characters were considered for cutting. Akimov’s attempt to save as much of Shakespeare’s text as possible echoed Meyerhold’s take on the play (see Chapter 1.6.3) and pointed towards Radlov’s 1938 production where he insisted on including several scenes that were often deleted and hence had remained largely unseen (see Chapter 3.5).

Akimov noted that the birth and development of ‘Hamletism’ ran parallel to the development of bourgeois ideology of the 19th century: ‘This historical process, however interesting and educational it may be, does not relate to our specific task of staging Shakespeare’s dramaturgy’. His goals were accordingly to better understand and interpret ‘the Shakespeare of the 16th century and not the Shakespeare of the 19th’, and ‘to consider *Hamlet* before

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 9-10.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁰² Akimov, ‘Shekspir, pročitannyi zanovo’, *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 11 May 1932.

⁴⁰³ Marina Zabolotniaia ‘Gamlet v postanovke N.P. Akimova’, in M. Liubimova and V. Mironova (eds.), *Akimov - eto Akimov* (Akimov is Akimov), Saint Petersburg, Rossiskaia natsionalnaia biblioteka, 2006, 86.

⁴⁰⁴ Akimov, ‘Shekspir, pročitannyi zanovo’.

anything else a dramaturgical work rather than a literal one.’⁴⁰⁵ If the working material in the 19th century consisted of Hamlet’s philosophical monologues, ‘our material is the holistic dramatic work of Shakespeare’.⁴⁰⁶ He admitted that the ‘Hamletism’ of the 18th and 19th centuries, followed by mysticism (as in Mikhail Chekhov’s *Hamlet*), reading between the lines and ‘falsifications’, were by then so deeply rooted in the audience’s sub-conscious that *his* more authentic *Hamlet* would paradoxically appear ‘false’. Akimov concluded that ‘in our time we should approach the question of interpretation of this work using ‘dialectical materialism’ which was, according to Stalin himself ‘the world outlook of the Marxist Leninist party’.⁴⁰⁷

For Akimov, Hamlet was ‘a highly developed, healthy, optimistic young man whose jokes sparkle throughout the five acts of the play [and who] dies while trying in vain to combine his advanced theories with feudalism in practice’ in the society of his time. Akimov summarised his task as: ‘a creative interpretation of *Hamlet* using methods and devices of our theatre, considering the concrete situation of Shakespeare’s era.’⁴⁰⁸ He required that scholarly studies of the history of *Hamlet* and Hamletism should accompany his ‘de-Hamletising’ efforts outside the theatre, through debates, exhibitions, brochures and the like.⁴⁰⁹

Akimov’s main objectives may be summarised as follows:

- *Hamlet* was to come across as a ‘living example’ of dramatic art, ‘a play with many excellent roles, a strong plot, written in a beautiful language, filled with a Shakespearean sense of humour which he does not lose even in his tragedies’⁴¹⁰
- The play should represent the current ideology of the time by means of stage strategies and not by means of the pronouncements of masters of ceremonies (*Sententsiami rezonerov*).
- The play should make the audience perceive the ‘cheerful’ (*bodrii*) attitude of its author, so that the extermination of the heroes at the end does not darken the play completely.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁵ ‘Doklad N.P. Akimova’, 3.

⁴⁰⁶ Akimov, ‘Shekspir, pročitanniy zanovo’.

⁴⁰⁷ Joseph Stalin, ‘Dialectical and historical materialism’, in Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1976, 835-73, here 835. In the course of this lengthy essay, first published in 1938, Stalin traces the origins of the terms to Marx and Hegel and identifies them as pertaining to Marxism-Leninism only.

⁴⁰⁸ Akimov, ‘Kak teatr im. Vakhtangov stavit “Gamleta”’, *Izvestia Moskva*, 26 March 1932.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Zabolotniaia, ‘Gamlet v postanovke N.P. Akimova’, 86-87.

Akimov summarises his task as: ‘a creative interpretation of *Hamlet* using methods and devices of our theatre, taking into account the concrete situation of Shakespeare’s era’.⁴¹²

2.4 Text, translation and adaptation

Akimov’s claims for, in effect, a fusion of authenticity and contemporary relevance went further. Regarding the problem of translating Shakespeare’s play into Russian, he maintained that previous translators, too, had served the ideology of their time, and that by adapting rather than translating accurately they had often taken part in the process of falsification. He illustrated this point through examples from ‘Belinsky’s Apocrypha’,⁴¹³ and from Andrei Kroneberg’s⁴¹⁴ insistence on Hamlet as a young and delicate prince, thus ignoring phrases such as ‘He is fat’ (Act V scene 2).⁴¹⁵ Akimov then claimed that the new translation⁴¹⁶ by Mikhail Lozinskii used for his *mise-en-scène* was ‘the first exact Russian translation both in form and artistic values’,⁴¹⁷ and that it ‘depicts the character of Shakespeare’s language without the usual artificial varnish’.⁴¹⁸ As an example, he noted that in most previous translations, Hamlet’s words to Laertes at the scene of Ophelia’s funeral are only selectively rendered, leaving out such phrases as ‘You eat a crocodile’ (V/1), which do not fit the beautiful image of the prince.⁴¹⁹

As we will see in 2.4 below, Lozinskii’s translation claimed to be one of great accuracy, reproducing ‘Shakespeare’s stylistic peculiarities – his lexicon, the architectonics of his speech and stylistic figures, as well as his figurative language, the very core of his poetry’, as well as achieving ‘the poetical equivalence of every verse in translation to every verse of the original’.⁴²⁰

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² Akimov, ‘Kak teatr im. Vakhtangov stavit “Gamleta”’.

⁴¹³ Akimov was alluding to Vissarion Belinskii’s 1838 essay embracing Nikolai Polevoi’s translation and Pavel Mochalov’s rendering, which became a milestone in Russian perceptions of the play - see Chapter 1.

⁴¹⁴ Kroneberg’s translation was used for the Craig/Stanislavsky production at the Moscow Art Theatre in 1911 - see Chapter 1.X

⁴¹⁵ The phrase has been a subject of debate among Shakespeare scholars, since ‘fat’ could also have meant ‘sweaty’.

⁴¹⁶ Lozinskii’s translation was published for the first time a year after the premiere of Akimov’s production.

⁴¹⁷ Akimov, ‘Kak teatr im. Vakhtangov stavit “Gamleta”’, *Izvestiia Moskva*, 26 March 1932.

⁴¹⁸ Akimov, ‘O “Gamlete”’.

⁴¹⁹ ‘Doklad N.P. Akimova’, 5.

⁴²⁰ Quoted in Semenenko, *Hamlet The Sign*, 91. According to Semenenko, Soviet translators had access to different versions of Shakespeare’s text (Folio, first and second Quartos) and Lozinskii ‘most likely used some old “combined” editions, for example, Edward Dowden’s of 1899. Both Lozinskii and Pasternak translated the bits that are missing from F but exist in Q2 and also preserve the lines specific to F only.’ (Personal communications, 26 August 2015.)

Despite this, the ‘philological’ and ‘archaic’ translation of Lozinskii is often described as unsuitable for theatre productions, giving actors little room for manoeuvre.⁴²¹ This may be one reason why Akimov did not hesitate to adapt the text to his theatrical requirements, injecting Shakespeare’s text with outside literature in the shape of extracts from Erasmus and Mass. Hence it was not surprising that prior to the premiere there were rumours circulating that Akimov’s *Hamlet* had not used Shakespeare’s text. In his article in *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* dismissing these accusations, Akimov justified his use of excerpts from other authors’ works: Throughout the history of Shakespeare translation, he claimed, one of the major challenges had been translating puns and wordplays, retaining their wit while staying as loyal as possible to the original text. Akimov correctly pointed out that translating these puns directly into Russian results in heavy, even incomprehensible language. So he decided it would be best if he replaced such extracts in Shakespeare’s text by Russian puns on the same subjects, written by the best literary experts in this domain. This explanation was clearly meant to justify Akimov’s plans to include text by Nikolai Erdman and Vladimir Mass, particularly for the gravediggers’ scene.⁴²² Like several other of his innovative but controversial intentions, these excerpts were voted down during dress rehearsals and were left out of the final production.⁴²³ As for the presence of lines by Erasmus of Rotterdam, this can be explained by Akimov’s intention to consciously free the play from Hamletism of the 19th century Turgenevian kind, in favour of Humanism the worldview centred on human agency rather than on the supernatural, dogma and, in more Marxist terms, social rankings. It was for the purposes of defending this conception, among other things, that Akimov turned to what he considered the essence of Elizabethan tragedies and their topicality, describing Hamlet as a ‘humanist of the 16th century, well ahead of his time, an individualist dying within his feudal surroundings’.⁴²⁴ In general, he explained, on behalf of the Theatre, ‘We try to re-evaluate the play in relationship to the philosophy of the 16th century: that is, “humanism” with reference to Erasmus’s “Colloquies”’.⁴²⁵

As convincing as Akimov’s reasoning may have sounded, his unconventional treatment of dramatic text could also be seen as a continuation and a toned-down version of Meyerhold’s

⁴²¹ See for example, Alexander Anikst’s statement, quoted in John Elsom (ed.), *Is Shakespeare Still Our Contemporary?*, London, Routledge, 1989, 44-45.

⁴²² Akimov, ‘O postanovke “Gamleta”’, 146, n.156.

⁴²³ Ibid. For details of discussions leading to such decisions see stenographic reports from dress rehearsals on 19 and 21 April 1932: ‘Stenogrammy khudozhestvennykh soveshchanyi po obsuzhdeniiu progona spektaklia “Gamleta”’, Vakhtangov Theatre Archive, Arkh. No. 530, Sviazka No. 22, op. 1.

⁴²⁴ Akimov, ‘Shekspir, pročitannyi zanovo’; also ‘Doklad N.P. Akimova’, 11.

⁴²⁵ Akimov, ‘Kak teatr im. Vakhtangov stavit “Gamleta”’.

dictum of the 1920s, which went as far as suggesting that ‘a play is simply the excuse for the revelation of its theme on the level at which that revelation may appear vital today.’⁴²⁶

Meyerhold’s 1926 production of Gogol’s *Inspector General* was the ultimate realisation of this view. In 1926 such interventionist productions could command a degree of comradely support (see Chapter 1.6.3). However, the evolution of the cultural climate of the country from then until 1932 meant that Akimov did not receive such backing for his untraditional treatment of *Hamlet*.

2.5 Meyerhold versus Akimov

Despite having recently advocated far-reaching potential alterations, when it came to Akimov’s production, Meyerhold took offence and accused the *mise-en-scène* of eclecticism: ‘I love the Vakhtangov Theatre’, he declared in a speech at the Theatre Workers’ Club on 26 January 1933,

but their latest, especially *Kovarstvo i liubov’* (*Cowardice and Love*) and *Hamlet*, scared me (*napugali*). Eclecticism is the easiest thing. A little bit of Dobuzhinsky,⁴²⁷ a little bit of Gordon Craig, a little bit of the journal in which Parisian artists print their work, etc. And what comes out of all this mess? In the midst of confusion Goriunov plays the role of Hamlet. Hamlet is shifted from the point at which Shakespeare had put him. And the result is a shambles (*kavardak*).⁴²⁸

One can hardly help hearing the resonance of this statement with the notorious *Pravda* article of 28 January 1936 branding Shostakovich’s music ‘A Muddle instead of Music’ (*Sumbur vmeste muzyki*). Of course the two statements are from opposing sides of the cultural war, but they indicate that both were prepared to use similar verbal weapons.

On 21 May 1934, during his lecture on theatre at the ‘Intourist’ seminar, Meyerhold returned to Akimov’s production, using it as an example of an unsuccessful remake of a classic, and warning theatre directors of the dangers of thoughtless re-workings that destroy the essence of a play:

The new ‘remakers’ (*peredelki*) - not all, but many - think that remaking is a self-sufficient art in itself. This is no good. These adapters have started to break away from

⁴²⁶ Meierkhol’d, ‘Meierkhol’d o svoiom *Lese*’, *Novyi zritel’*, 1924/7, 6.

⁴²⁷ Mstislav V. Dobuzhinski (1875-1957), one of the artists of ‘Mir Iskusstva’.

⁴²⁸ Published as ‘Vs. Meierkhol’d, “Put’ aktera. Igor’ Il’inskii i problema ampula’, in *Sovetskoe iskusstvo* 1933/10 (26 February), 256-260.

the tasks set by the author. The most unfortunate example of this, in my opinion is *Hamlet* at the Vakhtangov theatre. This is to such an extent ‘Not Shakespeare’ that there is already nothing remaining of Shakespeare. Above all, you don’t see what the main idea of the director is; you are always in a state of hesitation and you cannot guess.

I think we should fight against such remakes. It would be so much more interesting if we directors, when facing the question of classics, started to produce them without making any alteration. At the same time, we can show them in a new way. We don’t need simply to reshape and rebuild the stage - this is not the only path. Speaking of the actor being the main element, we can give the actor this task: that the thing should start to sound new, and not only in this way but also in the sense that paradoxical casting may create the effect of a new perception of things.⁴²⁹

By this stage, ‘Meierkhol’divshchina’ (Meyerholdism) had become almost synonymous with reckless interventionism and experimentation in production. But Meyerhold himself had evidently moved his position, whether out of conviction or expediency, or perhaps a bit of both. Indeed his comments on Akimov’s *Hamlet* are close to those in his famous self-defence in 1936, ‘Meierkhol’d protiv Meierkhol’divshchina’ (Meyerhold against Meyerholdism),⁴³⁰ but quite different from his earlier writings and remarks on his attempts at producing *Hamlet*. Indeed his suggestion of leaving the classics unaltered is the exact opposite of his own previous practice, as evinced in his production of Gogol’s *Revizor* (*Inspector General*) (see Chapter 1.4.3).

As an example of this shift in principles, at the time of his leadership of RSFSR 1 in 1920 Meyerhold had planned to ask Mayakovsky to rework the gravediggers’ scene in Shakespeare’s play, giving it a more political edge to go with the clown-like image of the characters.⁴³¹ So when in 1932 Akimov commissioned Erdman and Mass to rewrite the same

⁴²⁹ Meierkhol’d, ‘Iz lektzii na teatral’nom seminare “inturista”’, in Aleksandr Fevral’skii (ed.), *V.E. Meierkhol’d: Stat’i, pis’ma, rechi, besedy*, Vol. 2, 297, (quoted from the stenographic report of the lecture, RGALI, f. 963, op. 1, ed. khr. 46).

⁴³⁰ For the complete text of this speech, see Meierkhol’d, ‘Meierkhol’d protiv meierkhol’divshchiny’, in Aleksandr Fevral’skii (ed.) *V.E. Meierkhol’d: Stat’i, pis’ma, rechi, besedy*, Vol. 2, 330-347.

⁴³¹ See Gladkov, ‘Piat’ let s Meierkhol’dom’, 157.

scene,⁴³² most theatre scholars considered this an act of Meyerholdism, ignoring the evolution of Meyerhold's concepts over years as reflected in his speeches and writings.

2.6 Internal debates

What Meyerhold and the critics were unaware of was that they were only seeing Akimov's production after it had been extensively discussed, altered and abbreviated by the Theatre, subsequent to many rehearsals and particularly the discussions following the dress rehearsal on 19 April 1932. Taking place over two days, these discussions were attended by members of the crew and cast, including Boris Zakhava (executive director), Osvald Glazunov (actor of the second gravedigger and ex-director of theatre), Pavel Antokolskii (one of the directors), I. Golchanov (first name and role unknown), Maniushko (first name and role unknown), Konstantin Mironov (actor of Guildenstern), Osip Basov (permanent actor of the theatre), Anatoly Goriunov (actor of Hamlet), Vasilii Kuza (assistant director), Boris Shchukin (actor of Polonius) and Akimov himself. The accounts of these sessions kept at the archive of the Vakhtangov Theatre reveal invaluable information on details of the mise-en-scène and its practicalities, on major concerns of the production team about certain aspects of the show, and on Akimov's justification of his choices.⁴³³ Reading between the lines, we can glean from the debates something of how Akimov's production might have been, had it not undergone such trials.

What worried those present at the debates were: Akimov's manipulation of Shakespeare's text; the interpretation of Ophelia; the logical continuity of certain elements such as the clay pot used to evoke the ghost; and the overall length of the production (over five hours) and related logistics. Apart from these things, the directorial team was accused of turning Hamlet into Richard III, by concentrating solely on his thirst for power.

The actual length of the production was the most discussed item. At over five hours in dress rehearsal, Akimov's *Hamlet* was simply too long. During the debates where the necessity of cutting out several scenes was discussed, there was no mention of Meyerhold's earlier intentions of producing a *Hamlet* without leaving out a single scene 'even if the play takes from 6 p.m. until 2 a.m.'⁴³⁴ Various solutions were proposed to Akimov. Some as drastic as cutting complete scenes – particularly those that contained the most daring staging –

⁴³² Valentina Mironova, 'Gamlet po Akimovskii', in David Zolotnitskii (ed.), *V sporakh o teatre*, St Petersburg, Rossiiskii Institut Istorii Iskusstv, 1992, 19.

⁴³³ Stenographic reports of discussions, 19 and 21 April 1932, Archive of the Vakhtangov Theatre, Moscow, Arkh. No. 530, Sviazka 22, op. 1.

⁴³⁴ Meierkhol'd, 'Iz lektsii na teatral'nom seminare "inturista"', 298.

reworkings of the structure of the play and even reduction in the number of acts. These were all strenuously opposed by Akimov (see below). One of the scenes that did not survive this scrutiny however, despite Akimov's protestations, was that of the gravediggers; this was especially due to the added dialogue provided by Mass.

Accounts of these and similar discussions reveal how Akimov was aware of the shortcomings and how he tried to change the situation regarding these episodes. The cuts meant that he had lost many brilliant scenes and important themes, such as various chase scenes, which had given the production a special flavour. It was only natural for some critics to complain that 'in general the architecture of the composition of the play was destroyed'.⁴³⁵ But the blame should not have been laid at Akimov's door alone.

Marina Zabolotniaia has perhaps come closest to a reconstruction of the production, using newspaper cuttings, reviews and accounts of discussions preserved at the Vakhtangov Theatre archives.⁴³⁶ In their printed version her valuable efforts and documentation are not as clearly articulated as they might have been,⁴³⁷ to the point that the production's details remain more or less as obscure as they had previously been. The American critic Alma Law offers a clearer, less subjective and more factual account of the show, where she depicts the highlights of the production together with a few photographs of major scenes. But her lack of information about the background to the production, due to the inaccessibility of archives at the time of writing, places limitations on her reportage.⁴³⁸

2.6.1 Reporting from discussions

The executive director, Zakhava started off the session by presenting a brief summary of problems at hand, chief among them being the production's length. He noted that 'the fourth act is clearly not ready, and needs to be radically cut.' He suggested cuts to the scene of the banquet (*pir*) and the scene at the cemetery, and especially the gravediggers' conversation, which he felt should be cut to 40% of its actual length. 'The scene in the bath tub'⁴³⁹ is also to be cut in half ... Furthermore the image of Fortinbras needs reworking.'⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁵ 'Pervii disput o "Gamlete" v teatre Vakhtangova', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 1932/25 (5 June).

⁴³⁶ Zabolotniaia mentioned her still unfinished work in our personal correspondence, April 2013.

⁴³⁷ Zabolotniaia, 'O postanovke "Gamleta"', 91-120.

⁴³⁸ Alma Law, 'Hamlet at the Vakhtangov', *The Drama Review*, 21/4 (December 1977), 100-10.

⁴³⁹ This is the scene where Osric invites Hamlet to a fight with Laertes. In Akimov's rendering this scene takes place when Hamlet is in a bath tub.

⁴⁴⁰ Zakhava in Stenographic report of discussions (see n. 433). From this point on, all quotes and reports come from this sources, unless otherwise stated.

Zakhava approved of the production's unusual reinterpretation of Ophelia's death as making it more approachable for the contemporary audience. Returning to the graveyard scene, he then outlined the practicalities of changing scenes: at the end of the cemetery scene, Hamlet would try to say something sympathetic to Laertes, then leave; then the change of scene behind the curtain would happen as the music starts. This is a rare occasion when Shostakovich's music was mentioned during these debates: 'Here Shostakovich has composed a magnificent Requiem, which is to be accompanied by male chorus hiding in the orchestra or in the box seats and hence invisible to the audience. This chorus grows into a powerful *forte* and finally the first panel curtain (*padduga*) rises, and there Laertes and the King are standing to the background of the second *padduga*, in poses as if in a church. The Requiem is heard to the end. While the monologue about the return of Hamlet is going on, the bath tub scene can be prepared (behind the second curtain).' Zakhava's depiction of this scene reveals the place and role of Shostakovich's 'Requiem' in Akimov's *mise-en-scène*. As will be shown in 2.10, due to Akimov's interference with Shakespeare's text and his liberties with the order of the scenes, a few numbers from Shostakovich's score, including this one, would be difficult to place were it not for such reports and descriptions.

Moving on to the ending of the production, Zakhava noted that 'in order to finish the show on a high note, we thought of many solutions, until N.P. [Akimov] came up with a brilliant idea.' According to this suggestion, Hamlet would remain the main acting role but this time not through his physical appearance on stage. Instead after the final fight and the hero's death, Fortinbras arrives and orders, 'Take the bodies away!', and all bodies are carried away except for Hamlet's. Then, after everyone else's, Hamlet's corpse is taken away, however just as fast and as carelessly. Whilst this is taking place, Horatio is lying in grief, not noticing when Hamlet's body is gone. Then he looks around and sees there is nobody left, but finds the helmet in which Hamlet had fought. He takes this mask, looks at Fortinbras, looks in the direction of Hamlet's exit and slowly goes out with this mask. 'This is the last moment of the play. In it once again the attention is focused on Hamlet, but through an object which has remained of him, and which symbolises everything about him and all who killed him.' Whether or not in the final version of the production this scene was carried out exactly as Zakhava described it here is not known.⁴⁴¹ However, the importance of an object as a symbol certainly resonates with Akimov's earlier work, as described and analysed by

⁴⁴¹ The Production Book at RGALI (f. 2737, op. 2, ed. khr. 1, 242) does not include this episode; instead the scene breaks directly into a translation of Erasmus.

Bartoshevich.⁴⁴² The use of mask here could also be seen as a homage to Vakhtangov's well-known interest in this object.⁴⁴³ At the same time, using an object as a substitute for the hero chimes with Meyerhold's controversial solution for the last act of his 1926 *The Inspector General* where in the last scene all the characters were replaced by dummies (wax figures).⁴⁴⁴

Zakhava's long presentation was only the beginning of these two-day discussions, which ended in a session of voting for certain scenes to remain or to be left out. The main passages under consideration were: the texts written by Mass and Erdman and added to the gravediggers' scene; the interpretation of Ophelia as a character, and her function; the logical continuity of certain elements; and of course the overall length of the production and related logistics.

Following Zakhava's introduction almost every speaker started by addressing the key question: 'why (*radi chego*) are we producing a *Hamlet*?' Glazunov insisted on the 'responsibility of a new *Hamlet* mise-en-scene', while Golchanov started by supporting Akimov's views on the distortions brought into *Hamlet* adaptations ever since Goethe's time, describing the self-imposed task of the Vakhtangov Theatre to re-establish the fundamental idea of the play and to show what could be done with it (p. 13). Objecting to this statement, Kuza replied: 'I think Goethe is not as stupid as he has been presented to us recently. It has been said that Goethe interpreted Hamlet in the interests of his own class. Do we have the right to claim that we have interpreted *Hamlet* brilliantly today? I think not. Unfortunately we made quite a lot of noise in promoting our show in this regard' (p. 25). He continued that 'with just 25 days before the premiere we cannot possibly speak of a major discovery in *Hamlet*.' Kuza's concerns were echoed in Golchanov's remark: 'either the work on production is not finished yet, or all that the director has managed to do has been to free the path [for de-Hamletising] but has not clarified what he is doing this play for', and he accused the directorial team of 'turning Hamlet into Richard III', by concentrating solely on his thirst for power.

Representing the directorial team, Zakhava rounded off the question of '*radi chego*': 'before anything, so that we could identify our relationship with this masterpiece that has occupied people's minds for 300 and more years; to clarify our own understanding; and to compare this personal relationship with other personal relationships existing until now, that is during

⁴⁴² Aleksandr Bartoshevich, *Akimov*, Leningrad, Teaklub, 1933, 40, 68-73.

⁴⁴³ Rudnitsky, *Russian and Soviet Theatre*, 53.

⁴⁴⁴ Senelick and Ostrovsky, *The Soviet Theatre*, 264.

the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Agreeing with Akimov, who believed that Shakespeare was in fact writing about himself when he created *Hamlet*, Zakhava concluded that ‘Shakespeare definitely sympathises with him (Hamlet) entirely, but does not understand him completely, because he couldn’t have had enough distance from the character, from where he would understand those people surrounding him. He wrote of himself in *Hamlet*’ (p. 32).

Some topics of discussion were later echoed in the critics’ views, and there was indeed some truth in them, for instance as regards the problems of continuity, and especially the ghost and the clay pot. As Antokolskii correctly observed: ‘The problem with the clay pot is not in that it comes out of nowhere, but in that it never reappears in the play, whereas Shakespeare’s ghost figure reappears later in the play.’ Hence certain scenes had lost their *raison d’être*. For example, as Maniushku noted: ‘If the ghost is made up by Hamlet (with the help of Horatio), why in “To be or not to be” does he tell Horatio that “the ghost appeared to me” and after the play-within-the-play “I bet the ghost said the truth”?’

Kuza then turned to Ophelia’s death, finding Akimov’s solution ‘not convincing’: ‘In our age, this death should have a motive, perhaps a rape’ (p. 29). This point having been taken by Glazunov and Basov, they pointed to another problematic moment, namely the gravediggers’ scene and especially the added text written by Mass (and Erdman). Apart from Akimov himself, nobody seemed to be in favour of these excerpts. The dissatisfaction was expressed in different manners, starting from the relatively calm remarks of Goriunov, the actor of the title role, who admitted his dislike for the texts, despite not being able to judge their value, and who suggested replacing them with Shakespeare’s words. At the other end of the spectrum came harsher critiques from Glazunov: ‘Mass’s text is the most uninteresting part of the play’; Maniushku: ‘As for the text by Mass, it must be shortened even more than it has been suggested. We lose nothing by cutting Mass’s text short’; Kuza: ‘After careful study of such texts, I believe that these don’t give anything to the play. They add no contemporaneity’ (p. 30); and finally Basov: ‘Again attacking Mass’s text, I confirm that the whole text of the gravediggers is so unfunny that it becomes funny from that’ (p. 22). Akimov politely overruled these complaints: ‘I am convinced that this text will be received well by the public. During the dress rehearsal I watched a few guests closely and they became very excited when they heard familiar words (expressions). The texts are already shortened - both the gravediggers’ and the actors’. I advise that we don’t take aim at these texts.’ (p. 42)

Nevertheless they seem to have been left out of the final production in their entirety.⁴⁴⁵ In the production book (*rezhisserskii ekzempliar*)⁴⁴⁶ kept at RGALI, these texts are crossed out in pencil, possibly indicating Akimov's hope to retain them at the last moment. Paradoxically, the official poster of the production which was sketched by Akimov himself, depicted the gravediggers' scene (see Plate 2.1).

⁴⁴⁵ Akimov, 'O postanovke "Gamleta" v Teatre im. Vakhtangova', 147.

⁴⁴⁶ Akimov, *Hamlet* Production book, RGALI, f. 2737, op. 2, ed. khr. 1.

Plate 2.1: Official Poster for Akimov's *Hamlet*



One major goal in cutting out these texts was to shorten the production as a whole. The efforts seem to have been successful, since none of the critics and reviewers complained about the length. Long productions were not unusual at the time, as Zakhava noted: ‘I believe that this show will be normal for the size of our theatre... MAT started the show half an hour earlier, MKhAT II finished the show at 12.30, and we finish not later than 12.00. So I think trying to achieve the size of *Turandot* isn’t necessary’ (p. 34). After the dress rehearsal,

which lasted six hours, even Akimov agreed that certain cuts were necessary. However, his choice differed greatly from those eventually adopted, and it is only by studying the production book and the stenographic reports of the debates that we can work out how the cuts distorted his initial concept and its logic and hence caused a different perception of the play by the audience (see the detailed analysis of each scene below, 2.10)

Zakhava defended his suggestion of limiting the cuts to the final act by pointing out that ‘here all intrigues come to their conclusion’ (p. 34). This was quickly ruled out by Glazunov, who was in favour of more evenly-spread as well as more drastic excisions, with not only words but also complete scenes taken out. Kuza also objected to Zakhava’s solution, warning of the ‘danger of reaching the final act and realising that we cannot possibly hold the attention of the public any longer, the more so because this act is the weakest of all’. He suggested that ‘the more is taken out elsewhere, the less we need to omit from the deciding 4th act.’

Antokol’skii rather vaguely invited everyone to concentrate on ‘the rhythm’ of the production rather than on its ‘tempo’. Not developing his remark any further, he pointed out that, ‘The main problem of the play is its composition, which appears to be weak. This is not just because of the length of the play, but also because insignificant things play too important a role’ (p. 11). However, his proposed solution of dividing the play into five sections rather than Akimov’s four, where the third section would finish with the fourth scene, and the fourth section would end at the graveyard, leaving the fifth as quite a short one including the bath tub scene and the finale, did not prove to be popular with the other participants.

On the second day of discussions (21 April 1932), Antokol’skii came up with concrete suggestions regarding scenes to leave out. He proposed that they discard the scene of the reception of the Norwegian ambassador, shorten the dialogue of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in front of the King and the Queen during the hunting scene, and finally make some cuts to the ‘closet scene’, even though he believed it had artistic value. Akimov responded more or less positively to the first of these suggestions. However, he warned that cutting that scene might disturb the logic of Fortinbras’s story-line. In the end a vote was taken that assured the discarding of this scene (p. 35).

One of the other scenes under discussion was that of Claudius’s prayer after the play within the play, wherein, according to Shakespeare’s play, Hamlet enters with the intent to kill the King. Akimov was criticised for keeping the prayer in but omitting Hamlet’s entrance. The critique was justified by explaining that ‘Hamlet’s humanism is very clear here. Hamlet

doesn't kill the King during prayers because this is against humanist ideas' (pp. 29, 40). 30 years later, Grigory Kozintsev would apply the same solution to this scene for his cinema version of Shakespeare's tragedy (see Chapter 5.2)

Akimov's response to this and some other complaints came in the form of describing technical and acting issues, including what he saw as the actors' own shortcomings (pp. 45-47). These descriptions provide insight into his methods of work, his intentions and expectations. They also reveal his enthusiasm and bravado, since he was not afraid of openly criticising colleagues. The following are a few examples from his long presentation.

Addressing the Ophelia problem first, Akimov insisted that during the scene of the banquet (*pir*), Ophelia was the leading character and that this scene could be intertwined with the scene of Horatio and the pirates. He added that 'Horatio should be carrying a candle and wearing a night gown, so that it is understood that the actions are happening at night.' Then he moved to Ophelia's death and gravediggers' scene. Akimov insisted that despite all the tragic events the graveyard scene should begin with the scene involving ignorant but comic gravediggers. Deflecting criticism of its 'unfunny', he reminded participants that the decor for this scene was supposed to be blooming with flowers, but then because of financial restrictions 'flowers were one by one taken away from the cemetery'.

As for the fourth act, which had been severely criticised before Akimov's presentation, he insisted that 'this act can only be justified through the impetuosity (*stremitelnost'*) of development of the actions'. He continued to complain that the actor of Laertes, Shikhmatov, was mistaken in his view of his character's personality. According to Akimov, Shikhmatov (who seems to have been absent from the discussions) insisted on representing Laertes as a nobleman caught in the spider's web of Claudius's cunning plans. Judging this as 'trying to be more naïve than Shakespeare himself', Akimov deplored not only this interpretation but also Shikhmatov's compromise solution of presenting a parody of Laertes (p. 46).

2.7 Aftermath and reception

So far as the Soviet press of the time goes, one reaction was common: no critic seemed to agree with Akimov's claims of liberating *Hamlet* and reviving Shakespeare's concept. The general tone of the critical reception may be judged from such observations as:

- 'Hamlet is reduced to the ranking of a throne seeker and adventurer, admittedly also interested in exact science... . Everything is allowed and is legal. Machiavellianism –

political theories of Italian Renaissance plotters.’ Il’ia Berezark, ‘Avantyrust i gumanist’, *Rabis*, 1932/16, 7.

- ‘Akimov has preferred a Hamlet who is unthinking and unreflecting... . Akimov’s directorial idea derived from “topsy-turveydom”. It was from the start an idiosyncratic academic “reduction ad absurdum”. Shakespeare is reduced to absurdity.’ Pavel Markov, ‘*Gamlet v postanovke N. Akimova*’, *Sovetskii teatr*, 1932/7-8, 15-18.
- ‘She (Ophelia) languishes in high sensuality. That’s it. Is there really nothing else to say about her? Does the theatre really recognises such a dilemma: either she is made of moonlight, dream and reveries or she is happily drowning in whisky and speaks ambiguously?’ Iuda Grossman-Roshchin, ‘Strashnaia mest’, *Sovetskii teatr*, 1932/6, 8.
- ‘If *Turandot* was the joyful smile of a blossoming creativity, *Hamlet* is a grimace and in many ways an unhealthy one.’ E. Beskin, ‘*Gamlet spisannyi so scheta*’, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 17 June 1932.

What everyone seems to have forgotten, or simply ignored, was the conditions set by the Theatre repertoire committee (Repertkom) in 1931, when discussing and commissioning the production of *Hamlet* for the anniversary season of the Theatre. As Akimov himself later explained, at the time when his *Hamlet* was in progress the agenda had been very different from the time of the premiere: in 1931 no rich person or royalty could possibly be a positive hero, and depicting the ghost as a metaphysical creature would also cause concerns. According to Akimov, his changes and interpretative choices made it possible to stage a tragedy of Shakespeare at a time when it was not on top of the authorities’ list of priorities.⁴⁴⁷ Accordingly, what Akimov did was largely working towards the objectives set for him at the time. Of course within a year much had changed in the cultural and political climate of the country. April 1932 saw the Central Committee’s decree ‘On restructuring literary and artistic organisations’, which led to the dissolution of RAPP, the organisation of creative Unions and the doctrine of Socialist Realism. With hindsight, this resolution marked a pivoted moment in the cultural history of the country, leading to a more rigid, centralised bureaucracy. However, to assume, as Senelick and Ostrovsky do, for example, that the

⁴⁴⁷ Marina Zabolotniaia, ‘Obsuzhdenie akimovskogo “Gamleta”’, VTO, Kabinet Shekspira, 29 sent. 1943 g.’’, in V. Ivanov (ed.), *Mnemozina. Dokumenty i fakty iz istorii otechestvennogo teatra XX veka*, Moscow, VTO, 2004, 415.

‘inflexible framework was constructed’ overnight would be an oversimplification.⁴⁴⁸ In fact the dissolution of RAPP and its likes appeared to many as a relief from the hard-core instructions and expectations of these proletarian organisations.⁴⁴⁹

At any rate the resolution of the Central Committee, promulgated barely a month before the premiere, proved to be crucial in determining later views on the ill fate of the production.⁴⁵⁰ The reception of Akimov’s *Hamlet* was not merely reactive to the problematic mixture of the director’s conception and his realisation of it, but it was also to a degree prescribed. Had the production been staged at the time of its conception in 1931, it would most likely have had very different resonances for critics and public alike, in the sense that its interventions would have been perceived as more mainstream.

Hamlet was shown in Moscow for only a single season in 1932/33.⁴⁵¹ Yet its shadow followed Akimov throughout his life. In the gathering of artist workers discussing the 28 January 1936 *Pravda* article, ‘On the fight against formalism’, Akimov reminded participants that apart from *Hamlet* he had worked on 86 other productions, nineteen of them following his doomed *Hamlet*, yet he could not redeem himself from the stigma of formalism as a result of his rendering of Shakespeare’s tragedy.⁴⁵²

Even so he was clearly not ready to step back and admit to his mistakes. In 1936 he published an informative essay outlining his reading of Shakespeare’s tragedy and his reasons for considering his interpretation more genuine and closer to the Bard’s intentions and to Elizabethan traditions than traditional *Hamlets*.⁴⁵³ What was even more curious was that this directorial explication was published in the annus horribilis for artists, when most had to either stop creating or reconsider their former works - to self-censure or pay the price.

⁴⁴⁸ Senelick and Ostrovsky, *Soviet Theatre*, 296.

⁴⁴⁹ See Evgeny Dobrenko, ‘Literary Criticism and Transformation of the Literary Field during the Cultural Revolution, 1928-1932’, in Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov (eds.), *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism*, Pittsburg, University of Pittsburg Press, 2011, 42-62.

⁴⁵⁰ See Rudnitsky, *Russian and Soviet Theatre*; McBurney, ‘Shostakovich and the Theatre’.

⁴⁵¹ According to personal conversation with Marina Zabolotniaia, November 2013.

⁴⁵² Stenographic report from meeting of art workers (*rabotnikov iskusstv*), 9 April 1936, RGALI, f. 962, op. 3, ed. khr. 80, 34.

⁴⁵³ Akimov, ‘O postanovke “Gamleta” v Teatre im. Vakhtangova’, 119; and Akimov, ‘O postanovke “Gamleta” v teatre im. Vakhtangova v 1932 g.’, in Gvozdev (ed.), *Nasha rabota nad klassikami*, 125-168 (N.B. this is not the same document as the previous title).

2.7.1 Exhuming *Hamlet* in 1943

Akimov's 1936 article was not to be the last time that his *Hamlet* was exhumed. In 1943, the Shakespeare Cabinet of the Soviet Union, headed by Mikhail Morozov,⁴⁵⁴ returned to it in a discussion session in the presence of Akimov and certain artists from the production, as well as other Shakespeare scholars. The stenographic notes from this session have been reproduced by Marina Zabolotniaia.⁴⁵⁵ However, since the original documents have been destroyed in a fire, however, it is impossible to verify the exactness of her materials.⁴⁵⁶ Information in the following eight paragraphs is from this source.

At the time of this session, admiration for Shakespeare was among very few things, apart from hatred for the Nazi Germany, that the USSR and the UK had in common. In fact, the British authorities helped in the organisation of the Shakespeare festival in Yerevan (Armenia) in 1944, and the 1943 special session of the Shakespeare Cabinet may well have been a part of the preparations for this event (for more on Shakespeare in the Soviet Union in wartime, see Chapter 4.3 below).

Morozov opened this special session on 29 September 1943 by explaining that it was not going to be yet another trial for Akimov's *Hamlet*. He insisted that since the 1932 production was done by such a great artist, 'however wrong it was', it still carried much useful information for contemporary productions of Shakespeare. Morozov admitted that in the course of studying Akimov's sketches for *Hamlet*, he had realised that the spirit of this production was very close to English ballads, and hence quite in harmony with Shakespeare's style.

Morozov's logical and level-headed opening speech was followed by the key-note speaker, Liubov' Vendrovskaja,⁴⁵⁷ who reminded the participants of key scenes and presented an analysis of the historical context of this production.⁴⁵⁸ She correctly pointed out that the premiere on 19 May 1932 came just a few weeks after the dissolution of RAPP, whilst the initial plans for the production were born during the most advanced period of RAPP's doctrine, when it was simply impossible to stage *Hamlet* in a classical manner and free of avant-garde ideas. As a young artist just embarking on his independent theatre directing career, Akimov had to convince the Repertkom of his intentions in liberating *Hamlet* from

⁴⁵⁴ Mikhail Morozov (1897-1952), Soviet Shakespeare scholar and theatre critic.

⁴⁵⁵ Marina Zabolotniaia, introductory article to 'Obsuzhdenie akimovskogo "Gamleta"', 393-396.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Liubov' Vendrovskaja (1903-1993), Soviet theatre scholar.

⁴⁵⁸ Zabolotniaia, 'Obsuzhdenie akimovskogo "Gamleta"', 398-404.

the idealism of 18th and 19th centuries, making the hero approachable by the common people, who were energetic and devoted to his goal: to fight for the throne of Denmark. The speaker then pointed out Akimov's changes to the play and his efforts to omit its philosophical images. She also singled out a few deleted scenes, such as the procession of the beggars, which was to be carried out to a foxtrot and charleston music by Shostakovich (it seems likely that her memory was of a rehearsal or discussion, since this section of music, though composed in short score, was never actually orchestrated). Despite agreeing that Akimov had stripped the tragedy of any philosophy, she identified his main 'philosophical' and sociological understanding of Hamlet as the latter's duality and the tragedy of not being able to accomplish his task: 'Hamlet belongs to two different groups simultaneously: royalty and humanists.'⁴⁵⁹

This description and the speaker's toned-down criticism of the production led to further discussion and inevitable further judging of Akimov and his *Hamlet*. Everyone agreed on the artistic merits of Akimov and his stage work. Many scenes were described as memorable and amazing, and the production was counted as an important and 'necessary' one. However, it was noted that some of his visual solutions had taken pride of place over what should have been the actors' work; hence the philosophical part of the play, which could only be revealed through the art of acting, had gone missing. Yet most speakers referring to Mikhail Chekhov's 1924 production of *Hamlet* at MKhAT II – the one known for its lead actor overshadowing all other aspects of the production – praised Akimov in comparison, for his innovation and above all for reviving *Hamlet* after prior 'wrong' interpretations.

The participants considered it their prime role to discuss Akimov's 'mistakes' and to draw conclusions that could then be useful to any new artist attempting an interpretation of Shakespeare's works. Yet again, all this seemed much calmer and more constructive than the harsh critiques around the time of production.

The question of formalism was dismissed, with the explanation that a work would be formalist if it had no content or goal, whereas Akimov's intentions, however wrong they might have been, were crystal-clear: namely to depict the struggle for the throne of Denmark. Even so, the same speakers did not refrain from accusing Akimov of returning to Sumarokov's misinterpretation and rewriting of Shakespeare (see Chapter 1.1).

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 403.

Despite Morozov's warning at the beginning of the session, the discussions inevitably turned into questioning Akimov and his production. These arguments gradually changed the tone of the session, leading to what Akimov described as a 'Galileo moment', when he was expected to admit his mistakes. Trying to avoid engaging with the accusations, Akimov returned to the much more important and global subject – as he saw it – of the general history of theatre production of the classics in the Soviet Union. Echoing the key-note speech he emphasised that at the time when his *Hamlet* was in progress, the agenda of Repertkom was very different.

He also reminded the participants that in those days an important part of being a theatre director had consisted of reworking and reinterpreting (*peredelat'*) plays. He insisted that if he had concentrated on the intrigue of struggle for the throne, it was mainly to avoid being accused of 'formalism', which he nevertheless was. Maintaining that due to cuts and inevitable changes he did not manage to realise all his goals through the production, he announced his wish to stage *Hamlet* again, of course once the previous production was finally left alone and shelved.

Perhaps this is why he in fact never did realise that dream; he understood that however different a new production of *Hamlet* by him would be, it would always fall in the shadow of his 1932 production.

Whether Akimov could have deviated so far from the anticipated self-criticism had this meeting been held in 1948 or immediately afterwards, is doubtful. In the years of The Great Patriotic War, creative artists were enjoying relative freedom, due to the troubles of war and the over-riding need for boosting the morale of a war-stricken nation. In fact the most surprising thing about these discussions is that they took place at all. Accordingly, despite some more or less harsh criticism, the overall outcome of the Shakespeare Cabinet's 1943 session can be regarded as the first general retrospective survey of Akimov's *Hamlet* to concede its artistic values and its importance as a landmark in Soviet theatre history.

2.7.2 The reaction of the Western press

If time was a healer for Soviet critics, for their Western colleagues distance seemed to lend enchantment to the view. In the reviews following the premiere they at least seemed to notice many more positive aspects of Akimov's production. Today it is almost inconceivable that a Soviet production of a Shakespeare's tragedy by a newcomer at a young theatre, which could

be considered Moscow's third-ranking stage at the time,⁴⁶⁰ should have attracted such international attention., Akimov's *Hamlet* was reported in several Danish, German, American and English publications, where it was generally viewed as, at best, a breakthrough masterpiece and at worst as an interesting and unusual event.⁴⁶¹

The Observer described it as a 'daring experiment', in which 'Akimov transformed *Hamlet* from tragedy into comedy... calculated to evoke gusts of laughter'. Finding the production somewhat 'cold', the same writer nevertheless praised it as 'a specimen of how ingenious use of settings and costumes can change the accepted version of a play, while leaving the original text tolerably intact'.⁴⁶² By contrast, as we have seen, to Soviet/Russian critics the changes to the original text were nowhere near 'tolerable', even though one might have assumed that English speakers should be more sensitive to any manipulation of Shakespeare's words.

The Western journalists described the Soviet press's reaction was mixed rather than negative, presenting two different approaches: those who demanded more individuality in Hamlet's interpretation as a character, and those who required clearer depiction of the 'struggle between the trade capitalism and feudalism which according to strict Marxists dominated the life of Elizabethan England'.⁴⁶³

The Manchester Guardian took a relatively even-handed approach, trying to balance the show's originality with its dissimilarity to any traditional interpretation: 'Akimov has created a play that Shakespeare with his keen sense for good dramatic effects would most probably have admired, but would scarcely have recognised as his own work'.⁴⁶⁴

Although the *The Guardian*'s review conceded that some of Akimov's 'iconoclastic interpretations upset the inner structural harmony of the play', it astutely summed up the complexity of the production: 'Akimov has made a brilliant, hard, and unsentimental play of intrigue, in which elements of farce predominate, despite the sanguinary climax'.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁰ Compared to the Moscow Art Theatre (founded by Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko in 1898) and its offspring MKhAT II, Vakhtangov Theatre was still relatively new at the time.

⁴⁶¹ See for example: Ivy Low, 'Hamlet in Soviet Dress', *Moscow Daily News*, 24 May 1932; Ivy Low, 'Mr Shakespeare's "Hamlet", Soviet Style', *The New York Times*, 26 June 1932; "'Hamlet" Produced as Comedy: Daring Experiment in Russia', *The Observer*, 26 June 1932; 'Hamlet in Moskau', *Der Welt Spiegel*, 1932/31 (31 July), Sigvard Lund, 'Hamlet i Sovjetklæder', *Politiken*, 23 January 1934.

⁴⁶² "'Hamlet" produced as a comedy, daring experiment in Russia', *The Observer*, 26 June 1932.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ 'The Soviet "Hamlet". A Strange Production', *The Manchester Guardian*, 30 July 1932.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

A more subtle critique of Akimov's production appeared in the writings of Russian-born American theatre designer, Mordecai (Max) Gorelik who was visiting the Soviet Union at the time and who was clearly intrigued by this production.⁴⁶⁶ Praising several aspects of Akimov's staging, Gorelik nevertheless criticised several scenes that he considered as mere 'theatrical stunts'.⁴⁶⁷

If several reviews missed Akimov's scientific reasons behind his untraditional interpretation of Shakespeare's tragedy, Ivy Low in the *Moscow Daily News* managed to provide one of the first analytical readings of Akimov's *Hamlet*, claiming that this 'brilliant production is in truth an extremely respectful and scientific restoration of the original *Hamlet*, and may be compared to the work of the archaeologist'.⁴⁶⁸ She failed to clarify whether by 'original *Hamlet*' she meant Shakespeare's play or the medieval legend on which the Bard's tragedy is based. In the latter case, she should surely have dismissed Akimov's insistence on the notion of Hamlet as a university student and humanist, which sets the action in the Renaissance rather than the medieval era.

Low's extremely positive review berated those who criticised the production as 'magnificent but not Shakespeare', stating that 'very few people know what *Hamlet* ought to be like... the *Hamlet* we are pleased to call "traditional" is a mere bourgeois simulacrum thrust upon the world.' Low was a special case. She was the wife of Maxim Litvinov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs in the 1930s and later Soviet ambassador to the US. They had married in 1916 while he was a revolutionary exile in London and she lived in Moscow from 1920 before returning to England in 1972, where she died five years later. Her opinion might be judged as an example of pro-Soviet bias, even though the example of her fellow critics shows that this did not necessarily guarantee a positive review.

One reason why many Western critics admired Akimov's *Hamlet* had to do with its counterbalancing the contemporary trend to consider the play mainly as a vehicle for the star actor of the title role. The latter trend still reigns today, to the extent that many productions are merely known by the name of the lead actor (e.g. Cumberbatch's *Hamlet*, or David Tennant's) while the directors are often side-lined. By contrast, Akimov's *Hamlet* was not

⁴⁶⁶ Mordecai Gorelik, 'The Horses of Hamlet', *Theatre Arts*, November 1932, 883-886.

⁴⁶⁷ Anne Fletcher, *Rediscovering Mordecai Gorelik: Scene Design and the American Theatre*, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 2009, 101.

⁴⁶⁸ Low, 'Hamlet in Soviet Dress'.

just ‘the principal boy continually pursued by the spotlight, but a man among men’.⁴⁶⁹ All this contributed to Richard Watts Jr. from the *New York Herald Tribune* describing the production as ‘curious and exciting... and perhaps the best show in Europe’.⁴⁷⁰

2.8 Page vs Stage vs Age

For a fuller understanding of the dichotomy of Western and Soviet receptions of this production, it may help to step into the field of translation studies, and of semiologists such as Dirk Delabastia and Aleksei Semenenko.

Almost every post-war account of Akimov’s *Hamlet* places the production in its historic-political context, viewing the developing cultural climate of the time as the catalyst for the mixed reception of the play. In explaining the outcome of Akimov’s production, scholars often refer to the dissolution of RAPP, and the emergence of new doctrines, above all Socialist Realism.⁴⁷¹ However, studying Akimov’s production in isolation from its immediate political setting and observing its particularities within the historical process of canon formations offers a different, complementary explanation for the problem of its reception.

As discussed in Chapter 1.1 the history of Shakespeare reception in Russia as well as major areas of Eastern/Central European culture was hugely influenced by German and French trends. According to Paul Conklin, in the case of *Hamlet*, the play and the hero began to exist separately from very early on, with the prince often pictured as a ‘malcontent avenger’ already in the seventeenth century.⁴⁷² As Semenenko argues, this meant that there was already an interpretative canon of *Hamlet* that was more oral (or sensory) than written, being based on the theatrical presentations of the play.⁴⁷³ However, the German Romantic interpretation of *Hamlet*, Goethe’s in particular, proved to be pivotal to the process of separation of page and stage canons, with the ‘psychologised’ Hamlet being more a child of literature than of theatre. Likewise, in his study of *Hamlet* in the Netherlands, Dirk Delabastia affirms that Shakespeare’s tragedy was received along ‘two relatively independent lines, namely in the theatre and in literature’.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Richard Watts Jr., ‘*Hamlet* in Harmony with the Five-year Plan’, *New York Herald Tribune*, 24 June 1932.

⁴⁷¹ See Rudnitsky, McBurney, *et al.*

⁴⁷² Paul Conklin, *A History of ‘Hamlet’ Criticism, 1601-1821*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957 (orig. pub. 1947), 23

⁴⁷³ Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 51.

⁴⁷⁴ Dirk Delabastia, ‘*Hamlet* in the Netherlands in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries: The Complexities of the History of Shakespeare’s Reception’, in Delabastia and Lieven D’Hulst (eds.), *European*

Following this tradition, Semenenko concludes that the Russian *Hamlet* in the nineteenth and twentieth century was a dual canon, a dichotomy that was clearly reflected in translations of the tragedy: ‘There were simultaneously two canonical translations in each period which coexisted more or less peacefully due to the fact that they occupied different media: literature and the theatre.’⁴⁷⁵ In other words, one translation is considered relatively more accurate and closer to the source and therefore orientated towards the reader, whereas another is received as more creative, ‘multimodal’, dynamic and hence suitable for performance. As nineteenth-century examples of source-oriented translations Semenenko cites those by Mikhail Vronchenko, Nikolai Ketcher, Dmitrii Averkiev, and ‘K.R.’ (Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich of Russia), describing them as ‘philological’ with an ‘ethos to “educate” the audience and - more importantly - to convey the *canonical status* of the work.’⁴⁷⁶ Such translations tend to use an archaic and elevated style of speech, whereas creative translation often adopts contemporary language and modern style.

In the Soviet era this duality manifested itself very clearly in the opposition between so-called academic translations such as that by Mikhail Lozinskii (commissioned for Akimov’s production and published in 1933) and poetic or creative ones, most famously that of Boris Pasternak (c. 1940).

Lozinskii considered himself as a professional translator and a theoretician, who accordingly paid special attention to methodological principles. He confirmed the dual approach to translation in a speech of 1936, characterising the types as ‘reorganizational’ and ‘recreating’. Choosing the latter, Lozinskii described the process as reproducing the form and content of the original with the maximum possible degree of accuracy.⁴⁷⁷ He admitted that such a task can only be fulfilled to a certain extent and that the quality of the translation depends on how close the translator gets to the original. Acting as a ‘scientist-restorer’ (*uchenik-restavrator*), he singled out two functions of translation: the aesthetical and the cognitive

Shakespeare: Translating Shakespeare in the Romantic Age, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, J. Benjamins, 1993, 221.

⁴⁷⁵ Semenenko, ‘No Text is an Island: Translating Hamlet in Twenty-first-century Russia’, in Brian Baer (ed.), *Contexts, Subtexts and Pretexts: Literary Translation in Eastern Europe and Russia*, Amsterdam, J. Benjamins, 2011, 250. Semenenko defines a literary canon as a model of a text which can be used as a pattern for the creation of other texts – see Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 29-50.

⁴⁷⁶ Semenenko, ‘No text is an island’, 251.

⁴⁷⁷ Mikhail Lozinskii, ‘Iskusstvo stikhotvornogo perevoda’, *Druzhiba narodov*, 7 (1955), 160; Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 91.

(*poznavatel'naia*).⁴⁷⁸ He applied those principles to his translation of *Hamlet*, consciously aspiring towards an academic, canonical text.

One of the most distinguished features of this translation was the 'archaisation' of the language, adopted in order to suggest that the play itself was very old. Furthermore, Lozinskii applied 'his own unique system of equivalence – on metric, rhetoric and lexical levels' – and in order to avoid 'literal' translation he deployed 'semantic and stylistic substitutes'.⁴⁷⁹ Thus he created an academic and philological text, which strove to present the exact Russian counterpart to Shakespeare's text.

The accurate, academic translation canon may be understood as primarily reader-orientated and not particularly suitable to be adopted for stage or screen performance, since it does not really offer 'latitude to the creative power of the translator and/or director'.⁴⁸⁰ The antitheses to Lozinskii's translation which appeared around the same time were those by Anna Radlova (1937) and Boris Pasternak (1940). Of these Pasternak's, despite existing in several different versions/editions, has come to be considered canonic and has been the one most often used by theatre/film directors. Whereas Radlova announced that the focus of her translation was on the modern Soviet audience and theatre performance,⁴⁸¹ Pasternak went further and described his method as 'rendering thoughts and scenes' rather than 'translating words and metaphors', and he required that his work 'be judged as an original Russian dramatic work because... it contains more of that intentional liberty without which there can be no approach to great things.'⁴⁸² Of course, given Pasternak's affinity with *Hamlet* and the fact that through the increasing pressure in 1940s and 50s he took refuge in translation as an act of escapism, the personal and poetic nature of his translation of the tragedy comes as no surprise (see Chapter 4.4 and 4.5).

Given the accounts by Pasternak, Lozinskii's translation is rightly considered to belong to the opposing pole and therefore to be more in agreement with literary traditions, as opposed to

⁴⁷⁸ Lozinskii, 'Iskusstvo stikhotvornogo perevoda', in Efim Etkind (ed.), *Bagrovoe svetilo: stikhi zarubezhnykh poetov v perevode M.L. Lozinskogo*, Moscow, Progress, 1974, 173, quoted in Ivan Chekalov, 'Perevody "Gamleta" M. Lozinskogo, A. Radlovoi i B. Pasternaka v otsenke sovetskoi kritiki 30-kh godov', in Chekalov (ed.), *Russkii shekspirizm v XX veka*, Moscow, Reka veremen, 2014, 141.

⁴⁷⁹ Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 92; for details of Lozinskii's system see Eridano Batstarelli, 'O perevode *Bozhestvennoi komedii* Lozinskim. Sistema ekvivalentoi', in Aleksandr Lavrov (ed.), *Sravnitel'noe izuchenie literatury: Sb. Statei k 80-letiu M.P. Alekseeva*, Leningrad, Nauka, 1976, 315-323.

⁴⁸⁰ Semenenko, 'No text is an Island', 252.

⁴⁸¹ Anna Radlova, 'Kak ia rabotaiu nad perevodom Shekspira', *Literaturnyi sovremennik*, 3 (1934), 138-145.

⁴⁸² Christopher Barnes, *Pasternak*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Vol. 2, 170.

theatrical ones. Hence it seems paradoxical that Lozinskii's 'philological' translation was actually prepared specifically for Nikolai Akimov's seemingly anything but academic staging of *Hamlet* at the Vakhtangov Theatre. Lozinskii's elevated style made a clear dissonance with Akimov's iconoclastic rendition of Hamlet and his tragedy, despite instances of Akimov's adding to and interfering with it. This important dichotomy has not been pointed out by commentators and critics. Furthermore the archaism of the translation apparently contradicted Shostakovich's modern-sounding music, which, as we shall see in the next section, not only carried no trace of early music but deliberately exploited contemporary genres and cabaret style. Whether or not these dichotomies were intended by Akimov, the resulting dissonance could be counted among the factors for the frustration caused by this production, even if only at a subliminal level. Both the visual and musical interpretation might have been better received by the contemporary audience had the translated text been more stage-orientated.

2.9 Music and reception

If Akimov's *Hamlet* as a whole had a mixed reception, critics were unanimous in one respect: that Shostakovich's incidental music was excellent. Even the satirical journal *Krokodil* could not help but praise it: 'The composer Shostakovich leaves me in a very stupid situation as a critic. You see, when one writes for a satirical journal, one is supposed mainly to tell people off. But Shostakovich has composed such music that there is simply not a single fault with it. Amazing music!'⁴⁸³ What preceded this appraisal of Shostakovich's music was sharp-edged criticism of Akimov's production, claiming that the only Hamlet present at the theatre was in fact Vasilii Kachalov,⁴⁸⁴ who as the reviewer noted was in the audience and who should have been traumatised by what was happening on the stage in the name of Shakespeare.⁴⁸⁵

Other critics were not much different in preferring Shostakovich's 'magnificent' music to Akimov's scenic solutions. The harshest words directed at Akimov were probably those of the theatre critic and head of literary section of Moscow Art Theatre, Pavel Markov (1897–1980), who complained that 'At times it seems that the production is preventing us from hearing Shostakovich's music, let alone Shakespeare.'⁴⁸⁶ In this article Markov accused Akimov of betraying Evgeny Vakhtangov's traditions, this being even more hurtful in the

⁴⁸³ Armans Zoilova, 'V plane i razreze', *Krokodil*, 1932/17.

⁴⁸⁴ Vasilii Kachalov (1875-1948), Russian actor who played Hamlet in Craig/Stanislavsky's production at the Moscow Art Theatre in 1911/1912.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Pavel Markov, *O teatre*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1977, Vol. 4, 67, orig. pub. as "'Gamlet" v postanovke N. Akimova', *Sovetskii teatr*, 1932/7-8.

anniversary year of the great theatre director (10th anniversary of his death). He admitted to having detected brief echoes of Vakhtangov's theatre, not through Akimov's production but thanks to Shostakovich's music: 'Only a few times, during the long duration of the show, could Vakhtangov's principles be felt in it, and almost always this perception was caused not by the director's interpretation nor by the actors' skills, but by the music that Shostakovich composed in the teeth of Akimov.'⁴⁸⁷

By pointing to contradictions between Shostakovich's music and Akimov's production, these critics were no doubt responding to a problematic relationship. This is best illustrated by the fact that in one issue of *Sovetskoe iskusstvo* (27 May 1932) two separate articles were published: one discussing the production as a whole and the other Shostakovich's music. In the latter article, E. Gal'skii praised Shostakovich's music by suggesting that 'Shostakovich used music not only as an illustrative device but also in several moments he managed to give it the important, profound and clear significance of an independent composition. Thus, it is not rare that the music goes against the director's interpretative decision for a given scene.'⁴⁸⁸

Do these contradictions mean that Shostakovich's music simply overpowered Akimov's production and thus did not comply with the traditional subordinate function of incidental theatre music?⁴⁸⁹ Or were they perhaps a result of lack of communication and close collaboration between the two artists? To this day, no document has emerged to prove that Shostakovich composed his music with any detailed knowledge of Akimov's interpretative intentions. The two short letters that survive from the correspondence between these two men only reveal that Shostakovich started the composition quite late, due to his being overloaded by other projects, as he put it.⁴⁹⁰ Akimov and Shostakovich may well have elaborated their approaches at least to some extent independently, contributing to the apparent divergence between their readings. Even so, the little we do know about the background to Shostakovich's score helps us to understand its specific qualities and its relationship to the actual production, whether or not it was worked out through telephone conversations, meetings, letters that are now lost, or (as seems highly unlikely) without such communication altogether.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ E. Gal'skii, 'Muzyka k Gamletu', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 1932/24 (27 May).

⁴⁸⁹ For a rare study of theories of incidental music, see Kim Baston, 'Scoring Performance: the Function of Music in Contemporary Theatre and Circus'.

⁴⁹⁰ Letters from Shostakovich to Akimov dated 22 October 1931 and 18 February 1932, RGALI, f. 2737, op. 2, ed. khr. 214.

In the absence of such documentation, it may prove beneficial to refer back to the composer's previous incidental music and particularly to his first experience in this field, which was thrust upon him by none other than Meyerhold himself. When Prokofiev declined the offer to compose the incidental music to Meyerhold's 1929 production of Mayakovsky's *The Bedbug*, the director turned to his young protégé and friend, Shostakovich, who was at this time the pianist in residence at the Meyerhold Theatre in Moscow. Meyerhold's specific ideas regarding the musicality of theatre meant that he took great care to outline his requirements regarding the music and took the liberty of interfering in the process of composition and application of the musical material; this is revealed in his detailed letters to the composers involved in his productions explaining in detail his demands⁴⁹¹ and in his essential role in Shostakovich's music to *The Bedbug*, as detectable from the manuscripts and the final performance score where much pre-composed material was simply left out.⁴⁹²

A study of this score and Shostakovich's subsequent incidental music in conjunction with his other contemporary opuses reveals several instances of the composer's reusing of his own material. The recycling of musical material between different productions and between his theatre music and other genres suggests that many of his ideas were in fact generic rather than specifically intended for a particular character or scene. This may have been simply a result of onerous working conditions and strict deadlines dictated by the theatres, to which Shostakovich reacted in his famous 'Declaration' article in 1931 (see below); but it also illuminates the composer's 'cool-headed grasp of the way the same music could bear different meanings in different contexts.'⁴⁹³ Pre-composed generic musical excerpts had been an essential tool for the musician/accompanists of silent cinema, and this was a job from which Shostakovich himself had made money as a teenager. In his twenties, composing incidental music offered an opportunity to try his hand at diverse styles and aesthetic orientations, as well as to test out musical ideas from more ambitious ongoing projects, including most notably, his second opera, *The Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District* (1930-1932).

⁴⁹¹ Béatrice Picon-Vallin, 'Vers un théâtre musical. Les propositions de Vsevolod Meyerhold', in Laurent Fenech (ed.), *Musique et Dramaturgie, esthétique de la représentation au xx^e siècle*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 2003, 45-65.

⁴⁹² See Gerard McBurney, 'Shostakovich and the Theatre', 152-155.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, 147.

2.9.1 Shostakovich and Shakespeare

Akimov's production gave Shostakovich his first working encounter with Shakespeare; but it would be far from the last (see the list of works in Table 2.1). It is curious that in 1929, replying to a questionnaire, the young Shostakovich had admitted to a dislike for Shakespeare's work;⁴⁹⁴ however, this was before he had engaged with any of the Bard's works as a composer. The 1932 *Hamlet* seems to have left its mark, since from this point on he would return to Shakespeare at regular intervals during his career: in 1941 for Grigory Kozintsev's production of *King Lear* at the Leningrad Gorky Theatre (Bolshoi Dramaticheskii Teatr im. Gorkogo), in 1942 when he included a setting of Sonnet 66 in his song cycle, *Six Romances on Verses by English Poets*, Op. 62, and in 1954 when he recycled parts of the *King Lear* music together with a few newly-composed numbers for Kozintsev's 1954 production of *Hamlet* at the Pushkin Theatre in Leningrad (now the Alexandrinsky Theatre). In 1963, Kozintsev asked Shostakovich to provide the music for his famous cinema version of *Hamlet*, which was to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. The collaboration continued in 1970 with Shostakovich's score for Kozintsev's film version of *King Lear*.

The composer would have two further encounters of the Shakespearean kind, through characters rather than text, when he turned late in his career to Hamlet and Ophelia, this time to Russian poetic renderings of them. 'Ophelia's Song' opens his *Seven Verses of A. Blok*, Op. 127, depicting Ophelia's sorrow when bidding farewell to her beloved Hamlet. Finally 'Dialogue of Hamlet with his Conscience', which forms part of Shostakovich's *Six Verses of Marina Tsvetaeva*, Op. 143, describes Hamlet's inner turmoil as he blames himself for Ophelia's death (for further commentary see Chapter 5.4.1).

Table 2.1: Shostakovich's Shakespearean works

Work / Op.	Year	Genre	Source/Text	Director
<i>Hamlet</i> , Op. 32 and 32a	1932	Incidental music	Translated by Mikhail Lozinski, with some additions from Erasmus	Nikolai Akimov

⁴⁹⁴ Roman Il'ich Gruber, 'Responses of Shostakovich to a Questionnaire on the Psychology of the Creative Process', in Laurel Fay (ed.), *Shostakovich and His World*, Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2004, 31.

<i>King Lear</i> , Op. 58a	1941	Incidental music	Translated by Boris Pasternak	Grigori Kozintsev
<i>Six Romances on English poets</i> (texts by Raleigh, Burns and Shakespeare), Op. 62 and 62a. no. 5: 'Sonnet 66'	1942, 1943	Voice and piano, and arrangement for voice and orchestra	Translated by Boris Pasternak	N/A
<i>Hamlet</i>	1954	Incidental music	Translated by Boris Pasternak, Sonnet 74 at the end by Samuil Marshak	Grigori Kozintsev
<i>Hamlet</i> , Op. 116	1964	Film score	Translated by Pasternak	Grigori Kozintsev
<i>Seven Verses of A. Blok</i> , Op. 127, no. 1: 'Ophelia's Song'	1966	Vocal music	Aleksandr Blok	N/A
<i>King Lear</i> , Op. 137	1970	Film score	Translated by Pasternak	Grigori Kozintsev
<i>Six Verses of Marina Tsvetaeva</i> , Op. 143 and 143a, no. 3: 'Dialogue of Hamlet with his conscience'	1973, 1974	Voice and piano and arrangement for voice and orchestra	Marina Tsvetaeva	N/A

Apart from Shostakovich's self-chosen contact with Shakespeare, and *Hamlet* in particular, the image of the ambivalent self-doubting hero was also thrust upon him by critics, especially with regard to his Fifth Symphony. As Derek Hulme observes 'there are several instances in Russian books and articles of the Fifth Symphony being "dubbed the "Hamlet Symphony"'. Suggesting that the idea was probably started by David Rabinovich,⁴⁹⁵ Hulme argues that 'the composer would have known of this nickname'.⁴⁹⁶

Ian MacDonald, one of the more florid and (over-)imaginative of Shostakovich commentators, reports – without indication of source – that:

⁴⁹⁵ Rabinovich analyses the symphony by alluding to the 'accursed' questions that the composer asks through his music – see David Rabinovich, *Dmitry Shostakovich*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1959, 47-50.

⁴⁹⁶ Derek Hulme, *Dmitri Shostakovich: A Catalogue, Bibliography, and Discography*, 3rd edn., Oxford, Scarecrow, 2002 (1982), 176.

Since the staging of Yuri Olesha's *A List of Assets* [in 1931] the commonest symbol of individualism in Soviet culture had been Shakespeare's Hamlet, a man locked in the torture chamber of his own limited ideas. Incorporating this ready-made concept into their analysis of the Fifth, Soviet critics were soon talking about its individualism as 'Hamletesque' and referring to the work itself as the 'Hamlet symphony'. From here, it was a short step to identifying its beleaguered hero as Shostakovich himself and discussing all his music in terms of its composer's so-called 'Hamlet aspect'.⁴⁹⁷

In fact, as mentioned in the previous chapters, the symbolic qualities of Hamlet can be traced back to long before Olesha's play. In any case it is debatable whether, as MacDonald puts it, 'with the Hamlet theory, the Soviet authorities invented a myth about the composer which could be used to account for all deviations from optimism on his part',⁴⁹⁸ though of course this rings true to some extent if we conceive of Hamlet as he was traditionally portrayed: a dark, nostalgic prince.

Akimov's production had started Shostakovich off with quite a different Hamlet. Conceivably it may even have been an intimation of the director's untraditional and eccentric approach that tempted Shostakovich into this collaboration, despite his earlier ambivalence towards Shakespeare and theatre music in general, although in 1931 the two men would have known of each other from their joint participation in the music-hall revue, *Uslovno ubyiti* (*Declared Dead*).⁴⁹⁹

In November 1931, Shostakovich published an extraordinary manifesto in the journal *Rabochii i teatr*, entitled 'Declaration of a composer's duties', attacking the state of music in the theatre world, denouncing all his own theatrical and film music, and regarding only his 'First of May' Symphony [No. 3] among his recent works as a worthy contribution to the development of Soviet musical culture:

It is no secret to anyone that at the fourteenth anniversary of the October Revolution, the situation on the musical front is catastrophic. We composers answer for the

⁴⁹⁷ Ian MacDonald, *The New Shostakovich*, London, Fourth Estate, 1990, 126; rev. version, London, Pimlico, 2006, 149-150.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2000, 363.

situation on the musical front. And I am deeply convinced that it is precisely the universal flight of composers into the theatre that has created such a situation.⁵⁰⁰

Deploring the role of music diminished to what he called ‘naked accommodation’ with the appalling tastes of some theatres, Shostakovich summoned composers to turn away from submission to directorial requirements while composing works for the stage. And although he promised to fulfil his contract to provide incidental music for *Hamlet* at the Vakhtangov Theatre, he vowed to return the advances and cancel contracts for any other incidental music and to reject all future theatrical commissions for the next five years.⁵⁰¹

The fact that Shostakovich went ahead with his contract for *Hamlet* is easy to trivialise. It has been speculated that he had already spent the advances paid by the theatre, or that it was difficult to escape Akimov’s ‘convincing charm’.⁵⁰² But one might equally propose that *Hamlet* appealed to him as an excellent opportunity to set an example of how incidental music might resist what he had decried as total ‘subordination to the theatrical institutions’.

This point was particularly highlighted in Gal’skii’s glowing appraisal of Shostakovich’s music to *Hamlet* in his article published on the same page as a harsh criticism of Akimov’s production in *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*: ‘Earlier this year [*sic*], Shostakovich wrote an article in which he announced his dislike for theatre music and his decision to write “proper” music only. Shostakovich’s music to *Hamlet* is the best reply to the composer himself, the best piece of evidence to prove how wrong his opinion of his own theatre work was.’⁵⁰³

For another thing, being obsessed with the ongoing project of *Lady Macbeth*, Shostakovich’s work on Akimov’s *Hamlet* evidently provided him with a chance to try out the ‘tragedy-satire’ genre within which he classified his opera.

Unlike composer Vladimir Kobekin, who explicitly called his 2008 operatic take on *Hamlet* a comedy,⁵⁰⁴ for all Akimov’s interventions in the Shakespeare’s text, he did preserve the word ‘tragedy’ in the title of his production. Yet he chose to illustrate the poster with the ‘Gravediggers’ scene, which would presumably have been one of the satirical highlights, had it been preserved in the actual production. Such fusion of tragedy and satire points to

⁵⁰⁰ Shostakovich, ‘Deklaratsiia obiazannosti kompozitora’, *Rabochii i teatr*, 1931/31 (20 November), 6.

⁵⁰¹ Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, 64.

⁵⁰² Ian MacDonald, *The New Shostakovich*, 81, rev. edn. 98-9.

⁵⁰³ Gal’skii, ‘Muzyka k Gamletu’.

⁵⁰⁴ Vladimir Kobekin, *Gamlet (datskii) (rossiiskaia) komediia*, musical theatre piece premiered at the Stanislavsky-Nemirovich-Danchenko Academic Music Theatre in 2008 (see also Chapter 5.4.3).

Shostakovich's idea of a satirical rendering of Leskov's tragedy in *Lady Macbeth*, which could even have had its roots in the Vakhtangov production of *Hamlet* – existing documentations and evidence do not enable us to establish an exact chronology. That tragedy-comedy was in the air at the time is suggested by, for instance, the successful production of the well-known play *An Optimistic Tragedy*, written by Vsevolod Vyshevskii, and staged in 1933 by Tairov at the Kamernyi Teatr, which dealt with the story of a female commissar who sacrificed her life in order to bring glory to the Baltic fleet during the Civil War.⁵⁰⁵

2.9.2 Music and drama

Shostakovich's music to *Hamlet* was and remains the finest example of his theatre music and in a way the highpoint of all his incidental music of the 1920s and 30s.⁵⁰⁶ However, it is often assessed in isolation from the production itself, with most analysis being based on the musical material from the orchestral suite which the composer produced from his incidental music in 1932 and which has entered the concert repertoire (Op. 32a).⁵⁰⁷

Due to the lack of dramaturgical study of the music and production, and indeed the paucity of established theories for analysis of incidental music in general, even if it is considered in its theatrical context, Shostakovich's music has been described as closer to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* than anything else in Akimov's mise-en-scène. This highly debatable notion was possibly implanted by Iurii Elagin, a member of the Vakhtangov Theatre orchestra who emigrated to the West after the War, having been interned in a Nazi prisoner-of-war camp, and who published his memoirs in English in 1951: 'The music Shostakovich wrote for *Hamlet* was magnificent. Though it was very modern, it came closer to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* than anything else in Akimov's production.'⁵⁰⁸ As we shall see, there is a grain of truth in this observation. But the glaring mistakes that Elagin makes while describing the music and its respective scenes indicate that his memory was, to say the least, fallible.⁵⁰⁹ In fact, as we shall see, Akimov's untraditional interpretation of the tragedy is directly reflected by Shostakovich's music in several respects, not least in Shostakovich's choice of cabaret genres for several numbers.

⁵⁰⁵ See also Senelick and Ostrovsky, *The Soviet Theatre*, 338-41.

⁵⁰⁶ For a sympathetic survey of his other contributions in the field, see McBurney, 'Shostakovich and the Theatre', 145-178.

⁵⁰⁷ Derek Hulme, *Dmitri Shostakovich: A Catalogue, Bibliography, and Discography*, 105.

⁵⁰⁸ Juri Jelagin, *The Taming of the Arts*, 35.

⁵⁰⁹ One of these mistakes, regarding the recorder scene, is pointed out by McBurney, see McBurney, 'Shostakovich and theatre', 167-168. See also 2.10.3 below.

In support of Elagin's observation, the 60 or so musical numbers of the piano score kept at the Vakhtangov Theatre archive⁵¹⁰ are more or less divisible into the four categories Christopher R. Wilson lists as typical musical cues for incidental music to Shakespeare's works, namely stage music, magic music, character music and atmospheric music.⁵¹¹ In this way, all the fanfares, processions and transition ('stinger') numbers belong to the category of stage music, while Ophelia's songs and the gravedigger's are character music. Wilson argues that "atmospheric music" is the most subtle of the four categories, because it is concerned with such intangibles as mood, tone and emotional feeling, and because it may involve changes from suspicion to trust, from vengeance to forgiveness or from hatred to love.⁵¹² So it comes as no surprise that those numbers from Shostakovich's score which could be designated 'atmospheric' often belong to another category as well, and that it is by adding extra musical layers that the composer gives them subtle undertones, thereby musicalising the intangibles listed by Wilson. For example, as will be shown below, 'Hunt' is a 'stage music' (quasi-onomatopoeic), which at the same time underlines Ophelia's betrayal.

2.10 Akimov and Shostakovich's *Hamlet*: Act-by-act description and analysis

Akimov's production, due to its length, was subject to much debate regarding its outline, and several scenes had to be excised (see above 2.6). The production book and the musicodramatic synopsis (see below) indicate that Akimov's original concept was also more or less based on a five-act structure following Freytag's pyramid (or triangle)⁵¹³ though in the course of its development it ended up in four acts. When viewed in the context of Freytag's pyramid, liberties such as the omission of the Ghost of King Hamlet (replacing it with a fake ghost as impersonated by Hamlet and Horatio), reveal the director's personal take on the tragedy (see Figure 2.1), since these liberties have a significant effect on the exposition, the rising action and the climax.

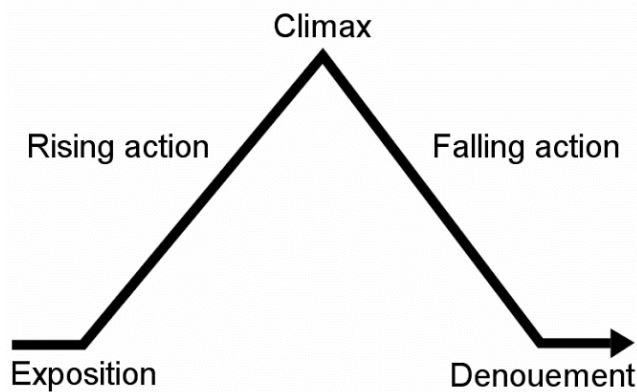
⁵¹⁰ At my first enquiries (2012-2014) the theatre's archivists claimed they no longer held this material. However, in 2014 they handed me a folder containing the scores. These are still uncatalogued and only carry the folder designation No. 26 and the stamp of the former Music Library of the Vakhtangov Theatre.

⁵¹¹ Christopher R. Wilson *et al.*, 'Shakespeare, William', in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn., London, Macmillan, 2001, Vol. 23, 192-198 – also available at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/public/page/shakespeare_william, accessed 21 July 2016.

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Created by nineteenth-century critic and novelist, Gustav Freytag, the Freytag Pyramid is a visual representation of how a dramatic plot develops. It consists of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement. See Freytag, *Die Technik des Dramas*, Leipzig, Hirzel, 1863 (the pyramid or triangle appears first at p. 100).

Figure 2.1: Freytag's pyramid



As Pavis observes, when it comes to analysis of a performance, ‘segmentation remains the core issue’, and although he concedes that there is little to be gained from ‘atomization of a performance into minimal units’, he also admits that it is not clear ‘what kind of macro units’ work best. Nevertheless he discourages what he calls the habitual trend of text-based, ‘philological’ segmentation in favour of a ‘découpage’ that is based on observable units derived from the actual *mise-en-scène*, its particular ‘rhythmic frameworks, its moments of rupture or pause’.⁵¹⁴ Moreover, he insists on the importance of ‘those sequences when text and stage move out of sync.’⁵¹⁵ Pavis’s further argument reveals that the ‘stage’ is understood to include all visual and audible elements of the *mise-en-scène*, including music and rhythm. What follows builds on Pavis’s theories and tools (derived from his *Analyzing Performance*), taking into account the role of music in ways that he himself does not undertake.

An overview of Shostakovich’s score reveals a high degree of affinity (‘synchronization’⁵¹⁶) with the overall structure of Akimov’s staging (see Table 2 in the Appendix). In fact, referring any incidental music back to the Shakespearean original is problematic, given the non-definitive status of the text in its various incarnations. The three different early versions of the play – the First Quarto (Q1, 1603), the Second Quarto (Q2, 1604), and the First Folio (F1, 1623) – each include lines, stage directions and even entire scenes missing from the others, and hence the play’s structure, its discontinuities and irregularities have inspired much critical scrutiny, which goes beyond the scope of this project. Clearly an analytical progression from text to production to music, of the kind Pavis deplores, is not practical in this instance (see Introduction).

⁵¹⁴ Pavis, *Analyzing Performance*, 21.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵¹⁶ For more on synchronization/desynchronization see, Pavis, *Analyzing Performance*, 220.

There follows an act-by-act description and analysis of each scene and its corresponding musical number where applicable, while the accompanying table presents an overview of the production and the sources used for this study (see Table 2 in the Appendix).

2.10.1 Akimov *Hamlet* Act 1

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* opens with a key question that will echo throughout the play: 'Who's there?' Pronounced by Bernardo, a frightened common soldier on guard, who is also the first person to appear on the stage, the question might seem innocuous, but it introduces the key topic of spying and conspiracy. However, and notwithstanding the common view regarding the dominance of the theme of espionage in Akimov's production, he chose to open his *Hamlet* with a short prologue, to be read in front of the closed curtains by the most philosophically depicted of his characters, Horatio. Horatio's costume, with its long university gown and round glasses, is intended to remind us of Erasmus (see Plate 2.2). This personalised prefacing of the play recalls Sir Laurence Olivier's 1948 film, where Olivier himself sets the play in motion with a summary of his understanding of the tragedy's main theme: 'This is the story of man who could not make up his mind.'⁵¹⁷ In Akimov's *Hamlet*, the opening words are not made up but come from the very end of the tragedy. In a sense Akimov actually finishes the play before he starts it, by quoting Horatio's final lines from V/2/364-369:

364 So shall you hear
365 Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
366 Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
367 Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,
368 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
369 Fall'n on th' inventors' heads: all this can I
Truly deliver.

This opening ploy strikes an unexpected philosophical and social tone, where Horatio's words suggest a universalised reading of Shakespeare tragedy as placed in a socio-political and historical context. If Olivier's *Hamlet* is about the dilemmas of an individual, Akimov's from the start deals, at least by implication, with the problems of a much larger impact on society, hence contributing to his reading of Hamlet as belonging to a social group caught between two eras. For Akimov, Hamlet is not just a man trying to regain what belongs to him; rather, he is a representative of two classes: a prince and a humanist in search of truth.

⁵¹⁷ *Hamlet*, 1948, Laurence Olivier (dir.), Universal International (viewable on DVD, Two Cities Film, Criterion, 2000).

Despite this textual transposition, Akimov then follows Shakespeare closely by giving Horatio the task of reader/narrator (it has been said that the name Horatio is derived from ‘orator’⁵¹⁸).

Plate 2.2: Akimov’s Horatio played by Aleksandr Kozlovskii (with the clay pot used for the ‘Ghost’ scene)



The sources do not indicate whether Shostakovich’s ‘Introduction’ was played before or after Horatio’s speech. However, its *fortissimo-marcato* character, and its harmonic open-endedness suggest that it would have been suitable for calling the audience’s attention before the entrance of the actor. At any rate it establishes a tone of Tchaikovskian fatefulness which will be echoed at the end of the first act.

⁵¹⁸ Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Thinking with Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2011, 86.

The curtain opens on the scene of the Night Patrol. The background story explains this depiction of security measures at Elsinore: Old King Hamlet has killed Fortinbras's father, the King of Norway, and has taken away lands from Norway. Fortinbras's uncle is the new king of Norway (an echo of what is happening in Denmark). Yet Fortinbras himself, like Hamlet, is determined to avenge his father and claim back his lands. Akimov uses Shostakovich's haunting music for the 'Night Patrol' to frame this scene, which starts as a mime. The motivic basis of the musical episode echoes down through Shostakovich's later works, the clearest example being the scherzo of his Tenth Symphony (see Ex. 2.1). In *Hamlet* its subdued yet naggingly insistent character suggests a mixture of vigilance and terror. Its static quality – quite unlike the naked brutality of the Tenth Symphony - is fully in accord with Shakespeare's overall image. This episode is also a recycling of the 'Infantry March' from Shostakovich's previous year's theatre score to Adrian Piotrovsky's *Rule, Britannia* (Op. 28) about communist agitation in the West.

Ex. 2.1: Shostakovich, *Hamlet* Act 1, 'Night Patrol', opening; b) Symphony No. 10, second movement, opening

a) **Moderato. Poco allegretto**



b) **Allegro** ♩=176



Despite the similarity to Shakespeare's opening scene in terms of the overall atmosphere of fear, reinforced by the music, Akimov's decision to leave out the Ghost of King Hamlet as a separate character means that the source of the fear of these common soldiers (Bernardo and Marcellus) is not clear. The production book at RGALI notes that the Ghost appears and is mentioned in the soldiers' conversation, but it does not clarify the staging solution adopted by Akimov (namely its impersonation by Hamlet and Horatio). However, a still from the production depicts a figure (most probably Hamlet) dressed as a ghost appearing to the soldiers and Horatio (see Plate 2.3). In any case, the result may have been initially confusing to the audience, which had yet to discover Akimov's Ghost-free concept.

Plate 2.3: Hamlet, Vakhtangov Theatre (1932), first appearance of the Ghost (I/I)



While in Shakespeare's play it is the rooster's crow that makes the Ghost disappear, there is no evidence of any musical rendering of this moment. Instead, Horatio's words 'I've heard this and believe it [i.e., that the rooster's crow is known to make ghosts disappear]' is followed by the 'Shepherd's pipe', played on the clarinet, which announces the breaking of dawn.

The second scene is visually the opposite of the first. It is daytime, and everyone is dressed in bright colours ready for the new King's wedding – everyone except Hamlet. Akimov assigns Hamlet a very dramatic entrance, singling him out not only visually but also dramatically. Following Claudius's words justifying his marriage and the celebrations, Shostakovich's 'Funeral march' is played while Hamlet enters wearing a black veil that covers his face (Ex. 2.2).

Ex. 2.2: Shostakovich, *Hamlet*, Act 1, ‘Funeral March’, bars 16-19

[Adagio]

The musical score consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with block chords. The second system continues the melodic line in the treble clef and the bass line in the bass clef. The key signature is B-flat minor (three flats) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo marking is [Adagio] and the dynamic marking is [ff pesante]. There are several triplet markings (3) over the notes in both staves.

This was a moment widely praised for its intensity and powerful drama. Pavel Markov, for instance, claimed that this was the scene where he encountered and felt Shakespeare, but he insists that this was thanks to Shostakovich’s music, rather than to Akimov’s staging.⁵¹⁹ Shostakovich’s music, according to Elena Zinkevych, could be placed beside the funereal music from his First Symphony (third movement) and the finale of his Fourth Symphony. If, as she argues, in the First Symphony the funereal music appears as a prophetic warning for those tragic events yet to come in Shostakovich’s life and the life of his country, and in the Fourth as a philosophical reflection, in *Hamlet* it represents pain and decay, arising directly from the tragedy of life. These interpretations are made with hindsight. The use of orchestral tutti and octave doublings of the melodic line during significant portions of the opening ‘Funeral march’ points to a more universalised status of mourning, rather than individual suffering.⁵²⁰ It might be added that to well-attuned musical ears the B flat minor tonality, echoing that of Chopin’s famous Funeral March Sonata, reinforces the archetypal impression. By conveying Hamlet’s mournful state and the universality of the tragedy of the King Hamlet’s death, the ‘Funeral March’ goes beyond simple ‘stage music’ marking the protagonist’s entrance. In fact, in the absence of the actual Ghost of King Hamlet from Akimov’s mise-en-scène, Shostakovich’s music in a sense fills in for this missing component

⁵¹⁹ Pavel Markov, “‘Gamlet’ v postanovke N. Akimova”, 67.

⁵²⁰ Elena Zinkevych, ‘Muzyka k pervomu Gamletu’, *Sovetskaya muzyka*, 1971/5, 96.

in the ‘exposition’ of the tragedy, according to Freytag’s pyramid structure, and by means of musico-dramatic irony brings to the audience’s consciousness the murder of the King.

This scene ends with Claudius announcing that Hamlet is next in line to the throne, and that to show his love to his nephew and now step-son he will be drinking to his health all through the celebrations. Claudius then invites everyone to a day of feasting, drinking and firing cannons. His exit, which is followed by that of the Queen and everyone else except Hamlet, is accompanied by Shostakovich’s startlingly up-tempo galop music in the manner of Offenbach (Ex. 2.3). Although Zinkevych finds this music to be ironic and hence an example of Shostakovich’s use of ‘*muzyka byta*’ (everyday music) to convey decay and evil,⁵²¹ the preceding announcement of the feast and the overall joyous atmosphere of the wedding justify Shostakovich’s choice of idiom also in a non-ironic way, in accord with both Shakespeare and Akimov.

Ex. 2.3: Shostakovich, *Hamlet*, Act 1, ‘Exit of the King and Queen’ (complete)

Allegro

In general, Akimov shuffles Shakespeare’s text quite extensively from this point. For example, he transposes to this scene Hamlet’s remark about Claudius’s being a villain despite smiling, which in Shakespeare comes only after the departure of the Ghost and Hamlet’s finding out about the destiny of his father (I/5/106-108).⁵²²

106 O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!

107 My tables—meet it is I set it down,

⁵²¹ Zinkevich, ‘Muzyka k pervomu Gamletu’, 98.

⁵²² See production book, RGALI f. 2737, op. 2, ed. khr. 1, 11.

108 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;

109 At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark:

By this means, Akimov reinforces his overall concept that Hamlet knew from the beginning of the play that his uncle was guilty and hated Claudius intensely for stealing the throne of Denmark. Hence, whilst Shakespeare's Hamlet needs a reason to justify his darkest inner feelings towards his uncle and is at times confused about those feelings, Akimov's prince seeks no such justification, but rather proceeds to put his plan into action and to gain support for his cause. The production book at RGALI suggests that this shuffling of text took place at a relatively late stage of work on the *mise-en-scène*, since the extract is written in by hand. It seems that Akimov was trying to reinforce his interpretation, by insisting that Hamlet knew from the beginning of the play who his enemy was. In this way, again applying Freytag's pyramid, it is Hamlet and not the Ghost who is the 'exciting force' behind the 'rising action'. This is confirmed by Hamlet's staging of the 'ghost scene' and later 'the mousetrap'.

The following musical number, the 'Dining music', despite contributing further to the festive mood of the scene with its waltz-like lilt, is probably mainly a filler for the change of set for the next scene, which takes place at Ophelia's closet (see Table 2 in the Appendix). There is no musical accompaniment for this scene, which depicts Ophelia being summoned by her brother and then by her father, and advised to spurn Hamlet's advances. Here Shakespeare's text offers no insight into Ophelia's heart, and her personality and feelings towards Hamlet indeed remain open to different interpretations. Traditionally, and especially in Russian secondary literature, she has been understood as a symbol of purity and innocence. Yet Laertes' and Polonius's worries could just as easily be the result of some hypothetical prior misbehaviour and lustful attitude on her part, and this is the approach chosen by Akimov.

The fourth scene of this act in Akimov's production corresponds to the end of Act 1, scene 2 in Shakespeare's text. Akimov delays the reunion of Hamlet and his old comrade Horatio until this point. This scene, which he calls 'Arsenal' and which is also without music, shows Hamlet revealing to Horatio his strategy for regaining the throne of Denmark and asking for his friend's help. He is, in fact, planning to pretend to be his father's ghost in order to win more support for his fight with Claudius for the throne (confusingly, he has already done this in Akimov's production, at the opening of the play). The title 'Arsenal' is appropriate both metaphorically and literally, referring to Hamlet's envisaged plan of action and at the same time to his trying on the armour that he has found in a closet in order to prepare for assuming the part of the Ghost in the following scene. Akimov's choice of an actor with a large

physique to play Hamlet evidently added visually to the comical side of the tragedy at this and other points. Marina Zabolotniaia quotes S. Petropavlovskii, who describes how ‘Hamlet skips and jumps like a well-fed calf (*sytyi telenok*).’⁵²³ Il’ia Berezark uses a more artistic comparison: ‘Goriunov plays a happy, fat guy with deformed legs, as if he has emerged from a painting by the Dutch artist, Pieter Bruegel.’⁵²⁴

The scene entitled ‘The Ruins’ conflates scenes 4 and 5 of Shakespeare’s first act; since there is no ghost, there is no need for a separate scene of ‘Hamlet and the Ghost (I/5)’. The scene begins with Hamlet, Horatio and Marcellus awaiting midnight and the reappearance of the Ghost. Following Shakespeare’s text, there are flourishes and cannon-fire, followed by ‘Dancing music’ emanating from Claudius’s feast in the distance. The *sempre piano* performance instruction and somewhat uncanny Mahlerian character of this musical number, evoked by the unexpected caesuras, are impossible to explain other than by the context of the play and with the help of the production book, which reveals its designated place.

Notwithstanding the lack of precision in the musico-dramatic synopsis, this piece was almost certainly designed to be heard as though sounding from a distance. Hence the more usual *forte* of dancing music (which would cover up the noise of feet on the stage) is replaced by a *sempre piano*. The transparent orchestral texture and the caesuras simulate the distance that, diegetically speaking, could well render the bass register acoustically inaudible (see Ex. 2.4).

Ex. 2.4: Shostakovich *Hamlet*, Act 1, ‘Dance Music’

The setting of the ‘Ghost scene’ – or, more accurately for Akimov’s production, the ‘non-ghost scene’ - has been immortalised by photographs that depict Hamlet kicking in the air as

⁵²³ Zabolotniaia, ‘O Postanovke “Gamleta”’, 94.

⁵²⁴ Il’ia Berezark, ‘Avantiurist i gumanist’, *Rabis*, 1932/16, 7.

if to repel an invisible ghost, and a bit further on by Horatio holding a clay pot in front of his mouth and making spooky ghost-like noises (see Plate 2.4 and, for the clay pot, Plate 2.2 above). The fact that this visually intriguing scene is without any music may seem strange. Following Shakespeare's text and musical tradition, as outlined by Christopher Wilson, this scene would require incidental music of the 'magic' category; however, in the absence of supernatural phenomena (i.e. the Ghost) such accompaniment would be futile and even misleading. The absence of music could also have been a case of avoiding making the scene too laden with semantic layers for an audience encountering this extremely original approach for the first time. Shostakovich's manuscripts and sketches show no sign of any draft for this scene, and in the absence of any significant correspondence between the two artists indicating their method of collaboration, it is impossible to establish whether or not Shostakovich was up to date with all the changes or was following any specific instructions given by Akimov. Whatever the case, Akimov's solution to the problem of the Ghost is highly innovative and is clarified in the production book, where instead of a dialogue between Hamlet and the Ghost the entire text is spoken by Hamlet alone. Great care is taken to include all of the Bard's words, including those spoken by the Ghost from under the stage, which Akimov allots to Horatio. Yet Akimov's interpretation has its logical flaws: the whole 'swearing by sword' scene appears not to fit with Akimov's concept of Hamlet's staging the Ghost scene in order to agitate the people against Claudius. Why does he now make the witnessing crowd swear to secrecy about what they have seen? It might be that Akimov had other agendas that were either deleted before finding their way into the production book or else got lost in the process of staging, not all of whose revisions are documented.

Plate 2.4: *Hamlet*, Vakhtangov Theatre (1932), second appearance of the Ghost (I/5)



Act 1 finishes with a short closing music ('Finale of the First Act') which recalls the Tchaikovskian character of the opening number but with a new concluding C minor twist, perhaps as an indicator of 'something... rotten in the state of Denmark' (found in Shakespeare Act 1 scene 4) or as a premonition of the bloodshed and tragedy to come.

If, as a whole, Shostakovich's music for Act 1 consists mainly of pastiche and lacks a personal stamp, the second act will offer more of his individual idiom, to the point of self-quotation, adding another semantic layer to the events and (apparent) personalities of the characters.

2.10.2 Akimov *Hamlet* Act 2

Akimov's realisation of the second act is almost impossible to reconstruct without a parallel study of archival materials, mainly because several scenes and ideas did not survive the scrutiny of panels before the premiere. In this act Akimov's imagination takes wing, and he is not afraid of moving scenes around and even adding scenes not found in Shakespeare's text. Some of these were eventually cut out, and as a result much of Akimov's general concept became distorted. Since some of the excised passages had no words and were designed as interludes (*Intermedia*), it is often quite difficult to work out their exact relation to the plot or their place in the play. This is the case with the scene, 'Passage of the Beggars', which is included in the piano score published in the Soviet Complete Collection of Shostakovich's works, but was not orchestrated, evidently because it was not included in the production

itself.⁵²⁵ According to the commentaries to that volume, the order of the pieces was established according to the manuscripts and copies kept at the Vakhtangov Theatre archives and at RGALI, as well as the conductor's list (musico-dramatic synopsis). However, this scene, which in this volume has been placed after the end of Act 5, was among those left out in the production itself, which seems to be the only the reason for placing it at the very end. Gerard McBurney, on the other hand, chooses to follow the logic of Shakespeare's text for the placing of his orchestration within the complete score as performed and recorded by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra,⁵²⁶ logically assuming that the beggars would appear at the graveyard scene after Ophelia's death (Act 5 in Shakespeare's text and 4 in Akimov's production). To establish the true place of this scene dramatically and according to the intentions of Akimov, we need to look at a much lesser-known archival document, entitled 'Protokol', which is a stenographic report of Akimov's outline for his production in March 1931.⁵²⁷ According to this document, the scene of the beggars was to be placed at the beginning of the second act, depicting those who are ready to sell themselves and become the King's spies (principally to keep an eye on Hamlet). Akimov describes the scene in detail:

The second act starts with a musical and dancing procession. A few monks and behind them beggars. Beggars were like a plague in that time. Because of the competition they would think of all sorts of tricks to feign deformity. The procession takes place on the proscenium. The music is catholic-religious with beaters (*kolotushki*) and sleigh bells with hints of the Charleston as a response to contemporaneity. The last beggar is pseudo-legless, rolling his cart along the proscenium; he leaves it and comes to the window. He knocks and hands in a letter. Polonius instructs him on how to spy on Laertes. The instruction is interrupted several times; the beggar leaves and comes back again. A pig's squeal distracts Polonius. In the end, the beggar rides his cart along the proscenium and bumps into Ophelia. Ophelia gives Polonius her first report. Polonius decides to go and see the King.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁵ Shostakovich, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Vol. 28, Moscow, Muzyka, 1986, 150-151.

⁵²⁶ *Shostakovich: Hamlet & King Lear*, various soloists, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Mark Elder (Signum SIGCD052, 1994).

⁵²⁷ Akimov, 'Protokol' in 'Doklad N.P. Akimova o Tragedii V. Shekspira "Gamlet" na khudozhestvennom soveshchani: protokol i stenogrammy khudozhestvennykh soveshchanyi teatra po obsuzhdeniiu doklada, 15, 16, 19 marta 1931', Vakhtangov Theatre Archive, Arkh. No. 522, Sviazka 22, op. 1, 20-21 (hereafter referred to as 'Protokol').

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, 20. Admittedly the sources show that a repetition of the beggars' music might have been considered by Akimov for the gravediggers' scene – see 2.10.4 below.

Meyerhold, interferes with Shakespeare’s text and structure, employing a combination of translations by Pasternak, Lozinskii and Polevoi.

In motivic/gestural terms Shostakovich’s music for the scene of Hamlet and the boys points towards the seduction scene from his opera, *The Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*, which was being composed parallel to his work on *Hamlet*. At the same time, it is arguably also a reworking and development of the opening bars of ‘The Wedding’ scene from his 1929 incidental music to Meyerhold’s production of *The Bedbug* (see Ex. 2.5).

Ex. 2.5: a) Shostakovich *Hamlet*, Act 2, ‘The passage of Hamlet with the boys’; b) *Lady Macbeth*, Act I, scene 3; c) *The Bedbug*, ‘The Wedding’

[Allegro]

a)

[Allegro]

b)

Allegro

c)

Finally it is Ophelia’s turn to be appointed as a spy to watch Hamlet. This is illustrated musically in the ‘Galop of Polonius and Ophelia’, which is quite comical and – like the ‘Exit of the King and Queen’ in the first act - very much in the style of Offenbach. Akimov explained that Polonius is the most comic character of the tragedy,⁵³⁰ which justifies the tone of this short extract, marked to be repeated until the actors have left the stage. By deploying

⁵³⁰ Akimov, ‘Protokol’, 20 verso.

a similar grotesque style and genre, Shostakovich confirms the director's grouping of Claudius, Gertrude, Ophelia and Polonius as opponents to Hamlet and his cause.

The second scene of Act 2 is made up of meetings and examinations, and finishes with the arrival of the actors and Hamlet's soliloquy. In the absence of any stage direction in Shakespeare's text, and probably in accordance with the possibilities of Shakespeare's Globe theatre with no curtains, the entire scene can take place with the same staging. But Akimov decides to change the background set, making extensive use of the proscenium and thus enriching the production visually while further reinforcing the images he wishes to attribute to each character.

In this vein, Claudius is first perceived posing while surrounded by the courtiers. But it turns out that he is in fact trying on the clothes of the old King, which are too big for him and are being altered to fit him. At this point Polonius enters and announces the arrival of Norwegian ambassadors and also that he has discovered the reason behind Hamlet's madness. This is followed by the arrival of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Here Akimov envisaged interludes that were eventually to be excised before the premiere. For example, in Shakespeare's text, Hamlet's unexpected visit to Ophelia's closet features as a report by the young woman to her father (Act 2, Scene 1). It is common practice for film directors to have these or other spoken reports and narrations acted out as scenes in their own right: this is the case, for example, with Kozintsev's 1964 film, which depicts Hamlet's going to Ophelia's closet after the ghost scene (another more familiar instance is Ophelia's death, which in Shakespeare's text has no independent scene and is merely reported by Gertrude). But theatre productions generally follow Shakespeare's text in such instances and keep the events as spoken reports. According to the 'Protokol', Akimov conserved parts of the dialogue between father and daughter but transferred some of the action to an interlude, together with Hamlet reciting his love poem to Ophelia (II/2/106-119), which in Shakespeare's text is read by Polonius to the King and Queen. Akimov used this moment as an opportunity to reveal his concept of Ophelia's personality:

Ophelia is sitting at the window. Ivy is hanging from the window with Hamlet on it. He is reading out a poetic text. Ophelia slams the window. Hamlet jumps down and

falls on or near a voluptuous girl, from whom he runs away. Another young guy appears, the window opens up, he sneaks in and the window closes behind him.⁵³¹

There is no sign of this scene in any of the other archival materials, and Shostakovich's score – despite the fact that the production book points towards 'Hamlet and musicians' – does not contain any number that could have been destined for it.⁵³²

Hamlet and Horatio, meanwhile, are in a library reading, when Polonius walks in on them. This is how Akimov confirms that Hamlet's and especially Horatio are humanists and university people. Seen among piles of books, Horatio is examining a skeleton, while Hamlet is reading from the German humanist, scholar, poet and reformer, Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523). Accordingly the 'words, words, words' seem to come from this scholar's book. The Yorick scene from Act 5 scene 1 is transferred to here, when a gravedigger presents Hamlet with the skull, thus returning Yorick to where he once belonged: according to Shakespeare's text, Hamlet used to play with Yorick in the castle as he was growing up (*Hamlet*, V/1/174-179). Neither of these scenes has any designated music.

The other interlude, which does appear in Shostakovich's score, depicts the conversation between Hamlet and Rosencrantz. This includes Akimov's additional words about the wandering actors and the critics' mean attitude towards them. Shostakovich's parodic music, quite similar to the 'Passage of Hamlet and boys' scene, punctuates Rosencrantz's added words: 'When critics see a heroic play, they claim that this is not enough... and when they see a satirical play, they say that this is already too much.' These phrases, which were left out of the final version of the production, accurately prophesied the critical reaction to Akimov's *Hamlet*.

Here, as Esti Sheinberg points out, Shostakovich is sending up a well-known Soviet popular song of the time, 'They wanted to beat us, to beat us'.⁵³³ This moment of musical parody has wrongly been reported by Elagin as belonging to the much later 'Flute Scene' (see below), and almost all accounts of this production draw on his version. In fact, for the Rosencrantz and Hamlet dialogue, Shostakovich's parodic music simply mirrors in updated form Shakespeare's mocking of the theatre of his time. The original march was composed in 1929 by Alexander Davidenko, a leader of the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians

⁵³¹ Akimov, 'Protokol', 20 verso.

⁵³² Akimov, *Hamlet Production Book*, 43

⁵³³ Esti Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000, 103-104.

Ex. 2.7: Shostakovich a) *Hamlet*, Act 2, [Arrival of the Actors]; b) Symphony No. 3, bars 262-71 (in each case the bass stave is Shostakovich’s piano rendition of a side-drum tattoo)

a) **Allegro**

The first system of music for Ex. 2.7a shows a treble clef staff with a forte (*ff*) dynamic marking. The melody begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef staff features a side-drum tattoo consisting of a steady eighth-note pattern in G4. The second system continues the melody with a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4, while the side-drum pattern remains consistent.

b) **[Allegro]**

The first system of music for Ex. 2.7b shows a treble clef staff with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The bass clef staff features a side-drum tattoo consisting of a steady eighth-note pattern in G4. The second system continues the melody with a half note D5, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4, while the side-drum pattern remains consistent.

Here there was to be another interlude following Hamlet’s stating of his plan of action – to observe and examine the King’s reaction to the performance of the ‘Mousetrap’ in order to catch him red-handed and reveal his criminal act. The musical interlude, entitled ‘Dialogue of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’, has Shostakovich’s typical flattened II and V degrees – always associated with a darkening of mood or image - and is performed *sempre piano*, which further illustrates the conspiratorial and secretive nature of the men’s dialogue (Ex. 2.8).

Ex. 2.8: Shostakovich *Hamlet*, Act 2, ‘Dialogue of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’

Allegretto

The apotheosis of this act is ‘The Hunt’, which Akimov in his ‘Protokol’ describes as ‘a musical scene’.⁵³⁶ Accordingly it contains the longest continuous musical number of the entire production. The title, in fact, carries a double meaning: a literal hunt with real horses on the stage and with the participation of Hamlet, Claudius, Polonius and other courtiers; and at the same time a metaphorical hunt for the real reason behind Hamlet’s ‘madness’. This scene leads to and replaces ‘the nunnery scene’ from Shakespeare’s tragedy (III/1), where Hamlet is confronted with Ophelia in a meeting with Polonius and Claudius watching them closely. Akimov adds a comic twist to this scene by placing these two inside a hollow tree trunk, from which Polonius would have trouble getting out.

The enigma of this scene as to why Hamlet’s gentle tone with Ophelia suddenly becomes aggressive is often solved by suggesting that the prince actually notices Polonius and that he is being ‘set up’. Akimov opts for the same strategy, and Shostakovich assists this by conveying Ophelia’s betraying deed in the troubled pulsation of the hunting music, reinforced by bass drum and, in the second section of the number, by driving syncopations. This is a truly Shostakovichian, obsessive galop in the manner of *Lady Macbeth*. Here, as in several instances already witnessed in Act 2, Shostakovich’s music demonstrates the hallmark of his individual modal style, which serves as a distinct layer of semantic progression from the more generalised style of Act 1 and reinforces the gathering intensity of the drama, along the lines mapped out in contrasting ways by Shakespeare and Akimov.

⁵³⁶ Akimov, ‘Protokol’, 20 verso.

One of the main distinguishing factors of any production of *Hamlet* is where the main climax is situated. Despite several instances of mirroring actions, Shakespeare himself cleverly avoids an exact symmetry and modifies the conventional five-act structure. Hence, in different productions the place of the climax varies: candidates include the King's prayer scene (III/3), the Queen's bedroom scene (III/4) as in Olivier's somewhat Freudian reading, the killing of Polonius, the final duel, or even the flute scene, as in Kozintsev's 1964 film. The importance given to both musical and visual forces of the 'Hunt' scene, with live horses and the only outside set of the production, suggests that Akimov may have considered it to be the peak of the 'rising action' in terms of Freytag's pyramid, or even the turning-point and climax of the play. Corresponding to Akimov's main theme of the struggle for the throne, this scene marks the beginning of an open confrontation of the two camps. Finishing the entire second act with a repeat of the breathless last eleven bars of this scene's musical accompaniment asserts its crucial role.

2.10.3 Akimov *Hamlet* Act 3

Having transposed the 'nunnery' scene (here the 'Hunt') from the third act to the second, Akimov begins Act 3 with Hamlet's advice to the actors, in one of the most often quoted phrases of Shakespeare: to play as if holding a 'mirror up to nature' (III/2/22). Since for Akimov the speech and the following scene are supposed to be a rehearsal for the 'Mousetrap' performance, he sets them in a wine cellar, with Hamlet, Horatio, actors and musicians present. The rehearsal scene was to have started with a musical jeu d'esprit from Shostakovich, illustrating the musicians tuning up their instruments (chromatic distorted open fifths on the strings), but this was presumably cut, since the music, though composed in short score, was never orchestrated.

In order to realise his unusual concept of presenting the play-within-the play first complete as a rehearsal and then with the real performance off-stage, Akimov asked Lozinskii to provide him with an ending for the rehearsal, since in Shakespeare's text the final scene of the show is interrupted by the King's storming out. This *mise-en-scène* also permitted Akimov to include most of the lines from the 'Murder of Gonzago' and hence to preserve the deeper and usually less explored side of Shakespeare's text for this scene. Most theatre/film directors reduce the text of the play-within-a play to its bare minimum, thus losing out on such interesting moments as the old King giving the Queen permission to forgive herself if she forgets him and remarries after his death (III/2/200-215).

The King's lines, which seemingly pardon Gertrude's later actions, should have rung a loud bell with Shostakovich, who in turn was justifying the violent actions of the heroine of *Lady Macbeth* on which he was working at this time.⁵³⁷ The accompanying music, and especially the introduction to the rehearsal of 'The Murder of Gonzago', repeats the allusions in *Lady Macbeth* Act 4 to Musorgsky's 'Gnomus' – all drawn from a semantic pool of musical representations of the horrific by means of quasi-onomatopoeic shivers (Ex. 2.9). The same motif will reappear in Shostakovich's incidental music to Kozintsev's 1964 film version of *Hamlet*, where the composer depicts the flight of a seagull, symbolising Ophelia's death (around 1:47:55, score unpublished).

Ex. 2.9: a) Shostakovich, *Hamlet*, Act 3 'Introduction [to the actors' rehearsal]'; b) Shostakovich, *The Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*, Act 4; c) Musorgsky, 'Gnomus' from *Pictures from an Exhibition*

Adagio

a)

b)

c)

poco a poco accelerando

This introduction and the following pastoral episodes, stylistically à la Tchaikovsky, which accompany the dialogue of the actor King and the actor Queen, are interrupted at various

⁵³⁷ For the most authoritative among many commentaries, see Caryl Emerson, 'Back to the Future: Shostakovich's Revision of Leskov's "Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District"', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, I/1 (March 1989), 59-78.

points by Hamlet’s descriptive instructions and commentaries, cleverly incorporated here from Shakespeare’s later scene. The entrance of the poisoner and the pouring of poison inside the sleeping King’s ear are depicted musically in harsh atonal fragments (Ex. 2.10).

Ex. 2.10: a) Shostakovich, *Hamlet*, Act 3, ‘Entrance of the poisoner’; b) ‘Music of the poisoning’

a) **Allegro**

b) **Adagio**

Finally the music for the exit of the poisoner resonates once again with Shostakovich’s *Lady Macbeth*, after Katerina Izmailova has poisoned her husband (Ex. 2.11).

Ex. 2.11: a) Shostakovich *Hamlet*, Act 3, ‘Exit of the Poisoner’; b) *Lady Macbeth*, Act 2

a) **Andante**

b) **Andante** ♩=88

Similar to Katerina’s crocodile tears, this poisoning scene is followed by the actor-Queen’s passionate reaction as she finds out about her husband’s death; the music here is in a syrupy mock-Richard Strauss style, suggesting the superficiality of the woman’s behaviour.

Lozinskii’s suggested ending to the play-within-a play was inspired by Shakespeare’s ‘dumb show’ – a mimed version of ‘Murder of Gonzago’ - which precedes the actual performance in front of the guests. This shows how the Queen and the poisoner got together as the new royal couple. This rehearsal is followed by Polonius’s announcing Gertrude and Claudius’s willingness to attend the performance and Hamlet’s ordering him as well as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to make the actors hurry up.

What followed was the riskiest episode in Akimov’s reading of *Hamlet*, as it tackled the most famous episode not only of the play but probably in the entire Shakespeare canon. Having delayed the celebrated ‘To be or not to be’ soliloquy until this point,⁵³⁸ Akimov presents the monologue as a dialogue between Hamlet and Horatio while Hamlet is trying on the papier-mâché crown left by the actors and wondering ‘to be or not to be [i.e. King]’ followed by a discussion of doubts between the two friends (see Plate 2.5). Already during the rehearsals Akimov was harshly criticised for this unusual reading. But he never backed off from offering what was quite possibly the first dialogued version of Shakespeare’s most famous soliloquy.

⁵³⁸ In the text of First Folio the soliloquy comes at the start of the nunnery scene (III/1/55-89).

Plate 2.5: *Hamlet*, Vakhtangov Theatre (1932), ‘To be or not to be’



The ‘To be or not to be’ dialogue was to be followed by the musical number, ‘Dialogue of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’ played, *pianissimo* several times, underlining the secretive nature of their conversation. The arrival of the guests, who include the royals and court noblemen, is presented musically in a very Soviet-public-style movement, similar to the climactic episodes from Shostakovich’s Symphonies 3, 4 and 5 and presenting his signature dactylic rhythm. Curiously, the composer did not employ here any of the more grotesque genres as he did with the confirmed opponents of Hamlet.

Since the complete version of the play-within-a play had already been shown as a rehearsal incorporating Hamlet’s commentaries from a later scene, here Akimov made the audience join Hamlet and Horatio in observing the guests, particularly Claudius, closely, whilst the performance is continuing off-stage. To this end, the actual performance is transferred off-stage, with a few bars of each musical episode preserved as a background to Hamlet’s mocking of Ophelia and Claudius. The whole thing is then interrupted as Ophelia screams ‘The King stands up’. What follows is visually the most iconic moment of the production, which was praised and quoted by critics, even those who despised the rest of the *mise-en-scène*: After shouting out ‘Give me light’ (in Russian translated as ‘fire’), the frightened and furious Claudius, played by an actor of small stature, runs down the stairs followed by twelve

metres of red velvet train, suggesting a river of blood. This dramatic and somewhat Macbethian scene alone proves that Akimov had no intention of turning *Hamlet* into a comedy or farce (see Plate 2.6).

Plate 2.6: *Hamlet*, Vakhtangov Theatre (1932), Act 3, after ‘Muder of Gonzago’



With its references to Stravinsky’s *Petrushka*, the musical number that illustrates the ‘Flute scene’ has been widely referred to in the Shostakovich literature. This is probably thanks to its being mentioned in Elagin’s memoirs: ‘Hamlet held the flute to the lower part of his torso, and the piccolo in the orchestra, accompanied by double-bass and a drum, piercingly and out of tune played the famous Soviet song “They wanted to beat us, to beat us’ written by the composer Alexander Davidenko, the leader of the proletarian musicians’⁵³⁹ McBurney suggests that Elagin had made a mistake regarding the instruments assigned to play the parody of Davidenko’s tune, since the second half of this number features a much more overtly satirical timbre – a tuba accompanied by a tambourine⁵⁴⁰ (Ex. 2.12). However, Elagin’s mistake is much more fundamental, since the parody in question is actually heard not here but in Rosencrantz and Hamlet’s scene in Act 2 (described above).

⁵³⁹ Juri Jelagin, *The Taming of the Arts*, 35.

⁵⁴⁰ McBurney, ‘Shostakovich and the Theatre’, 168.

Ex. 2.12: Shostakovich *Hamlet*, Act 3, Flute scene (the bass staff is Shostakovich's piano rendition of the tambourine)

Allegro

Given his (imprecise) description of this parodic scene with its satirical instrumentation, Elagin's claim that Shostakovich's music overall was closer to Shakespeare's tragedy than was Akimov's staging seems a touch paradoxical.

The next scene is a musical pantomime, with a score that features fairy-tale-like intonations in the manner of Prokofiev's comic opera, *The Love for Three Oranges*. This scene, entitled 'The King is unwell', depicts the ailing Claudius surrounded by court doctors; the composer uses glissandi to represent the King's sighs of pain, very similar to those of the ailing prince in Act 1 of Prokofiev's opera.

Shakespeare's 'Prayer scene', with Claudius addressing the heavens, has proved to be one of the most problematic for any production. The problem is not so much Claudius's confession of his guilt as Hamlet's reaction to it, or rather his non-reaction. With Claudius alone and helpless, this would have been an ideal opportunity for Hamlet to do his 'duty' and kill the murderer of his father. Yet he hesitates about killing a praying man, as this would supposedly allow the latter to ascend to heaven: a logic not acceptable to those believing in Hamlet's superior culture and intelligence.⁵⁴¹ Akimov tried many different solutions, including the one Kozintsev would use in his 1964 film, which is to keep the King's speech but to omit Hamlet's entrance. In the end, this scene, which apparently had no accompanying music, was cut from the final version.

Akimov's presentation as inscribed in the 'Protokol' document provides three different 'variations' for the following scene at the Queen's closet. These are all different solutions for Polonius's hiding place: the first under the carpet on the ground with his slippers left out, the second behind a tapestry with a portrait of Claudius on it, and finally behind a wardrobe.⁵⁴² The piano score offers two variations for this scene, the first an untitled pastoral music and

⁵⁴¹ Personal exchange with Alexander Kozintsev, son of the film director, Grigori, 30 March 2013.

⁵⁴² Akimov, 'Protokol', 20 verso.

the second a Prokofievian satirical fragment. It seems more plausible that the pastoral music would have accompanied Hamlet's farewell to his mother, whereas the satirical fragment could have been appropriate to Hamlet's carrying Polonius's dead body up the stairs.

Shakespeare's Act 3 finishes here. However, with the overall structure having gone through several changes, the five acts of Akimov's original were finally condensed into four, Shakespeare's fourth act being distributed across Akimov's third and fourth. Hence the following scene in Akimov's Act 3 is the dialogue of Gertrude and Claudius at the Queen's bedroom, where Gertrude tells Claudius of Hamlet's murder of Polonius. Shostakovich's cabaret-style foxtrot music, which follows Claudius's mournful words: 'My soul is full of discord and dismay' (IV/1/45), moves further from Shakespeare than any other component of Akimov's staging of this scene. Apart from that, it is in clear contrast with the intense funeral march that is designated for the King's following monologue as he sends Hamlet off to England. His dark plans to have Hamlet murdered upon the latter's arrival in England are suggested in the score (at R2), which bears close resemblance to the music of poisoning from the 'Mousetrap', reinforced by allusions to *Dies irae* chant in the bass (Ex. 2.13, cf. Ex. 2.10 above).

Ex. 2.13: Shostakovich *Hamlet*, King's monologue



What comes between these two musical representations of Claudius is a visual masterstroke. The confrontation of Claudius and Hamlet reaches a highpoint when two groups carry the protagonist and the antagonist on chairs, holding them face to face, which prophesies the final duel of the play. Shostakovich again draws on the style of *Lady Macbeth*, particularly the whipping and seduction scenes, with their obsessive, indeed excessive, drive (Ex. 2.14, cf. Ex. 2.5b above).

Ex. 2.14: a) Shostakovich *Hamlet*, Act 3, ‘Fight’; b) Shostakovich *Lady Macbeth*, Act 1, Scene 3, R188

[Allegro]

a)

[Allegro molto $\text{♩}=138$]

b)

The final scene of the act, which again was apparently mostly cut in the actual performance, takes place at the harbour front, where martial music accompanies the arrival of the Fortinbras's forces. Music of similarly military character would represent Fortinbras at the end of the tragedy.

2.10.4 Akimov *Hamlet* Act 4

The fourth act of Akimov's production starts with a royal banquet and an accompanying vocal waltz, entitled 'Romance for the feast', which seems to have been left out of the final version, since it only features in the piano score and is clearly crossed out from the musico-dramatic synopsis at a late stage. The title of the following musical number, which was to begin just as the applause for the previous one quietened down, seems to have been changed more than once – from Feast (*Pir*) to Cancan and back, with a preference for the latter title. As McBurney notes, this Offenbachian parody number is in fact a transcription of the 'blistering' cancan that ends the music-hall scene in the *Golden Age* ballet of (1929-30).⁵⁴³ The composer seems to have felt an affinity between the two scenes and their depiction of Western decadence.

This entire scene and the pantomime seemingly performed parallel to it on a separate part of stage, entitled 'Pirates', are quite difficult to reconstruct, as the musical and dramatic sources

⁵⁴³ McBurney, 'Shostakovich and the Theatre', 168.

are contradictory and seemingly mis-matched. According to the 'Protokol', at this moment the arrival of the raging Laertes should have been marked by the noise of breaking plates, and this was to be followed by Ophelia's entry. Akimov's reasons for depicting a drunken Ophelia rather than a mad one are much more logical and respectful to theatrical and cultural history than was suggested during the discussion of the production (see 2.6 above). In his defence, during the discussions of the dress rehearsal,⁵⁴⁴ Akimov explained that in Elizabethan times seeing a mad person on the stage was considered something comic and hence entertaining. In modern times, however, it was not acceptable to laugh at such a figure. Hence the originally planned effect of Ophelia's and Hamlet's mad scenes, which, according to Akimov, had more to do with the comical side of the play than the philosophical one, is lost unless a strategy is employed to adapt them to our contemporary views. Claiming that a drunken person on the stage is more comic and also appropriate for modern times, Akimov justified his reading of Ophelia's final scenes showing her as tipsy rather than mad. Not everyone might agree with Akimov's rationale, but it shows once again that his agenda was much more serious and thought-through than is often implied.

Of all the characters of Shakespeare's tragedy, Ophelia is the only one who shows an obvious evolution - from innocent obedient daughter, to passionate lover, to mad victim of a tragic fate. Akimov's interpretation disregards this evolution to a certain extent by depicting her primarily as a spy among other spies, whose principal function is to observe Hamlet and report to her father. Ophelia's *musical* depiction, on the other hand, is a perfect example of Shostakovich following Akimov's interpretation while at the same time staying loyal to a more Shakespearean image of the heroine. Ophelia as a member of the list of Elsinore's spies and baddies is best revealed in numbers such as the trivial 'Galop of Ophelia and Polonius' in Act 1. On the other hand, the more delicate Ophelia - as portrayed by Russian poets such as Blok and Fet - is represented most remarkably in the 'Lullaby' (later in Act 4), which in turn points ahead to Shostakovich's music for her in Kozintsev's 1964 film. The passionate Ophelia who mirrors Katerina, the heroine of Shostakovich's, *Lady Macbeth*, is shown through her cabaret-style song during her mad scene, where the composer incorporates a motif also sung by Katerina in the last act of the opera (Ex. 2.15).⁵⁴⁵ Finally the tragedy of her fate and the cruelty done to her are expressed in the Requiem accompanying her funeral (see below).

⁵⁴⁴ Akimov, 'Stenogrammy khudozhestvennikh soveshchanyi po obsuzhdeniiu progona "Gamlet" Akimova', 21 April 1932, Vakhtangov Theatre Archive, Arkh. No. 530, Sviazka 22, op. 1, 39.

⁵⁴⁵ See Gerard McBurney, 'Shostakovich and the Theatre', 173.

Ex. 2.15: a) Shostakovich *Hamlet*, Act 4, ‘Ophelia’s ditty’; b) Shostakovich *Lady Macbeth*, Act 5, R512

a) **Allegro [meno mosso]**

On vstal na zov, byl v mig go-tov, za - tvo - ry s dve - ri snial

b) **Moderato**

Na chul-ki, voz' - mi chul-ki!

The scene of the Royal Feast is interrupted by one showing parallel events related to Hamlet’s voyage to England. This scene features Horatio at the library repairing a skeleton while wearing a nightgown and holding a candle, thus implying that it is still night time. Hamlet’s letter is delivered, and Horatio learns about the Prince’s confrontation with pirates and his imminent return to Elsinore. According to Zabolotniaia the whole adventure was acted out on the proscenium, which could imply that the musical number ‘Actors’ pantomime’ could have belonged here and not to the ‘Mousetrap’ scene, as in the CBSO recording (see Table 2 in Appendix). Horatio is now due to pass another letter to Claudius. We are back to the royal banquet, and we follow on where we left off: Claudius is trying to convince Laertes that he must avenge his father by killing Hamlet. Whether it is the news of Ophelia’s death or Claudius’s powerful words that sway him, Laertes agrees to the King’s apparently foolproof plan.

Although it is not clear where it fits with the rest of the dramatic plan, musically Shostakovich’s ‘Lullaby’ is definitely one of the most intriguing numbers of this scene. As noted above, most probably it depicts the gentler and more fragile side of Ophelia’s character. It is composed as a string quartet in C major, the tonality of Shostakovich’s first String

Quartet proper, composed six years later. The identical tonalities and related character of musical ideas raise the question of whether this episode could even be considered as a kind of first draft for his future opus (Ex. 2.16). According to Shakespeare's text, and taking into account the musico-dramatic synopsis, it is possible that this music was either to accompany Laertes grieving over Ophelia's death, or, as in Kozintsev's film, to constitute a solemn moment depicting the young woman's untimely death.

Ex. 2.16: a) Shostakovich *Hamlet*, Act 4, 'Lullaby'; b) Shostakovich String Quartet No. 1, first movement

a) **Andantino**



b) **Moderato** ♩=80

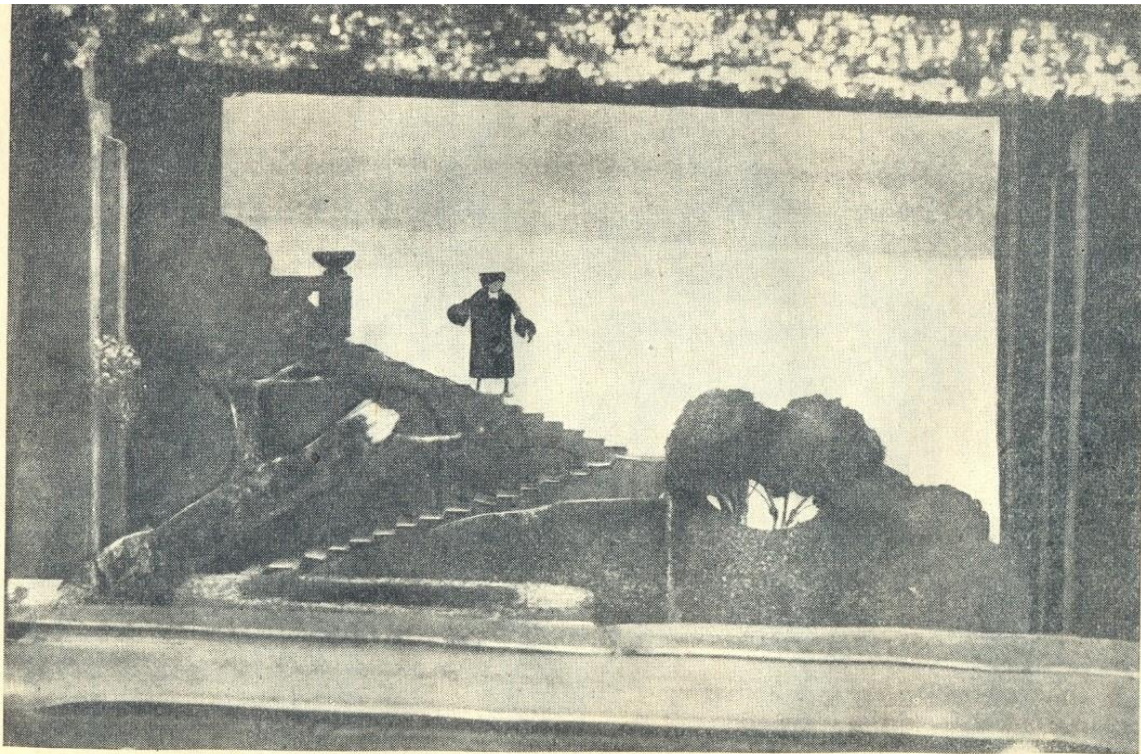


With the curtain rising to a pastoral musical episode similar to the 'Shepherd's pipe' of the first act and depicting birds singing, the graveyard scene was to be presented under the glowing sun and covered in flowers.⁵⁴⁶ However, as Akimov put it during the discussions of the dress rehearsal, due to financial exigencies the flowers disappeared one by one and the scene started to resemble a desert rather than a flower garden (see Plate 2.7).⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁶ Akimov, 'Protokol', 20 verso.

⁵⁴⁷ Akimov, 'Stenogrammy khudozhestvennykh soveshchaniï', 46.

Plate 2.7: *Hamlet*, Vakhtangov Theatre (1932), design for Graveyard Scene



«Гамлет». Макет сцены IV действия «Кладбище» (сокращена). Художник Н. Акимов.

Asserting that the best way to translate Shakespeare's humour and preserve its freshness and wit would be to rewrite the jokes directly in the target language (i.e. Russian) while referring to contemporary issues, Akimov commissioned Nikolai Erdman and Vladimir Mass to rewrite the dialogue of the clowns at the start of the scene.⁵⁴⁸ This decision went down badly during the rehearsals, however, and Akimov was severely criticised for his choice of text and for mixing Shakespeare's words with the 'unfunny' writings of Mass. Thus, as the production book reveals, almost the entire scene had to be left out of the final version. This excised scene included Shostakovich's 'Gravedigger's song' and a possible repetition of the grotesque polka entitled 'The passage of beggars'. Akimov proposed for the rest of the scene that the lights should dim, thus suggesting the clouds that were gathering as the body of Ophelia is carried to the stage, followed by Laertes, Claudius and Gertrude. The funeral is accompanied by Shostakovich's powerful 'Requiem', sung by off-stage male chorus (not solo, as on the CBSO CD recording); this is another scene where Shostakovich's music was praised by critics for its affinity with Shakespeare's tragedy. However, it was not only Shostakovich's music that conveyed the much-awaited tragic intensity. As Markov puts it: 'As for staging,

⁵⁴⁸ This text may be found in Nikolai Erdman and Vladimir Mass, *A Meeting about Laughter: Sketches, Interludes and Theatrical Parodies*. Luxembourg, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, 139-154.

[the presence of] Shakespeare was felt only after the beginning of the “Dies irae”, in that dark gloomy dialogue which Laertes and the King had as they were holding candles at Ophelia’s funeral.⁵⁴⁹ The other interest of this scene lies in Shostakovich’s preserving of the Latin text of the Dies irae in his music, at a time when composing a full-scale Requiem in Latin would have been politically out of the question.⁵⁵⁰ Perhaps in deference to this, he ends the Requiem with a mock antique cadence.

The heavy, dark atmosphere is balanced by the following scene, added by Akimov, which takes place at the bathroom, where Hamlet is shaving and telling Horatio what has happened to him. This is where Osric comes in to invite Hamlet to a fencing match with Laertes. There is no music for this scene; however, Goriunov’s acting was said to have acquired more softness and lyricism at this point, suggesting Hamlet’s tiredness and eventual acceptance of his tragic destiny.⁵⁵¹

The final duel scene starts with Shostakovich’s score (‘Joust’), couched in the style of Soviet public celebrations and pointing forward to his 1941 music for Lear’s Fool, which makes explicit the resemblance to ‘Jingle Bells’ (Ex. 2.17). The entire scene was staged similarly to medieval knights’ tournaments, with many extras consisting of both actors and papier-mâché dummies, and with the main participants wearing masks. There are two main musical numbers for the duration of the duel: a fast and a slow one, both rooted in G minor and again reminiscent of Shostakovich’s obsessive score to *Lady Macbeth*. There are also two key moments that Shostakovich marks individually, the first being as the Queen drinks from the poisoned cup that kills her, which is preceded by a flourish, and the second at the end of the fight, which follows Goriunov’s ‘the blade is poisoned too’ and foreshadows the composer’s music for the Ghost in Kozintsev’s 1964 film.

⁵⁴⁹ P. Markov, ‘Gamlet v postanovke N. P. Akimova’, *Sovetskii teatr*, 1932/7-8, 12.

⁵⁵⁰ For a detailed account of Western sacred genres performed in the Soviet Union, see Pauline Fairclough, “‘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*, 65/1 (Spring 2012), 67-111. Shostakovich’s Requiem for *Hamlet* is not mentioned here.

⁵⁵¹ Shchukin, ‘Stenogramma obsuzhdeniia spektaklia v Teatre im. Vakhtangova’, 14 February 1932, Vakhtangov Theatre Archive, Arkh. No. 529, Sviazka 22, op. 1, 5.

Ex. 2.17: a) Shostakovich *Hamlet*, Act 4, ‘Joust’; b) Shostakovich *King Lear* (1941), Songs of the Fool, No.1

a) **[Allegro]**

b) **Allegro**

Finally, when everyone except Horatio is dead, Fortinbras arrives on his white horse, together with his soldiers. Here three character marches are played, not all that different from one another in their character. The first two follow Hamlet asking Horatio to tell the truth about his story and Horatio’s final words (respectively), and the third leads to the trumpets’ signalling the final scene following Fortinbras’s ordering of a military salute in the honour of the dead Prince. The entire music of ‘Fortinbras’s march’ is in fact a variant of the ‘Camouflage’ march from Shostakovich’s music to the music hall production, *Hypothetically Murdered*.⁵⁵² The scenic solution of Akimov was described during the discussions of the rehearsal: Hamlet’s presence is felt through the only remaining object belonging to him – the mask he was wearing during the duel.

The reconstruction of the very ending of the production presents yet another difficult case, due to divergent reports and the missing last page of the production book. In any case, as the musico-dramatic synopsis suggests, the above-mentioned ‘Fortinbras March’ followed Horatio’s last line, closing close the production on a triumphant note. As to what Horatio’s last words were supposed to be, at least two different versions have been reported; of course it is possible that there was a combination of the two versions or that different words were used on different nights. The production book at this point contains several pages (different

⁵⁵² See McBurney, ‘Shostakovich and the Theatre’, 168.

paper and different ink) with Erasmus's words on Science, the last few sentences reading: 'He knew how to enjoy the sound of mosquitos, but enjoying a normal life, *that* he did not know'. The latter phrase is quoted in the musico-dramatic synopsis as a cue to Fortinbras's march. On the other hand, Eleanor Rowe, quoting Nikolai Chushkin, suggests that the production ended by Horatio citing Ulrich von Hutten's words: 'O Century, oh Science, What a joy it is to be alive'.⁵⁵³ Incidentally these exact words were used by Goebbels a year later at the time of the Nazis' book-burning.⁵⁵⁴ Regardless of this, 'Hutten's words of 1518 were interpreted, in the early modern period, as the clarion call of an altered epochal awareness.' Moreover, 'what was celebrated was the euphoric feeling of standing at the threshold of a new age.'⁵⁵⁵ Given that Hamlet was holding a book of von Hutten in the library scene and that Akimov had insisted on a 'dialectical materialist' reading of *Hamlet* as the tragedy of a man caught between two eras, the use of Hutten's words seems to be in complete accordance with the rest of the *mise-en-scène*.

2.11 The Relationship of Shostakovich's music to Akimov's staging

In general Shostakovich's music to Akimov's *Hamlet* marked a new stage in Soviet/Russian Hamletiana, not least by tackling those aspects of Shakespeare's tragedy that seemed inaccessible for music in the 19th century, specifically its irony. In her study of Shostakovich's music for this *Hamlet*, Zinkevych points out that this was a task which Tchaikovsky had famously declared impossible: 'Music can't find the means to reveal the irony that is hidden in the words of Hamlet.'⁵⁵⁶ However, this comment does not take account of the context of Tchaikovsky's remark, which had to do with his first encounter with Ambroise Thomas' 1868 opera, *Hamlet*. It also misses the point that Tchaikovsky was referring to Hamlet the hero rather than the play. Zinkevych provides several musical examples from Shostakovich's score to illustrate a mocking effect, but these are not directly linked to the protagonist: such as the march accompanying the exit of the King and the Queen in Act 1 (see Ex. 2.3) – a small cheerful childish number, rather than a regal, grandiose piece as might have been expected. However, Zinkevych's study is mainly based on the orchestral suite rather than on the full incidental music, and she seems not to have had access to the

⁵⁵³ Rowe, *Hamlet a Window on Russia*, 130.

⁵⁵⁴ As reported in *Völkischer Beobachter*, 12 May, 1933.

⁵⁵⁵ Ortrude Gutjahr, 'Literary Modernism and the Tradition of Breaking Tradition', in Christian Emden and David Midgley (eds.), *Cultural Memory and Historical Consciousness in the German-Speaking World since 1500: Papers from the Conference 'The Fragile Tradition'*, Cambridge 2002, Oxford and New York, Peter Lang, 2004, 76.

⁵⁵⁶ Pyotr Chaikovskiy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Vol. 2, Moscow, Muzyka, 1977, 301. See also Chapter 5.4.3.

production material which would have enabled her to encounter the same elements of irony in Akimov's mise-en-scène. This close reading of Shostakovich's score - probably unique in Russian musicology - is therefore in need of revision.

A few so-called 'illogical outcomes' of the show that were severely criticised could arguably have been avoided had the score been different in its characterisation. As we saw, the scene of Ophelia's funeral, for example, struck the critics for its overwhelming tragedy, which one assumes as normal for a traditional production, but which is quite irrational if Akimov's depiction of Ophelia and her loveless relationship with Hamlet is followed to its logical conclusion. However, most critics, while praising the magnificent music of Shostakovich for this scene, failed to see - or at least to comment on - how the heavy, tragic Requiem and Funeral March resulted in a much darker perception of the scene than Akimov's staging suggested. Of course it is possible that Akimov may have intended the contrast and communicated this conception to Shostakovich, but there is nothing in the existing sources to confirm or refute this possibility.

Given that in places Shostakovich's music admittedly works contrapuntally to Akimov's scenic solutions, studying the convergences and divergences between the settings and its music reveals, among other things, each artist's creative obsession at the time: securing a career as an independent and self-sufficient theatre director in the case of Akimov and ongoing work on the opera, *Lady Macbeth* in the case of Shostakovich.

Hence, and probably to try out the musical ideas for his opera, Shostakovich's most compelling divergence from Akimov's conception lay in his choice of style. Unlike many productions of *Hamlet* at the time, where the events of the play take place in the Middle Ages, Akimov had decided that it was more logical to place the tragedy in the time of Shakespeare himself. Shostakovich, however, did not follow suit but incorporated cabaret genres such as cancan and tango and galop in an uproarious updated-Offenbach style. As Richard Taruskin has observed, it was especially the latter genre that was used extensively in *Lady Macbeth* to dehumanise the characters surrounding the heroine, in an attempt by the composer to justify her murders and evil deeds.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁷ Richard Taruskin, 'The Opera and the Dictator: the Peculiar Martyrdom of Dmitri Shostakovich', *The New Republic*, 20 March 1989, 38-39, reprinted as 'Entr'acte: The Lessons of Lady M.', in Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997, 498-510.

In the same vein, and in accordance with his sympathetic reading of the otherwise monstrous heroine of Nikolai Leskov's novella, Shostakovich seems to have identified common traits between her and Ophelia. These are musically revealed through similar motifs sung by the two women in similar situations and through the universalised state of mourning depicted in the 'Requiem' accompanying Ophelia's funeral. Here again, Shostakovich apparently followed Shakespeare more closely than did Akimov, since in the director's interpretation Ophelia's death was by accidental drowning, following her drunkenness during a court ball. Shostakovich's music, composed as a free interpretation in the style of early music, develops from mourning to a depiction of the inevitability of tragic fate. However, it is Akimov's interpretation of Ophelia as a passionate, sensual and lustful woman that permitted Shostakovich's assimilation of her to the heroine of his opera in the first place; a more traditional reading of Ophelia as the symbol of purity and innocence would not have allowed such representation. In the case of the opera, Shostakovich was his own master. Therefore there was no question of disharmony in the conception, other than between his view and that of Leskov's original.

The parallels between Akimov's *Hamlet* and Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth* extend beyond purely musical affinities and are manifested in ideological aspects and especially in their reception. Shostakovich's programme note for the premiere of his opera in 1934, in which he outlines his task as correctly interpreting what Nikolai Leskov could not fully grasp from his contemporary time,⁵⁵⁸ conspicuously echoes Akimov's statements about his *Hamlet* in above-mentioned articles published prior to the opening of his production. Akimov, too, argued that Shakespeare was too close to his era to be able to understand and interpret the ongoing events he reports in his *Hamlet*.⁵⁵⁹ Indeed class struggle was at the centre of both works: if Shostakovich' opera dehumanised the crowd and the heroine's social environment, Akimov, with the help of the composer, drew a ghastly portrait of the beggars by representing them as parasites, who would do anything for money.

In general, apart from drawing on his extensive experience with music for the theatre, Shostakovich's incidental music provided him with a kind of laboratory to try out many aspects of his still evolving musical language. Being a young composer, and despite the fame that had already to some extent been thrust upon him, his musical language at this time was

⁵⁵⁸ See Richard Taruskin, 'The Opera and the Dictator', 36.

⁵⁵⁹ See for example 'Doklad N.P. Akimova', 19. This view was echoed by the executive producer (*otvetstvennyi rezhisser*), Boris Zakhava, during the discussions of the dress rehearsal, see 'Stenogrammy khudozhestvennykh soveshchaniy', 19 April 1932, 32.

not yet fixed and secure. Contact with big personalities in related artistic fields, such as Kozintsev, Akimov and not least Vsevolod Meyerhold, was crucial in defining his musical persona (or his multiple personae, one might say). At this point in his career it could be argued that his concerns were not so much social criticism as how to place himself as modern, individual and at the cutting-edge of artistic developments. The development of his experiments from the 1932 *Hamlet* on is not only reflected in his later Shakespearean works, and especially Kozintsev's film, but also in his symphonies and, more immediately, as we have repeatedly seen, in his second opera, *Lady Macbeth*. By composing a self-contained score for *Hamlet*, which, as one of the critics of the time somewhat over-optimistically put it, would 'definitely find its way into the symphonic repertoire',⁵⁶⁰ Shostakovich stuck to his manifesto of not submitting to the instructions of theatre directors. Could we perhaps go further and say that in avoiding compromises and following his inner light, Shostakovich composed music that was simply too good for the production, and hence inadvertently exposed its shortcomings? Perhaps the only way to test this hypothesis would be a reconstruction of the entire production – a project which, as we have seen, faces almost insuperable difficulties.

Since its reported disappearance from Russian stages between 1762 and 1809 because of the parallels between the tragedy's plot and the murder of Peter III leading to reign of Catherine the Great, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has been considered, especially in Eastern Europe and Russia, as a politically charged tragedy.⁵⁶¹ In this vein, and especially in the Soviet era, productions of this play have often been read and understood as political commentaries. Akimov's version has raised many speculations along political lines, especially among Western scholars. Theories regarding its true intentions vary from Simon Morrison's reading of the production as a direct allusion to power struggle of the 1920s leading to Stalin's reign,⁵⁶² to Akimov's supposed efforts to comply with the forthcoming socialist realist doctrine, as suggested by Boika Sokolova.⁵⁶³ However, compared to such productions and adaptations of *Hamlet* as Lyubimov's (1970s) and Slonimsky's opera (1991), that of Akimov made a comparatively passive and generalised political statement on historical and political events, rather than an immediate and contemporary one. If anything, again to echo Taruskin's

⁵⁶⁰ E. Gal'skii, 'Muzyka k Gamletu'.

⁵⁶¹ Eleanor Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 13.

⁵⁶² Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, 82.

⁵⁶³ Boika Sokolova, 'Between Ideology and Religion: Some Russian Hamlets of the Twentieth Century', in Peter Holland (ed.), *Shakespeare Survey Vol. 54: Shakespeare and Religion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, 147.

controversial reading of *Lady Macbeth*, by concentrating on the positive impact of a hero in something akin to the class struggle, Akimov's *Hamlet* could be read as affirming the concept of epochal change from feudal to bourgeois values in Shakespeare's time, as outlined by Marxist dialectics. If this conception was unclear to Akimov's contemporaries, that can largely be laid at the door of vicissitudes in the production process. And if it was his prime intention, as a straightforward reading of his spoken and written declarations would suggest, it could be argued that Akimov's *Hamlet* has never been seen at all.

Chapter 3

Sergei Radlov's Shakespearealism

Unlike that of Akimov, Radlov's career as a theatre producer was fully shaped by the time he tackled *Hamlet*. Moreover, he had established a specific reputation as Shakespearean director and scholar, combining the two aspects in the way that would later be praised as a positive characteristic of Soviet Shakespeareology by John Dover Wilson and taken up by Grigori Kozintsev. Radlov's approach to directing *Hamlet* was formed not only by his own early colourful career (see Chapter 1.6.2) and by the socio-political context but also by his other Shakespearean works. Accordingly, this chapter begins with an overview of the major trends in his Shakespearean projects prior to *Hamlet*, including his collaboration with Prokofiev on the latter's ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*. Similarly, Prokofiev's incidental music for Radlov's *Hamlet* will be placed in the context of his previous experience with theatre and cinema, and with Shakespeare in particular.

As for the production itself, the very few archival materials from the performance are not sufficient to allow a reconstructive analysis, in Pavis' terms, in the way that is possible for Akimov's. What is clear from the existing reviews, reactions and Radlov's own writings, is that the production tried to stay as close as possible to Shakespeare's text, reducing directorial interference of the Akimovian kind to a minimum. There is plenty of evidence for the ways in which Radlov tried to put across his interpretation of each character and the major issues of the tragedy as he saw them.

It is also interesting to observe the harmony and convergence between the various components of the production, particularly the music and staging, which is again quite different from the frictions and inconsistencies of Akimov's staging. Accordingly, the second part of this chapter attempts a description of the production based on Il'ia Berezark's 'analyse-reportage' (to use Pavis' term again),⁵⁶⁴ supported by Radlov's own writings (in particular his detailed letter to Prokofiev),⁵⁶⁵ reviews and reminiscences of the actors as found in the uncatalogued collection of David Zolotnitsky held at the St Petersburg State Theatre Library. In addition, a letter addressed to Prokofiev from Ksenia Kochurova, wife of

⁵⁶⁴ Il'ia Berezark, *Gamlet v Teatre im. Leningradskogo Soveta: opyt analiza spektakl'ia*, Leningrad and Moscow, VTO, 1940.

⁵⁶⁵ Radlov, Letter to Prokofiev, RGALI, f. 1929, op. 2, ed. khr. 466.

composer Iurii Kochurov, based on the now unlocated production book for Radlov's staging of *Hamlet* in Ukraine, helps to place the musical numbers within the production.⁵⁶⁶

3.1 The year 1932: A tale of two productions

On 4 May 1932, a fortnight before the premiere of Akimov's *Hamlet* at Moscow's Vakhtangov Theatre, Sergei Radlov's *Othello* opened in Leningrad. This was his first ever Shakespeare production with his own theatre, at the time known as 'Molodoi Teatr' (Youth Theatre). The modest staging, performed by young and as yet unknown actors was completely overshadowed by the media dazzle surrounding Akimov's tour de force.⁵⁶⁷

Nevertheless, it attracted the support of such critics as Aleksei Gvozdev, who wrote: 'Interesting productions of the classics have to be seen in small theatres, and the recent work on Shakespeare's *Othello* at the Youth (*Molodoi*) Theatre, produced by S.E. Radlov, indicates that a skilful approach can achieve valuable results even on a tiny stage and having a collective of very young actors.'⁵⁶⁸

Despite their obvious differences, the two productions had much in common: they both avowedly rejected the preconceptions of received acting traditions and scholastic conceptions, and they chose to set universal conceptions such as duty, honour, jealousy within an historical framework, creating concrete characters and actions.⁵⁶⁹ As for their cultural-intellectual context, Zolotnitsky observes that 'both tragedies were staged just before publication of letters of Marx and Engels on the tragic element in art – on "Shakespearization" and "Schillerization".'⁵⁷⁰

The two productions had very different fates, however, which become ironic with hindsight. After its premiere, Akimov's *Hamlet* continued to be a media phenomenon, but mainly in a negative way, as we have seen. The debates and condemnations meant that it was removed from the repertoire of the Vakhtangov Theatre after only one season. Radlov's *Othello*, by contrast, received very little critical response, but it managed to secure a place in the repertoire of the Youth Theatre for three more seasons.

History had more cards to play. After the war, Radlov and his wife were accused of treason and sentenced to ten years in the Gulag; hence he became a non-person, and his name

⁵⁶⁶ RGALI, f. 1929, op. 2, ed. khr. 434,

⁵⁶⁷ David Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov: The Shakespearian Fate of a Soviet Director*, 1995, 101.

⁵⁶⁸ Aleksei Gvozdev, 'Klassiki na sovetskoi stsene', *Rabochii i teatr*, 1932/29-30 (November), 5.

⁵⁶⁹ David Zolotnitsky (1918-2005), Soviet and Russian theatre scholar, critic, member of the St Petersburg Writers' Union.

⁵⁷⁰ Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov*, 102.

disappeared from documents of the time. Akimov had by then created his own Comedy Theatre in Leningrad, and despite the many risks he took with his chosen repertoire, he survived the regime's ordeals. Despite Radlov's rehabilitation in 1957 and his Shakespeare productions in the post-Stalin era, it was in the end Akimov's 1932 *Hamlet* that survived the test of time, at least in the sense that it retained a place in the history books, albeit mainly as prominent example of eccentric interpretation of Shakespeare's tragedy.

By the mid-1930s Radlov and his own Studio Theatre (developed from his Youth Theatre) had become an authoritative presence in Russian Shakespeare production, and the translations by his wife, Anna Radlova, were widely discussed.⁵⁷¹ On 15 April 1935, Radlov's *Othello* was presented in a new version (at his Theatre), receiving acclaim and praise from critics nationwide. The reviews and Radlov's own writings of this time also shed light on his 1932 production, which at the time had passed by relatively quietly. For one thing, Radlov dissociated himself from what was now considered the 'formalist' production of Akimov's *Hamlet*:

If *Hamlet* at the Vakhtangov Theatre, three years after its premiere, was finally and irrevocably condemned as a nihilist attempt to remove the central problem of Shakespeare's play, in my sketchy production of *Othello* I began to feel my way towards finding the main and the only conceivable approach to Shakespeare as a realistic playwright, which became the leading principle in my further work.⁵⁷²

Given the political climate of the time, barely four months after the assassination of Kirov, it is hard to judge the sincerity or otherwise of Radlov's accounts of Akimov's work. This becomes even more complicated in view of the fact that in a year's time Radlov would be collaborating with Akimov, and indeed Shostakovich, on a production of *Saliut Ispan'ia*.⁵⁷³

In any case, it is clear that Radlov's own *Hamlet*, which was premiered with great success on 15 May 1938, was in part a reply to Akimov's (formalist) production and in part representative of the by then reigning Socialist Realist doctrines. Equally, however, it was a continuation of his prolific theatre career with its many apparently contradictory trends, which are today little known, even among specialists.

⁵⁷¹ See, for example, Anna Radlova, 'O roli i otvetstvennosti perevodchika', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 11 April 1934, 4; Radlova, 'Perevody Shekspira', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 4 December 1935, 4; Aleksandr Smirnov, 'O russkikh perevodakh Shekspira', *Zvezda*, 1934/4, 165-172.

⁵⁷² Sergei Radlov, 'Iunost' teatra', *Teatr i dramaturgia*, 1935/6, 23.

⁵⁷³ Play by Aleksandr Afinogenov about the Spanish civil war, premiered 23 November 1936 at Leningrad's Pushkin Theatre.

3.2 Radlov's Shakespeare productions before *Hamlet*

It is tempting to interpret Radlov's radical changes of direction in his creative outlook (see chapter 1.6.2) primarily in the light of the 1930s purges and the increasing popularity of Shakespeare in the context of Socialist Realism.⁵⁷⁴ Valerii Gaidebura, for one, certainly avoids this pitfall. Gaideburov became one of the most prominent advocates of Radlov, publishing several articles and monographs with the goal of 'an actual rehabilitation' of Radlov in addition to the 'official' one. In 1958 he wrote: 'Radlov's misfortunes were not associated with the repressions of the 1930s. ... His fate was safe then, and his popularity reached its zenith.'⁵⁷⁵ The 1930s were indeed Radlov's starry decade, and as Svetlana Bushueva observes it was not 'fate' that saved Radlov; 'he was his own saviour in that in its essence, his art happened to be in harmony with the spirit of the time.'⁵⁷⁶ Of course, it could be argued that Radlov was obliged to modify his works in order to survive the repressions of the anti-formalist campaign of the mid-1930s, and this seems to be what Zolotnitsky implies throughout his book. Simon Morrison, too, interprets Radlov's Socialist Realist concept for his 1938 *Hamlet* as dictated from above, with the artist given little choice (see below).

It has also been suggested that Radlov was simply 'a loyal safe' option as opposed to more problematic directors, such as the Ukrainian Les Kurbas.⁵⁷⁷ It is impossible to be certain either way; there could be no doubt that Radlov's creative output was a result of conscious and unconscious negotiations with the prevailing politico-cultural climate of the country. On the other hand, many of Radlov's socialist realist tendencies had already manifested themselves before the doctrine was introduced in 1934. For example, his views as expressed during the debates of 1928 regarding what Soviet opera should be like, represented an alternative vision to the modernist one suggested by the likes of Ivan Sollertinsky.⁵⁷⁸ As Marina Frolova-Walker observes, Radlov 'put forward two necessary features for the future

⁵⁷⁴ For more on Shakespeare and Socialist Realism, see Arkady Ostrovsky, 'Shakespeare as a Founding Father of Socialist Realism: The Soviet Affair with Shakespeare', in Irena Makaryk and Joseph Price (eds.), *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, Toronto, Toronto University Press, 2006, 56-83.

⁵⁷⁵ Valerii Gaidebura, 'Tak raskazhi pravdivo ...', *Sovetskaia kul'tura*, 22 August 1989, 6.

⁵⁷⁶ Svetlana Bushueva, 'Shekspir u Radlova', in David Zolotnitsky (ed.), *V sporakh o teatre*, St Petersburg, Rossiiskii institut istorii iskvstv, 1992, 24.

⁵⁷⁷ Irena Makaryk, *Shakespeare in the Undiscovered Bourn: Les Kurbas, Ukrainian Modernism, and Early Soviet Cultural Politics*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2004, 195.

⁵⁷⁸ See Ivan Sollertinskii, 'Vozmozhnye printsipy sovetskoi operi', *Zhizn' iskusstva*, 1929/32 (11 August), 3.

of Soviet opera: its form should be “monumental”, and its content “concrete”.⁵⁷⁹ According to Radlov himself, the new operatic genre would be ‘heroic in its content’. He announced:

I envisage man, shown in moments of the greatest tension of emotion and will; I envisage the mass of people in moments of uplift. Music enters in its full power, as a relief of this tension. The audience feels that music enters where one cannot do without it, where the orchestra cannot resist playing, the singer cannot resist singing. This is where the music of revolution emerges.⁵⁸⁰

It is difficult not to detect echoes of these visions of Radlov in his production of *Hamlet* ten years later. Although Radlov’s main Shakespearean productions belong to later years, the core of his views concerning the treatment of the Classics in general and of Shakespeare’s work in particular remained essentially unchanged throughout his career. Even in the years of the Theatre of Popular Comedy, Radlov avoided the temptation ‘to put Shakespeare, who has done us no harm, upside down (*verkh nogami*)’.⁵⁸¹ In an interview prior to the 1920 production of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, his very first Shakespearean *mise-en-scène* and the only comedy of Shakespeare he ever staged, Radlov warned that his work ‘might appear not leftist enough’ and that he had ‘treated Shakespeare according to the nature of the material in front of us’. Despite continuing to juxtapose circus and theatre, and, for example, giving the roles of the servants to acrobats, and regardless of his innovative setting on two platforms and uninterrupted action on lower and upper levels, Radlov insisted that ‘this is not an experimentation; this is a mathematical calculation from the essence of the work’.⁵⁸² The positive reaction of the critics suggests that even in the age of experimental theatre, such a respectful approach to the works of Shakespeare was welcome. Georgi Guriev, a young theatre director, found Radlov’s work ‘brilliant, resonant, and full of energy’ and described it as ‘authentically Shakespearean production’. The idea of ‘not a new Shakespeare but an authentic (*podlinnii*) Shakespeare’ would soon become *mot du jour* in newspaper discussions of the 1930s, including those around Akimov’s *Hamlet*.⁵⁸³

Notwithstanding the positive reviews, Radlov himself would later look back with regret on his first Shakespearean attempt, admitting that he was far from ‘any correct scenic rendering

⁵⁷⁹ Marina Frolova-Walker, ‘The Soviet Opera Project: Ivan Dzerzhinsky vs. Ivan Susanin’, *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 18/2 (2006), 187.

⁵⁸⁰ Sergei Radlov, ‘K sovetskoy opere’, *Zhizn’ iskusstva*, 1929/1 (1 January), 6, quoted in Frolova-Walker, ‘The Soviet Opera Project’, 187.

⁵⁸¹ Sergei Radlov, ‘Vindzorskie prokaznitsy’, *Zhizn’ iskusstva*, 12 November 1920, 1.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ Sergei Radlov, ‘Zapiski o Gamlete’, *Teatral’naiia zhizn’*, 2001/2, 46.

of Shakespeare. ... Thinking back to what I was doing back then, I must admit that some of the staging was quite close to the “geography” of an Elizabethan performance, but it had little in common with the very essence of the problems of Shakespeare’s drama.⁵⁸⁴ He had the same sceptical opinion towards his first production of *Othello* at The State Academic Dramatic Theatre (Alexandrinsky) in 1927, which was designed to mark the 35th anniversary of the artistic career of the veteran actor, Iurii Iur’ev. At the time of his 1932 production of *Othello*, which Radlov considered ‘a landmark and a turning point’ for his creative career, the director remembered his earlier production of the tragedy and wrote: ‘This [1932] production is as serious and important as my previous mise-en-scène of *Othello* at the State Academic Theatre was unfortunate.’⁵⁸⁵

Working with Iur’ev on *Othello* was not the only time Radlov’s directorial initiatives for his Shakespearean work were challenged by the creative presence of a legendary actor. But the next two instances of such collaborations proved to be very different. In 1935, Radlov staged, or at least inherited and finalised the staging of, *King Lear* at the State Jewish theatre, with the great Solomon Mikhoels at the title role. This production, which Gordon Craig reportedly watched at least four times and described as ‘a real shock’,⁵⁸⁶ has been object of many studies and much speculation. Apart from its marking the first Shakespeare production in Yiddish on this stage, and Mikhoels’s performance, which immortalised him as an inimitable Lear, the main subject of debate concerns the extent of Radlov’s involvement as the production’s director. Theories range from Zolotnitsky’s complete attribution of the directorial role to Radlov to Rudnitsky’s denying him any function whatsoever, apart from ‘signing off’ Les Kurbas’s final work due to the latter’s imprisonment and being purged prior to the opening of the show.⁵⁸⁷ Irena Makaryk’s pioneering book on the Shakespearean works of Kurbas sheds new light on the talents and initiatives of this neglected Ukrainian director, presenting a more documented and objective account of the destiny of his work on GOSET’s production of *Lear*. Whatever the nature of Radlov’s role, Mikhoels had his own concept of the tragedy, which in many ways contradicted Radlov’s reading.⁵⁸⁸ Radlov remembered how this was

⁵⁸⁴ Radlov, ‘V boiakh za *Lira*’, *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 5 January 1935 (No. 1), 2.

⁵⁸⁵ Radlov, ‘Kak ia stavliu Shekspira’, in Gvozdev (ed.), *Nasha rabota nad klassikami*, Leningrad, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1936, 20.

⁵⁸⁶ Edward Gordon Craig, *Vospominanie, stat’i, pis’ma*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1988, 337.

⁵⁸⁷ Radlov, ‘Moia vstrecha s Gosetom’, *Rabochii i teatr*, 1935/8, 23.

⁵⁸⁸ In her chapter on *Lear*, Nataliia Vovsi-Mikhoels refers to Radlov as the producer of the production. See: Nataliia Vovsi-Mikhoels, *Moi Otets Solomon Mikhoels (vospominaniia o zhizni i gibeli)*, Tel-Aviv, Iakov Press, 1984, 108.

possibly the most difficult production of my life, which cost me and the participants a lot of blood, nerves and life. I wouldn't even talk about my main concept of Shakespeare as a profoundly realistic and generally progressive dramatist, which was accepted by the troupe immediately and without any hesitation. From Mikhoels's original idea of *Lear* to his final embodiment of the character there was a great, difficult and at times agonising creative struggle. In this struggle Mikhoels had the courage to honestly and irreversibly give up most of his initial perceptions, so that he could not only entirely agree with my main concept but also bring into his image of *Lear* the wealth of his own personal wisdom, experience and talent.⁵⁸⁹

Radlov's next project in Moscow was a third attempt at *Othello*, which turned out to be yet another media phenomenon. It has been noted that *Othello* was the most popular of Shakespeare's tragedies in Russia in the 1930s, with at least one hundred more productions than its rival *Romeo and Juliet*.⁵⁹⁰ In 1935, despite the recent challenges of working with Mikhoels, Radlov took the risk of calling on another legendary actor, Aleksandr Ostuzhev, to perform the title role of the tragedy for the new production at the Maly Theatre in Moscow. Despite his many honorary titles, Ostuzhev at this time was considered a faded star and unsuitable for such a demanding role, due to his age and his deafness.⁵⁹¹ But in the end, it was Ostuzhev, like Mikhoels in *King Lear*, who secured the place of this production in history.

Radlov took an even greater risk by deciding to work simultaneously on yet another production of the same tragedy at his own theatre studio in Leningrad. Although work at the Maly Theatre took longer, and Ostuzhev's *Othello* opened about eight months after the premiere of the Leningrad production, comparisons between the two stagings were inevitable. Both used Anna Radlova's highly disputed translation of the tragedy, as well as the stage design by Victor Basov and the music of Boris Asafiev; but the end results were radically different.⁵⁹² Radlov naturally foresaw critics' comparative views and had warned against them in an interview prior to the premiere of the Moscow production. He confirmed that the

⁵⁸⁹ Radlov, 'Moia vstrecha s Gosetom', 23.

⁵⁹⁰ Ostrovsky, 'Shakespeare as a Founding Father of Socialist Realism: The Soviet Affair with Shakespeare', 61 (Ostrovsky does not provide any source for his statistics).

⁵⁹¹ The actress Natalia Rozenel' reported such rumours in her memoirs - see Natalia Lunacharskii-Rozenel', *Pamiat' serdtsa. Vospominaniia*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1962, 241.

⁵⁹² For details of Radlova's translation of *Othello* and its reception, see Jill Warren, 'Acculturating Shakespeare: the Tactics of Translating his Works under Stalin in the Light of Recent Theoretical Advances in Translation Studies', PhD dissertation, University of Nottingham, 2015.

concept was the same for both productions – that is to interpret *Othello* not as a play about jealousy but as one about love and trusting. But he used very different means at each theatre and noted: ‘I think I would have made a very bad mistake if I had tried to copy my Leningrad production of *Othello*.’⁵⁹³ Being aware of the Romantic tradition associated with the Maly Theatre in general, and with Ostuzhev in particular, Radlov seems to have embraced the challenge, observing that, ‘The passionate metaphor of Shakespeare is organically embodied in the romantic impulse of the actor.’⁵⁹⁴ Furthermore, he realised that Ostuzhev’s powerful acting was not going to be easy to tame, and therefore tactically reassured the actor that: ‘I don’t want to lose anything from your powerful acting in this production. ... I shall regard my task unfulfilled if I am unable to help you show the whole range and force of your temperament.’⁵⁹⁵

It might have been under the influence of his recent position as the director of the Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre that Radlov was quite specific about the actor’s intonations and referred to Verdi to clarify his concept. He asked Ostuzhev to speak Othello’s farewell monologue (V/2/260-280) ‘in a baritone register, trying to imagine an uninterrupted line of marching soldiers coming and going before your eyes. [...] This is how Verdi, who by the end of his life composed his genius opera, *Othello*, understood this aria – introducing the sound of marching soldiers in the orchestral part.’⁵⁹⁶ Here, both Ostrovsky and Bushueva insist on Ostuzhev’s disobedience in presenting the entire role of Othello in the ‘tenor’ register: Ostrovsky interprets the terms ‘tenor’ and ‘baritone’ literally, whilst Bushueva tries to understand Radlov’s requirements metaphorically.⁵⁹⁷ However, an archive recording of this production, and this scene in particular, reveals no trace of any ‘tenor’ in either interpretation of the word. True, Ostuzhev’s reading is highly passionate, musical and possibly less warrior-like than Radlov would have desired, but his voice covers a range of registers and intonations, with a clear tendency towards the bass-baritone.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹³ E.P., ‘*Otello* v Malom Teatre’, *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 1935/ 68 (9 December), 5.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Radlov, ‘Kak ia stavliu Shekspira’, in Gvozdev (ed.), *Nasha rabota nad klassikami*, 68.

⁵⁹⁶ Stenographic report from rehearsal on 3 October 1935, quoted in Rudnitskii (ed.), *Mikhoels: Stat’i, besedy, rechi. Vospominaniia o Mikhoelse*, Moscow, Iskuststvo, 1965, 41.

⁵⁹⁷ Ostrovsky, ‘Shakespeare as a Founding Father of Socialist Realism’, 71; Bushueva, ‘Shekspir u Radlova’, 43.

⁵⁹⁸ A recording of the play with Ostuzhev may be heard on the website of the Maly Theatre: <http://www.maly.ru/news/4433>, accessed 28 August 2016.

In general, Radlov aimed to replace the category of the tragic with that of the heroic.⁵⁹⁹ This strategy would become a hallmark of his *Hamlet*, too. But if in *Hamlet* and in the production of *Othello* at his own theatre studio he was able to mould his young actors to his desired result, realising his concepts proved more difficult with established actors. For Ostuzhev he required that Othello's costume, black with orange slings, should not distinguish him from other soldiers and that it should remain in the spirit of 'conquistador'.⁶⁰⁰ After his hard experience with Mikhoels, Radlov was optimistic about his collaboration with Ostuzhev, believing him to be 'like a red-hot, molten metal in need of a form into which this precious fiery mass could flow'.⁶⁰¹ But in practice, Ostuzhev was much less flexible than Radlov had hoped: he refused to wear the assigned costume and opted for an all-white, free-flowing one to contrast with the dark colour of skin. As a result critics argued that Ostuzhev was visually and conceptually isolated from the rest of the cast: 'Ostuzhev was only formally connected to Radlov and his production. He could easily have been acting in a different production.'⁶⁰²

Despite the great triumph of the leading actor, who reportedly received 37 curtain calls⁶⁰³ the contradictions between Radlov's concept and Ostuzhev's acting were too clear to be missed. In Radlov's interpretation and indeed in Radlova's translation of the text,⁶⁰⁴ Othello was above all a soldier and warrior 'conquering new countries with his weapon'.⁶⁰⁵ This reading of the tragic hero, which Radlov openly advocated, sparked off a series of discussions between the director and the critic Iurii Iuzovskii, which reached its peak in *Literaturnyi kritik* with the latter's article 'Is Othello a human being (*chelovek*)?',⁶⁰⁶ replying to Radlov's provocative 'Is Othello a warrior (*voin*)?'⁶⁰⁷

Throughout his book, Zolotnitsky suggests that when working on productions starring great actors Radlov was unable fully to realise his own concept of the play. Hence parallel to each of these *Othellos*, for example, Radlov worked on a production of the tragedy at his studio and with his young actors, where he was able to materialise his personal reading. Such

⁵⁹⁹ Arkady Ostrovsky, 'Shakespeare as a Founding Father of Socialist Realism', 70.

⁶⁰⁰ Svetlana Bushueva, 'Shekspir u Radlova', 43.

⁶⁰¹ Radlov, 'Moi vstrechi s Ostuzhevym', in V. Finkel'shtein (ed.), *Ostuzhev – Otello*, Leningrad and Moscow, VTO, 1938, 39.

⁶⁰² Rudnitskii, 'Mikhoels – Obraz i mysli', in Rudnitskii (ed.), *Mikhoels: Stat'i, besedy, rechi*, 35.

⁶⁰³ 'Uspekh *Otello*', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 1936/8 (17 February 1936), 4.

⁶⁰⁴ Jill Warren argues that Radlova's translation was shaped by Radlov's theatrical interpretations – see Warren, 'Acculturating Shakespeare', esp. 125-156.

⁶⁰⁵ Radlov, *Moia rabota nad Shekspirom*, Russian National Library Archive, St Petersburg, f. 625, ed. 151/1, 7 verso.

⁶⁰⁶ Iurii Iuzovskii, 'Chelovek li Otello?', *Literaturnyi kritik*, 1936/4, 167.

⁶⁰⁷ Radlov, 'Voin li Otello?', *Literaturnyi kritik*, 1936/3, 117.

generalisations could easily imply that Radlov belonged by nature to the category of dictator-directors who used their actors as puppets whenever they could. A counter-argument to Zolotnitsky's theory would be Radlov's post-Stalinian production of *King Lear* in November 1954 (without Mikhoels, who had been assassinated in 1948) with his newly adopted theatre in Latvia, which failed to surprise the critics and scholars.⁶⁰⁸

Contrary to Zolotnitsky, Berezark argues that Radlov's Shakespearean works, prior to his 1938 *Hamlet*, all suffered from a tendency towards 'over-simplification' and that it was only working with great actors, such as Mikhoels and Ostuzhev that saved the Moscow productions from the same problem.⁶⁰⁹ By 'over-simplification', Berezark most probably had in mind 'bringing Shakespeare heroes down to earth', something that was pointed out by other critics regarding theatre studio productions of *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*, whether they praised the director or criticised him for it.⁶¹⁰ As for the difference between *Hamlet* and his previous Shakespearean productions, Radlov himself was aware of it and explained his change of method. If prior to *Hamlet* Radlov's concept was deduced directly from the text, in *Hamlet*, he turned for the first time to the large quantity of available scholarly studies and academic theories, particularly those of contemporary Western Shakespeare scholars.⁶¹¹

3.3 'How I stage Shakespeare'⁶¹²

Throughout his work on various Shakespeare productions, Radlov published several articles in which he described his work. Similar in their content, these articles reveal that Radlov's position was above all a positivist one, insisting that 'the talent of a director before anything lies in reading and hearing Shakespeare'.⁶¹³ He believed that there exists a single correct way of approaching Shakespeare's works and staging them, 'a realistic interpretation' (*realisticheskaiia traktovka*). And he insisted that it was only by working out this essential approach that the director would be able to present on the stage the 'authentic-real'

⁶⁰⁸ Personal correspondence with Aleksei Bartoshevich, 24 November 2015.

⁶⁰⁹ Il'ia Berezark, *Gamlet v teatre imeni Leningradskogo Soveta*, Leningrad-Moscow, VTO, 1940, 21-23.

⁶¹⁰ See for example, Iurii Iuzovskii, 'O *Dame s kameliami* i krasote zhizni', *Literaturniy kritik*, 1934/6, 152; and Karl Radek, 'Na shekspirovskom fronte', *Izvestiia*, 1936/141, 3.

⁶¹¹ As mentioned in several articles and reports, for example Radlov, 'Gamlet iz besedy s akterami', *Iskusstvo i zhizn'*, 1938/3, 17-20.

⁶¹² Taken from the title of Radlov's article, 'Kak ia stavliu Shekspira', in Gvozdev (ed.), *Nasha rabota nad klassikami*, 11-70.

⁶¹³ Radlov, 'Rabota nad Shekspirom', *Teatr*, 1939/4, 64.

Shakespeare, which would reveal the correct reading of the play without merely reconstructing it archaeologically.⁶¹⁴

The first stage of this process, according to Radlov, consisted of studying the time and historical situation of the England where Shakespeare lived and worked, as well as the Bard's social profile within this context. In principle this approach was similar to that of Akimov and his dialectical-materialistic reading of the context of *Hamlet*.

Radlov's experience of staging several plays of Shakespeare meant that he could compare the evolution of the playwright's ideologies and worldviews at different stages of his life. Radlov believed that the director needed to determine the one leading idea of the play, which is always clearly expressed by Shakespeare. For him, for example, *Romeo and Juliet* was a tragedy of young, Komsomol types, fighting for the right to love; and *Othello* was not a play about jealousy but a tragedy about love. He was quite confident of his own reading of each play, even if it raised mixed reactions from other authoritative figures, such as Meyerhold. In his 1936 speech, 'Meyerhold against Meyerholdism', the director dismissed those who claimed to have found 'the norm' for staging a play. Referring to the production of *Othello* at the Maly Theatre, Meyerhold reacted with utmost hostility towards Radlov's reading:

Everybody said that this was an amazing show. They shouted: here is the real production – as if a new era had started and that everything was discovered. These are those norms and standards of which I have been talking. I arrived and saw that first of all there was nothing left of Shakespeare. I remember in an interview Radlov blathered (*vyakal*) that he was staging not a drama of jealousy but a drama of love; here Shakespeare is interested in neither drama of jealousy nor drama of love. He was interested in the intrigue spun by people and the machine under whose wheels Desdemona, Othello and others die. Here! Comrades! If this is right, and it is indeed, then the main protagonist is Iago and not Othello, notwithstanding that the play is called *Othello*. Shakespeare was so sorry for Othello that he felt bad about giving the name of such villain as Iago to the play.⁶¹⁵

⁶¹⁴ See, for example, 'Kak stavit' Shekspira', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 10 February 1935, 4; 'Kak ia stavliu Shekspira', in Gvozdev (ed.), *Nasha rabota nad klassikami* 11-71; 'Shekspir i problem rezhissury', *Teatr i dramaturgiia*, 1936/2, 57-8.

⁶¹⁵ Meierkhol'd, 'Meierkhol'd protiv meierkhol'divshchiny', in Fevral'skii (ed.), *V.E. Meierkhol'd: Stat'i, pis'ma, rechi, besedy*, Vol. 2, 341.

For Radlov, the key to the correct staging of Shakespeare lay in the principle of contrasts.⁶¹⁶ This notion gradually evolved from the physical in *Merry Wives of Windsor* to the psychological in *King Lear* and *Hamlet*, which in turn contributed to his departing from the iconoclastic towards the monumental.

In general, like Akimov, Radlov did not shy away from the comic episodes of Shakespeare's tragedies. 'The alternation of comic and tragic episodes was deliberately played upon, the former prevailing at the beginning of the play, the latter at the end of it. This helped heroes step down from their pedestals.'⁶¹⁷ Always in search of the true spirit of Elizabethan theatre and considering himself as a Shakespeare scholar as well as theatre director, and clearly familiar with ongoing Shakespeare studies in the west, Radlov wrote at the time of his first production of *Othello* in 1927:

Shakespeare's tragedy is built upon a well-considered and regular alternation of tragic and comic. Of course, there are 'snobs' who will feel it an offence if some free and merry personages interfere with their thoughtful 'mood'. Then I shall prompt to them the following, just in case: jokes cracked by those oddities are as 'well-grounded scientifically' as the tirades of the tragedians are; such is the true Shakespeare. ... Certain scenes in Shakespeare are sometimes like an adventure film... . And, on the whole, a Shakespeare performance is a review rather than a mass spectacle, although – to put it more exactly - it is neither one nor the other. At any rate, it is a performance where the characters not only weep but also laugh simple-heartedly.⁶¹⁸

It was in his 1934 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, however, that he took the juxtaposition of comedy and tragedy to a new level, similar to Akimov's aims in the 1932 *Hamlet*. Unlike Akimov's work, this production, which preceded Prokofiev's ballet version of the play with the libretto of Radlov and Piotrovsky, was met with positive reactions from press and scholars alike. Zolotnitsky describes how 'the tragic grew from the comic; they would alternate; but until the very end they would not part.'⁶¹⁹ In fact Radlov was acclaimed for his success in staging an 'optimistic Shakespeare'.⁶²⁰ Piotrovsky noted that 'Radlov never misses an opportunity to make the audience laugh. The central lyrical heroes of the tragedy, the lovers themselves laugh, full of life-enhancing happiness.' He approved of Radlov's portrayal

⁶¹⁶ Radlov, 'Rabota nad Shekspirom', *Teatr*, 1939/4, 64.

⁶¹⁷ Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov*, 102.

⁶¹⁸ Sergei Radlov, 'K postanovke v Akdrame', *Rabochii i teatr*, 1927/16 (19 April), 6.

⁶¹⁹ Zolotnitskii, 'S.E. Radlov: Iz Shekspiriani trydtsatikh', Zolotnitskii (ed.), *V sporakh o teatre*, 58.

⁶²⁰ Piotrovskii, 'Romeo i Dzulietta v teatre-studii p/r Radlova', *Rabochii i teatr*, 1934/14, 10.

of the heroes. Romeo was a brave, determined and strong-willed young man who belonged to those courageous people who realised the victory of Renaissance over old feudalism; and Juliet, portrayed as a hot-blooded, down-to-earth woman of the Renaissance, was freed from all abstract mysticism and sentimentalism.⁶²¹ Such descriptions echo Akimov's concept of *Hamlet* and his interpretation of Ophelia. Indeed, Akimov was among those who praised Radlov's mise-en-scène:

After all the trouble with *Hamlet*, I received a great joy. It was at the production of *Romeo and Juliet* at Radlov's theatre that I saw how the seed that I had planted in the hard soil of the Vakhtangov theatre suddenly gave fruit in a small theatre on Troitskaia Street, and all this with utmost clarity and persuasiveness. I saw my seed which I could recognise from its taste, colour and smell; I was there to see the realisation of what I had striven to achieve – with Shakespeare taken down from the false classic (*lozhnoklassicheskogo*) pedestal, and cleared of declamations, aesthetic mise-en-scène, etc. I saw that Shakespeare was approached as an author who can stand up for himself, even if lit up with a strong lantern or considered in broad daylight.⁶²²

Zolotnitsky, with his usual optimism, regards this statement as a 'noble gesture' from Akimov.⁶²³ However, it could be argued that in these early years after the scandal of his *Hamlet*, Akimov was desperately seeking rehabilitation and a justification for his work, by affiliating it to a universally approved mise-en-scène such as Radlov's *Romeo*. His efforts finally paid off and in 1935 he was appointed the director of the former and then unpopular Leningrad Theatre of Satire and Comedy, where he founded his successful Comedy Theatre, which is active to the present day.

Despite a few negative comments from the likes of Radlov's unshakable critic, Iurii Iuzovskii,⁶²⁴ and the director Konstantin Tverskoi's disapproval of the designer, Basov,⁶²⁵ the success of *Romeo and Juliet* was uncontested. This might be one reason why Prokofiev considered entrusting his project of the ballet on the same tragedy to Radlov. In his book on Prokofiev, Simon Morrison almost ignores the earlier production, which he simply describes as 'a stripped-down, unsentimental version of *Romeo and Juliet* with young actors in his

⁶²¹ Ibid., 11.

⁶²² Akimov, 'O postanovke *Gamleta* v teatre im. Vakhtangova', 166.

⁶²³ Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov: The Shakespearian Fate of a Soviet Director*, 117.

⁶²⁴ Iurii Iuzovskii, 'O *Dame s kameliami* i krasote zhizni', *Literaturnyi kritik*, 1934/6, 153.

⁶²⁵ Konstantin Tverskoi, 'Printsipial'nyi spektakl': Zametki rezhissera', *Literaturnyi Leningrad*, 1934/21, 2.

[Radlov's] studio'.⁶²⁶ However, Radlov himself had insisted that as for the concept of Prokofiev's ballet, 'the starting point was my production of *Romeo and Juliet* (on Theatre-Studio of Radlov) which Prokofiev had seen during our Moscow tour last year.'⁶²⁷ Indeed the idea of *Romeo and Juliet* as a Komsomol (Communist Youth League) tragedy was already explored in Radlov's 1934 production, which he described as:

a play about the struggle for love, about the struggle for the right to love, by young, strong, progressive people fighting against feudal traditions and feudal views on marriage and family. This makes the entire play alive and permeated with a breath of struggle and passion; makes it, perhaps, the most 'Komsomol-like' of all of Shakespeare's plays.⁶²⁸

Despite its great influence, this production rarely features in studies of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*.⁶²⁹ However, it seems that many of the more controversial moments of the ballet in its original version had their roots in Radlov's concept for his theatre production of the tragedy. For example, Morrison observes in Acts I to III 'episodes in which the drama between the Montague and Capulet factions is interrupted by processions of merry-makers' and that in the last act, prior to the scene of the happy ending, 'to alleviate the gloom of the scene in which Juliet drinks the "death" potion, Prokofiev composed three exotic dances, which represent the nuptial gifts that Paris had brought to Juliet's chambers.'⁶³⁰ The equivalent of such moments of 'juxtaposition of counterpoints', as Radlov called them, appeared in the theatre production: the director combined 'the miming scene of Juliet's death with the bustling of servants and peasants preparing for a happy wedding ceremony'; and similarly he 'extended the same device by introducing the joyous music of a street singer while Romeo was mourning Juliet's death. I prefaced this scene with a clown-like interlude

⁶²⁶ Morrison, *The People's Artist*, 32.

⁶²⁷ Radlov, 'Romeo i Džulietta – baleta', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 1935/29 (23 June), 3.

⁶²⁸ Radlov, 'Iunost' teatra', *Teatr i dramaturgiia*, June 1935, 23.

⁶²⁹ This is despite the increasing attention paid to the early versions of the ballet – see for example, Morrison, *The People's Artist*, 31-40; David Nice, *Prokofiev: From Russia to the West 1891-1935*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2003; Svetlana A. Petukhova, 'Pervaya avtorskaya redaktsiia baleta Prokof'eva "Romeo i Džhul'etta". Istochnikovedcheskie problemy izucheniia', PhD dissertation, MGK im. P.I. Chaikovskogo, 1997; Deborah Wilson, 'Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet: History of a Compromise', PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 2003; issues of the journal *Three Oranges*: No. 8 (November 2004); No. 10 (November 2005); No. 17 (May 2009).

⁶³⁰ Simon Morrison, 'Romeo and Juliet's Happy Ending', *Three Oranges*, No. 17 (May 2009), 4.

of an old Capulet and his servant undoing his belt.⁶³¹ Elsewhere he explained his concept in a very pragmatic way:

What should be done so that the Komsomol of our time, when watching a beautifully staged actor weeping, doesn't start explicitly laughing at him. I understood that there was only way out of this situation, ... that is to take the initiative of humour away from the audience and offer it to the director and actors themselves.⁶³²

Notwithstanding such practicalities, for most critics Radlov's concept deserved to be praised for its modernising Shakespeare and bringing his heroes closer to the audience.⁶³³ It is only fair to assume that subsequently, by the time of his production of *Othello* in 1935 Radlov had become 'the leading director in the fields of Soviet Shakespeare theatre. ... His productions started a new era and have laid the foundations for a new Soviet school of theatrical adaptations of Shakespeare.'⁶³⁴

3.4 Sergei Prokofiev and the theatre

Prokofiev's compositions for the theatre remain a relatively neglected area of study, although various articles deal with individual productions or the composer's collaboration with Meyerhold. By virtue of the time period that they cover, the two major academic studies of Prokofiev's works do not attempt a discrete survey of Prokofiev's theatrical output.⁶³⁵ Simon Morrison begins his account of the composer's life and work in 1935, just before the composer's return to permanent residence in the Soviet Union, and his book therefore only contains a single mention of the 1934 *Egyptian Nights*. David Nice, by contrast, ends his book at the same point.⁶³⁶ Similarly, Prokofiev's diaries stop in 1933. Elena Dolinskaia's survey of Prokofiev's theatre music promises much, but in fact it is mainly devoted to his operas and her coverage of the incidental music is quite cursory.⁶³⁷ Accordingly there is no equivalent to Gerard McBurney's overview of Shostakovich's theatre music⁶³⁸ or to Kevin Bartig's account of Prokofiev's film music.⁶³⁹

⁶³¹ Radlov, 'Kak ia stavliu Shekspira', 30.

⁶³² Ibid., 28-29.

⁶³³ Leonid Zhezhelenko, 'V soyuze s Shekspirom', *Rabochii i teatr*, 1934/14, 11.

⁶³⁴ D. Mirskii, 'Othello Teatr Studia p/r S. Radlova', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 1935/42, 5.

⁶³⁵ Simon Morrison, *Prokofiev: A People's Artist*, David Nice, *Prokofiev: A Biography: From Russia to the West 1891-1935*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003.

⁶³⁶ The second volume of David Nice's book is in preparation.

⁶³⁷ Elena Dolinskaia, *Teatr Prokof'eva*, Moscow, Kompozitor, 2012.

⁶³⁸ Gerard McBurney, 'Shostakovich and the Theatre', 147-178.

⁶³⁹ Kevin Bartig, *Composing for the Red Screen*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013.

The nature of the genre of incidental music in general and the time of Prokofiev’s theatre scores in particular means that any study of the composer’s output in this domain requires a multi-disciplinary approach: the evolution of Prokofiev’s personal musical style, the theatre director’s angle, the nature of the play itself and finally the underlying politico-cultural context. The four productions for which Prokofiev composed fall between 1934 and 1938, a transitional period for the composer and for the country. Preparing for his return to his homeland and already in his forties, Prokofiev was keen to show his devotion to his people and would use any occasion to publicise his music. For this purpose, theatre, cinema and radio were most attractive. Accordingly, trying to appease various popular and musical tastes, his opuses from this period include: children’s music – *Twelve Easy Pieces for Piano* and *Summer Day*, plus the suite derived from the latter (Op. 65, 65bis) and *Peter and the Wolf* (Op. 67), *Three Children Songs for Voice and Piano* (Op. 68); film music – *Lieutenant Kijé* and derived orchestral suite and songs (Op.61, 61bis), and *Alexander Nevsky*; ballet – *Romeo and Juliet* and derived suites (Op. 64, 64bis, 64ter); theatre/incidental music (see Table 3.1); as well as music ‘designed for more refined tastes of experienced musicians’⁶⁴⁰ – the Cello Concerto (Op. 58) later revised as Symphony-Concerto, and the Violin Concerto No. 2 (Op. 63).

Table 3.1: Prokofiev’s music for stage and screen (1934-1938)

Year of composition	Title (Genre)	Author	Director	Theatre/Studio	Date of premiere or release	Other version(s)
1934/ Op. 60	<i>Lieutenant Kijé</i> (film)	Iurii Tynianov	Alexander Faintsimmer	Belgoskino	9 Dec. 1934	Orchestral suite
1934/ Op.61	<i>Egyptian Nights</i> (theatre)	Shakespeare, Pushkin and George Bernard Shaw	Tairov	Kamernyi teatr (Moscow)	29 Jan. 1935	Orchestral suite
1935-1936/ Op. 64	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (ballet)	Shakespeare (libretto by Radlov and Piotrovsky)	Radlov during composition Ivo Vâna Psota for Brno premiere, Leonid Lavrovsky for Leningrad premiere (1940)	Intended for GATOB and then Bolshoi; premiered in Brno	30 Dec. 1938	Orchestral suites; Piano transcription
1936/ Op. 70	<i>Queen of Spades</i> (film)	Pushkin	Mikhail Romm	Mosfilm	Not realised	
1936 /Op.	<i>Boris</i>	Pushkin	Meyerhold	Meyerhold	Not	

⁶⁴⁰ Prokofiev, ‘Soviet Audience and My Work’, *Soviet Travel*, 1934/3, reproduced in *Three Oranges*, No. 7 (May 2004), 18.

70bis	<i>Godunov</i> (theatre)			Theatre (Moscow)	realised	
1936/ Op. 71	<i>Eugene Onegin</i> (theatre)	Pushkin	Tairov	Kamernyi Theatre	Not realised	
1937-1938/ Op. 77	<i>Hamlet</i> (theatre)	Shakespeare	Radlov	Radlov Theatre/Lensovet from 1939 (Leningrad)	15 May 1938	Piano transcription of Gavotte
1938	<i>Alexander Nevsky</i> (film)	Eisenstein, Piotr Pavlenko	Eisenstein, Dmitri Vasiliev	Mosfilm	1 Dec. 1938	Cantata (1939, Op. 78)

With ‘popular’ music clearly outweighing serious compositions, Prokofiev seems to have been trying to prove himself ‘as a composer seeking simplicity, in order to aid the masses who wish to develop an understanding of music but are yet insufficiently experienced.’⁶⁴¹ In any case, if for Shostakovich the theatre and incidental music provided a ‘laboratory’ in which he could experiment and develop his skills in an abundance of ways, for Prokofiev composing for stage and screen offered a fine opportunity to showcase his adaptability and the range of his musical language.⁶⁴²

In his quest for securing his place as composer par excellence, Prokofiev was helped by the fact that his collaborative projects were commissioned by the best-known cultural figures of the time: Nataliia Sats (*Peter and the Wolf*), Meyerhold (*Boris Godunov*), Tairov (*Egyptian Nights* and *Eugene Onegin*), Radlov (*Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*) and Eisenstein. Notwithstanding the simplification of his musical language, Prokofiev took great care to conform to the demands of his collaborators. According to the directors’ requests, his incidental music ranged from melodeclamation for *Egyptian Nights* and *Eugene Onegin* to traditional song setting and musical numbers for *Hamlet*. It is tempting to explain this trend by referring to the politico-cultural context surrounding each production, notably the rise of Stalinist aesthetics and the reign of Socialist Realism. However, once specific instructions given by each director and the nature of each play and its appropriation are taken into account, it becomes clear that each work was the product of a complex negotiation between the authors, the artists and societal trends.

The *Romeo and Juliet* ballet project was not the first encounter between Radlov and Prokofiev, and nor would it be the last, as Table 3.1 shows. The two men had a longstanding friendship, mainly as chess partners. On 6 June 1925, in the course of a letter to Boris Asafiev

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Gerard McBurney, ‘Shostakovich and the Theatre’, 147.

from Paris, Prokofiev mentions that he met Radlov ‘fifteen years ago at a chess tournament’,⁶⁴³ and Radlov’s archive holds an early letter (most probably written in 1909) from Prokofiev addressing the director as ‘Dear Maestro’ and expressing the composer’s regret about missing their chess game.⁶⁴⁴ Notwithstanding their subsequent artistic collaborations, chess remained one of the main topics of discussion in their correspondence; in a postcard dated from April 1933, for instance, Prokofiev wrote how excited he was about some new chess moves and that he wanted to share them with Radlov so that the latter could study them.⁶⁴⁵

Despite the rivalries between Radlov and Meyerhold, it was surprisingly Meyerhold who facilitated the creative collaboration of Radlov and Prokofiev, when he suggested that Radlov should direct the Leningrad premiere of *The Love for Three Oranges* in 1926. It was probably Meyerhold’s awareness of Radlov’s experience and success with Commedia dell’arte as practised in his Theatre of Popular Comedy that made him consider his former pupil for this task. Radlov did not disappoint anyone, least of all the composer. Prokofiev saw this production during his tour of the Soviet Union in 1927 and was completely taken by it:

Somehow all the inventive little touches got me into the swing of the performance right from the start, and it was clear the production had been conceived with enthusiasm and talent. ... I am astonished and delighted with the ingenuity and liveliness of Radlov’s production and embrace my old chess partner.⁶⁴⁶

Up to the mid-1930s Radlov was never too far away from the world of opera and ballet. Prior to the *Romeo and Juliet* project he had staged two of Boris Asafiev’s ballets: *The Flames of Paris* in 1932 and *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* in 1934. Prokofiev’s music theatre career, on the other hand, was above all related to Meyerhold, with whom he collaborated and corresponded from 1916 until the very day of the director’s arrest in June 1939. Three of the composer’s seven operas were in one way or another associated with Meyerhold: He suggested that Prokofiev should compose an opera based on Carlo Gozzi’s *The Love for Three Oranges* and provided him with a translation; he made several unsuccessful attempts at

⁶⁴³ Harlow Robinson (ed.), *Selected Letters of Sergei Prokofiev*, Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1998, 100.

⁶⁴⁴ NLR, f. 625, ed. khr. 465, l. 5; quoted in Wilson, ‘Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet*: History of a Compromise’, 48.

⁶⁴⁵ NLR, f. 625, ed. khr. 465, l. 1; quoted in Wilson, ‘Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet*: History of a Compromise’, 49.

⁶⁴⁶ Prokofiev, Entry for 10 February 1927, in his *Soviet Diary 1927 and Other Writings*, Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1991, 77-79.

staging *The Gambler*, especially in its revised version; and when arrested he was in the process of organising rehearsals of *Semyon Kotko*.⁶⁴⁷ Meyerhold, who had studied music in his youth and considered his musical education as the basis of his work as a director,⁶⁴⁸ held a very high opinion of Prokofiev, to the point of regarding him as the future of Soviet opera. In his January 1925 speech addressing the problem of musical theatre, Meyerhold praised *The Gambler*, claiming that

If it was published, one could close down all opera theatres for ten years. ... I am convinced that after *Aida*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Eugene Onegin* finally start falling into the abyss – simply because these operas have been performed 200,000 times and the entire human race has heard them, and once everyone has heard *Eugene Onegin* then they will finally get tired of it – then they shall ask: What about opera? And then, it seems to me – I believe in it profoundly – that some new Wagner will appear – maybe his name is Prokofiev, I don't know – who will get rid of such opera theatre and will make way for a new kind of opera.⁶⁴⁹

Opera was not the only domain where Meyerhold and Prokofiev collaborated. As mentioned in Chapter 2.9.1, Prokofiev was the director's first choice as the composer for his production of Mayakovsky's *The Bedbug*. Working at the time on his ballet, *Les Pas d'acier*, for Diaghilev, Prokofiev had to turn down the commission for *The Bedbug*, which was subsequently offered to young Shostakovich.⁶⁵⁰ The other theatre project of Meyerhold and Prokofiev, the 1936 production of Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* to mark the centenary of the poet's death, was never realised.⁶⁵¹ Prokofiev had no luck either with his other two commissions for the Pushkin celebrations of 1937: a score for a filmed version of *The Queen of Spades* directed by Mikhail Romm and incidental music for a theatre production of *Eugene Onegin* directed by Alexander Tairov for his Moscow Kamernyi Teatr. For reasons unrelated to Prokofiev, who completed extensive musical scores, these projects were all censored and remained unrealised.⁶⁵²

⁶⁴⁷ Harlow Robinson, 'Love for Three Operas: The Collaboration of Vsevolod Meyerhold and Sergei Prokofiev', *The Russian Review*, 45 (1986), 287-304, here 288.

⁶⁴⁸ Fevral'skii (ed.), *V.E. Meierkhol'd: Stat'i, pis'ma, rechi, besedy*, Vol. 2, 503.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 70-71.

⁶⁵⁰ Prokofiev, Letter to Meyerhold, 8 January, 1929, in *Selected Letters of Sergei Prokofiev*, 76.

⁶⁵¹ In 2007 the University of Princeton revived the production using Meyerhold's notes and the almost complete Prokofiev score. For details, see Caryl Emerson and Simon Morrison, 'Princeton's Boris Godunov', *Three Oranges*, No. 14 (November 2007), 2-4.

⁶⁵² See Morrison, *People's Artist*, 119-156.

Thus, prior to Radlov's *Hamlet*, Prokofiev's only theatre music to reach the stage was his score for Tairov's 1934 *Egyptian Nights*, a production made up of a montage of three texts: an abridged version of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, with a prologue comprising extracts from George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, and with Pushkin's poem, *Egyptian Nights*, as an interlude. Since the opening of his production of Vsevolod Vishnevskii's *An Optimistic Tragedy* in December 1931, Tairov and his Moscow Chamber (Kamernii) Theatre, had been enjoying exceptional success and prestige. He presented his *Egyptian Nights* as 'a characteristic example of the way we approach the classics', with 'the fundamental task' being 'to make it [classic drama] effective and stimulating, of real significance to the modern spectator.'⁶⁵³ It was for such an audience that Prokofiev, as he publicly announced, was eager to compose.⁶⁵⁴ In order to get the best of both worlds, he opted for a similar strategy to Tairov – If Tairov alternated his epic Soviet productions with his experimental appropriations of the classics, Prokofiev categorised his works according to his intended audience: those 'unafraid of modern idioms' and 'the newcomers who have not yet developed a mature understanding of music'.⁶⁵⁵ As Abensour and Petchenina argue, this 'double standard' served as a catalyst for the collaborations between Tairov and Prokofiev.⁶⁵⁶

As early as 1929, Prokofiev had renounced the complexities of modern music in favour of a 'new simplicity' with 'simpler means of instrumentation... simpler in form, less complex in counterpoint and more melodic'.⁶⁵⁷ Resonating with Radlov's views on Soviet opera (see above), in 1934 Prokofiev suggested that Soviet music needed to be 'above all *great* music, i.e. music that would correspond in form and in content to the grandeur of the epoch'. He defined such music as "'light-serious" or "serious-light" ... It should be primarily melodious, and the melody should be clear and simple without however becoming repetitive or trivial.'⁶⁵⁸

As concerns composing for theatre, Prokofiev insisted on the composer's duty to distinguish dramatic plays from opera or ballet:

⁶⁵³ Alexander Tairov, 'How we produce the Classics', *Soviet Travel*, 1941/3, quoted in *Three Oranges*, No. 7 (May 2004), 19.

⁶⁵⁴ Prokofiev showed his interest in several interviews, for example: 'Soviet Audience and My Work', *Soviet Travel*, 1934/3, quoted in *Three Oranges*, No. 7 (May 2004), 17-18.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶⁵⁶ Ludmilla Petchenina and Gerard Abensour, 'Egyptian Nights', *Three Oranges*, No. 7 (May, 2004), 11.

⁶⁵⁷ 'Prokofiev hopes for the arrival of a period of "new simplicity" in music', *Los Angeles Evening Express*, 19 February 1929; *Sergey Prokofiev: Diaries 1924–1933: Prodigal Son*, London, Faber, 2012, 779.

⁶⁵⁸ Prokofiev, 'The Path of Soviet Music', *Izvestiia*, 1934/16, quoted in Semyon Shlifstein (ed.), *Sergei Prokofiev: Autobiography, Articles, Reminiscences*, Moscow, Foreign Language Publishing House, 1959, 99-100.

It is not for nothing that one goes to ‘hear’ an opera and to ‘see’ a drama. The composer cannot expect music in a dramatic production to play the same role as in opera or ballet. The purpose of music in a play is to enhance the impression and it should not be heard where the dramatic action can dispense with it. ... Music for a play does not need to solve any special problems; it must merely accompany the performance and must above all be simple and easy to understand.⁶⁵⁹

As much as these statements may be applicable to Prokofiev’s music to *Hamlet*, he did not exactly follow his own advice while composing for *The Egyptian Nights* or *Eugene Onegin*. This may have been in response to Tairov’s idea of ‘synthetic theatre’, which advocated an organic unity of all elements of theatre.⁶⁶⁰ Accordingly Prokofiev worked on the text-music relationship, trying to incorporate the rhythm of Pushkin’s verse into his music. The result was neither an opera nor incidental music as such, but a ‘melodeclamation’ or ‘melodrama’ with the spoken word set to music. Although Prokofiev’s letters indicate that he had enjoyed working on the music of *Egyptian Nights*, he seems to have agreed with critics who did not find Tairov’s hybrid text convincing:

However, despite the scintillating wit of Bernard Shaw, old man Shakespeare turned out to be such a titan by comparison that the desire arose to give him as much space as possible and as little as possible to Shaw. The excised Bernard dwindled down in weight and was transformed into one brief, unimportant episode tacked on to the beginning of the production.⁶⁶¹

Abensour and Petchenina provide a detailed analysis of the score of *The Egyptian Nights* and examples of its relationship to the text and Tairov’s concept, suggesting that the music provided the unifying element of a play made up of three different texts.⁶⁶² However, they do not note that despite working for Meyerhold’s arch rival, Prokofiev did not shy away from referring to some of the director’s devices. Prokofiev’s scorn for the orchestra pit, for example, echoes Meyerhold’s Fuchs-inspired⁶⁶³ idea – traceable back to Wagner – of

⁶⁵⁹ Prokof’ev, ‘Izuchaite tekst, teatr, orkestr: Beseda s S.S. Prokof’evym’, *Teatr i dramaturgiia*, 1936/41, 489-91, quoted in Shlifshtein (ed.), *Sergei Prokofiev: Autobiography, Articles, Reminiscences*, 102.

⁶⁶⁰ See Marvin Carlson, *Theories of Theatre: A historical and Critical Survey from the Greeks to the Present*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1993, 357.

⁶⁶¹ Shlifshtein (ed.), *Sergei Prokofiev, Autobiography, Articles, Reminiscences*, 84.

⁶⁶² Petchenina and Abensour, ‘Egyptian Nights In Search of the “New Simplicity”’, *Three Oranges*, No. 7 (May 2004), 11-15.

⁶⁶³ Georg Fuchs (1868–1949), German journalist, dramatist, and theatre reformer. For Fuchs’s influence on Meyerhold, see Robert Robertson, *Eisenstein and the Audiovisual: The Montage of Music, Image and Sound in Cinema*, London and New York, I.B. Tauris, 2009, 51-52.

covering the orchestra pit and hence extending the stage and increasing the intimacy between the audience and the actors - an idea that Meyerhold famously employed in his 1910 production of Molière's *Dom Juan*.⁶⁶⁴ Furthermore, Prokofiev decided to position the orchestra in two separate places, 'to create a stereophonic effect'.⁶⁶⁵ Meyerhold had already used the idea of calling on two different orchestras in his 1917 production of Lermontov's *Masquerade* at the Alexandrinsky Theatre, with incidental music by Glazunov.⁶⁶⁶

Glazunov supplied a possible model for another salient feature of *Egyptian Nights* – its use of the saxophone to convey an exotic atmosphere (Prokofiev seems also to have taken interest in Glazunov's saxophone quartet, which he had heard at its premiere in Paris in December 1933). Describing cultural life in the French capital to Myaskovsky, Prokofiev wrote: 'It was entirely obvious that with a stronger contrapuntal structure and with a greater attention to color and certain other devices, a saxophone ensemble has every right to exist and can even stand up quite well in a serious piece of music.'⁶⁶⁷ In the same letter, Prokofiev mentions that he was 'working on music for a production at Tairov's theatre', which can only have been *Egyptian Nights*. Accordingly it is tempting to propose that the idea of using saxophones in his score to this play as well as in his previous film music to *Lieutenant Kizh e*, was influenced by Glazunov's work. As well as trying out a 'saxophone ensemble' for its own sake, Prokofiev used it to provide an exotic touch to his incidental music depicting Egypt, to distinguish it further from Romans. For the latter, Prokofiev envisaged different orchestral timbres, using a tam-tam to depict the menace of Caesar's force, as well as 'an archaic *corno da caccia* for extra flavour, a modest reflection perhaps of Respighi's six Roman *buccine* in the resplendent procession concluding *Pini di Roma*.⁶⁶⁸ The opposition of the two camps was one of Tairov's main requirements.

Prokofiev worked similar timbral contrasts into the music for Meyerhold's *Boris Godunov*, another commission for Pushkin's jubilee celebration – and later into his film score to *Alexander Nevsky*. In *Godunov* the music for Russia was opposed to that of Poland: 'Musically Russia is a world of bleak, stark contrasts, a place without musical instruments, where people hum rather than sing', whereas 'musical Poland is a world of tuneful melodies

⁶⁶⁴ See Alma Law and Mel Gordon, *Meyerhold, Eisenstein and Biomechanics: Actor Training in Revolutionary Russia*, Jefferson, NC and London, McFarland, 1996, 20-22.

⁶⁶⁵ Petchenina and Abensour, 'Egyptian Nights', 12.

⁶⁶⁶ Robert Leach, *Vsevolod Meyerhold*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, 149.

⁶⁶⁷ Prokofiev, Letter to Nikolai Miaskovskii 23 December 1933, in Robinson (ed.), *Selected Letters of Sergei Prokofiev*, 309.

⁶⁶⁸ Nice, *Prokofiev*, 314.

and thick, Hollywood-style orchestration.⁶⁶⁹ Elsewhere, Prokofiev juxtaposed diegetic (music with a visible source on the stage) and non-diegetic (here off-stage chorus) music in a similar way to his music for Eisenstein's films.⁶⁷⁰ All these elements suggest that Prokofiev's music to the productions of Meyerhold and Tairov was more than just incidental music in the way that his score to Radlov's *Hamlet* represents, and indeed more than what he himself had claimed in his discussion on incidental music in general: 'The composer will be well advised to confine himself to a few tunes frequently repeated so that by the end of the performance the audience will be humming them. It is better to have a few good tunes than many colourless or complicated melodies.'⁶⁷¹

Prokofiev's method in the case of his pre-*Hamlet* theatre scores, which resembled his work on his ballets and film music, was a result of the respective directors' extremely precise and detailed indications to him. In his letters, Meyerhold described in detail his requirements for each scene of *Boris Godunov*, down to the number of seconds each musical number should last.⁶⁷² This was indeed in line with Prokofiev's desired method of working, as he stated in an interview: 'I prefer the playwright and the director to tell me exactly what they want. It is a great help to me when they can say, "Here I need a minute and a quarter of music" or "give me something tender and melancholy here."⁶⁷³

Radlov would follow the composer's advice and give him, in a long letter, detailed indications regarding the score of *Hamlet*. But Radlov emphasised the fact that he only required a few musical numbers, which he would then mix and match according to the requirements of scene and character. In compensation, he spent a great deal of time outlining the specific characteristics required for each of these episodes, as well as his understanding of *Hamlet* based on his extensive studies and experience with Shakespeare's works, providing the composer with comparisons from other Shakespearean heroes, particularly from *Othello*. This would have relieved Prokofiev from the task of 'visualizing' the play:

⁶⁶⁹ Caryl Emerson and Simon Morrison, 'Princeton's Boris Godunov, 1936/2007: After Seventy Years, Prokofiev's Music is Attached to Meyerhold's Vision of Pushkin's Play', *Three Oranges*, No. 14 (November 2007), 5.

⁶⁷⁰ See Morrison, *People's Artist*, 217-246.

⁶⁷¹ Prokof'ev, 'Izuchaite tekst, teatr, orkestr', 102-103.

⁶⁷² Viktor Gromov, *Tvorcheskoe nasledie Vsevolod Meierkhol'da*, Moscow, VTO, 1978, 392-399. See also Béatrice Picon-Vallin, 'Vers un théâtre musical: Les propos de Vsevolod Meyerhold', in Laurent Feneyrou (ed.), *Musique et Dramaturgie: Esthétique de la Représentation au Xxe Siècle*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 2003, 45-64, and her translation and commentaries to Meyerhold's letter to Prokofiev, *ibid.*, 75-86.

⁶⁷³ Prokof'ev, 'Izuchaite tekst, teatr, orkestr' 102-103.

When I am asked to write the music for a play or film I rarely give my consent at once, even if I am familiar with the text of the play. It usually takes me five or ten days to ‘see’ the production, i.e., to visualize the characters, their emotions and the actions in terms of music. It is at this stage that the main musical themes usually suggest themselves.⁶⁷⁴

As Deborah Wilson has pointed out, this visualisation was not limited to Prokofiev’s theatre music and could just as easily describe his approach to his ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*. Wilson argues that the earliest surviving documents regarding Prokofiev’s work on his ballet in fact show the composer trying to ‘see’ the tragedy by creating an outline of Shakespeare’s text rather than a ballet scenario.⁶⁷⁵ The document, dated January 1935, mentions none of the changes to the original tragedy that would occur later in work on the ballet score; nor does it contain the infamous ‘happy ending’. Prokofiev’s use of English for the title of scenes suggests that at the very least he had the original English text alongside the Russian translation. Given the collaboration with Radlov and his friend and colleague Adrian Piotrovsky, it is highly likely assume that Prokofiev used Anna Radlova’s translation, which was widely available following her husband’s production of the tragedy in 1935 (see above).

The similarity of working method should not be understood as the composer not distinguishing between music for opera and ballet and incidental music. However, it seems that for Prokofiev it was primarily the audience’s expectation that determined the difference, even if in all cases the music was to express what the visuals could not. Simon Morrison uses such visual-auditory relations to argue, albeit rather cursorily, that Prokofiev’s music for the original 1935 version of *Romeo and Juliet* with its controversial ‘happy ending’ made more sense than the revised 1940 version with Shakespeare’s original tragic end. According to the former ending ‘in the last act Romeo arrives a minute earlier, finds Juliet alive and everything ends well.’⁶⁷⁶ Prokofiev explained the reason for such apparent barbarism as ‘purely choreographic: living people can dance, the dying cannot’. He also referred to a more Radlovian justification based on the fact that ‘Shakespeare himself was said to have been uncertain about the ends of his plays (*King Lear*) and parallel with *Romeo and Juliet* had written *Two Gentlemen of Verona* in which all ends well.’ He also mocked the fact that the news of this change in the ballet was received calmly in London but that ‘our own

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁵ Wilson, ‘Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet*: History of a Compromise’, 72-75.

⁶⁷⁶ Prokofiev, *Soviet Diary 1927 and Other Writings*, 299.

Shakespeare scholars proved more papal than the pope and rushed to the defence of Shakespeare.⁶⁷⁷ Such a reaction is of course reminiscent of Soviet critics' responses to Akimov's *Hamlet*, by contrast with broad Western approval and even praise for director's controversial approach.

In his close study and reconstruction of the original 'happy ending' for *Romeo and Juliet* Morrison brackets together Prokofiev and Radlov (and at times Piotrovsky) without ascribing the idea to any of them individually. Alongside Radlov's updating of Shakespeare in line with Proletarian ideas, Morrison suggests that the concept of the 'happy ending' was also 'an elaboration of the central precept of Christian Science, whose teachings Prokofiev esteemed: "No form or physical combination is adequate to represent infinite love".'⁶⁷⁸ The tenets of Christian Science, which Morrison later cites while discussing the emergence of a triumphant C major at the end of the final musical number of Radlov's *Hamlet*, could also be argued to have much in common with the positive outlook recommended by the doctrine of Socialist Realism.

Contrary to received wisdom, Prokofiev and Radlov's replacing *Romeo and Juliet*'s tragedy by transcendence had received a positive reaction from the critic and Central Committee advisor, Sergei Dinamov, who, according to Radlov's letter to Prokofiev 'in general approves of it, even with the happy ending, but recommends being careful naming it – adding something like "on motives of Shakespeare" or another cautious subtitle.'⁶⁷⁹ But the adversaries were undeniably strong, and when facing the many obstacles regarding their ballet's being premiered, Prokofiev and subsequently Radlov accepted defeat and changed the ending back to the original Shakespearean one.⁶⁸⁰

In the intervening years between work on *Romeo and Juliet* and the premiere of *Hamlet* in 1938, much had changed in the life of the composer and in the politico-cultural climate of the country. The infamous *Pravda* article, 'Muddle instead of music' of 28 January 1936 attacking Shostakovich's opera, *Lady Macbeth* was quickly followed by another condemning the composer's ballet *The Limpid Stream* and its librettist, Adrian Piotrovsky.⁶⁸¹ This marked the start of a wave of ferocious repression within cultural circles, ultimately with many

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁸ Morrison, 'Romeo and Juliet', 7.

⁶⁷⁹ Letter from Radlov to Prokofiev, 2 May 1935, quoted in Morrison, 'Romeo and Juliet', 4.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁸¹ These attacks have been widely documented and studied – see, for example, Laurel Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2000, 84-85, and Leonid Maksimenkov, *Sumbur vmesto muzyki: Stalinskaia kul'turnaia revoliutsiia, 1936-1938*, Moscow, Iuridicheskaia kniga, 1997.

victims, including most famously Meyerhold, who was arrested and executed in 1939. In the meantime, in January 1936 Prokofiev permanently settled in the Soviet Union but was subsequently (after a last tour to America in 1938) deprived of his external passport, with his official status changed from *vyezdnnoi* (allowed to travel) to *nevyezdnnoi* (disallowed).⁶⁸² This meant that he was unable to attend the successful Czechoslovakian premiere of his *Romeo and Juliet* in Brno in December 1938.

It is difficult to explain why Prokofiev rather than Asafiev composed the music to *Hamlet*, given that the latter had been the composer of choice for all Radlov's previous Shakespearean productions. It could have been as a result of the disappointments related to the realisation of *Romeo and Juliet*, or that Prokofiev had reportedly reflected on composing an opera based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*⁶⁸³ and showed interest in the production of his chess partner as a stepping-stone towards this larger project. Be that as it may, following Radlov's detailed letter (see below) in which he outlined the specificities of the music needed for his production, Prokofiev completed the score after his return from what was to be his last visit abroad on 23 April 1938. Soon afterwards he started working on the film score to Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*.⁶⁸⁴

In accordance with Radlov's requests, and probably due to the low quality of the Theatre orchestra, Prokofiev's music to *Hamlet* has fewer numbers and is less elaborated than his previous incidental scores. However, an account of one of the rehearsals in the presence of the composer shows that he had no less interest in the production and in the compatibility between the music and stage:

He [Prokofiev] stopped the orchestra more than once. Rushing from the director's table where he was sitting with Radlov, he hurried down to the orchestral rail and whispered something to the conductor [Nikolai Ershov]. When he went back, the music sounded better and more together. ... A composer with an international reputation, Prokofiev had just [sic!] returned from America. He came to Leningrad and applying himself to musicians who were patently not up to what he had written for them, did not show dissatisfaction or disappointment, but worked steadily to

⁶⁸² Morrison, 'Romeo and Juliet', 7.

⁶⁸³ Igor Vyshnevetskii, *Sergei Prokofiev*, Moscow, Molodaya Gvardiia, 2009, 445.

⁶⁸⁴ Edward Morgan, 'Prokofiev's Shakespearean Period', *Three Oranges*, No. 10 (November 2005), 8.

achieve what had to be achieved. Sitting at the table with a low light, Radlov kept quiet – he was grateful for the composer’s involvement.⁶⁸⁵

Although Prokofiev’s music was more modest and less strikingly original than Shostakovich’s for Akimov’s *Hamlet*, both scores displayed awareness of current stylistic and public demands, and both were highly praised. However, the more organic relation of Prokofiev’s music to Radlov’s staging and concept meant that the press did not discuss it separately, and it could therefore be argued that it served the foremost function of incidental music more faithfully (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Sergei Radlov’s *Hamlet* – Musical Numbers

Musical number, title	Place and function according to Radlov’s letter	Character indication, metre and tonality	Remarks in published score
1. The Ghost of Hamlet’s Father	Appearance of the Ghost: twice in first act, during snowstorm Third appearance: (probably) Queen’s bed room scene, more domestic setting	<i>Andante lugubre</i> 4/4, a	‘After the repetition to be continued as long as the scene requires’
2. Claudius’s March	Second scene of First act as Claudius, Gertrude and the rest of court enters the stage Beginning of second act Third act before the ‘Mousetrap’	<i>Moderato con brio</i> 4/4, Eb	
3. Fanfares/ I	Included in the description of 2	4/4, Ab	
3. Fanfares / II	Included in the description of 2	4/4, Ab	Fanfares are played more than once. If a fanfare is required before ‘Pantomime’, play I but a tone higher
4. Pantomime	To replace the ‘dumb show’ of Shakespeare’s text; depicts love affair between an old queen and a young handsome man to whom she gives the stolen crown Musical accompaniment for the following spoken words in the style of Japanese or Chinese theatre	<i>Allegro moderato</i> 4/4, Eb, then a and back to Eb	After the repetition, continue as long as needed or finish on the bar marked ‘for ending’
5. Ophelia’s First Song: ‘How	Finish with line: ‘budto dozhdik letom’	<i>Andante</i> 4/4, g	Anna Radlova’s translation. Conversations between verses

⁶⁸⁵ Arkadii Minchkovskii, *Povesti o moem Leningrade*, Leningrad, Sovetskii pisatel’, 1986, 346-347, quoted in Edward Morgan, ‘Prokofiev’s Shakespearean Period’, 8.

should I your true love know?’			could take place during the ‘otygrysh’ (codetta) R3 (the last four bars) – in that case the music will be continuous. But it is also possible to have a pause if desired. It is possible after the third verse to complete or not otygrysh R3. (Prokofiev’s remark)
6. Ophelia’s Second Song: ‘Tomorrow is St Valentine’s Day’	Finish with line ‘vot chto on mne skazal’ <i>Otygrysh</i> to be played four times after each four lines or twice after each eight, to which she dances lightly	<i>Andante</i> D	During the songs Ophelia dances and during the otygrysh she simulates (mimiruyet) The last eight bars of the second couplet are repeated several times, so that with them in the background Ophelia manages to say everything before leaving. (Prokofiev’s remark)
7. Ophelia’s Third Song: ‘They bore him barefaced on the bier’	Has only four lines	<i>Andante</i> 4/4, C	
8. Ophelia’s Fourth Song: ‘And will he not come again’	Has ten uninterrupted lines	<i>Andante</i> <i>espressivo</i> 4/4, a minor	
‘For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy’	Single line	Same tone as first song	To be song on the motif of the first song in this way: (music) Orchestral accompaniment as in first song.
9. The Gravedigger’s Song	Fifth act	<i>Sostenuto</i> 4/4, C	
10. The Concluding March of Fortinbras	Just before Osric’s ‘here comes young Fortinbras with victory’ The march starts from far away almost inaudible but victorious. Thirty seconds after Hamlet’s death the march expands in sound and continues two more minutes while getting louder and louder. Image of march closer to Ghost’s music than Claudius’s flamboyant mannerism.	<i>Andante</i> <i>maestoso</i> – <i>Meno mosso</i> 4/4, Bb, then C	

3.5 *Hamlet* (1938): The production as reported

For Radlov, *Hamlet* was a natural continuation of his work on Shakespeare's tragedies using his wife's new, functional and somewhat controversial translations. His theatre was now installed in larger premises and its acquired reputation as a 'Shakespeare laboratory'⁶⁸⁶ meant that every Shakespearean production was a highly awaited event with extensive media coverage both in advance and subsequently.

In a detailed account of Radlov's *Hamlet*, Il'ia Berezark presents what he calls a 'portrait of the production',⁶⁸⁷ wherein he describes each scene from the audience's point of view. A professional theatre critic, Berezark seems to have attended most of the performances throughout the two seasons preceding his book, and hence his account of the staging could be considered the closest thing possible to a video reportage of the show, albeit one that is commented and critiqued throughout. Berezark's quotes from the now lost production book, together with several articles by critics and scholars as well some material from letters of contemporaries who attended the performances and of course Radlov's writings and presentations (*doklady*), previews and correspondence (particularly with Prokofiev) are here employed as the main sources from which to analyse the production. Without a musico-dramatic synopsis of the kind that is preserved for Akimov/Shostakovich *Hamlet*, the place of each musical number is worked out using all the above-mentioned material, as well as Prokofiev's manuscripts and sketchy outline of the numbers as reported in Kochurova's 1952 letter to Prokofiev. However, given that her account was derived from materials from the time of Radlov Theatre's residence (in reduced form) during the War in western Ukraine - materials that were at the time apparently preserved in fragmentary form - her information will be mainly used as a way of confirming hypotheses regarding the place of musical numbers (see Table 3.3).⁶⁸⁸

Similarly to Akimov, Radlov tried to retain as much of Shakespeare's tragedy as he could, keeping the cuts to a minimum, which meant including a few of the often deleted scenes. In a letter to archivist Elizaveta Konshina (1890-1972), Olga Knipper-Chekhova mentions this aspect: 'Was at Radlov's for *Hamlet*, 7:30 to 12:30 – can you imagine it? Average. *Hamlet* clearly enjoys his image but doesn't bring it up to the audience. He mumbles on the stage for

⁶⁸⁶ Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov: The Shakespearean Fate of a Soviet Director*, 176.

⁶⁸⁷ Il'ia Berezark, *Gamlet v Teatre im. Leningradskogo Soveta*, 105

⁶⁸⁸ Contrary to Berezark's account Kochurova's notes suggests that the production was in four acts. It is possible that due to the War conditions and the reduced number of actors and crew, the production was shortened. The whereabouts of the material she refers to are currently unknown.

himself. But not too bad. There are scenes that are not often performed (in other productions).⁶⁸⁹ Radlov argued that as an actor, Shakespeare had clearly planned the structure of his plays according to the physical and emotional possibilities of the leading actor: ‘great tension in the first act (or first part), some rest and relative weakening in the second, huge emotional explosion in the third, almost complete rest during the fourth in order to prepare for the blow of the final and deciding fifth act.’⁶⁹⁰ Accordingly, it was the second and fourth acts that would provide the easiest option for the necessary cuts. However, as Berezkin observes, such a solution would mean that the leading actors would have no chance of recovery from the great pressure of the most demanding acts. He suggests that this might explain why the reception of those Shakespearean productions with great actors such as Mikhoels and Ostuzhev surpassed Radlov’s stagings at his own theatre with his younger, less experienced actors.⁶⁹¹

As the director of a Shakespearean theatre, Radlov did not consider any of the changes Akimov brought to Shakespeare’s text and the order of scenes. Hence there is no equivalent to Akimov’s prologue being read by Horatio (see Chapter 2.10.1).

⁶⁸⁹ Ol’ga Knipper-Chekhova, letter to Elizaveta Konshina, 5 June 1938, in Vitalii Vilenkin (ed.), Ol’ga Leonardovna Knipper-Chekhova, *Perepiska (1896-1959), Vospominaniia ob O. L. Knipper-Chekhovoi*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1972, [Vol. 2], 189.

⁶⁹⁰ Radlov, ‘Rabota nad Shekspirom’, *Teatr*, 1939/4, 64.

⁶⁹¹ Berezkin, ‘Shekspirovskie postanovki na sstene russkogo teatra v pervoi polovine tridsatykh godov XX veka’, Dissertation [Diplomnaia rabota], Moscow, State Humanitarian University of Russia [RGGU], 2000, also available at and downloadable from <http://www.sibkursy.ru/pages/download>, accessed 28 August 2016.

Table 3.3: Hypothetical Musical-dramatic Scenario of Radlov/Prokofiev *Hamlet*

Act/Scene (Shakespeare's if different)	Music (No. in Manuscript)	Action	Place
I/1	The Ghost Theme (1)	First appearance(s) of the Ghost	Terrace of the Castle
I/2	Claudius's March (2) complete	Arrival of Claudius and Gertrude	Large room in the palace
		Claudius's speech and conversations with Hamlet, etc	
I/3	Claudius's March (2) ending	Exit of Claudius and Gertrude followed by others	In front of the curtain
	Ophelia's (second?) song (6)	Laertes parting with Polonius and Ophelia, Polonius's advice to his children	
I/4	Fanfare No. 1	Claudius's celebrations heard from afar	Terrace of the Castle
	The Ghost Theme (1)	Hamlet's encounter with the Ghost	
	Fanfare No. 2	End of Act I	Curtain
II/1 (II/2)	Fanfare No. 1, Pantomime (probably accompanying actors arrival) ⁶⁹²	Claudius and Gertrude are having a private dinner. They receive Rosencrantz and Guildenstern followed by Polonius	Interior of the palace
		Hamlet is pretending to be mad. He teases Polonius	In front of the curtain
		Hamlet receives Rosencrantz and Guildenstern	Gallery in the castle
		The actors arrive, Hamlet asks for Hecuba's monologue, the scene finishes with Hamlet's soliloquy	
III/1		Polonius reveals his plan Hamlet's 'To be or not to Be' Hamlet and Ophelia meet while being watched (the nunnery scene)	
III/2	Fanfares	Arrival of the guests	Hall in the castle
	Pantomime	Pantomime followed by	
	Pantomime and fanfares	'Murder of Gonzago'	
	Flute solo	Recorder (Flute) scene: Hamlet confronts Rosencrantz and Guildenstern	
III/3		The King's prayer	Gothic-like chapel
III/4	The Ghost Theme	Hamlet confront his Mother He kills Polonius accidentally	Gertrude's closet

⁶⁹² Kochurova's letter does not indicate the precise place for this musical number.

		The Ghost reminds Hamlet not to mistreat his mother	
IV/1 (IV/2)		Hamlet hides Polonius's dead body but confronts with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who arrest him	Semi-dark scene (a passage in the castle)
IV/2 (IV/3)		Hamlet is interrogated by Claudius and sent to England Claudius's soliloquy	A room in the castle
IV/3 (IV/5)	Ophelia's songs	Ophelia's madness	A luxurious hall in the castle
V/1 (IV/6 and IV/7)		Horatio receives the news of Hamlet's adventure with the pirates and his return	In front of closed curtains
		Claudius and Laertes learnt about Hamlet's return and Ophelia's death. They plot against Hamlet	
V/2 (V/1)	Gravedigger's song	Gravediggers singing and digging up skulls and bones	Graveyard
		Hamlet and Horatio enter and start chatting with them; Hamlet contemplates on death holding Yorik's skull	
		Ophelia's funeral and fight between Hamlet and Laertes	
V/3 (V/2)		Osric invites Hamlet to a duel with Laertes	In front of closed curtains
		Hamlet and Laertes fight to death	Same big hall as I/2
		Gertrude is poisoned and dies Hamlet kills Polonius but he dies too	
	Fortinbras' march	Fortinbras arrives	

3.5.1 Radlov *Hamlet* Act 1

The curtains open to the first scene set on a terrace in Elsinore, lit by a light blue colour evoking the northern sky. Believing in the necessity of differentiating between Shakespeare's nordic tragedy and his southern ones (i.e. *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*) Berezark suggests that the stage designer, Vladimir Dmitriev and Radlov should use the blue tones of Leningrad's White Nights as the closest thing they knew to a northern landscape.⁶⁹³ Shivering guards indicate the cold, and fear is in the air. Horatio is the only non-military person, and everyone is respectful towards him. He is in a simple student outfit. The Shakespeare critic, John Dover

⁶⁹³ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 54.

Wilson, whose classic study, *What Happens in Hamlet*⁶⁹⁴ is extensively quoted in Radlov's presentations⁶⁹⁵ and previews, explains that Shakespeare tried 'to make the Ghost a dramatically convincing figure' through stressing 'its actuality by exhibiting the effect of the apparition upon characters holding different opinions about the spirit world, opinions which would be entertained by different parts of the audience'.⁶⁹⁶ After a thorough examination of Catholic, Protestant, and sceptical thoughts about ghosts, Wilson concludes that Marcellus and Barnardo 'typify the ghost-lore of the average unthinking Elizabethan', whereas Horatio 'comes on to the stage as a disciple of Reginald Scot, or at any rate as a sceptic in regard to the objectivity of spectres'. Hamlet, on the other hand, represents the Protestant point of view, so he asks himself, 'Is it his father's spirit indeed, or a devil, or even possibly an angel?'⁶⁹⁷ Radlov agrees that the presence of scholar Horatio might be a result of soldiers asking for him, believing that his university education allows him to judge the nature of the wandering ghost.⁶⁹⁸ In Radlov's production, the first appearance of the Ghost is not visible to the audience and is merely evoked by the reaction of the soldiers, the ranting words of Horatio in their defence, and, most probably, the Ghost's musical theme. Soon the Ghost reappears, this time to the audience as well, walking past everyone to the accompaniment of his music and exiting from the gate.

In his detailed letter to Prokofiev, Radlov indicated that the Ghost of Hamlet's father makes three appearances. It could be worked out that these were the Ghost's appearance to the soldiers, and his reappearance to Hamlet in Act 1, and his return or evocation in Act 4 (Act 3 in Kochurova's letter) during the closet scene, where he reminds Hamlet that his mother was not to be mistreated. The two appearances of the Ghost in the first act were to take place during 'a stormy, dark night, while the wind is whistling and autumn leaves are swirling around, even maybe a snowstorm / these are all not for the music, I shall be in charge of them independently: that is to say with the help of sound-montage machines (*zvukomontazhnie mashini*).'⁶⁹⁹ Radlov insists that Prokofiev's music should make the appearance of the Ghost

⁶⁹⁴ John Dover Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003 (orig. pub. 1935).

⁶⁹⁵ According to Berezark, *Gamlet*, 38.

⁶⁹⁶ Dover Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet*, 59-60

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 66, 70, 71.

⁶⁹⁸ Radlov, 'Ekspozitsiia o Gamlete', (17 December 1937), NLR, f. 625, ed. khr. 150, 50-51.

⁶⁹⁹ Radlov, 'Letter to Prokofiev', 1

‘incredibly significant, ceremonial, the royal entrance of a true hero, a warrior, a loving and awe-inspiring father’.⁷⁰⁰

Following Radlov’s instructions, an important characteristic of Prokofiev’s music for the Ghost is the absence of ‘any mysticism’. This aspect has been explained, particularly in Western studies, as Radlov’s recognising that mysticism was ‘anathema to Stalinist-era aesthetics’.⁷⁰¹ On the surface this is not implausible. However, a close study of Radlov’s previous writings on Shakespeare, his references to the likes of Dover Wilson, and his instructions as they appear in the letter to Prokofiev, suggest that the non-mystical interpretation of the Ghost could have been sincerely and independently conceived by the director as being the most truthful to Shakespeare. Indeed he writes: ‘And least of all, there must be nothing mystical in the appearance of the Ghost; not because this is what our materialist era requires from us, but because this is how Shakespeare thinks and feels’.⁷⁰²

In a related way, Akimov’s non-ghost solution was also the result of a close reading of Elizabethan theatre traditions and a perception that the appearance of a ghost was a usual feature of that time, which could not be thoughtlessly transferred to contemporary theatre because of the very different expectations of the modern audience.⁷⁰³ From similar reasoning Radlov chose a different solution, which emphasises the mission of the Ghost rather than its metaphysical nature:

Clearly, the ghost of a murdered person does not reappear in the light of day for nothing. He has come to earth in order to tell his son the reason of his death; and for Shakespeare this is absolutely natural. That is why the characteristics of Hamlet’s father and the aspects of his entrance on the stage are a sort of depiction of the nature of this magnificent, severe, brave and straightforward person and certainly have nothing to do with the characteristics of being surprised at seeing a dead person coming back from grave. This [event] is unusual mainly because of its being ceremonial and majestic rather than because of reversing the laws of nature.⁷⁰⁴

The Ghost’s musical theme (first musical number in the score) reappears in a fuller version later in this act (Scene 4). While the stage is changed for the second scene, the second main

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ Simon Morrison, *The People’s Artist*, 83.

⁷⁰² Radlov, ‘Letter to Prokofiev’, 1.

⁷⁰³ Akimov presents this theory in most of his pre-premiere writings and presentations (doklady).

⁷⁰⁴ Radlov, ‘Letter to Prokofiev’, 2.

musical theme of the play is heard; this is Claudius's march. Berezark describes this music as a ceremonial, bravura 'Danish march', though he understandably does not attempt to put his finger on any specifically Danish qualities in it.⁷⁰⁵ The main theme, like the Ghost theme, would come back throughout the play to depict the entrances of Claudius, the Queen and the rest of their court. According to Radlov's letter, this musical number (to which Radlov adds 'fanfares')⁷⁰⁶ was to recur 'at the start of the second scene of the first act, and then at the beginning of the second act and most probably in the third act before the "Mousetrap" scene'.⁷⁰⁷ This theme, which Berezark qualifies as 'mincing' (*zhemanni*)⁷⁰⁸ is in fact a musical portrait of Claudius, as Radlov describes to Prokofiev:

How should Claudius be depicted? He is a clever monarch of a new Machiavellian type, stronger in diplomacy and courtly intrigues than in military cases, insolent, handsome, in his own way bright, who can speak well and seduce women. With him, the Danish Royal court forgets about the somehow severe simple-mindedness (*prostovatost'*) of morals [which were] so essential to Hamlet's father. And in general Claudius creates around him that atmosphere of court luxury, ceremony, bows, reverences, exquisite turns of phrase, mannered obsequiousness (*slachavost'*) and etiquette in every aspect of life, whose generation consists of Osric, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: the atmosphere of lies and pretension which Hamlet hates and which is suffocating him. That is why it seems to me that Claudius's march is at the same time elegant, mannered, self-pleased, and self-confident; in it, it's as if the image of the courtly life of the last years of Elizabeth's reign is depicted.⁷⁰⁹

Prokofiev's vivid music echoes Radlov's reading of Claudius as a cunning leader, refraining from the traditional evil portrait of the 'usurper king'. Claudius's refined manners are depicted in a balletic musical number which is close Prokofiev's music to 'The Minuet' in *Romeo and Juliet*, having very few march-like characteristics, despite the title. Several solo instrumental episodes could be interpreted as representing different members of Claudius's flamboyant court. Prokofiev takes extra care to mark the irregular accentuations that subvert the indicated 4/4 metre (Ex. 3.1). The middle section of this number becomes more reflective and acquires a darker atmosphere, in accordance with Claudius's evil deeds and the tragic

⁷⁰⁵ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 106.

⁷⁰⁶ In Radlov's letter, 'fanfares' is added by hand to the description of this number, but the word does not appear in Kochurova's list.

⁷⁰⁷ Radlov, 'Letter to Prokofiev', 2.

⁷⁰⁸ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 54.

⁷⁰⁹ Radlov, 'Letter to Prokofiev', 2, 3.

events to come. Furthermore, in order to symbolise the contrast and opposition, Claudius's music is set in E flat major - that is, a maximally distant tritone away from the Ghost's A minor march.

Ex. 3.1: Prokofiev, *Hamlet*, Act 1, Claudius's March

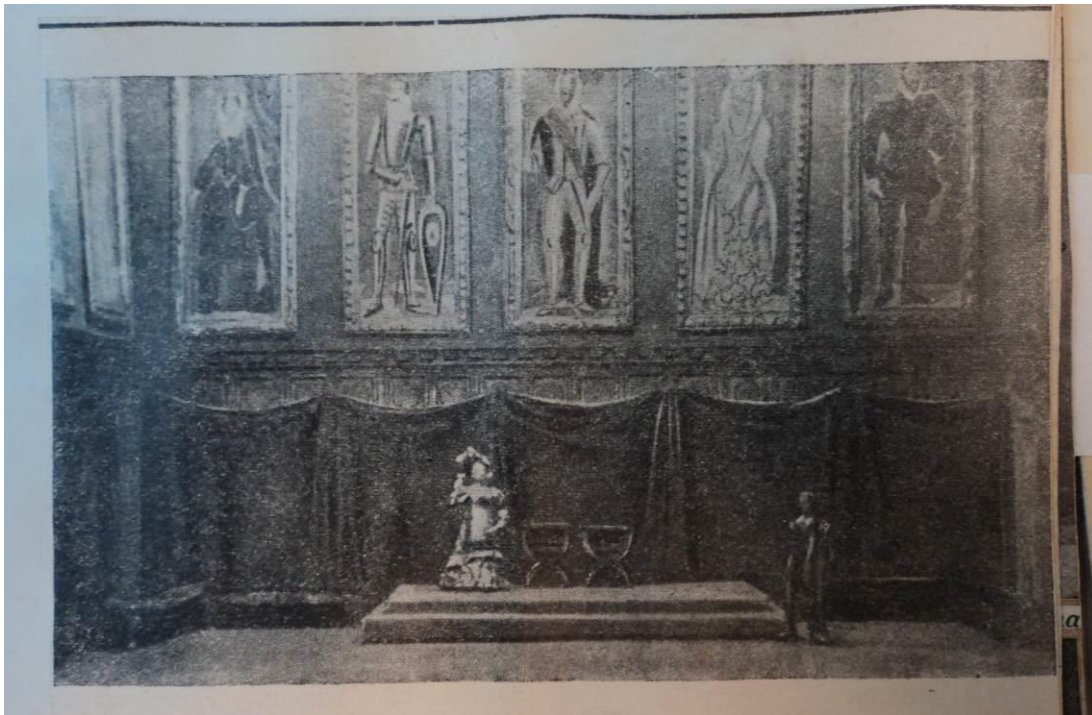
[Moderato con brio] ♩ = 88

The musical score is written for piano in E-flat major and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system begins with a first ending bracket over the first two measures. The tempo is marked 'Moderato con brio' with a quarter note equal to 88 beats per minute. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'v'.

The contrast between the world of Claudius and his men and that of Hamlet and his father's ideals is visually emphasised too. The second scene is set in a cosy, colourful room of the palace; the entire decor is opposite to the previous scene (see Plate 3.1). Here a big hall is decorated with green curtains and family portraits, and a red podium with two steps leads the eye to where the King and Queen are sitting in their chairs, surrounded by the courtiers standing in a straight line parallel to the ramp. On the left is Laertes and on the right Hamlet in his traditional black mourning clothes, like 'a black stain on the background of the courtiers'.⁷¹⁰

⁷¹⁰ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 106.

Plate 3.1: Radlov *Hamlet* (1938), stage design for Act 1 Scene 2



Being an actor of Stanislavsky's school, Dmitri Dudnikov⁷¹¹ applied 'the system' rather directly and hence required from Radlov some slight psychological and biographical details about Hamlet's background story. Radlov for his part believed that such a system, while appropriate for Chekhov, Gorky and Ostrovsky, was out of place for Shakespeare's tragedy, where even the geographical and historical context is debatable (*uslovna*), and he refused to provide the information Dudnikov sought. This is where, according to Berezark, the collaboration between the actor and director underwent serious challenges. For Radlov the psychological and sociological truth were more important than trivial, everyday (*bytovaia*) details. However, the Stanislavsky 'method' constituted the backbone of Dudnikov's creative work, and hence he invented a background story from his own imagination, thereby creating divergences from Radlov's more scholarly reading of the character. For example, Dudnikov imagined the arrival of Hamlet at Elsinore (which would precede the second scene of Act 1) in the following way: Hamlet is on board a sailing ship approaching the Danish coast. In the light of the setting sun he sees the towers of the castle and on them celebratory flags instead of the mourning ones he had expected. An old servant tells him about the wedding of his mother, and Hamlet enters the castle with great shame and finds himself in the middle of a celebratory reception at court. This back story determined the actor's crucial opening pose on

⁷¹¹ Dmitri Dudnikov (1895-1964), theatre and cinema actor.

the stage: lowered head, right hand on the hilt of his sword, wandering eyes, giving answers to the first question that are sharp, dull, almost irrelevant.⁷¹²

After his first ceremonial speech and having faced Hamlet's dry and official response, Claudius hurries to save the celebratory atmosphere, inviting everyone to a feast, and with the same 'Danish march' the King and Queen leave, followed by the courtiers, among them Polonius and Laertes, who are discussing and thus preparing the audience for the scene at Ophelia's chambers.⁷¹³ This balletic and almost artificially refined exit music, in perfect harmony with Radlov's reading and with the setting, is very different from the same scene in Akimov's production, where, with the help of Shostakovich's grotesque and coarsely festive music, the King and Queen were presented in caricaturish fashion.

After the regal exit, in a short episode reminiscent of Akimov's 'wine cellar' scene, Hamlet approaches the throne that has been left behind. But unlike Akimov's Hamlet, who is determined to regain what was legally his, Radlov's prince looks troubled and confused and delivers his first monologue 'Oh, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt'. The two actors who alternated in the title role took different approaches here. Dudnikov delivered the soliloquy with a mixture of shame and sadness, while Boris Smirnov's prince was more emotional and suggested Hamlet's desire to fight. Here Horatio and the soldiers arrive. Hamlet is genuinely happy to see them. 'These are people he trusts and with whom he does not need to pretend.'⁷¹⁴

In his quest to focus the audience's attention on the actors and the ongoing action rather than on distracting special effects and stage tricks, and also to allow smooth transitions, Radlov chose to have several scenes realised in front of the curtains in foreground (*krupnyi plan*). The next scene (III/3) is one of them. Laertes's parting with Polonius and Ophelia takes place in front of a small yellowish curtain. The scene is acted in a fast tempo, with Ophelia blank and submissive, and Polonius and his teachings assuming the centre of attention. Berezark notes that this scene is accompanied by a gentle, lyrical, and at the same time mincing (*zhemannaia*) music which points towards Ophelia's future theme.⁷¹⁵ However, it is not clear from the score which musical number he is referring to. From Berezark's description it could have been one of Ophelia's songs, most probably the first, which is also used for the little

⁷¹² Ibid., 59-61.

⁷¹³ Ibid., 107.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., 108.

‘Robin’ song; Kochurova’s letter suggests that it might have been either the first or the second song (see below for discussing of Ophelia’s songs).

The fourth scene goes back to the terrace of the castle. It is night time, cold and snowy. Hamlet, Horatio and Marcellus, all shivering, hear from the distance the continuation of Claudius’s celebratory feast. Unlike Akimov’s production, which used an elaborate number by Shostakovich specifically composed for this purpose, Radlov only subtly suggests the ongoing party, using offstage timpani and trumpets - most probably a mix-and-match from Prokofiev’s fanfares. This turns out to be an effective dramatic strategy as Radlov keeps the most powerful element of Prokofiev’s score for the following episode of the appearance of the Ghost of Hamlet’s father. In the midst of a furious snowstorm and frenzied wind, from the left of the stage the silhouette of the Ghost appears as a black shadowy figure dressed in knightly armour. He passes across the stage, lifting his arm as if beckoning the Prince. Despite his friends’ warning, Hamlet starts following the Ghost, with his hands stretched out in front of him and with uneven steps, as if sleepwalking. Prokofiev’s music here anticipates his score to the famous ‘Battle on the Ice’ for Eisenstein’s *Alexander Nevsky*, in that the bass line consists of repeated notes followed by a motif within a narrow range which references the symbolic ‘Cross’ figure from J.S. Bach (see Ex. 3.2). In the score of *Nevsky*, similar motifs are assigned to the Teutonic knights, explained by Prokofiev as ‘sing(ing) Catholic Psalms as they march into battle’.⁷¹⁶

⁷¹⁶ Sergei Prokofiev, ‘Mogut li issiaknut’ melodii?’, *Pioner*, 1939/7, 80-83, translated in Semen Shlifstein (ed.), *Sergei Prokofiev Autobiography, Articles, Reminiscences*, 115-117.

Ex. 3.2: a) Prokofiev, *Hamlet*, Act 1, ‘The Ghost’; b) Prokofiev, *Alexander Nevsky* ‘Battle on the Ice’

a)

Andante lugubre ♩ = 68-72

b)

[Allegro moderato] ♩ = 112

Berezark describes the music of the Ghost scene as evoking ‘gust, ...storm, unrest’.⁷¹⁷ Employing his favourite tick-tock accompaniment, as if echoing the rhythm of heartbeats, Prokofiev stresses the uneasy walk of the Ghost and Hamlet through the snowstorm, tenuto articulation evoking their heavy footsteps. By adding his signature sharpened fourth degree to the harmonic palette, the composer creates a tritone between the tenuto line and the bass, further emphasising the troubled atmosphere of this scene.

⁷¹⁷ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 109.

The stage is empty for a moment, with the snowstorm and the music as the main protagonists. Then the Ghost reappears, now walking steadily but tired, followed by Hamlet who is out of breath and hence refuses to go on. Then the storm calms down and the Ghost delivers his solemn speech, during which Hamlet reacts with a mixture of emotions ranging from anger and rage to shame.

3.5.2 Radlov *Hamlet* Act 2

Despite his efforts to include as much of Shakespeare's text as possible, Radlov had to cut out several scenes, including the first of the second act, which is indeed often omitted as it does not directly impact on the general line of the tragedy. The second act of Radlov's production therefore opens with Shakespeare's second scene, which is set in the intimate, peaceful interior of the palace. The cosiness and comfort are underlined by the green velvet, gold-plated tables of meat and fruits. The King and Queen are having a private dinner, and lovingly they drink from the same cup. Here Radlov takes advantage of this short added episode in order to establish the nature of the relationship between Claudius and Gertrude as one based on love and not simply a thirst for power. The theme of the cup is subtly planted in the audience's subconscious, as the same cup and the Queen's trust in her husband will later lead to her poisoning in the fifth act. In this opening of the second act, Radlov introduces the mute character of the court fool, which he adds to Shakespeare's tragedy. It is hard not to associate this added character with the concept of the 'holy fool' or 'Iurodivyi',⁷¹⁸ as employed, for example, in Musorgsky's opera, *Boris Godunov*.⁷¹⁹ Radlov's fool is constantly around the King, sometimes suddenly sitting on his chair. The King is sometimes kind to him but sometimes pushes him away and punishes him. All this may well have been inspired by Radlov's work on *King Lear* in 1935. Although it seems that Radlov added the character to suggest a materialisation of Claudius's inner world and consciousness, Berezark believes that the idea was not very successful and that it was not clear what the director wanted to prove.⁷²⁰

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern arrive (probably after Fanfare No. 1) and pay their respects to the royal couple. Soon Polonius enters and loudly declares his discoveries regarding the real reason behind Hamlet's madness. Radlov, clearly sympathetic to Gertrude, continues developing the tragic line of the Queen, in that she is caught between her love for her new

⁷¹⁸ For a detailed study of the 'Iurodivyi' in Russian culture, see Sergey Ivanov, *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006.

⁷¹⁹ See Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 75.

⁷²⁰ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 103.

husband and her affection for her son, realising gradually the intractability of such a love triangle: She seems sincerely saddened by the issues surrounding Hamlet.

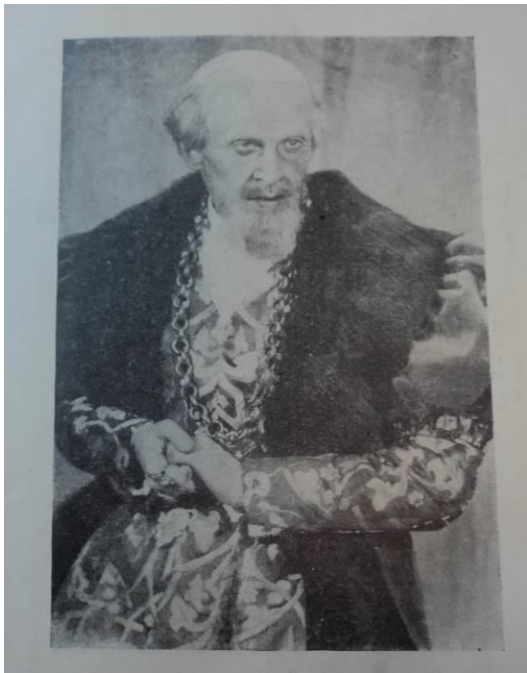
The continuation of the scene takes place in front of closed curtains: this is the arena for Hamlet's apparent madness and his mocking of Polonius. Far removed from Akimov and Shostakovich's slapstick staging of Hamlet's madness, Radlov's prince enters reading a book while Polonius is watching him from a corner. Polonius starts a conversation with Hamlet in a tone clearly meant for talking to a mad person, while Hamlet calmly replies in an increasingly sarcastic tone. Berezark quotes from Radlov's *rezhisserskii ekzempliar* (now missing) on the director's idea of each character; when talking of Polonius's image, Radlov warned against turning the character into a joker and overdoing the funny side. 'Joking (*shutovstvo*) in the image of Polonius has become some sort of theatrical tradition. Even Shchepkin,⁷²¹ who is the founder of realism on Russian stage, kept the joker image of Polonius in part. We know this from writings of Belinsky.'⁷²² This is why Radlov asked the actor playing Polonius to remember that Polonius is above all a '*baryn*' (gentleman) and '*sanovnik*' (dignitary). Polonius is wise in his own way. True, he is sometimes laughed at and mocked, especially by Hamlet, but this applies to all the court people. Radlov did not deny that Polonius has some comic features of his own - fussiness and extreme self-liking - but merely required that these should not predominate (see Plate 3.2). Berezark, however, considered that the actor of Polonius failed to realise Radlov's concept, and that comedy remained his salient feature.⁷²³

⁷²¹ Mikhail Shchepkin (1788-1863), Russian actor/comedian; see Laurence Senelick, *Serf Actor: The Life and Art of Mikhail Shchepkin*, Westport, Greenwood Press, 1984.

⁷²² Berezark, *Gamlet*, 35.

⁷²³ *Ibid.*

Plate 3.2: Radlov *Hamlet* (1938), Polonius



Soon Rosencrantz and Guildenstern appear on the stage, whilst the curtains slowly open onto a gallery of the castle. The two approach Hamlet carefully and start a conversation, in which they seek to gain the prince's trust. Hamlet, however, appears strange and makes unusual remarks, whilst trying to discover the real reason behind the arrival of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. They finally change the subject by announcing the arrival of the wandering actors, news which results in a gust of happiness and excitement in Hamlet.

Throughout the production, Radlov was careful to demonstrate the individual features of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, avoiding what he saw as the common mistake of representing them as twins.⁷²⁴ In Radlov's reading, Rosencrantz, played by Evgenyi Zabiakin, is soft and gentle, with lyrical and subtle movements, and he approaches Hamlet affectionately, trying to gain his trust. On the other hand Guildenstern, played by Kirill Ussakovskii, is much rougher, more direct and even as Berezhark puts it 'course' (*grubyi*),⁷²⁵ conversing in a dry and almost official tone. He feels humiliated and is enraged by each harsh word of Hamlet. They are even distinctive in their appearances: Rosencrantz has a constant fake smile and is dressed simply but ceremonially, whereas Guildenstern barely smiles, wears sumptuous clothes and always has a hat with a feather on his head. In this way Guildenstern mirrors part of Claudius's personality, his delicate manners and manipulative strategies, as well as his cruel

⁷²⁴ Ibid., 97

⁷²⁵ Ibid., 98.

intentions and deeds. In his *Rezhisserskii ekzempliar*, Radlov apparently insisted: ‘Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are little Claudiuses. Fate has brought them together. They decided to work together even though they might have hated one another. In fact they are afraid that one would get ahead of the other (in serving the King). At the same time these are smart people, not stupid ones; they have noble looks and charm.’⁷²⁶

Soon after the flourish of trumpets for the actors (one of Prokofiev’s fanfares, probably No. 1), Polonius comes bustling in to tell the Prince the news of their arrival (probably to the ‘Pantomime’ music number).

The actors are received warmly and sincerely by Hamlet who addresses them in friendly tones (see Plate 3.3). Radlov used every opportunity to stress those features of Hamlet’s character that he claimed had been left out of many older productions. Above all this concerned what he called Hamlet’s ‘democracy’, which he believed was ‘not only in that he hates the King but in that he loves simple people: soldiers, actors, students, these are his friends and his teammates.’⁷²⁷ Hamlet also feels that their art might provide him with a useful weapon for his fight.⁷²⁸ Hence he approaches the first actor and asks him to prepare ‘the Murder of Gonzago’, with a few added lines provided by the Prince himself.⁷²⁹ Finally Hamlet is alone, and moved by the actors’ sincerity, delivers his second soliloquy, often known as ‘O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I’, which features Hamlet’s anger at himself for his lack of action. In Russian appropriations of *Hamlet* this monologue, known as ‘Hecuba’, is particularly famous for its focus on Hamlet’s observing the First Actor’s powerful emotions when delivering Hecuba’s lament at loss of her husband, King Priam. Hamlet’s phrase: ‘What’s Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba’ (II/2/494) has entered Russian literature⁷³⁰ in a way unknown to its English counterpart.

⁷²⁶ Ibid., 34.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., 33.

⁷²⁸ Ibid., 112.

⁷²⁹ Shakespeare never reveals what these lines might have been.

⁷³⁰ For example, it features in Anton Chekhov’s short story, ‘Kniaginia’ – see Chekhov, *Khmyrye liudi: Rasskazy*, St Petersburg, Izdanie A.S. Suvorina, 1890, 64-84.

Plate 3.3: Radlov *Hamlet* (1938), Hamlet welcomes actors



3.5.3 Radlov *Hamlet* Act 3

The central act of the tragedy contains Hamlet's famous 'To be or not to be' soliloquy, at the end of which he notices Ophelia who is acting as Polonius's agent. The entire scene, which takes place in a peaceful corner of the palace with red curtains and a big black door, is set for spying on Hamlet and watching him closely. The Prince is at first gentle and affectionate to Ophelia, but then he notices Polonius's feet from behind the curtain and realises he has been deceived and harshly sends Ophelia off. Berezark finds Radlov's solution for explaining Hamlet's sudden change of attitude towards Ophelia 'oversimplified'.⁷³¹ However, Radlov was far from alone in seeking a rational explanation for Hamlet's behaviour. Laurence Olivier, Franco Zeffirelli, and indeed Akimov, adopt the same strategy, and interpret the final words of Hamlet to Ophelia as addressed to those spying on him, too.

Apart from 'democracy', another trait of Hamlet that was particularly important to Radlov was his artistic nature, which characterised him as a man of Renaissance.⁷³² It seems somewhat surprising, therefore, that Radlov should have chosen to cut out the episode

⁷³¹ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 39.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, 34.

containing Hamlet's advice to the actors, featuring the famous phrase: 'to hold up, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature' (III/2/21-22). Radlov, however, explained this decision by claiming that preserving Hamlet's advice would have encouraged the audience to expect its realisation in the acting of participants of 'The Mousetrap'; whereas, as we shall see below from his letter to Prokofiev, Radlov had intended a different non-realist and 'marionette-like' interpretation of the play-within-the play. This might have been yet another strategy for reinforcing, by juxtaposition, the realism of the surrounding drama. Berezark, unsatisfied with Radlov's justification, argues that Hamlet's advice to the actors presents Shakespeare's image of an ideal theatre and does not apply to the immediately following scenes; in this sense it is addressed to the audience or readers than to the actors themselves.⁷³³

In his letter to Prokofiev, Radlov describes a reading of the 'play-within-the play', which, although seemingly less creative than Akimov's interpretation, bears witness to his in-depth study of Shakespeare's text and Western scholarly investigations. The main issue here was that following Shakespeare's text prior to the actual 'Murder of Gonzago' there is a 'dumb show' in the form of a 'pantomime', where the poisoning of the old King by Claudius is acted out. However, it is only during the actual spoken play that Claudius loses his temper at the sight of the actor-killer, Lucian, and halts the show. Radlov wondered why Claudius had not guessed the performance was all about him during the dumb show when the poison is poured into the ear of the sleeping King.⁷³⁴ Here, too, it was not only Radlov who struggled with an apparent implausibility: Akimov, as we have seen, chose to separate the two performances by presenting the one as a rehearsal for the other; Kozintsev's 1964 film would omit the 'dumb show' all together; whilst Sergei Slonimskii would use it as a pretext for a ballet scene prior to his opera-within-an-opera rendition of the actual 'Murder of Gonzago' (see Chapter 5.2). Apart from artists and directors, scholars have also struggled with this double show. Radlov himself refers to a few classic critics (without naming them) and outlines their reasoning in his letter to Prokofiev:

One cunning English Shakespeare scholar of recent years thought of this simple explanation: the Ghost lied to Hamlet and Claudius never poured poison down the ear of Hamlet's father. This [solution] is, of course, very clever, but in that case there is no point in playing or even reading such an outlandish tragedy of Shakespeare. I've encountered more perceptive English critics who suggest the following: while busy

⁷³³ Ibid., 42.

⁷³⁴ Radlov, 'Letter to Prokofiev', 3.

discussing with Polonius and the Queen about the reason behind the madness of Hamlet, Claudius did not watch the presentation of the pantomime that was happening before him; he only started paying attention as the texted play about Gonzago began. This also does not satisfy me, because the tension of the way Claudius perceives the entire show and how Hamlet watches him closely should grow steadily and continuously as each scene unfolds.⁷³⁵

Surprisingly, Radlov declares that the content of the ‘dumb show’ is not even authored by Shakespeare and is:

As untrue and arbitrary as most other remarks that have ended up in Shakespeare editions. That is why I feel I have the right to replace this pantomime by another one, which has a much less distinct content and which does not immediately give away the purpose of the mousetrap prepared by the prince for Claudius; instead it would act as a hidden threat, alluding rather to motives of deeds done by Claudius and Gertrude, but without reproducing these deeds with a protocol-like clarity.⁷³⁶

In order for Prokofiev to compose the music that accompanies this pantomime, Radlov then tries to describe its themes and objectives: ‘To me this pantomime represents motifs (themes) of passionate and shameful love between an old queen and a young insolent handsome man to whom she gives the stolen crown and servility: the low and limitless surrounding courtiers of this new king and his loving queen who is as loyal as a dog’. According to this letter, the required duration of the musical number is two or two and a half minutes.

Radlov required that immediately after his substitute pantomime the dialogues of the ‘murder of Gonzago’ should begin, albeit in an abridged form, as he planned to cut almost half of the 76 lines comprising this scene. He then explained how he imagined the delivery of the text in order to differentiate between the ongoing play-within-the-play and Hamlet’s commentaries:

I’d be very pleased if you could possibly help me here by composing a particular accompanying support while the text is being read in the style of Japanese or Chinese theatres. In other words I wish to stress (underline) the fact that we are observing a voluptuous, old fashioned, almost medieval theatre pageant, to a certain point

⁷³⁵ Radlov, ‘Letter to Prokofiev’, 3-4.

⁷³⁶ Ibid., 4.

marionette-like. As for the movements, it seems to me that actors should be reminders of medieval village sculptures rather than adopting natural and simple gestures that ordinary people take.⁷³⁷

Prokofiev chose his favourite dance genre, the gavotte, to accompany the pantomime and the play-within-the-play scene. The ironic, playful musical number has little to do with traditional baroque Gavottes, however, and instead resembles the dance numbers from *Romeo and Juliet*, including the one directly lifted from his ‘Classical’ Symphony. But the overall character is in accordance with marionette style as intended by Radlov thanks to the teasing harmonic shifts and pointedly articulated texture. The outer sections in E flat major hark back to Claudius’s march, with the constant wrong-footing shifts of the upbeats (Ex. 3.3a), while the darker middle section in A minor evokes musical ideas from the score to the Ghost’s appearance (Ex. 3.3b). This section may well have corresponded to the evil deed committed by the young King, since the descending passages could suggest the pouring of poison in the old King’s ear. Prokofiev was evidently fond of this Gavotte, since he would also transcribe it for piano solo, as Op. 77bis (1938-1939).

Ex. 3.3: a) Prokofiev, *Hamlet*, No. 4 (Pantomime); b). Prokofiev, *Hamlet*, No. 4 (Pantomime), R15

a)

[Allegro moderato ♩ = 120]


The musical score for Ex. 3.3a is presented in two systems. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) in 4/4 time. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first measure of the treble staff is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. A first ending bracket labeled '1' spans the first three measures of the treble staff. The second system also consists of two staves. The first measure of the treble staff is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second measure of the treble staff is marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

⁷³⁷ Radlov, ‘Letter to Prokofiev’, 4-5. It is not clear which parts of the score, if any, were designed for the accompaniment that Radlov required here.

b)

[Allegro moderato ♩ = 120]

mp espress.



The scene of the performance was set as a big platform covered with red cloth. Facing the audience on the platform were the courtiers, and in the centre the King and Queen watching the show alongside Hamlet sitting in front of Ophelia (see Plate 3.4). As the performance continues, Hamlet loses his patience and rushes the actors to get to the crucial scene of the ‘Mousetrap’. Here on the stage, Lucian, the fictional villain, pours the poison in the ear of the King, at which point Claudius jumps up, plunges towards Hamlet and leaves the stage in a fury, followed by everyone else, including Guildenstern who on his way out beats up the actor-King. Hamlet and Horatio remain, the former in a stormy and victorious mood. In another image that points back to Akimov’s production, Hamlet wears the theatrical crown left by the actors and runs around the stage screaming.

Plate 3.4: Radlov *Hamlet* (1938), the spectators of ‘The Mousetrap’



Next comes the flute scene, which is again set by Radlov in front of closed curtains to help keep the focus on the actors. Here Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are trying to make Hamlet see how he has hurt his uncle and mother, but instead Hamlet mocks them. At this moment Radlov has the Fool reappear with a flute in his hands (instead of Shakespeare’s stage direction noting that the flute belonged to the actors). Hamlet takes the flute and plays it, before sticking the instrument in Guildenstern’s face and asking him to play. Kochurova’s letter notes a musical number entitled ‘Flute solo’ for this scene. Unfortunately it is not clear what music if any was destined for this scene, though Berezark cryptically remarks that ‘the rhythmic design of this episode follows the music’.⁷³⁸ It could be that this was a mere improvisation by the actor or a member of the orchestra.

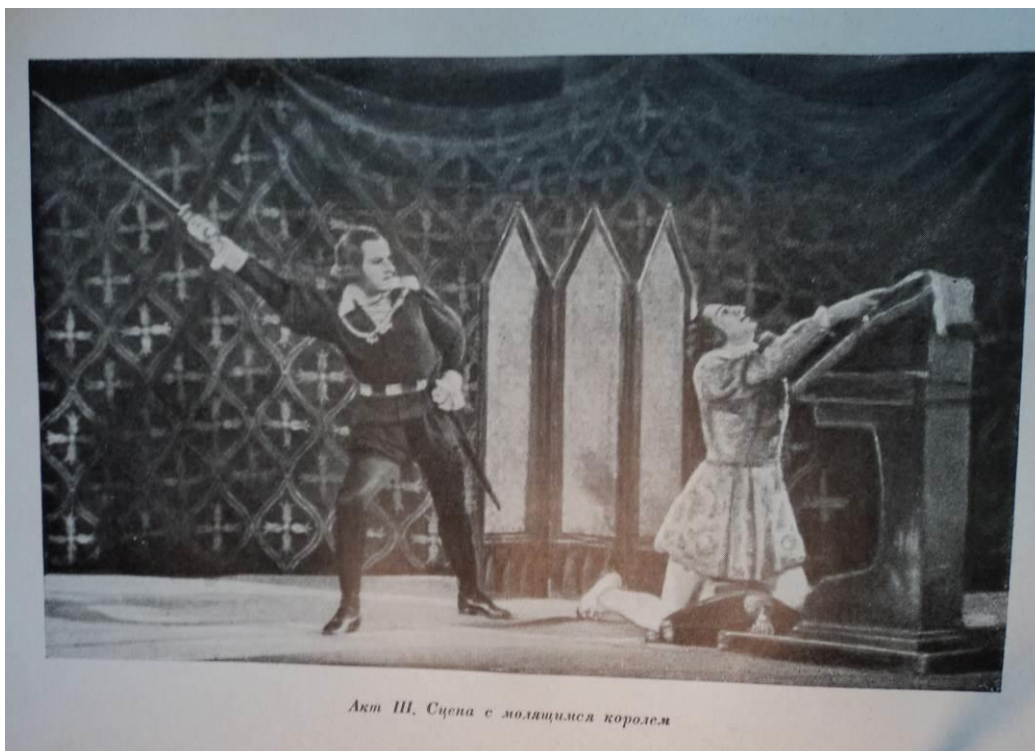
Next Polonius appears on stage and after being mocked by Hamlet tells the latter of his mother’s ordeal and her desire to see her son, to which Hamlet gives his accord. When everyone finally leaves, Hamlet delivers the most Macbethian of his monologues (III/2/378-380)

⁷³⁸ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 51.

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood, ...

Radlov and Dmitriev's faint, purple lighting and dark background curtains emphasise the gloomy nature of this monologue, which serves as a prelude to the next two scenes. The first of these is the King's prayer (see Plate 3.5). Radlov's understanding of this scene came from his belief that despite his Machiavellianism, the King still possessed inner nobility.⁷³⁹ He chose a dark, quasi-Gothic setting, with narrow windows and church walls, in clear contrast to the cosy intimate chambers where Claudius had been seen previously. Unlike Hamlet's well-constructed soliloquys, Claudius's prayers and remorseful monologue were delivered in broken phrases, as if he himself was finding them difficult to remember.

Plate 3.5: Radlov *Hamlet* (1938), Claudius' prayer scene



The following episode sees Hamlet walking in on Claudius and contemplating murdering him, but then deciding not to do so while the latter is at his prayers. This is a difficult scene to make convincing, and each of the two actors of the title role chose a different approach: Dudnikov here walked slowly towards the King, as if thinking and trying to make a decision at the same time; Smirnov, by contrast, energetically took off his sword, as if determined to

⁷³⁹ Ibid., 87.

complete the deed but suddenly realising that he should not kill the King as the latter was praying, since this state of grace would enable him to ascend to the heavens.

The last scene of this act, which takes place at the Queen's closet, seems to have been the climax of Radlov's production (see Plate 3.6). It is set in the intimate domestic atmosphere of the Queen's bedroom, where there is a huge bed with curtains in the centre. There also hangs a red curtain from behind which the audience can easily observe the actions. This is where Polonius is hiding. The gloomy purple light points back to the previous monologue of Hamlet, underlining this scene as a continuation of Hamlet's decisions made during his Macbethian soliloquy. Berezark believes this scene to have been the most successfully staged and acted, with the Queen's image being particularly powerful.⁷⁴⁰

Plate 3.6: Radlov *Hamlet* (1938), Hamlet confronting his mother



⁷⁴⁰ Ibid., 117.

Varvara Soshalskaia as Gertrude presented a feminine, charming and beautiful Queen who loved her son dearly and with most sincere motherly feelings, despite finding his behaviour incomprehensible.⁷⁴¹ At the same time she loved and almost worshipped her new husband. This is where her tragedy lies, which completes and sharpens the main plot: her great love for her husband and son creates a contradiction and she knows that a reconciliation is impossible. This reading of Gertrude indicates that Radlov believed in her innocence and that he was using what he saw as her true passionate love for Claudius in order to justify her actions. This echoes Shostakovich's justification of the violent (re)actions of the heroine of his doomed opera, *Lady Macbeth*. Furthermore, by placing the closet scene as the climax of the tragedy, Radlov stressed the importance of the tragic line of the Queen as a parallel plot to that of Hamlet, yet one that was unknown and would be incomprehensible to the young Prince, who has rejected his mother's love.

Soshalskaia delivered this scene with a mixture of tenderness, love and some inexplicable fear. Hamlet tried to open her mother's eyes by showing her the pictures of her two husbands. Radlov's rendering of this scene differs from Kozintsev's film, and many productions and adaptations, where the picture of Hamlet's father is in a locket that he wears and that of Claudius in a locket that Gertrude wears. According to Berezark's description of this scene, here Gertrude stared intensely at Claudius's picture in her locket whereas Hamlet looked into distance as if seeing an invisible portrait of his father. In the absence of definitive documentation, it seems plausible to assume that Radlov combined the picture of Hamlet's father with the final reappearance of the Ghost, and that Hamlet was therefore describing the image of the deceased King while communicating with the Ghost.⁷⁴² Radlov's letter to Prokofiev mentions a third appearance of the Ghost in this act, which would logically be during this scene, when the Ghost asks Hamlet not to mistreat his mother.⁷⁴³

3.5.4 Radlov *Hamlet* Act 4

With Polonius's accidental murder ending Act 3, the first scene of the fourth act shows Hamlet slinking by the semi-dark stage, trying to hide the corpse, when Rosencrantz and Guildenstern arrive loudly. It seems they have been looking for Hamlet for quite some time. They take his sword, arrest him, and take him to the King.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid., 87-88.

⁷⁴² Ibid., 75.

⁷⁴³ Kochurova's letter confirms this theory.

Radlov sets the scene of Hamlet's interrogation (*dopros*) in the presence of the King and a few of his important advisors. The King, acted by Pyotr Vsevolozhskii, appears calm and even friendly at first. However, it is clear to the audience that he can barely control his anger. When the interrogation is finished and Hamlet is taken away, Claudius abandons the mask of calmness, and concentrating all his hatred for Hamlet he delivers his ominous monologue. This scene reveals different layers of Radlov's reading of Claudius: his cleverness, his subtle political game, his weakness and fears, and his efforts to maintain a proper tone.

One of the important scenes that Radlov completely left out of his production was the fourth scene of the fourth act. This shows Fortinbras and his army on the march to Poland, crossing Danish territory. After they leave, Hamlet stops the Norwegian captain and questions him. He learns that in Poland, Fortinbras's army was going 'to gain a little patch of ground, / That hath in it no profit but the name' (IV/4/17-18) and that thousands of lives were going to be lost for that reason. This makes Hamlet ponder Fortinbras's action and his own lack of it; he voices his soliloquy: 'How all occasions do inform against me / And spur my dull revenge!' (IV/4/32-33). Apparently Radlov's excuse for cutting this important scene was that there was not enough room on the stage to depict the grandeur of the Norwegian army, to which Berezark bitterly objects, suggesting that the director could have simply staged the scene without showing the entire army.⁷⁴⁴ There might be a more subtle reason for this cut, however. Radlov's reading of Fortinbras as a positive hero who emerges at the end of the tragedy to give it an optimistic conclusion, and as a more suitable ruler of Denmark than Hamlet and a natural successor to Hamlet's father,⁷⁴⁵ suggests that Radlov found the meaningless war mentioned in Act 4, Scene 2 contradictory to his intended image of Fortinbras. As logical as it seems, cutting out this scene as well as the previous ones with Norwegian ambassadors, meant that the appearance of Fortinbras at the end of the play was unexpected, as the audience had already forgotten about this dramatic line that had only been mentioned once in Act 1, Scene 2. Berezark asserts that the downplaying of Fortinbras's role 'seems to have impoverished the whole production to certain extent.'⁷⁴⁶

The next scene of this act takes place in one of the luxurious halls of the palace, decorated with heavy green curtains, a big black door and a divan on the proscenium where the Queen is surrounded by her maids and attendants. Then the mad Ophelia appears. In general,

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid., 41.

⁷⁴⁵ Radlov, 'Letter to Prokofiev', 4.

⁷⁴⁶ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 42.

Berezark does not approve of Ophelia's rendering in the production and blames the failure equally on the actress(es) and the director. He dismisses Radlov's comparing of Ophelia to Desdemona and Juliet, arguing that the circumstances surrounding Ophelia's life and tragic destiny are very different from theirs:

Radlov says 'Ophelia is a daughter of her time...a lady of her milieu. She loves truly, but what can she do if the social surrounding in which she lives is much stronger?' ... This means Radlov hasn't considered the whole situation of the play. ... Ophelia's situation is very different from that of Desdemona and Juliet: her situation is tragic from the start of the play. She cannot be with her beloved man, cannot change the norm...⁷⁴⁷

Berezark goes on to quote Belinsky's 19th-century reading of Ophelia as a simple-hearted (*prostodushnaia*), pure girl, who does not suspect any evil in the world and sees the good in everything and everywhere, even where there is none: in other words, the traditional depiction of Ophelia as a delicate creature and the victim of life's contradictions. This is the interpretation that Berezark prefers, and he claims it goes deeper than Radlov's.⁷⁴⁸ This suggests that despite the fact that Radlov's reading of Ophelia – which compared to that of Akimov's may have seemed tame – had great scholarly value, the Russian mentality had its own canonic image of this character, so deeply rooted that the slightest diversion from it could verge on the incomprehensible.

Later in his book, Berezark describes in detail how the actresses of Ophelia reinforced the weak image of the heroine and contributed to the audience's not sympathising with or understanding her madness.⁷⁴⁹ Tat'iana Pevtsova, the first actress to play the role, apparently did so subtly and with a certain lyricism, but rather monotonously: 'Ophelia's role requires many different tragic colours. Pevtsova plays it in a rather watercolour (aquarelle) tone, as if she only draws the contours of the role, but there is no wholeness to the image.'⁷⁵⁰ The second performer, N. Vladimirova, created the image of an inexperienced, very young girl who knows nothing about life. Her lack of experience in acting, however, resulted in the director's input being too clearly felt, and the audience was not convinced by her performance. Regarding the scene of Ophelia's madness, Berezark could only praise

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., 36-37.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid., 90-92.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid., 90.

Vladimirova's rendering of the end of the scene, where she spreads flowers around swords, screams and runs off. However, he found the performance of Ophelia's songs uneven, weak and even unprofessional. In the 1939/40 season, as the image of Ophelia was clearly incomplete, a third actress was brought in: Tamara Iakobson. Her acting was stronger and clearer, creating a specific depiction of Ophelia as a worldly girl who is submissive to her father's will. This image of Ophelia is a reminder of the main traits assigned to her by Akimov, who in a more exaggerated reading believed Ophelia's main function was in spying on Hamlet for her father (see Plate 3.7).

Plate 3.7: Radlov *Hamlet* (1938), actors of Ophelia (from left) - T. Pevtsova (1), Y. Iakobson (3) and N. Vladimirova (2)



In Radlov's production, and particularly in the nunnery scene, Ophelia again becomes 'a weapon for legitimate spies'.⁷⁵¹ But the difference with Akimov's reading is that Radlov's Ophelia at the same time loves the Prince and sometimes lets slip these hints of her true feelings, which frightens the well-mannered girl. 'She is afraid of her own feelings - of her sincerity. Hamlet is also frightening, as he destroys all the secular (*svetskie*) rituals. She loves the Prince but she doesn't understand him. In the scene with Hamlet, we feel for the first time the future tragedy of Ophelia'.⁷⁵² Only in madness does she become sincere and do what she

⁷⁵¹ Ibid., 91.

⁷⁵² Ibid.

thinks – in effect, she is unchained. The strange tricks of her beloved and the death of her father appear to be too strong a blow for her.⁷⁵³

Describing the actual madness scene, Berezark writes that Ophelia's first songs are gentle and lyrical; she is mad but she still has some glimpses of consciousness.⁷⁵⁴ According to Radlov's letter to Prokofiev, this is exactly what the producer had intended. For Ophelia's songs in this scene Radlov gave precise instructions, insisting on their folk-like character:

Altogether there are four of them, not counting the single line of 'moi milyi Robin, vsia radost' moi' (For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy), which she remembers from a fifth one which is also a folk song. Substantially, and by their characteristics, these songs - similar to Desdemona's before her death - are full of Shakespeare's unexpected surprises both in their contents and in their so-called social background, and they are certainly not suitable for a ceremonial, well-mannered and timid Ophelia. Even Desdemona remembers the simple (demotic) folk song of her maid, Barbara, whose text starts very poetically but finishes with unambiguous words... . And it is Desdemona who is singing these, upset and aggrieved, but in sound mind and with good memory. In the same way the mad Ophelia remembers random songs, folk songs that she had heard accidentally somewhere some time, and she doesn't even try to remember them, in fact probably tries not to remember, since they don't correspond to her taste and her education. These are authentic folk songs, and if my memory is right, Shakespeare chose them from a collection of folk songs published not long before in London.⁷⁵⁵ I value highly this pure folk character of the songs that Ophelia sings; she, who is an educated and I'd even say a rather too well-mannered girl and obeying her father and brother, was perhaps the main reason of her death and her tragedy. I also find estimable the kind of roughness and indecency of some of the words escaping from her pure mouth. One German Shakespeare scholar is right in pointing out that this is exactly where Ophelia is saved from being depicted with a sentimental and syrupy image. He is also right in alluding to psychological observations which often notice the appearance of coarse and impure sensuality in mentally ill girls whose previous life has been flawless in every way.

⁷⁵³ Ibid., 92.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid., 118.

⁷⁵⁵ Radlov's assertion is debatable.

So, all four songs of Ophelia are very folk-like in the character of their melodies. I don't think that Ophelia's madness should affect her correct interpretation of these melodies, as, according to Gaovskii, Il'ia Sats tried to do so in the MKHAT production of *Hamlet*. I believe that the mad Ophelia remembers both the text and melody of these songs with utmost and even astonishing precision. To me, her madness is expressed in the very fact that she sings these songs in the palace and not in that she sings them in an especially crazy way.⁷⁵⁶

These thoughts suggest that it was Radlov's intention not to depict Ophelia's madness by means of her music. Simon Morrison states that Radlov 'did not want these (Ophelia's) songs to be irrational... anathema to Stalinist-era aesthetics'⁷⁵⁷ - a plausible assumption, given that in 1937-8 the fear of purges was still in the air. But it could also be argued that Radlov's other productions and his writings on Shakespeare already demonstrate a preference for realism, and that his logic (in this instance) is in complete accordance with now accepted scholarly views of the nature of these songs (see Introduction above).

There are four songs for Ophelia, with spoken words integrated into the codetta and/or instrumental sections. The first two songs are more or less strophic and come before Laertes' breaking in. The third and fourth, which are sung during the second appearance of Ophelia, and this time in the presence of her brother, are more musically developed and quasi through-composed. Here Ophelia is clearly out of her mind and can no longer control her deranged thoughts. Radlov insisted on the fact that the texts of the songs are 'contrasting from one another', thus requiring different approaches for each.

The first of Ophelia's songs, 'How should I your true love know?', following Shakespeare's indications, is addressed to the Queen, though the text summarises all of Ophelia's tragedy from her deception in love to the lonely grave (either of her father or anticipating her own fate). Prokofiev's music is a tender lullaby, set to his favourite tick-tock accompaniment. The musical language is quite impersonal, which could suggest the composer's intention to imitate anonymous folk ballad tunes according to Radlov's prescription. However, according to the composer's letter to Radlov, this song (unlike the other ones) does not contain actual traditional material.⁷⁵⁸ The musical rhythm does not follow the versification and Prokofiev

⁷⁵⁶ Radlov, 'Letter to Prokofiev', 6.

⁷⁵⁷ Morrison, *The People's Artist*, 83.

⁷⁵⁸ Prokofiev, 'Letter to Radlov', 23 December 1937, RGALI, f. 1929, op. 2, ed. khr. 256, 2.

stretches the second and fourth feet of the first two lines the poem, thus contributing to the tension between folk and art melody (Ex. 3.4).

Ex. 3.4: Prokofiev *Hamlet*, No. 5 (Ophelia's first song), opening

Andante ♩ = 60

Andante ♩ = 60

Kak liu - bi - mo-go u - znat?

Vot i - det on mi - mo.

The second song is addressed to the King and comes after Claudius's attempt to understand the meaning of Ophelia's first one. Shakespeare's text here is one of sexual suggestion and deception and has resulted in much hypothesis regarding the nature of Ophelia's madness and her relationship with Hamlet. In Akimov's production, Shostakovich employed a musical motif used for his lustful heroine, Katerina Izmailova, and the result was a cabaret-style number in tune with Akimov's reading of Ophelia as a flirty, full-breasted (*polnogradnaia*) woman (see Chapter 2.10.4, Ex. 2.15). Prokofiev's music is quite different, adopting the style of a Scottish gigue (see Example 3.5); the gentle dance music could easily be used for the scene of the young Juliet dancing. The inverted pedal-point is given edge by a combination of natural and flattened auxiliaries, adding a touch of weirdness appropriate to Ophelia's mental decline. Radlov specified to the composer here:

I would prefer if in the second song about Valentine's day the codetta (*otygrish*) is played either four times after each four lines or twice after each eight, so that during it

Ophelia could dance lightly in a crazy way. The real-life motivation for this tune - that is, whether she hears it in her head or is humming it with closed mouth - seems to me not essential.⁷⁵⁹

Curiously, the score contains Prokofiev's indications for this scene, which are slightly different: 'During the songs Ophelia dances, and during the *otygrysh* she mimes (*mimiruet*) ... The last eight bars of the second couplet are repeated several times, so that with them in the background Ophelia manages to say everything before leaving.'⁷⁶⁰ All the transitional sections have minor-mode inflections, perhaps in order to mirror the deeply tragic atmosphere of the scene (Ex. 3.5).

Ex. 3.5: Prokofiev, *Hamlet*, No. 6 (Ophelia's second song)

[Andante ♩ = 60]

Ved' zav - tra Val - len - ti - nov den'. Ia u__ tra po - do - zhdu. Chtob'

[Andante ♩ = 60]

va - shei Va - len - ti - nov stat', ko - kosh - ku po - doi - du

From Berezark's descriptions it seems that Radlov transferred the words of the scene of Claudius and Gertrude from the first scene of this act to here, as an intermission between the two appearances of the mad Ophelia. Berezark writes: 'The feeling of unrest grows as

⁷⁵⁹ Radlov, 'Letter to Prokofiev', 6.

⁷⁶⁰ Prokofiev, 'Vtoraia pesenka Ofelii', in *Hamlet* (full score), Moscow, Sovetskii kompozitor, 1973, 127.

Ophelia leaves and the king sitting by his wife tells her of his troubles...⁷⁶¹ In the absence of the production book it is not possible to verify this change, however.

Ophelia's next appearance is quite different, and Prokofiev's music faithfully depicts her final descent into madness and a tragic end. As Berezark writes, the tragedy has become stronger and there is no trace of lyricism in her songs. Now she is not only mad but also doomed. Terrible visions follow her; she creates something resembling a coffin from flowers before she runs away with a frightening scream.⁷⁶² Her third song, which starts with 'They bore him barefac'd on the bier', has only four lines. The vocal line illustrates how her thoughts are becoming fragmented as she regresses into the innocence of girlhood with her childlike melody in C major (Ex. 3.6).

Ex. 3.6: Prokofiev, *Hamlet*, No. 7 (Ophelia's third song), opening

Andante ♩ = 72

S ne - po - kry - tym li - tsom on v gro - bu le - zhal.

Andante ♩ = 72

pp

Ei, ver - tis', ver - tis', ver - tis', ver - tis!

⁷⁶¹ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 118.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, 119.

The fourth of Ophelia's songs is the most folk-like; It is tonally dual-centred (A minor and C major) with a tonal/modal mutability (*peremennost'*) that is characteristic of folk music.⁷⁶³ Once again Prokofiev evokes the style of Scottish folk song, in particular with its short-long rhythms ('Scotch snaps') (arrowed on Ex. 3.7).

Ex. 3.7: Prokofiev, *Hamlet*, No. 8 (Ophelia's fourth song), opening

[Andante espressivo ♩ = 52]

On ne ver - net - sia siu - da, on ne ver - net - sia siu-da, U - mer

[Andante espressivo ♩ = 52]

4 on i spit, on v gro - bu le - zhit.

Radlov's letter mentions a final one-line song, which Prokofiev sets to the same melody as the first of Ophelia's songs, thus creating an arch-like structure for this mini-cycle. To assure the dramatic climax created by Ophelia's madness, Radlov chooses to finish Act IV with Laertes' painful observation of his sister, with his arms raised to the sky.

3.5.5 Radlov *Hamlet* Act 5

The final two scenes of Act IV four (in Shakespeare's text) are grouped into the first scene of Act V of Radlov's production. They are once again presented in front of the closed curtains, in *krupnyi plan*. Here sailors hand Horatio a letter from Hamlet that tells of his imminent return to the castle. At the same time on the avant-scene, beside a small yellow curtain,

⁷⁶³ See Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 133, 138-9 and Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, Vol. 1, 145.

discussions between Laertes and Claudius are taking place while they learn about Ophelia's tragic end. Here Radlov decided to cut Hamlet's telling the story of his altering Claudius's letter to the King of England and causing the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Radlov justified this decision by stressing that this deed in the eyes of contemporary audiences does not appear ethical or noble.⁷⁶⁴ Radlov's modification and his explanation for it again recalls Shostakovich's change of a similar nature to Leskov's *Lady Macbeth*, when the composer decided to leave out the cruellest of Katerina's crimes, the murder of her infant nephew. Berezark argues that Radlov's change was not necessary, as everyone knows that 'Hamlet was a person of his own time', and that:

Shakespeare's Hamlet is not leading a battle for life but one for death, and in such circumstances Shakespeare himself counted this act as just and righteous. This should have been staged in a way that the audience comprehends how the noble Hamlet had to act in such evil ways because of the conditions of his time.⁷⁶⁵

Be that as it may, Radlov's decision can certainly be faulted logically, as without clarification that Hamlet has murdered them, the fate of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern remains unknown.

Then the curtain opens and the audience sees the graveyard hill with crosses, wet ground, and the yellow, autumnal rays of the setting sun barely piercing through the leaves. In the midst of all this two gravediggers are working hard. The ironic music of the gravedigger's song, with its exaggerated folk-like vocalises at the end of each verse, stands in stark contradiction to the gentle lyricism of Ophelia's songs. Yet Berezark writes that like all folk characters of Shakespeare's plays, the gravedigger's trivial appearance is decorated with the philosophical thoughts and accordingly the music contained poetic elements.⁷⁶⁶ It is, to be sure, quite difficult to find anything especially poetic in Prokofiev's setting, unless the actor's singing or indeed the staging gave it extra colours. In his letter to Prokofiev, Radlov writes:

I can't pass by the marvellous song of the gravedigger in the fifth act, although I am also perplexed by the surrounding circumstances, as my best comedian (and he is indeed an extraordinary comedian) is tone deaf. Nevertheless if this song appeals to you, I could pass it on to the second gravedigger, for whom I have found an actor with an exceptional musicality. The characteristics of the song seem to be completely

⁷⁶⁴ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 42.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 42-3.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

explained within its text. [The next phrase is handwritten] So – please do write it and we won't disappoint you!⁷⁶⁷

In the manuscript this is the only musical number for which Prokofiev does not use abbreviations or shorthand notation; indeed, he even writes out each stanza separately. The vocal line is quite simple, mainly consisting of ascending and descending scales, perhaps intended for the ease of the non-musical actor mentioned in Radlov's letter (Ex.3.7).

Ex. 3.8: Prokofiev *Hamlet*, No. 9 (Gravedigger's song) complete

Sostenuto ♩ = 76

Kog-da ia viu-no-sti liu - bil, ka-za-los'mne slad-ko,

slad-ko pro-vo -dit'okh! Vre-mia akh! ne zha-le-ia sil'okh!

toi, chto vstre- chal ia u -krad - - koi, o, o, o, o, o, o, o!

⁷⁶⁷ Radlov, 'Letter to Prokofiev', 7.

Berezark compares the characteristics of the (first) gravedigger to those of the first actor from the wandering troupe in Act III, arguing that both of them are shown as folk (*narodnii*) characters in the production, in line with the production's plans to show how all of these people are close to Hamlet, and to explore other aspects of the title character - his love for the people, his 'democracy', and his true artistry (see Plate 3.8).⁷⁶⁸ Of course the final outcome of the scene also depended on the actor's choices. Berezark describes two slightly different approaches: in Dudnikov's performance, Hamlet is thoughtful, and standing by the grave he lifts the skull in a gesture familiar from celebrated prints, whereas Smirnov is sitting at the edge of the grave and is chatting to the gravediggers, appearing more amused than thoughtful, hence somewhat downplaying the philosophical depth that, according to Berezark, was intended for this scene.⁷⁶⁹

Plate 3.8: Radlov *Hamlet* (1938), the first gravedigger with Hamlet and Horatio



Like most of the other important transitional episodes, Hamlet's invitation to the fencing match takes place in front of closed curtains, a strategy that would also allow a quick change of setting for the final scene of the tragedy. It seems that Radlov, unlike Akimov who set this scene in a bathroom, did not make too much of the witty conversation between Hamlet and Osric.

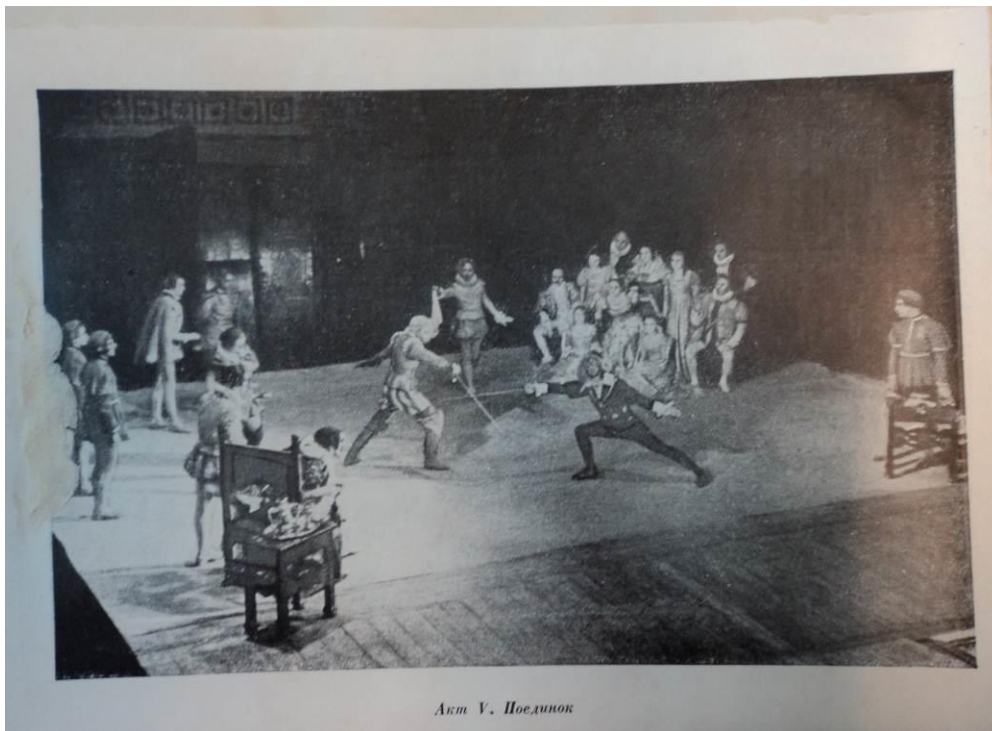
⁷⁶⁸ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 102.

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

Radlov sets the last scene in the same big hall with the family portrait that was used for the second scene of the first act, except that it is now arranged for the competition, with seats for the King and Queen and a few other necessary objects for the contest (see Plate 3.9). The fencing itself happens diagonally from right to left, with Hamlet fighting while facing the audience. Noting that for the crowd scenes Radlov referred not to theatrical traditions but to the great masters of the Petersburg ballet, such as Petipa and Ivanova, Berezark believes the placement of the protagonists in the scene of the fencing match followed the principles of ballet composition. Of course Radlov had his recent experience of the duel scene in *Romeo and Juliet* to go on. But this arrangement of the scene also has logical reasons that resolve certain ambiguities of Shakespeare's text. For instance, when, in the middle of the bout, Hamlet tires and is offered a drink, the Queen quietly crosses over to the opposite side from Claudius; she is now separated from the King by the fighters, and hence when she drinks from the poisoned cup, Claudius simply cannot reach to stop her. This idea not only follows Radlov's reading of the relationship between Gertrude and Claudius as true love, but also removes any question regarding Claudius's thoughts and intentions in this scene. Berezark believes that the Queen's death here is also connected with her remorse (*raskaianie*), as she finally realises that her beloved husband is the arch-enemy of her son and involuntary assassin of herself.⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., 120.

Plate 3.9: Radlov *Hamlet* (1938), The scene of the final fight



As Laertes falls, he tells Hamlet of the poisoned sword. Turmoil grows and the courtiers run away, while Hamlet feels death approaching. But before he dies he stops Horatio from killing himself by stealing the poisoned cup away and asking him to stay and tell the truth about this story. Berezark writes: ‘He not only killed the King but also fought for the future... He dies a thinker, fighter and a statesman’ (see Plate 3.10).⁷⁷¹

⁷⁷¹ Ibid., 121.

Plate 3.10: Radlov *Hamlet* (1938), Death of Hamlet



As Radlov describes for Prokofiev's benefit:

Following Shakespeare's remark before Osric's line: 'here comes young Fortinbras with victory', this march of Fortinbras starts first from far away, almost inaudible but very victorious. Thirty seconds after Hamlet's death the march expands in sound and continues a further two minutes, while getting louder and louder.⁷⁷²

Accordingly the sound of the majestic march gradually fills the stage. In the meantime the big gate of the castle opens and two rows of soldiers enter. They place their banners over Hamlet's body. Among these rows of soldiers, Fortinbras passes triumphantly, almost like a sculpture figure.⁷⁷³ He puts his sword beside Hamlet's body. Four of his captains raise the body of Hamlet to the ongoing ceremonial music and carry him on their arms. As they arrive at the gate, the curtain falls.

Berezark complains that Fortinbras's 'words get lost in the music and don't project properly, as if Radlov intended to merely display this character and finish the play right away, without explaining his place in the tragedy.'⁷⁷⁴ The overwhelming effect of the music also somehow contradicts Prokofiev's own advice for theatre composers: 'The music must on no account

⁷⁷² Radlov, 'Letter to Prokofiev', 7.

⁷⁷³ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 121.

⁷⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

drown down the voices of the actors. ... In drama theatres orchestras tend to be dreadfully noisy and one waits impatiently for the music to cease.⁷⁷⁵ But this effect might equally have been the result of the acoustics and/or quality of the orchestra, which according to the Theatre's letter to Prokofiev was made up of 'final-year students'.⁷⁷⁶

Berezark also observes that the setting of the scene, like most of other group scenes of this production, has the stamp of musical theatre all over it. 'The movement here is determined by the rhythm, dictated by the triumphant music of Prokofiev: the courtiers, slowly and in the tempo of this music, approach Hamlet's body, and four captains carry it ... to this music. This is the ending of a heroic performance.'⁷⁷⁷ The choreographic traits of this scene echo Radlov's instructions to Prokofiev: 'And it is your music, dear Sergei Sergeyevich, that determines the true, brave and bright ending of the play.'⁷⁷⁸

Despite the slow tempo of this concluding march, and the fact that it accompanies Hamlet's body being carried off the stage, Radlov insisted that:

Fortinbras's march represents Shakespeare's constant, peaceful, trusting and almost far-fetched optimism. Heroes die, villains die; nevertheless at the very moment of the entrance of coffin (*u grobovogo vkhoda*) 'young life carries on' (*mladaia budet zhizn' igrat*', literally: young life will play). And this is the life that Shakespeare loves and has confidence in. And the handsome young Horatio will tell the young Norwegian hero the wonderful truth about Hamlet.⁷⁷⁹

In view of Radlov's instructions and Berezark's account, Simon Morrison's description of Prokofiev's score seem less than wholly convincing. Morrison comments that the final march 'reverts back to the chromatic strains of the opening ghost music' in order to suggest that 'the opening and closing numbers in the score, which resonate with each other, find Prokofiev focusing on the theme of death.'⁷⁸⁰ In reality, apart from the slow tempo, it is hard to detect anything in Fortinbras's march that would qualify as musical rendering of death, not to mention that Morrison's interpretation is wholly incompatible with Radlov's expressed intentions. Fortinbras's march is in Bb, ending in C, whereas the Ghost's was in A minor.

⁷⁷⁵ Prokofiev, 'Izuchaite tekst, teatr, orkestr: Beseda s S.S. Prokof'evym', 102-103.

⁷⁷⁶ The same note outlines the available instruments, particularly pointing out that there was no saxophone available (probably in view of Prokofiev's use of the instrument in his music of *Egyptian Nights*) - RGALI, f. 1929, op. 1, ed. khr. 837, 4 (undated, but most probably 10 June 1938).

⁷⁷⁷ Berezark, *Gamlet*, 48.

⁷⁷⁸ Radlov, 'Letter to Prokofiev', 7.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁰ Morrison, *People's Artist*, 84.

Radlov, in a footnote added by hand to his typed-out letter to Prokofiev, required some similarity to be worked into the music of Fortinbras and the Ghost, with neither of them having anything to do with death. Rather the contrary: ‘In his character (personality), the young Fortinbras is of course closest to Hamlet’s father and appears to be the most natural continuation for his work. Hence the image of his march is closer to the action of the Ghost rather than the flamboyant mannerism of Claudius.’⁷⁸¹

Fortinbras’s march, which is the most elaborate musical number of the entire production, indeed goes through different keys, which might be read as symbolising the freedom that is acquired at the arrival of the redemptive figure of Fortinbras. Morrison explains the ‘discord that Prokofiev builds into the march’ as a comment ‘on the terrible cost of this restoration’.⁷⁸² Be that as it may, the march certainly contains much more dissonance and complexity than Radlov’s description would seem to allow, and to capture the dramatic tension and evolution of the play the march does not modulate back where it had set off from. Thus it diverts from the expected symphonic ploy, searching for an alternative solution, which is found in the final sunny C major section – a breakthrough gesture characteristic for Prokofiev’s music such as his soon-to-be-written paean to Stalin, *Zdravitsa* (Op. 85, 1939).⁷⁸³ This C major coda is indeed a moment of complete harmony between the directorial and musical interpretation of the scene (see Ex. 3.9). The ‘uplifting apotheosis’, as Morrison describes, is in tune with Radlov’s belief in Shakespeare’s optimism and love for life; as for Prokofiev, Morrison argues that ‘in keeping with the precepts of his chosen faith – Christian Science - Prokofiev wittingly or unwittingly devised an apotheosis for the score that serves as a paean to the human spirit, the manifestation of divine.’⁷⁸⁴ The abiding impression is of Hamlet as a positive hero without any ambiguity, who fought for a higher purpose and who enabled the evolution towards the political and social ideal by opening up the path for the ‘young’ Fortinbras. This is the exact opposite of the 1991 opera by Sergei Slonimsky, who viewed Fortinbras as yet another tyrant similar to Claudius, and for whom the tragedy of *Hamlet* had no notion of optimism nor any glimpse of hope (see Chapter 5.4.3).

⁷⁸¹ Radlov, ‘Letter to Prokofiev’, 7.

⁷⁸² Morrison, *People’s artist*, 84.

⁷⁸³ For more on the symbolic associations of C major in the music of Prokofiev, Shostakovich and others, see David Fanning, ‘Shostakovich: “The Present-Day Master of the C major Key”’, *Acta musicologica* 73 (2001), 101-140.

⁷⁸⁴ Morrison, *People’s Artist*, 84.

Ex. 3.9: Prokofiev, *Hamlet*, No. 10 (Fortinbras's March) R8-11

[Andante maestoso ♩ = 68]

[*f* *espress.*]

mp *cresc.* *f*

ff *pesante*

3.6 Radlov's *Hamlet*: Conclusion

While from a distance Radlov's *Hamlet* might seem to be in accord with the tenets of the Socialist Realism, this is more a matter of reception than intent. Radlov's own expressed starting points were much more to do with his knowledge of Western scholarship, his proximity to the text as a translator, and his desire to showcase what he considered to have been neglected, all this in order to stage an authentic and true Shakespeare. All the same, it is clear that his production achieved a convergence - if not harmony - between conception, realisation and acceptability within fraught ideological conditions, of a kind that had eluded Akimov seven years previously.

Radlov was soon to pass on the torch of the Soviet Union's most prominent Shakespeare scholar-practitioner to Grigori Kozintsev. In both of the latter's *Hamlet* ventures – for the stage in 1954 and for the cinema in 1964 – there was a different act of negotiation to perform, one which arguably would allow the director to realise his ideals more completely, albeit still partially in coded form (see Chapter 5.2). Meanwhile Radlov's production enjoyed success up to the point of Russia's entry into the Second World War in June 1941 and – according to some sources - even beyond, despite the capture or evacuation of his troupe. As for Prokofiev, *Hamlet* was his last encounter with Shakespeare. However, it could be argued that the experience stayed with him as he embarked on a series of works on a more epic scale and with more profound content than he had previously attempted (the film score and cantata *Alexander Nevsky*, the opera *War and Peace*, the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, the Piano Sonatas Nos. 6, 7 and 8 and the Violin Sonata No. 1).

Chapter 4

Hamlet in Crisis

4.1 Introduction: *Hamlet* and Stalin

It has become received wisdom that Stalin hated *Hamlet* and its hero and accordingly banned any production in the Soviet Union.⁷⁸⁵ Whilst some scholars have nuanced this notion by referring to a ‘tacit ban’,⁷⁸⁶ others – and not only in the West (see 4.4 below) – have exaggerated its the impact, claiming, for instance, that ‘[in 1954] the play [*Hamlet*] had not been produced in the Soviet Union since Akimov’s zany version of 1932.’⁷⁸⁷ Such statements disregard not only the provincial productions of the 1940s (for instance two Belorussian productions by Valeri/Valerian Bebutov: 1941 at the Voronezh State Dramatic Theatre and 1946 at the Iakub Kolas Theatre in Vitebsk) but also Radlov’s 1938 staging, which due to its great success had toured widely beyond Leningrad and Moscow, as far as the Urals, Sochi and Belorussia, to almost unanimously positive reviews.⁷⁸⁸ Of course given Radlov’s subsequent fate, his and his wife’s names had disappeared from Shakespeare studies and criticism until well after their rehabilitation (in Anna Radlova’s case posthumous) in 1957;⁷⁸⁹ but that hardly excuses such an oversight.

Although it seems logical to assume that Stalin would not have sympathised with the Danish prince - and he would not have been the first political leader to have such an attitude⁷⁹⁰ - in the absence of any official documentation the so-called *Hamlet* ban has no factual backbone. The source of this Soviet ‘Chinese whisper’ is not easy to pin down. However, an overview of the status of Shakespeare in the Soviet Union just before the outbreak of the War, incorporating official reports, popular reminiscences, Soviet Shakespeare studies published

⁷⁸⁵ See for example, David Bevington, *Murder Most Foul: Hamlet through the Ages*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2001, 151.

⁷⁸⁶ See for example Makaryk, ‘Wartime *Hamlet*’, in Makaryk and Price (eds.), *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, 120.

⁷⁸⁷ Senelick and Ostrovsky, *The Soviet Theatre*, 478.

⁷⁸⁸ See, for example, ‘Gastroli teatra imeni Leningradskogo soveta’, *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, 16 June 1939; Stepan Birillo, ‘“Gamlet”, vmesto retsenzii’, *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, 23 June 1939, 3; Anon., ‘K gastroliam teatra imeni Leningradskogo Soveta’, *Krasnoe znamia* (Sochi), 6 September 1940; Anon., *Kurortnaia gazeta Sochi*, 10 September 1940 (about the start of the Radlov Theatre’s tour and its successful performance of *Hamlet*); M. Senin, ‘Gamlet: spektakl’ teatra im. Leningradskogo soveta’, *Kurortnaia gazeta, Sochi*, 15 September 1940.

⁷⁸⁹ Copies of documents confirming their rehabilitations are in the possession of their grandson Sergei Dmitrevich Radlov, St Petersburg.

⁷⁹⁰ See Semenenko, ‘Pasternak’s Shakespeare in Wartime Russia’, in Irena Makaryk and Marissa McHugh (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Second World War: memory, Culture, Identity*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2012, 157.

during the War and after (even up to the 1960s), and reports and articles published by Russian émigrés in the West, proves beneficial in identifying the context which facilitated the dissemination and persistence of the myth.

4.2 Radlov's *Hamlet* and the Shakespeare celebrations of 1939

Although Radlov's Theatre was more than once upbraided for not including in its repertoire enough contemporary Soviet plays, the accounts of the official discussions of his 1938 production of *Hamlet* show 'that the common opinion was that the production of Hamlet in Radlov's theatre is a very important theatre event, a real victory not just for the Leningrad theatre front but for the theatre front of the entire Soviet Union.'⁷⁹¹ It was not surprising that soon afterwards, 'on the order of Supreme Council (*Verkhovniy Sovet*) RSFSR, Radlov's troupe was promoted from Radlov's Theatre (*Teatr pod rukovodstvom Radlova*) to Lensovet Theatre (*Gosudarstvennyi Teatr Leningradskogo Soveta*)'.⁷⁹²

It was yet further proof of the importance of the Lensovet *Hamlet* that in 1940, not only did *Hamlet* opened the Theatre's season,⁷⁹³ but also the theatre critic, Iliia Berezark, published a book entirely dedicated to this production (see Chapter 3), the book itself being subject to intense discussions and scrutiny the following year. The mixed reaction to Berezark's *Hamlet* book had nothing to do with the play's lack of affinity with the doctrines of the regime, as the myth of Stalin's ban might imply. On the contrary, the participants at the discussions mainly complained about Berezark's ignoring of scholarship surrounding *Hamlet* [*Gamletovedenie*] and his book's lack of theoretical backbone and analysis of the creative methods of the Theatre.⁷⁹⁴

The esteem accorded to theory and scholarship was nothing new. Ever since the equation of Shakespeare with Soviet writers at the 1934 First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, the status of Shakespeare as one of the models for Socialist literature was continually reaffirmed.⁷⁹⁵ However, the Soviet Shakespearean celebration of 1939 had provided this trend with a renewed impulse, attempting to establish a direct relationship between scholarship (*Shekspirovedenie*) and performance. From this year the Shakespearean

⁷⁹¹ 'Gamlet v teatre pod ruk. S.E. Radlova: Obsuzhdenie spektaklia', 29 May 1938, Stenographic reports, All-Russian Theatre Society – Leningrad Department, NLR, Manuscripts, f. 625, op. 226, del. 58.

⁷⁹² 'Teatr imeni Leningradskogo soveta', *Leningradskaiia pravda*, 4 May 1939.

⁷⁹³ 'Sezon v Teatre imeni Lensoveta', *Leningradskaiia pravda*, 2 November 1940.

⁷⁹⁴ 'Zasedaniia otdela teatrovedeniia, 11 March 1941', *Protokoli i stenogrammy zasedanyi muzykal'nogo i teatral'nogo otdeloi i uchenogo soveta* (4 January 1941 to 16 July 1941), TsGALI, f. 82, Op. 3, del. 128, 90.

⁷⁹⁵ See Aleksei Semenenko, 'Making the Soviet Shakespeare Canon: The "Realist" Translation', paper delivered at World Shakespeare Congress, London, August 2016.

Department, which had been set up in 1934, organized annual conferences on Shakespeare, and by 1939 ‘mass Shakespearization was in full swing.’⁷⁹⁶

The Soviets were among forerunners in celebrating the 375th anniversary of Shakespeare’s birth in 1939. Even ‘the cover of the fourth number of the journal *Teatr* of 1939 looked different’:⁷⁹⁷ this issue was almost entirely dedicated to the Bard and his presence in the Soviet Union, and the traditional portraits of Soviet leaders and Party announcements were replaced by Shakespeare himself. The central topic of this issue was formulated in Iurii Spasskii’s article: ‘Why do Hamlet and Romeo, Lear and Prospero, Cordelia and Desdemona, Ophelia and Rosalinda speak so eloquently to the consciousness of people of the great Soviet era? Why are the ideas and passions of Shakespeare so close to the generation who achieved communism?’⁷⁹⁸

This was not an isolated case. A glance at the Shakespeare bibliography compiled by Inna Levidova shows a significant influx of Shakespeare-related articles in 1939 throughout most major publications.⁷⁹⁹ On 21 April half of the official newspaper of the All-Union Committee on Arts Affairs, *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo*, contained articles on Shakespeare’s anniversary year, his works on the Soviet stage, Shakespearean actors of both the Soviet Union and England, and the history of Shakespeare’s arrival in Russia. Shakespeare’s portrait was accompanied by those of Mikhoels as Lear and Ostuzhev as Othello, with Sergei Radlov’s production and the recent Shakespeare conference at the All-Russian Theatre Society (VTO) featuring widely in the texts. The latter Society, headed by the Shakespeare scholar, Mikhail Morozov, created the first bulletin of the Shakespeare and Western European Classics Cabinet (*Kabinet Shekspira i Zapadno-evropeiskoi Klassiki*), which would become an established organisation with annual conferences and proceedings, running even throughout the Great Patriotic War.

These celebrations were not a new phenomenon but came as an apotheosis of the ongoing Sovietisation of Shakespeare and his systematised appropriation during the 1930s. This trend may be traced through the two productions of *Hamlet* already examined. Despite the aggressive attitude towards Akimov’s production, it ignited heated discussions and manifestos regarding the appropriation of Shakespeare in the Soviet Union (see Chapter 2.7).

⁷⁹⁶ Ostrovsky, ‘Shakespeare as founding father of Socialist Realism’, 58.

⁷⁹⁷ Sergei Radlov, ‘Iubilei Shekspira v SSSR v 1939 g.’, *Moskovskii nabliudatel’*, 1997/1-2, 22.

⁷⁹⁸ Iuri Spasskii, ‘Shekspir bez kontsa’, *Teatr*, 1939/4, 13-32.

⁷⁹⁹ Inna Levidova (ed.), *Shekspir: Bibliografiia russkikh perevodov i kriticheskoy literatury na russkom iazyke 1749-1962*, Moscow, Kniga, 1964.

In line with Akimov's own writings, the dominating factor in 1932 continued to be ideological slogans, humanism and dialectical materialism and such readings, applied not only to Shakespeare's works but also to Shakespeare scholarship, as could be detected from the first Soviet Russian monograph on Shakespeare, published in 1934.⁸⁰⁰ The campaign against Goethe's 'bourgeois' interpretation of *Hamlet* was just one example of such attempts. The 'vulgar sociologist' approach, however, gradually gave way to accommodating the Socialist Realist agenda, and praising Shakespeare for his celebration of life.⁸⁰¹ The final scene of Radlov's 1938 *Hamlet*, with Prokofiev's radiant final C major chord, resonated with this utopianised Shakespeare.

It was hence not surprising that Radlov and his Shakespearean productions featured largely in the anniversary celebrations. In a recall of Tairov's (and Prokofiev's) 1934 project, *Egyptian Nights*, one centrepiece of these events was a hybrid production made up of single acts from Radlov's *Hamlet* and the other two major Shakespearean productions of his theatre (*Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*). This was accompanied by a booklet containing programmes, several photos of the cast and crew, and stills from the productions, a foreword by the director of Radlov's Theatre, Ia. Olesich and an article by Radlov himself.⁸⁰² Outlining the main achievements of the Theatre, particularly its Shakespearean productions, in the ten years of its existence, Olesich made sure to point out its weakness and the next important task. With a nod to the official discussions of the Theatre's *Hamlet* and the criticism of Radlov for not including enough Soviet plays in their repertoire, Olesich required that 'the Theatre should not only expand the quantity of its contemporary productions, but also pay special attention to elevating the ideological-artistic (*ideino-khudozhestvennogo*) quality of its output to meet the requirements of Soviet culture and the growing culture of our country's spectators.'⁸⁰³ Unlike Olesich's statements alluding to future restrictive agendas, Radlov's article in the same booklet concentrated entirely on his work on Shakespeare. Evidently not inclined to engage with Olesich's criticism, Radlov instead explained his Theatre's growth above all as a result of working with the Bard's tragedies. Defending his methodology, he insisted that 'we need to believe that the poetic image of conception (*poeticheskii obraz myshleniia*) has a right to existence and does not in any way contradict the great ideas of Socialist Realism'.⁸⁰⁴ He

⁸⁰⁰ Aleksandr Smirnov, *Tvorchestvo Shekspira*, Leningrad, Bolshoi Dramaticheskii Teatr im. Gorkogo, 1934.

⁸⁰¹ Sergei Radlov, 'Iubilei Shekspira', 24.

⁸⁰² *K Shekspirovskomu festivaliiu: Otello, Romeo i Džulietta, Gamlet*, Leningrad, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1939.

⁸⁰³ Ia. Olesich, 'Ot Teatra', in: *K Shekspirovskom Festivaliiu: Otello, Romeo i Džulietta, Gamlet*, 4.

⁸⁰⁴ Radlov, 'Nasha rabota nad Shekspirovom', in *K Shekspirovskomu festivaliiu: Otello, Romeo i Džulietta, Gamlet*, 11.

described the main goal of his Theatre as ‘trying to bring together the truth of the great Russian realism with the poetry of great European dramaturgy’.⁸⁰⁵

The coexistence of such conflicting opinions was by no means exclusive to this booklet or to theatre. As Marina Frolova-Walker observes, the same dichotomy applied to Stalinist opera: ‘On the one hand, there were demands for realism and contemporary topics, and on the other, for monumentality and elevated musical language; these demands proved to be in deep conflict with each other.’⁸⁰⁶ Having been actively involved in the discussions leading to the inauguration of the ‘Stalinist Soviet opera project’,⁸⁰⁷ Radlov knew only too well that ‘any treatment of a contemporary topic was bound to become unacceptable before long, given the ever-shifting political landscape.’⁸⁰⁸ Hence his attempt at appropriation of Shakespeare alongside already accepted Russian classics might have been prompted by the success and official approval of the Sovietised production of Glinka’s *A Life for the Tsar* as *Ivan Susanin*, which took place in the same year as the Shakespeare celebrations. Indeed, as Irena Makaryk comments: ‘if in the early 1920s the utility of Shakespeare was very much debated, by 1939 it was unquestioned.’⁸⁰⁹ However, in the months leading to the Soviet-German anti-aggression pact of August 1939, it was ‘nationalism’ rather than ‘universalism’ that was sought.⁸¹⁰

Appropriation of Shakespeare as a national hero was of course by no means a peculiarly Soviet trend. The cult of Shakespeare in Germany and ‘his annexation as a “German Classic”’⁸¹¹ have been widely studied and provide a useful comparative case to Russian and Soviet Shakespearisation.⁸¹² As Werner Habicht observes, ‘by common conviction [the German appropriation of Shakespeare] had, ever since the eighteenth century, been instrumental in forming the German spirit, imagination, literature and drama.’⁸¹³ If ‘Germans in the Weimar Republic embraced English writers, including Shakespeare, as a means of

⁸⁰⁵ Radlov, ‘Nasha rabota nad Shekspirom’, 13.

⁸⁰⁶ Marina Frolova-Walker, ‘The Soviet Opera Project: Ivan Dzerzhinsky vs. Ivan Susanin’, *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 18 (2006), 181.

⁸⁰⁷ For an account of which, see Philip Bullock, ‘Staging Stalinism: The Search for Soviet Opera’, *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 18 (2006), 83-108 and Marina Frolova-Walker, ‘The Soviet Opera Project’, 181-216.

⁸⁰⁸ Frolova-Walker, *ibid.*

⁸⁰⁹ Irena Makaryk, *Shakespeare in the Undiscovered Bourn: Les Kurbas, Ukrainian Modernism, and Early Soviet Cultural Politics*, Toronto, Toronto University Press, 2004, 202.

⁸¹⁰ Iurii Sherekh [George Shevelev], *Druha cherha: literatura, teatr, ideolohii*, New York, Suchasnist, 1978, 46.

⁸¹¹ Werner Habicht, ‘Shakespeare and the Berlin Wall’, in Makaryk and Price (eds.), *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, 166.

⁸¹² See, for example, Peter Holland, ‘“More a Russian than a Dane”: The Usefulness of Hamlet in Russia,’ in Shirley Chew and Alistair Stead (eds.), *Translating Life: Studies in Transpositional Aesthetics*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1999, 315-338.

⁸¹³ Werner Habicht, ‘Shakespeare and the Berlin Wall’, 158.

opposing France after the First World War’, the authorities of the Third Reich ‘took particular care to employ’ and manipulate Shakespeare ‘in the service of dominant ideology.’⁸¹⁴ In this regard, productions of *Hamlet* are particularly revealing, as ever since its appropriation by Goethe it had become ‘a vehicle for staging German desires and anxieties, psychological or political.’⁸¹⁵ It suffices to consider the fate of a production of *Hamlet* at the Kammerspiele in Munich, which was to open the playhouse’s season in September 1939. The director, Otto Falckenberg, who had been at the head of Kammerspiele ever since 1917, cultivated a distinctive style, incorporating musicality, rhythm and ‘imaginative potential of the text’, turning the theatre into ‘a centre of progressive art theatre’.⁸¹⁶ All this had much in common with Meyerhold’s efforts in his own theatre in Moscow. But Falckenberg’s arrest at the hands of the Gestapo in 1933 had a better ending than that of Meyerhold by the NKVD in 1939.⁸¹⁷ So did his *Hamlet* compared to Meyerhold’s never-realised plans. With the outbreak of War in Germany, and the banning of plays by enemy dramatists, Falckenberg’s *Hamlet* was in danger of being cancelled. However, when the not entirely persuaded director decided to check the affair with the Reichsdramaturg,⁸¹⁸ he was ‘assured that Shakespeare was to be treated as a German author[!]’.⁸¹⁹

Applying the German analogy further, the highlight of the Soviet 1939 Shakespeare celebrations, in the form of a conference and its report published in the first bulletin of Shakespeare cabinet edited by Morozov, is comparable to the 1937 annual meeting of the German Shakespeare Society in Weimar to mark Shakespeare’s birthday but also to ‘complete the Bard’s Nazi canonization’.⁸²⁰ The German meeting, with its inaugural speech ‘Shakespeare Maidens and Matrons: a Practical [*lebenskundlicher*] Perspective’,⁸²¹ published

⁸¹⁴ Barbara Korte and Christina Spittel, ‘Shakespeare under Different Flags: The Bard in German Classrooms from Hitler to Honecker’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 44/2 (April 2009), 267-286, here 268.

⁸¹⁵ Lawrence Guntner, ‘*Hamlet* on East German Stages’, in Irena Makaryk (ed.) *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism*, 178.

⁸¹⁶ Werner Habicht, ‘German Shakespeare, the Third Reich, and the War’, in Irena Makaryk and Marissa McHugh (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Second World War: Memory, Culture, Identity*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2012,

⁸¹⁷ Falckenberg was cleared of accusations and was allowed to resume his work at the Kammerspiele - see *ibid.*, 24.

⁸¹⁸ Rainer Schlösser, head of the theatre department of the Ministry of Propaganda.

⁸¹⁹ Habicht, ‘German Shakespeare, the Third Reich, and the War’, 22.

⁸²⁰ Gerwin Strobl, ‘The Bard of Eugenics: Shakespeare and Racial Activism in the Third Reich’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34/3 (1999), 323-336, here 326.

⁸²¹ Hans F. K. Günther, ‘Shakespeares Mädchen und Frauen aus lebenskundlicher Sicht’, *Jahrbuch der deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, 73, Neue Folge 14 (1937), 85-108.

in the Society's Jahrbuch of that year, is said to have 'foreshadowed and facilitated Germany's deadly eugenic experiment'.⁸²²

In the case of Soviet Shakespeare, it could be argued that his place as 'the founding father of Socialist realism' was already secured as early as the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. Shakespeare had a primary position among the great treasures that Andrei Zhdanov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, enumerated as having been inherited by the proletarians.⁸²³ The 1939 conference, which in many ways affirmed the cult of Soviet Shakespeare, brought together practitioners such as Mikhoels, Aleksei Popov⁸²⁴ and the Radlovs as well as scholars such as Iurii Spasskii, whose speech summed up the Sovietisation of Shakespeare:

a great thing is happening: two different currents (*vstrechnikh potoka*) are flowing into each other. Shakespeare is being poured, through theatre, into our people's consciousness, into the culture of our Soviet nation. And vice versa: the flow of Soviet culture obliges a new and different approach to the world of Shakespearean images.⁸²⁵

Although it already featured briefly in some of the 1939 papers, the question of Shakespeare translation was most heatedly discussed at the 1940 conference of the Shakespeare Cabinet along with the publication of Pasternak's first version of his translation of *Hamlet* in that year. Although discussion about methods of translation had been ongoing since the 1920s, it was during the First All-Union Translator's Conference of translators in 1936 that 'realist translation' as opposed to 'formalist' or 'naturalist' (in practice literalist) was established as an official norm.⁸²⁶ A year prior to that, during a meeting at the Translators Section of the Union of Writers, the importance of translators was hinted at by Ezra Levontin, who described them as 'engineers of communication' clearly echoing Stalin's famous 'engineers

⁸²² Gerwin Strobl, 'The Bard of Eugenics', 323.

⁸²³ Arkady Ostrovsky, 'Shakespeare as a Founding Father of Socialist Realism' 56.

⁸²⁴ Aleksei Popov (1892-1961) leading Soviet theatre director and theoretician. He staged *Romeo and Juliet* at Moscow Revolution Theatre in 1935 and *The Taming of the Shrew* at Central Red Army Theatre in Moscow in 1937.

⁸²⁵ M. Morozov (ed.), 'Shekspirovskaia konferentsia VTO', in Mikhail Morozov (ed.), *Biuletten' No. 1 Kabineta Shekspira i zapadno-evropeyskoi klassiki vserossiskogo teatral'nogo obshchestva*, Moscow, VTO, 1939, 7-8.

⁸²⁶ Susanna Witt, 'Arts of Accommodation: The First All-Union Conference of Translators, Moscow, 1936, and the Ideologization of Norms', in Leon Burnett and Emily Lygo (eds.), *The Art of Accommodation*, Oxford, Peter Lang, 2013, 141-184, here 160.

of human souls' remark regarding writers.⁸²⁷ In practice, as for Shakespeare translations in particular, despite the efforts for unification of translation methods, the duality of page versus stage (as with translations by Polevoi and Kronberg discussed in Chapter 1) continued to exist, with Pasternak's translations used most often for theatrical purposes.⁸²⁸

In 1939, Meyerhold whose own theatre was closed down, but who was determined not to give up his plans of staging *Hamlet*, had commissioned Pasternak to produce a new translation of the tragedy. The poet's fascination with *Hamlet* is shown through the fact that he continued working on the translation even after Meyerhold's arrest later that year. By the end of 1939, the Moscow Art Theatre and one of its founders, Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, another legend of theatre with unfulfilled *Hamlet* dreams, cancelled the Theatre's contract with Anna Radlova in favour of Pasternak's unfinished translation. It could be argued that such an action was due to the potential evinced by those extracts of Pasternak's translation that Nemirovich-Danchenko heard in November 1939; but it could also have been in part an act of bitterness towards the Radlovs, given the tragic fate of his friend and their arch-rival, Meyerhold. At any rate, Pasternak, eager to see his *Hamlet* on the Moscow Art Theatre stage, repeatedly ceded to requests for changes from the director and actors of this doomed production (see 4.4 below).

Despite Pasternak's occasionally belittling of the activity of translation, expressed in such statements as 'I am a translator not by good fortune but through misprision',⁸²⁹ his output as a translator of Shakespeare has been widely studied, in particular from the perspective of 'translation as escapism'.⁸³⁰ This dissertation will only refer to a few aspects of Pasternak's attitude to *Hamlet*, such as the role of his text in shaping certain productions and in other creative adaptations of Shakespeare's works (e.g. Shostakovich's songs).

4.3 Pre-war and wartime *Hamlets*: Radlov's unfulfilled plans, evacuation and fall

In February 1940, Meyerhold's prophecy (see Chapter 1) came true: he was executed for treason and never accomplished his dream of staging *Hamlet*. His ultimate efforts to stage the

⁸²⁷ Witt, 'Arts of Accommodation', 141; see also Semenenko, 'Making the Soviet Shakespeare Canon: The "Realist" Translation'.

⁸²⁸ See Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, 98-101, and 'Making the Soviet Shakespeare Canon: The "Realist" Translation'.

⁸²⁹ Letter to Mikhail Morozov, translated in Barnes, *Pasternak*, Vol. 2, 249.

⁸³⁰ See for example Semenenko, 'Pasternak's Shakespeare in Wartime Russia', in Irena Makaryk and Marissa McHugh (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Second World War: Memory, Culture, Identity*, 149-151.

tragedy at the Alexandrinsky Theatre were aborted with his arrest in June 1939 and his execution in early 1940. In the meantime, Radlov, following successful tours of his Theatre, was expanding its Shakespeare repertoire. The announced repertoire of the Lensovet Theatre for 1940 included: *Hamlet* (1938 version with Prokofiev's music), *Othello* (first version of 1931 and second version of 1938, both with Asaf'ev's music), *Romeo and Juliet* (first version of 1935 and second version of 1939, both with music by Asaf'ev), as well as a new production, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, with Anna Radlova's translation, stage design and costumes by Dmitriev and music by Shostakovich.⁸³¹

But despite his apparently safe status, even Radlov was not able to keep a clean record. In a similar situation to Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*, Radlov's anti-fascist production of 1939, *Kliuchi Berlina (The Keys to Berlin)*, by Mikhail Gus and Konstantin Finn, which was supposed to fulfil the official requirement for contemporary plays and to react to the upsurge of fascism, turned out to be untimely. As the actor, Voldemar Chobur, who later became a close friend of Radlov, wrote in his unpublished diaries:

When fascism started threatening the world, prior to the signing of the [Soviet-German anti-aggression] Pact, our Theatre was the only one in the country to stage patriotic productions such as Finn's 'Kliuchi Berlina'. ... during the discussions the Theatre, its actor and director were praised greatly. But then came the signing of the Pact and the production was taken off the stage.⁸³²

With the outbreak of war and the siege of Leningrad, the priorities of Radlov and his Theatre changed to patriotism and the staging of morale-boosting performances. In this vein Radlov described his plans for 1941:

I believe that in these troubling times, we have to try hard so that our Theatre may with excitement, persuasiveness and strength demonstrate the greatness of our liberating war and the heroism of its participants. I also want our stages to echo with utmost anger the remorseless denunciation of these fascist enemies of freedom and

⁸³¹ 'Spektakli vkhodiashchie v repertuarnyi plan 1940 teatra imeni Lenin Soveta', NLR, f. 625, ed. khr. 230. Part of the repertoire appears in an announcement in S. Radlov, 'Nashi plani na 1940 god', *Iskusstvo i zhizn'*, 1940/1, 48. This incidental music of Shostakovich has not been mentioned in any other context.

⁸³² Vol'demar (Vladimir) Chobur, unpublished diaries, in the Zolotnitsky *fond*, Theatre Museum Library, St Petersburg, uncatalogued (page 2).

culture. And I hope that the creative work of our dramaturgs will complement our work: the work of director.⁸³³

In his book on Radlov, Zolotnitsky attempted a partial reconstruction of the life of the Theatre after the outbreak of war; unfortunately his embellishments and the lack of proper referencing diminish the value of his account. Moreover, the Radlovs' story becomes increasingly complicated as the war continued and they ended up in the occupied territories. The couple's movements and activities raised confusion and suspicion, to say the least, among the Soviet authorities, who after the war, arrested and confined them to 'corrective labour camp' (Ispravitel'no-Trudovoy Lager', or ITL), a sub-category within the Gulag system. Although the Radlovs were officially rehabilitated in 1957 (posthumously in Anna Radlova's case, since she died in the camp), many questions remained unanswered. This topic lies beyond the scope of this dissertation and requires a separate investigation into the archives of those countries the couple and the Theatre visited and into their life and times in captivity and beyond. However, the fact that Sergei Radlov became a non-person and that his name disappeared from books - even those describing his Shakespearean productions - cannot be denied, and the ramifications for scholarship are severe.⁸³⁴ The *fond* of the Radlovs at the National Library in St Petersburg, which is the director's only personal archive in Russia, only goes up to 1941. According to his grandson, Sergei Dmitrievich Radlov, any documents and materials belonging to the wartime and post-war periods were confiscated and subsequently disappeared.⁸³⁵

Hence the further unfolding of the fate of the Radlovs and his Lensovet Theatre can only be reconstructed from the reports of various eye witnesses, the reliably documented excerpts from Zolotnitsky's book and the unused material he gathered from newspaper cuttings, diaries and letters, which are grouped in his uncatalogued *fond*, now housed at the Theatre Museum Library in St Petersburg, together with other writings by the likes of Valerii Gaidebura,⁸³⁶ Boris Ravkin,⁸³⁷ Erich Franz Sommer⁸³⁸ and Lina Glebova.⁸³⁹

⁸³³ Sergei Radlov, 'O planakh na novii god Lensoveta', *Ocherki, informatsii, teksty, vystuplenyi i drugie materialy o gorode Leningrada v blokade* (29 December 1941 to 31 December 1941), TsGALI, f. 293, op. 2, del.139, 84.

⁸³⁴ See Eleanor Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 133.

⁸³⁵ Personal conversation with Sergey Dmitrievich Radlov in May 2015. Nevertheless, Radlov has provided me with some unpublished material regarding the trials of his grandparents, which I intend to develop into an article for publication at a later date.

⁸³⁶ Valerii Gaidebura (Haidebura), *Gulag i svitlo teatru*, Kyiv, Fakt, 2009.

⁸³⁷ Boris Ravdin, 'Sergei Radlov - k postanovke rizhskoi biografii', *Rizhskii al'menakh* 3, Riga, LORK, 2012, 180-202.

All of these reports agree on the fact that Radlov and his theatre kept their promise and continued to function as long as they could in besieged Leningrad. They were far from the only prominent cultural figures to take an active part in defending the city. In his diaries, Chobur mentions how one day in September 1941, as he was walking with Radlov, they saw Shostakovich on the Fontanka Bridge.

Dmitri Dmitrevich was in some shabby suit, with a gas mask over his cloak, wearing an inconceivable (*nemyslimoi*) hat, either very dirty or very old. Shostakovich was always very neat, and this picture was extraordinarily surprising. ... 'We didn't sleep all night. I was guarding on the roof of the Conservatoire, and the fascists flew over us three times, throwing lighters, which we had to clear off the roof', said Shostakovich as if he had been doing this job all his life.⁸⁴⁰

Chobur then describes Radlov's reaction, praising the composer's bravery: 'Talented in everything. Talented people go to the end of everything they put their mind into.' Elsewhere, Chobur remembers how with the war and the shortage of actors, Radlov himself took on minor roles in his productions. 'The front was approaching Leningrad. We played during the day and more and more often we went down to bomb shelters with the spectators and continued the performances after the enemy air-raids had been repulsed. The audiences were quite different, but entrance to the theatre was free to everybody ... Then came October. It was cold and damp in the theatre. The actresses in particular suffered a lot.'⁸⁴¹ These events were all reported in a much rosier tone by the press, which was desperate to boost the morale of the besieged city:

The immediate proximity of the front and the enemy raids against the city have not disrupted the normal life of the Leningrad theatres. The company of the Lensovet Theatre has every reason to claim that the harsh conditions of life in the front-line city have united and tempered it even more. Not for a single day has the theatre closed since the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. The Theatre's actors are frequent and welcome visitors in Red Army units and hospitals. The company gives regular

⁸³⁸ Erich F. Sommer, *Geboren in Moskau: Erinnerungen eines baltendeutschen Diplomaten 1912-1955*, Munich, Langen Müller, 1997, 313-331.

⁸³⁹ Lina Glebova, 'Delo Kolesnikova: povest' v piati priznaniakh', *Zvezda*, 1968/ 9, 110-150, and 1968/10, 111-142.

⁸⁴⁰ Chobur, unpublished diary, page 9.

⁸⁴¹ Ibid.

performances in its own building, while during intermissions and air raids it gives concerts in bomb shelters.⁸⁴²

Radlov's theatre remained in Leningrad until as late as March 1942, at which point they were evacuated to Pyatigorsk, in the Caucasus. Given that the Theatre had already toured to this city and had received glowing reviews, especially for their production of *Hamlet*, the troupe was welcomed as heroes and soon created there what Chobur called 'a little Leningrad'. But in August the Germans arrived and only a few were lucky to escape in time. There are contradictory theories as to why the Radlovs did not leave the German-occupied city and how they reacted to the invaders. According to most sources, including Chobur's diaries (also quoted by Zolotnitsky) and Boris Ravdin (who is vouched for by Radlov's grandson, Sergei), by this point the Radlovs had become such heroes and emblems of the city that their departure would have created a panic among people; hence the authorities asked them to stay and promised not to give them up to the enemy. This meant that they missed the last chance of getting away. That the Radlovs were under threat from the Germans is also mentioned in Lina Glebova's story from the mouth of the Theatre's make-up artist, disguised as Maria Luzhskoi (her real name was Maria Ivanova).⁸⁴³ The account of Erich Franz Sommer, who happened to serve time in the same camp as the Radlovs and who in his autobiography retells the story of the Radlovs (albeit with many mistakes in the names of places and people) as he claimed Sergei Ernestovich had told it to him, is somewhat different. According to Sommer, Radlov and his wife were sent an invitation to attend the officers' club, where they were welcomed thanks to Radlov's diplomacy, intelligence and fluency in German, as well as Anna Radlova's elegance. Sommer also reminds us that Radlov's name was known to the officers thanks to the director's cousin who worked in Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda.⁸⁴⁴

In early January 1943, the Germans left Pyatigorsk, 'for strategic reasons', and they took Radlov's Theatre with them to Zaporozhia in western Ukraine.⁸⁴⁵ There under the new name of 'Radlov's Petrograd Theatre', assigned to them by the Germans, they re-staged their production of *Hamlet* with Prokofiev's music.⁸⁴⁶ This was the last occasion on which Prokofiev's incidental score was used in the composer's lifetime, as revealed in a letter from

⁸⁴² 'Teatr v dni otechestvennoi voini', *Leningradskaia Pravda*, 1941/245 (14 October 1941), 4, quoted in Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov*, 193.

⁸⁴³ Glebova, 'Delo Kolesnikova: Povest' v piati priznaniakh', 118-126.

⁸⁴⁴ Sommer, *Geboren in Moskau*, 325, Russian version at <http://labas.livejournal.com/872935.html>, accessed 24 August 2016.

⁸⁴⁵ Boris Ravdin, 'Sergei Radlov – k postanovke rizhskoi biografii', 180.

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Kseniia Kochurova replying to the composer, who was trying to locate its whereabouts towards at the end of his life (see Chapter 3.5). However, Radlov's Theatre was not the only troupe to stage *Hamlet* in the occupied Western Ukraine that year. Irena Makaryk describes the Ukrainian production of the tragedy that opened in September at the Lviv Opera Theatre.⁸⁴⁷ Directed by Iosyp Hirniak, the production featured Volodymyr Blavatskii at the title role, who later described it as 'the crowning point of all [the Theatre ensembles] activities, the test both of its artistic maturity and of the Ukrainian theatre as a whole.'⁸⁴⁸

In September 1943, Radlov's theatre was sent to Berlin, where the troupe was renamed yet again and joined the vignettes (*vineti*) as 'dramatic ensemble in the service of the camps of western workers (*po obsluzhivaniuu lagerei vostochnikh rabochikh*)'. Later, the Theatre was divided into three groups, and the Radlovs were transferred with one part of the troupe to the south of France. There, after the liberation, the Theatre regained its pre-war title in the French version: 'Théâtre Lensoviet de Leningrad sous la direction de M Serge Radlov, Metteur en scène', as seen on the Theatre's poster for their December 1944 performances of Chekhov and Ostrovsky at the Théâtre de la Rue d'Alger in Marseille.⁸⁴⁹ According to Sommer, at that point the Radlovs received several propositions from the British and the Americans, all of which they turned down in favour of the Soviet invitation to return to the country and reassurances provided by the ambassador in France concerning the couple's involuntary and unpolitical collaboration with the enemy. However, upon their arrival at the airport in Moscow the couple were arrested and transferred to NKVD custody at the Lubyanka. The interrogations were protracted, but by mid-November 1945 the Higher Court of the RSFSR stripped Radlov of his titles and awards and sentenced the couple to ten years in Corrective Labour Camp. However, as a sign of mercy, the Radlovs were allowed to stay together and to choose their camp from the European part of the country. As Anna Radlova's sister, the sculptress Sara Lebedeva lived in Moscow, they chose Perebory, near Rybinsk.⁸⁵⁰ As Radlov's letters to Chobur reveal, he was quick to create a theatre troupe and to tour to nearby cities. As early as June 1946, Radlov and his wife started working on a series of

⁸⁴⁷ Makaryk, 'Wartime *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, 125- 132.

⁸⁴⁸ Volodymyr Blavatskii, 'Try roky Lvivskoho opernoho teatru', *Kyiv* (Philadelphia), 1951/1, 20-22; quoted in Makaryk, 'Wartime *Hamlet*', 126.

⁸⁴⁹ Ravkin, 'Sergei Radlov – k postanovke rizhskoi biografii', 180. A reproduction of the poster is found in Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov*, 223.

⁸⁵⁰ Solzhenitsyn mentions this camp in *The Gulag Archipelago: 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*. New York, Harper & Row, 1974 - 'Perebory' at 285, 577, 592; 'Rybinsk' at 29, 596-597. For more information about the camp see: <http://www.memo.ru/history/NKVD/GULAG/r3/r3-63.htm> (accessed 2 September 2016).

themed performances around Pushkin and Shakespeare, including excerpts from *Hamlet*.⁸⁵¹ However, Anna Radlova's death in 1949 seems to have been too much for Sergei's artistic career and emotional health: 'That I still continue to exist simply proves that I am a coward and a scoundrel, and that the vile survival instinct is stronger than logic, reason, sense of duty and decency.'⁸⁵² The same 'survival instinct' helped Radlov after his final liberation from the camp in June 1953 to settle and continue his theatrical output first in Daugavpils (Latvia) and then in Riga, staging Shakespeare once again: *King Lear*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

4.4 *Hamlet* in crisis: MKhAT and the Stalin 'ban'

Despite its clear potential, Radlov's fate during and after the war did not become the stuff of legend and even remained a somewhat grey area. However, a different, more persistent and widespread myth emerged from the wartime Shakespeare, concerning Stalin and his supposed banning of *Hamlet*. If such a notion (in all its exaggerated forms) made some sense for anti-Soviet agendas during the Cold War, over time the Stalin-and-*Hamlet* saga has become a kind of a marketing tool for new productions of the tragedy by any Central/Eastern European company that tours to the West.⁸⁵³ Stalin's 'war' against *Hamlet* features in almost every study dealing with Shakespeare and politics, Soviet political cultural life and Russian theatre or Shakespeare history. Solomon Volkov's concoction of Shostakovich's memoirs does not shy away from it. In fact Volkov's Shostakovich goes even further: 'Of course, all the people knew once and for all that Stalin was the greatest of the great and the wisest of the wise, but he banned Shakespeare just in case. ... For many long years *Hamlet* was not seen on the Soviet stage.'⁸⁵⁴

Although some scholars have taken care to nuance this 'ban' by modifiers such as 'tacit',⁸⁵⁵ 'virtual',⁸⁵⁶ 'effectively' and 'unofficially', none ventures to quote a definitive source. It becomes more frustrating when a Russian theatre scholar of the stature of Anatoly Smeliansky presents this idea in tones that brook no disagreement: 'Stalin, for obvious reasons, intensely disliked the play [*Hamlet*] and banned it at MKhAT after it had been in

⁸⁵¹ V. Gaidebura, 'Pis'ma S.E. Radlova k V.Ia. Chobur', *Teatr*, 1992/10, 123-4.

⁸⁵² Gaidebura, 'Pis'ma', 123-4

⁸⁵³ See, for example, David Sillito, 'Hamlet: The Play Stalin Hated', *BBC News Magazine*, 22 April, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17770170>, on a Lithuanian production of *Hamlet* on tour to the UK, in the context of the 'Globe to Globe' project, accessed 26 November 2015.

⁸⁵⁴ Solomon Volkov, *Testimony*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1979, 64-5.

⁸⁵⁵ Irena Makaryk, 'Wartime *Hamlet*', 120.

⁸⁵⁶ Arthur Mendel, 'Hamlet and Soviet Humanism', *Slavic Review*, 30/44 (December 1971), 733-747, here 733.

rehearsal for a long time in Pasternak's translation.⁸⁵⁷ Apart from the lack of reference to any documented source and the exaggerated tone, an even more obvious mistake is Smeliansky's immediately following claim that Okhlopkov's 1954 *Hamlet* was the first post-Stalin production of the play⁸⁵⁸ – both Grigory Kozintsev's *Hamlet* at the Alexandrinsky Theatre and Radlov's at Daugavpils in Latvia predated Okhlopkov's.

Yet here Smeliansky, as most other more scholarly studies, does at least refer back to one of the points of origin for the myth of the banning of *Hamlet*: namely the doomed MKhAT production of the early 1940s. Probably the closest point, in Western literature at least, to the source of this Soviet Chinese whisper seems to be a statement by the theatre scholar Nikolai Chushkin and – for Western readers - Arthur Mendel's quoting of it: 'It is enough to recall that an offhand remark by Stalin in the spring of 1941 questioning the performance of *Hamlet* at that time by the Moscow Arts Theater was sufficient to end rehearsals and to postpone the performance indefinitely.'⁸⁵⁹

Before proceeding to the facts related to this story, we need to put Chushkin's remark in its appropriate context. Chushkin offers no reference, but his statement is preceded by a fairly incontestable observation regarding Soviet wartime theatre and the public's need for morale-boosting, or at the very least for active, optimistic plays as opposed to passive, pessimistic ones. Chushkin recollects how 'shortly before the Great Fatherland War', and as the nation prepared itself to fight the fascists, there were increasing arguments regarding the Soviet audience's need for an active hero.⁸⁶⁰ Moreover, just like his allies and the Germans, during wartime Stalin was 'forced to turn to an exploration of nationalism, not world classics', and hence it was 'not internationalism, but "Slavic solidarity" and Russian nationalism' that became the main weapons in the fight against the Fascists.⁸⁶¹ However, this in itself does not imply the complete absence of *Hamlet* and/or allusions to it from the Soviet stage. In this cause, recognisable 'Shakespearean motifs', such as the skull in *Hamlet*, which had become an inseparable part of popular culture, provided a useful tool for appealing to the patriotism of the Soviet nation. Makaryk provides examples of instances where Shakespeare-infused

⁸⁵⁷ Anatoly Smeliansky, *The Russian Theatre after Stalin*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, 6.

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁹ Nikolai Chushkin, *Gamlet-Kachalov: Iz stsenicheskoi istorii Gamlet Shekspira*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1966, 309; quoted in Mendel, 'Hamlet and Soviet Humanism', 734-735.

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁶¹ Makaryk, 'Wartime *Hamlet*', 122. For a detailed study of the formation of national identity in the Stalin era, see David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2002.

new plays, such as Oleksander Korneichuk's 1941 *Partizany v stepiakh Ukrainy* (*Partisans in the Steppes of Ukraine*), were not only approved by the authorities but were even awarded the Stalin Prize.⁸⁶²

It was not just allusions to Shakespeare that continued during the war. From 20 to 30 April 1944, Yerevan celebrated the Bard's 380th birthday in style, with an instalment of the All-Union Shakespeare Conference and accompanying festivals. Prior to this, in 1942, Arshan Burdzhalian had staged *Hamlet* for the third time in the Sundukian Theatre, to such acclaim that the production remained in the repertoire of the Theatre for an entire decade.⁸⁶³

But despite such documented instances of the presence of *Hamlet* on the Soviet stage, the myth of Stalin's disapproval has persisted. With no actual reference to be found in the archives (including that of the Moscow Art Theatre)⁸⁶⁴ literary historian Dmitri Urnov's article, 'How did Stalin ban *Hamlet*?',⁸⁶⁵ is perhaps the only example of an in-depth investigation. Urnov agrees that the aborted production of *Hamlet* at the Moscow Art Theatre in the early 1940s, and in particular the rumours that surrounded it, were the main point of origin. This was of course no ordinary production: apart from the iconic venue of the Moscow Art Theatre, this staging featured the collaboration of such luminaries as Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko (main supervisor), Vasilii Sakhnovskii (director), Boris Pasternak (translator), Vissarion Shebalin (composer), Vladimir Dmitriev (artist designer) and Boris Livanov (leading actor).

In copious detail, and with many added commentaries, often in the form of rhetorical questions, Urnov offers an overview of the historical facts, as well as reports and reminiscences of such figures as Livanov regarding this production and its fate. Urnov retells the story (as reported by the lead actor) that might have been behind the rumours, which has also been published in a book by the actor's son, Vasilii Livanov.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶² Makaryk, 'Wartime *Hamlet*', 122.

⁸⁶³ Babken Arutiunian, 'Virmenskii teatr', in Inna Vishnevskaiia *et al.* (eds.), *Istoriia sovetskogo dramaticheskogo teatra v shesti tomakh*, Vol. 5: 1941-1953, Moscow, Nauka, 1969, 333-64, here 342.

⁸⁶⁴ Kindly confirmed by Ksenia Iasnova from the research centre of the archive of the Moscow Art Theatre, email communication, 29 January 2016.

⁸⁶⁵ Dmitri Urnov, 'Kak Stalin *Gamleta* zapretil', *Nash sovremennik*, 2, 2012, 218-237, also available at <http://nash-sovremennik.ru/archive/2012/n2/1202-19.pdf>, accessed 3 October 2016. Urnov sent me an unabridged version of his article – email communication, 19 July 2015, and some of the information provided below comes from this latter version.

⁸⁶⁶ Vasilii Livanov, *Nevydumannyi Boris Pasternak*, Moscow, Drofa, 2002, 87-91.

In the 1940s, at a reception in Kremlin ... Boris Nikolaevich [Livanov] is asked to ... go to a special hall where 'the one whom everyone knows' is present. Zhdanov is at the piano, playing. Stalin enters 'What is the [Moscow Art] Theatre working on these days?' asked Stalin; learning that the Theatre is going to stage *Hamlet*, Stalin states: 'But Hamlet is weak' ... 'But our Hamlet is strong, comrade Stalin', answered the actor preparing the role. 'This is good ... because the weak get beaten.'⁸⁶⁷

If this encounter resulted in the rumours regarding the 'ban', that can only be explained 'in the spirit of the Stalin time... then it was possible to draw any conclusions in accordance with one's goals, or as a result of one's fears or risks.' Hence the Theatre's official statement regarding the encounter quoted Stalin as saying: 'it was great to speak to a thinking [*mysliashchim*] artist'. Such vague phraseology typically allowed room for many different interpretations, as dictated by individual and collective fear. 'This [fear] was in the air and we breathed this air', adds Urnov.

Evidently the story of Stalin's disapproval was also in the air, because later it was re-told by Isaiah Berlin, among others, albeit in a different version, where Stalin had supposedly described *Hamlet* as decadent and not suitable for staging.⁸⁶⁸ As Semenenko observes, the popularity of such rumours was inevitable, since it fitted in with 'the vein of the mythology surrounding Stalin'.⁸⁶⁹

Urnov, however, goes on to argue - convincingly - that the production of *Hamlet* at the Moscow Art Theatre was halted not by Stalin but rather by many unfortunate circumstances and much internal tension within the Theatre itself. The outbreak of the War and the arrest of the director, Vasiliy Sakhnovsky, raised the first hurdles. Yet once the Theatre returned from the wartime evacuation, the rehearsals of *Hamlet* continued under the supervision of Nemirovich-Danchenko himself. For him, as for Stanislavsky and Meyerhold, *Hamlet* was a lifetime project destined never to be realised.⁸⁷⁰ The accounts of Nemirovich-Danchenko's work on the MKhAT production suggest that the elderly director was desperate to realise his *Hamlet* dream. Among the material in the personal collection of the theatre director and critic

⁸⁶⁷ Urnov, 'Kak Stalin *Gamleta* zapretil', 218 (the following quotes are from Urnov's article unless otherwise credited).

⁸⁶⁸ Semenenko, 'Pasternak's Shakespeare in Wartime Russia', 157; Isaiah Berlin, *Personal Impressions*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, New Expanded Edition, 2001, 229-230.

⁸⁶⁹ Semenenko, 'Pasternak's Shakespeare in Wartime Russia', 157.

⁸⁷⁰ Nemirovich-Danchenko's directorial concepts and work on *Hamlet* are partly documented in Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko and Vitalii Vilenkin, *Nezavershennie rezhisserskie raboty: Boris Godunov, Gamlet*, Moscow, VTO, 1984.

Arkadii Katsman, there are reproductions of Dmitriev's sketches and models for various scenes. One of them, depicting the setting for the first act, is curiously very similar to Natan Altman's design for Kozintsev's 1954 production. It has a note on the back of the photo: 'This version was not taken up by N.-Danchenko. This is due to its being too cumbersome (*gromozdko*), gloomy (*mrachniy*) and pessimistic. Dmitriev made other more optimistic sketches.'⁸⁷¹

Then came Nemirovich-Danchenko's death in April 1943, which also sounded the death-knell for this production. At first the Theatre continued rehearsals and preparations under the direction of Vasilii Sakhnovsky, seemingly determined 'to create a show worthy of the memory of the great Master [Nemirovich-Danchenko]'.⁸⁷² Here Urnov's account differs from Livanov's reminiscences. According to the former, Nemirovich-Danchenko's replacement at the head of the Moscow Art Theatre (Artistic Director), Nikolai Khmelev had already manifested his opposition to the production of *Hamlet* with Boris Livanov in the title role telling him that 'you shall play Hamlet over my dead body'.⁸⁷³ With Sakhnovsky's death in 1945 the production was 'literary demolished'. The rumours regarding Stalin's personal influence on the abortion of the project were 'maliciously spread and supported y Khmelev's Party'.⁸⁷⁴

However, according to Vasiliy Livanov, MKhAT's *Hamlet* seems still to have been awaited, even in the West. Livanov quotes his mother as receiving in early 1945 a gift from a troupe of English actors headed by the 'English Kachalov', John Gielgud, consisting of 'a recording of two monologues from *Hamlet* read by Gielgud. He dedicated his performance to ... "my friend Boris Livanov, who is now working on Hamlet"'.⁸⁷⁵ According to Vasiliy Livanov, his father's working notebooks of this time⁸⁷⁶ show how he and his friend Pasternak were hard at work trying to adjust the translation to the acting and to the requirements of the Theatre. It

⁸⁷¹ 'Dokumenty sobrannie A.I. Katsmanom o postanovkakh p'es anglikskikh avtorov. T.7. O postanovkakh p'es U. Shekspira. Chast' 2. O postanovkakh p'esy "Gamlet" (stat'i, retsenzii, ... iz izdanyi 1935-1955 godov)', TsGALI, f. 563, op. 1, ed. khr. 180, 27 and 27 verso.

⁸⁷² 'Blizhaishie prem'eri khudozhestvennogo teatra', *Literatura i iskusstvo*, 30 June 1943, quoted in Livanov, *Liudi i kukli*, Moscow, Astrel', 2012, 60, also available online at <http://www.litmir.co/br/?b=186132&p=60>, accessed 27 October 2015.

⁸⁷³ Urnov, 'Kak Stalin *Gamleta* zapretil', 5-6.

⁸⁷⁴ Urnov, personal correspondence (email), 31 July 2016.

⁸⁷⁵ Urnov, 'Kak Stalin *Gamleta* zapretil', 5-6. According to Urnov (personal correspondence 31 July 2016) the recording was kept at the Dom Aktera Vserossiiskogo Teatral'nogo Obshchestvo, where he listened to it in the mid-1950s. The current whereabouts of the recording are unknown.

⁸⁷⁶ According to Ann Pasternak Slater these were auctioned by Sotheby's at their Sale of Fine Continental Books and Manuscripts, Science and Medicine, London, 5 December 1991, Lots 547-54; see: Ann Pasternak Slater, 'Indirect Dissidence, Pasternak, and Shakespeare', in Ruth Morse (ed.) *Hugo, Pasternak, Brecht, Césaire*, Great Shakespearians Vol. 14, London, Bloomsbury, 2014, 55-112, here 214, n. 16.

could be argued that this set a trend for Pasternak, who later created at least twelve different versions of his translation of the tragedy.⁸⁷⁷

As for the music, a letter from Shebalin to his wife on 18 June 1943 indicates that he had just ‘signed the contract for composing music to *Hamlet* at the MKhAT’.⁸⁷⁸ On 13 December of the same year, he wrote to his friend and father-in-law Maksim Gube: ‘I’m up to my eyes in work. Yet I managed to compose a new quartet (the sixth) and something for MKhAT (*Hamlet*).’⁸⁷⁹ In December 1944 he mentioned completing his score, admitting that ‘this work has been interesting and most significant for me. Three and a half centuries have passed since the appearance of the tragedy of *Hamlet* in the world; but the great creation fully retains its great power and freshness, its truthfulness and profundity.’⁸⁸⁰

None of the writings on Shebalin, even those published in later years, mentions any reason other than Sakhnovsky’s death for the project of *Hamlet* remaining unrealised. In 1957 Shebalin would return to the play, composing a new score for a production directed by Boris Zakhava at the Vakhtangov Theatre the following year. By this time, however, he had already created a much more important Shakespearean-themed work: an opera based on *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Despite all efforts, the MKhAT production seems to have come to a complete standstill by 1945, when *Hamlet* was replaced by *Ivan the Terrible*, a play about the medieval Russian tsar by Alexei Tolstoy, which was premiered in 1946. This turn of affairs did not pass without comment. In the same year Pasternak, whose other Shakespearean translations apparently had no better chance of being staged in major theatres, wrote directly to Stalin. In this curious letter, which seemingly remained unanswered, after complaints about various personal, domestic and family problems Pasternak reminded Stalin of his work on translating Shakespeare ‘for the past five years’ and asked:

Is it possible for the Committee on Artistic Affairs (*Komitet po delam iskusstv*) to drop a hint to theatres, so that they could be content with their own taste and stage them, if they like these [plays], without awaiting any additional instructions

⁸⁷⁷ Semenenko, ‘Pasternak’s Shakespeare in Wartime Russia’, 148. Pasternak’s translations of Shakespeare in general and of *Hamlet* in particular have been widely studied. See, for example, Anna K. France, *Boris Pasternak’s Translations of Shakespeare*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978.)

⁸⁷⁸ Alisa Shebalina, *V.Ia. Shebalin: Gody zhizni i tvorchestva*, Moscow, Sovetskii kompozitor, 1990, 129.

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁸⁸⁰ Interview in *Moskovskii Bol’shevik*, 17 December 1944, quoted in Shebalina, *V.Ia. Shebalin: Gody zhizni i tvorchestva*, 136.

(*ukazanie*)? Because in theatres, and not only there, everything that lives only by itself and not thanks to some additional recommendations or sanctions is put aside. This is what happened to *Hamlet* at MKhAT, whose path was crossed by the modern play, *Ivan the Terrible*.⁸⁸¹

Semenenko suggests that by calling a play about Ivan the Terrible ‘modern’, Pasternak was ironically alluding to Stalin’s ‘ongoing campaign of mythologization of the first Russian tsar’.⁸⁸²

4.4.1 Hamlet and Ivan the Terrible

In 1946, the names of Ivan the Terrible and Hamlet were also brought together in a different context, which could be considered as another source for the by then well-known attitude of Stalin towards the Danish prince. The two parts of Sergei Eisenstein’s planned epic trilogy on the life and times of *Ivan the Terrible* had contrasting fates. The first, released in 1944, enjoyed great success and was awarded the coveted first-class Stalin prize, while the second, filmed in 1946-7 was met with severe criticism from Stalin and had to wait until 1958 to be released in public cinemas. In February 1947 the film-maker and the main actor, Nikolai Cherkasov, were summoned to a meeting with Stalin, Zhdanov and Molotov at the Kremlin, during which they were severely criticised and driven to self-denunciation.⁸⁸³ Stalin formulated one of his main criticisms using the Turgenevian image of Hamlet as an analogy: ‘The tsar comes out in your film as indecisive, like Hamlet. Everyone suggests to him what should be done, but he can’t make a decision himself.’⁸⁸⁴ Despite the abundant presence of bloodshed and carnage, Stalin complained that Eisenstein had failed to depict the cruelty of Ivan and ‘why it was essential to be cruel.’⁸⁸⁵

Katerina Clark provides several instances from Eisenstein’s writings, life and works that confirm the film’s debt to the genre of Elizabethan revenge tragedy, and particularly Shakespeare’s appropriation of it in *Hamlet*.⁸⁸⁶ Among the outside influences, Clark mentions Eisenstein’s acquaintance with the scholar and Elizabethan specialist, Ivan Aksenov. Some of

⁸⁸¹ Benedikt Sarnov (ed.), *Stalin i pisateli*, Moscow, Eksmo, 2008, 243.

⁸⁸² Semenenko, ‘Pasternak’s Shakespeare in Wartime Russia’, 158.

⁸⁸³ ‘Authorized transcript of the conversation between I.V. Stalin, A.A. Zhdanov, V.M. Molotov and S.M. Eisenstein and N.K. Cherkasov, concerning *Ivan the Terrible*, 26 February 1947’, in D. Mar’iamov, *Kremlevskii tsenzor: Stalin smotrit kino*, Moscow, Kinotsentr, 1992, 84-92; quoted in Dobrenko and Clark, *Soviet Culture and Power*, 440-45.

⁸⁸⁴ Ibid. 441.

⁸⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁶ Katerina Clark, ‘Sergei Eisenstein and the Renaissance: Ivan the Terrible an Example of Stalinist Cosmopolitanism?’, *Slavic Review*, 71/ 1 (Spring 2012), 49-69, here 59-62.

Clark's own arguments, including her accounts of Renaissance humanism as depicted by Eisenstein, provide evidence for a complementary hypothesis: that Eisenstein's Hamletic model may have been specifically that used by Nikolai Akimov in 1932. Although there is no direct evidence that he had seen it, Eisenstein had no doubt heard of this production and the noise created around it, not least through the writings of his friend, Aksenov. One particular revelatory instance identified by Clark is the scene from the pre-coronation reign of Ivan, where a secretary of the foreign ambassadors is depicted by a figure with striking similarity to the Holbein portraits of Erasmus.⁸⁸⁷ This Erasmus figure, however, 'with his cynical *realpolitik*' seems 'closer to that other renowned Renaissance intellectual and opponent of Erasmus, Machiavelli'.⁸⁸⁸ The cryptic presence of this Erasmus/Machiavelli dialogue, juxtaposed in one character, might, as Clark concludes, provide an insight into Eisenstein's personal dilemmas as a cosmopolitan immersed in contemporary Western culture and at the same time a Soviet patriot.⁸⁸⁹ It also suggests an original solution and a nod towards Akimov's depiction of Hamlet and Horatio as Machiavelli and Erasmus respectively, dividing the 'To be or not to be' as a dialogue between the two opposite yet, in Akimov's view, symbiotic Renaissance intellectuals.

Despite the multi-layered structure of Eisenstein's film and its reception, most mentions of Stalin's criticism are content with the face-value of the Ivan/Hamlet comparison. Describing Hamlet as a weak-willed personality, this comparison reveals that Stalin's understanding of *Hamlet* was far more conservative than many interpretations of the tragedy at the time. This understanding had its roots in the Romantic era, and even in Goethe's understanding of the Danish Prince. On the other hand, as Semenenko observes, this comparison reveals, above all, how Stalin's model of history differed from the one depicted by Eisenstein, which was 'based, among other factors, on the Shakespearean model of tragedy'. Instead of using 'the historic events as a background for the characters' lives', Eisenstein focused on 'Shakespearean tragedy, in which psychology and history are fused.'⁸⁹⁰ This is confirmed by Molotov's criticism regarding 'the stress on psychologism, on the excessive emphasis of inner psychological contradictions and personal sufferings.'⁸⁹¹ Clark correctly identifies the source of 'Eisenstein's emphasis on the way irrational psychological forces drove Ivan' in a

⁸⁸⁷ Ibid., 64.

⁸⁸⁸ Ibid., 66.

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid., 69.

⁸⁹⁰ Semenenko, 'Pasternak's Shakespeare in Wartime Russia', 159.

⁸⁹¹ Molotov at the Kremlin meeting of 26 February 1947, quoted in Dobrenko and Clark, *Soviet Culture and Power*, 441.

passage in T.S. Eliot's essay on Hamlet and his psychological motives, in *The Sacred Wood*, a work that Eisenstein refers to in his writings.⁸⁹²

With the drastic change of cultural climate from relative artistic freedom during the Great Patriotic War to the start of the anti-formalist campaign in late 1948, there was no room for an Ivan depicted not as a mythical figure and a 'great and wise ruler'⁸⁹³ but as a tragic character of a Shakespearean stamp.

4.5 Post-war *Hamlet*: The Zhdanov affair and Soviet Shakespeareology

Stalin's Hamletised reception of *Ivan the Terrible* was emblematic of the drastic post-war changes in the political and cultural climate, following the legitimisation of Soviet power by victory in the Great Patriotic War. Eisenstein's film and Stalin's reaction to it, including his famous criticism of its depiction of the tsar, are often quoted in relation to the post-war cultural purges and the period that has come to be known as the Zhdanov Affair [*Zhdanovshchina*] after the second secretary of the Communist Party, Andrey Zhdanov (1896-1948). But in fact, Zhdanov himself died before the full consequences of the anti-formalism campaign unfolded, and before anti-cosmopolitanism showed its teeth. As Dobrenko and Clark observe: 'Zhdanov's role ... was not decisive. Unquestionably, it was Stalin who not only initiated the various decisions but also directly dictated and pronounced them.'⁸⁹⁴

The Kremlin meeting of 26 February 1947 came six months after the decrees of the Central Committee against the journals *Leningrad* and *Zvezda*, the first of three decrees of that year establishing the policy of cultural repression and the official start of the Zhdanov era.⁸⁹⁵ As the editors of *Soviet Culture and Power* show, referring to the materials from the Central Committee archives, Zhdanovism was nothing new and was not preceded by any kind of 'thaw'. In essence, the resolutions of the years 1946–1948 'merely made public what had been known to a narrow circle of writers and had been concealed from the broad public.'⁸⁹⁶ Furthermore these decrees, which were just 'ordinary "censoring" resolutions' were simply

⁸⁹² Clark, 'Sergei Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* and the Renaissance', 59-62.

⁸⁹³ Richard Taylor (ed.), *The Eisenstein Reader*, London, British Film Institute, 1998, 161.

⁸⁹⁴ Dobrenko and Clark, *Soviet Culture and Power*, 447.

⁸⁹⁵ For the first and the third (on cinema) see *ibid.*, 402-403.

⁸⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 392.

‘symbolic documents marking the new status of the state’ and its public function of exhibiting itself.⁸⁹⁷

In theatre too, there was a natural continuation of the pre-war campaign for Socialist Realism, and theatrical Zhdanovism was merely officialised by the second decree of the Party Central Committee, issued on 16 August 1946 and titled ‘About the Repertoire of the Dramatic Theatres and the Means of Improving It’. According to this ‘the principal defect of the present dramatic repertoire is that plays by Soviet authors on the contemporary themes have actually been crowded out of the country’s leading theaters.’ Similar criticism had already featured in closed discussion sessions of Radlov’s Theatre in the late 1930s; but if Radlov had managed to partially ignore them then, this time the Central Committee resolved to oblige the Committee on Artistic Affairs to ensure ‘the production by every drama theatre of no fewer than two or three new plays annually of high ideological and artistic standards on present-day Soviet themes.’⁸⁹⁸ The changes to the administrative system of the theatres and the appearance of the new role of the deputy artistic director in charge of literature (*Zavlit*) reduced the artistic freedom of the theatre producer and ‘further reinforced the outside control and complicated any diversions.’⁸⁹⁹ All this, and particularly the resolutions, should be viewed, as Dobrenko puts it, as ‘ideological warm-ups’ and ‘prelude’ to the rising campaign of ‘struggle against anti-cosmopolitanism’ and ‘preparation for a new wave of terror.’⁹⁰⁰

Curiously, none of these factors seem to have resulted in Shakespeare being dethroned, even if Soviet Shakespearean priorities at this time shifted noticeably from stage to page. There is good evidence to suggest that in post-war years the Bard was ‘generally tolerated and even generously subsidized by Communist authorities but, at the same time, strictly controlled.’ Bearing the seal of approval of Marx, Engels and Lenin, Shakespeare was indeed an attractive subject for schools and research institutes and provided ‘an ideal classic to reach the widest strata of readers and audiences and thus to bridge the gap which had frequently developed between modern art and the people.’⁹⁰¹ Moreover, in the immediate after-war years, Shakespeare was briefly used as ‘a link between Russia and the West’. In this regard,

⁸⁹⁷ Dobrenko, ‘Literary Criticism and the Institution of Literature in the Era of War and Late Stalinism 1941-1953’, in Dobrenko and Tihanov (eds.), *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism*, University of Pittsburg Press, 2011, 170.

⁸⁹⁸ ‘The dramatic repertoire and measures to improve it: Decision of the Central Committee, CPSU (b), 26 August 1946’, in *Decisions of the Central Committee CPSU (b) on Literature and Art (1946-1948)*, Moscow, Foreign Languages, 1951, 11-20; quoted in Senelick and Ostrovsky, *The Soviet Theater*, 484.

⁸⁹⁹ Senelick and Ostrovsky, *The Soviet Theater*, 483.

⁹⁰⁰ Dobrenko, ‘Literary Criticism’, 171.

⁹⁰¹ Zdeněk Stříbrný, *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, 97

Mikhail Morozov played a defining role. He contributed ‘a few brief notes on Shakespearean events in Russia’ to the *American Shakespeare Association Bulletin*,⁹⁰² and his booklet *Shakespeare on the Soviet Stage* (translated into English) was published in England, opening with a fulsome introduction by John Dover Wilson.⁹⁰³ Surprisingly, perhaps, the booklet gave no sign of any exploitation of Shakespeare for ideological means and propaganda. Instead it offered a brief history of Russian adaptations and translations of Shakespeare plays since the 18th century, followed by a chapter on recent productions, and ending with a declaration, admired by Dover Wilson, of the necessity for a close relationship between scholars and practitioners. However, when it came to the inevitable mentioning of Radlov’s productions, Morozov managed to avoid any reference to the name of the theatre director, who was at this point considered a non-person. Morozov used instead the name of the leading actors as a means of identifying these specific adaptations.

The official accounts of theatre repertoires of the wartime and late Stalinist period, published during the ‘thaw’,⁹⁰⁴ are, as Makaryk observes, quite sketchy and gloss over many plays that were feared to be problematic.⁹⁰⁵ With the rumours of Stalin’s attitude towards *Hamlet* already in the air, it is not surprising that the few productions of *Hamlet* that did take place received minimal attention. For example, Valerian Bebutov’s 1946 *Hamlet* at the Kolas Theatre of Vitebsk received very little comment beyond its being in line with the tendency of the time to present Hamlet the fighter (*Gamlet-bortsa*).⁹⁰⁶ There were at least two more *Hamlet*-related events in the same year, both in the form of a composition (*kompozitsiia*) for a single performer, and both in Moscow. The main actor of Radlov’s *Hamlet*, Dudnikov, is reported to have presented his composition of *Hamlet* during one of the evenings of the annual Shakespeare Conference.⁹⁰⁷ The other one-man *Hamlet* event was organised by actor and musicologist, Aleksandr Glumov, at the Club of Moscow State University and at the Polytechnic museum in September 1946 and on 4 January 1947. Surviving posters of these events advertise them as ‘Concert with reading of a composition based on tragedy of *Hamlet*

⁹⁰² George Gibian, ‘Shakespeare in Soviet Russia’, *The Russian Review*, 11/ 1 (January 1952), 33.

⁹⁰³ Mikhail Morozov, *Shakespeare on the Soviet Stage*, London, Soviet News, 1947.

⁹⁰⁴ See, for example, the multi-volume history of Soviet theatre: Inna Vishnevskaiia et al. (eds.), *Istoriia sovetskogo dramaticheskogo teatra v shesty tomakh*, Vol. 5: 1941-1953.

⁹⁰⁵ Makaryk, ‘Wartime *Hamlet*’, 123.

⁹⁰⁶ Vishnevskaiia, *Istoriia sovetskogo dramaticheskogo teatra*, Vol. 5, 269.

⁹⁰⁷ Liubov’ Vendrovskaiia, ‘Rabota Kabineta Shekspira VTO’, in Mikhail Morozov et al. (eds.), *Shekspirovskii sbornik 1947*, Moscow, VTO, 1948, 254-263, here 258.

by Shakespeare, with music by N.N. Rakhmaninov [sic!] arranged for string quartet'.⁹⁰⁸ The accounts of the 'protokol' and discussion (*obsuzhdenie*) at Moscow University show that Glumov included the monologues as well as the main characters of the tragedy and succeeded in providing different nuances for each of them.⁹⁰⁹ The translation Glumov chose for his mono-spectacle was that of Pasternak, and by doing so he offered the first ever Moscow public performance and quasi-staging of this text. Pasternak himself attended the premiere, and it was after this performance that he created the first draft of his poem 'Hamlet', which not only appears at 'the opening bars of the coda' to *Doctor Zhivago* but also marks the start of the author's first phase of intensive work on the beginning of his iconic novel.⁹¹⁰ In a similar way to Glumov's performance with its multi-tiered central figure, the lyric persona of Pasternak's 'Hamlet' is 'a composite of at least five strata – Pasternak, Zhivago, an actor portraying Hamlet, Hamlet himself, and Christ.'⁹¹¹ A similar complexity was embodied in the Soviet bard of the 1970s, Vladimir Vysotsky, whose guitar accompaniment to his 'recital' of the as-yet-unpublished poem of Pasternak provided an ideal opening for Yuri Lyubimov's canonic production of *Hamlet* at the Taganka Theatre (1971-1980).⁹¹²

Admittedly, and notwithstanding the previously mentioned productions of *Hamlet* and the continuation of related scholarship, the account of registered Shakespeare productions of the post-war and late-Stalinist period reveals a clear preference for comedies, particularly in the years immediately following the war; among the tragedies, *Othello* was the front runner, with as many as 52 productions between March 1945 and February 1953; *Macbeth* and *Richard III* were the least performed plays, apart from those not performed at all.⁹¹³

The year 1948 saw the extension of Zhdanovshchina to composers⁹¹⁴ and the assassination of the actor, Solomon Mikhoels, soon to be followed by the anti-cosmopolitan campaign brought about in January 1949 'by circumstances that had arisen in Stalin's circle after the

⁹⁰⁸ RGALI, f. 2420, op. 1, ed. khr. 67. No further detail regarding the music appears in any of the consulted material; however, it was most probably by Nikolai Rakhmanov (1892-1964) who was a theatre composer and conductor.

⁹⁰⁹ 'Potokol: obsuzhdenie raboty A.N. Glumova v VGKO ot 13 Fev 1946', RGALI, f. 2420, op. 2, ed. khr. 7.

⁹¹⁰ Timothy Sergay, 'Boris Pasternak's "Christmas Myth": Fedorov, Berdiaev, Dickens, Blok', PhD dissertation, University of Yale, 2008, 131.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁹¹² Birgit Beumers, *Yuri Lyubimov at the Taganka Theatre 1964-1994*, 115.

⁹¹³ For statistics derived from the list of Shakespeare productions on Soviet stage (1945-1957) published in the 1958 issue of *Shekpirovskii sbornik*, see <http://www.w-shakespeare.ru/library/shekpirovskiy-sbornik26.html>, accessed 12 May 2016.

⁹¹⁴ See Ekaterina Vlasova, *1948 God v sovetskoi muzyke*, Moscow, Klassika-Kh.Kh.T, 2010.

unexpected death of Zhdanov.⁹¹⁵ During this critical period, it was not Shakespeare but supposed Western-style attitudes towards his scholarship that came under attack, including works of Mikhail Morozov that were deemed to be under Western influence, particularly his 1947 project *Shekspirovskii sbornik*, this being the proceedings of the annual Shakespeare Conference held by the Shakespeare department of the All-Russian Theatre Society.⁹¹⁶ It was not the subject matter or the mere fact of writing about a foreign author that came under criticism, but Morozov's 'Western' approach to Shakespeare scholarship – in reality no more than that of an exceptionally well-read commentator – and his lack of insistence on the superiority of Soviet Shakespearology. In subsequent articles, Morozov tried to redeem himself by attacking 'bourgeois' critics and by accusing the West of dissociating Shakespeare from real life and realism, insisting that Shakespeare's humanism and realism could only be revealed in Soviet productions, where the heroes are not abstract.⁹¹⁷

Following these attacks, and while politically correct Soviet Shakespearology was being developed by the likes of Aleksandr Anikst, criticism and scholarly articles were replaced by the writings of Pushkin and Vissarion Belinsky on Shakespeare, as well as translations and reprinting of translations of plays and sonnets in great anthology volumes; in this regard Pasternak had his fair share, with his translations being published in various guises.⁹¹⁸ Meanwhile, the next volume of *Shekspirovskii sbornik* had to wait until after Stalin's death, by which time Morozov was also dead and had been replaced by Anikst as the new face of Soviet Shakespeare scholarship. From this point on, Soviet Shakespearology gradually separated along three distinct lines, namely Anikst and his school; the philosophical approach typified by Lev Vygotskii, and Kozintsev's fusion of a close reading of Shakespeare text with practical directorial experience.⁹¹⁹ This diversity of approach was not sharply antagonistic, as had been the case prior to death of Stalin, but it represented a clear move away from the 'conflictlessness' (*bezkonfliktnost'*) of the late-Stalin era. At the same time, sites of socio-political and artistic contention moved from affirmation of the status quo towards critique of it, with *Hamlet* as a potential instrument of such critiques.

⁹¹⁵ See Dobrenko, 'Literary criticism and the institution of literature', 175.

⁹¹⁶ Mikhail Morozov *et al.* (eds.), *Shekspirovskii sbornik*, VTO, Moscow, 1947.

⁹¹⁷ Morozov, 'Falsifikatory Shekspira', *Teatr* (January 1949), 53-56; 'Teatrovedcheskaia ekspansiia Uall Strita', *Teatr* (May 1949), 85-88.

⁹¹⁸ For a bibliography of Shakespeare-related publications, see I. M. Levidova, *Shekspir: Bibliografiia russkikh perevodov i kriticheskoi literatury na russkom iazyke 1748-1962*, Moscow, 1964, http://az.lib.ru/s/shekspir_w/text_0220.shtml, accessed 21 May 2016.

⁹¹⁹ See Mark Sokolianskii, 'Osnovnye tendentsii v otechestvennom shekspirovedenii 1960-1980-ikh godov', in G. Krasnov and A. Viktorovich (eds.), *Iz istorii filologii: Sbornik statei i materialov: K 85-letiiu G.V. Krasnova*, Kolomna, KTPI, 2006, 72–83.

Chapter 5

Critical *Hamlets*

5.1 *Hamlet* fever during the Thaw: A tale of three productions

There was at least one other contributing factor to the longevity of the myth of *Hamlet* and Stalin: the ‘Hamlet fever’ that took over Soviet theatres following Stalin’s death, which is now well known and widely quoted in Western and Russian literature, even if many nuances of this term are commonly ignored.⁹²⁰ It could be argued that the sudden onset of *Hamlet* productions meant that they might have been held back while Stalin was alive. Senior Russian Shakespeare scholar, Alexei Bartoshevich, himself an advocate of the idea of the tacit/unofficial Stalin ‘ban’, explains the phenomenon rather more subtly, by suggesting that in the history of *Hamlet*’s stage life there has been an alternation of Hamletian and non-Hamletian eras.⁹²¹ The former is when all political, social and historical factors are aligned in such a way as to make society - or more precisely a generation within a given society - open and ready for new *Hamlets*. Accordingly 1954 was a Hamletian time, as were the 1970s, when Vladimir Vysotsky’s *Hamlet* took both Soviet and international stages by storm.

The accounts of immediate post-Stalin productions of *Hamlet* are frequently reductionist, exaggerated and inaccurate. For one thing, most mentions of the term ‘Hamlet fever’ only list one or at most two productions that appeared in 1954, namely Nikolai Okhlopkov’s at Moscow’s Mayakovsky Theatre and Grigori Kozintsev’s at Leningrad’s Pushkin Theatre, passing over Sergei Radlov’s defiant return with his *Hamlet* at the Daugavpils Theatre in Latvia. Moreover, despite premiering only in December 1954 - more than five months after Kozintsev production in Leningrad - Okhlopkov’s takes primacy even in such authoritative reference books as Smeliansky’s.⁹²² In his more recent articles, Senelick, in an effort to respect the chronology, identifies Okhlopkov’s *Hamlet* as ‘the first major [production]’ and hence downplays the importance of Kozintsev’s and Radlov’s stagings. Senelick then describes Okhlopkov’s *Hamlet* as ‘the most original interpretation of *Hamlet* since Nikolai

⁹²⁰ The term probably entered Western writings through Chushkin’s use of it in *Gamlet-Kachalov*, 309, quoted in Mandel, ‘Hamlet and Soviet Humanism’, 734.

⁹²¹ Aleksei Bartoshevich, ‘Gamlety nashikh dney’, in Bartoshevich (ed.), *Shekspirovskie Chteniia*, Moscow, Moscow Humanitarian University Press, 2010. 209-216.

⁹²² Smeliansky, *The Russian Theatre after Stalin*, 5.

Akimov's grotesque revision of 1932 at the Vakhtangov Theatre.⁹²³ Despite the valuable archive documents presented in his article, Senelick does not provide the reader with convincing justification for either of his claims.

The three productions used three different texts: Radlov stayed loyal to his wife's translation (she, like Radlov himself, was still not rehabilitated), while Kozintsev opted for Pasternak's,⁹²⁴ in what would be its first major staging, whereas Okhlopkov used Lozinskii's. As an event, Radlov's production had probably even more historical importance than Okhlopkov's. In late 1953, having served almost nine out of ten years of his 'correction camp' sentence and having lost his wife there, Radlov assumed leadership of the almost non-existent Drama Theatre in Daugavpils and almost immediately started planning his *Hamlet*.⁹²⁵ For Radlov this was his rising from the ashes, while for the city of Daugavpils it was the first ever Shakespeare play to be staged. Reactions were accordingly rapturous.⁹²⁶

As for originality of interpretation, Kozintsev's controversial reworking of the end of the tragedy was far more original than anything in Okhlopkov's *Hamlet*.⁹²⁷ Having omitted the lines of Fortinbras entirely,⁹²⁸ Kozintsev resurrected his title-character at the very end, where, accompanied by Shostakovich's triumphant music (one of only two pieces freshly composed for the production), the Danish prince recites Shakespeare's Sonnet 74, affirming the immortality of spirit as opposed to body (see lines 11-14, for instance: *The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,/ Too base of thee to be remembered./ The worth of that is that which it contains,/ And that is this, and this with thee remains*). Although the resurrection seems to be in line with Pasternak's Christ-like understanding of Hamlet, the poet's disapproval and his

⁹²³ Senelick, "“Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all”: New Documentation on the Okhlopkov *Hamlet*", in Makaryk and Price (eds.), *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, 136.

⁹²⁴ Except for the Sonnet 74 recitation at the end of the tragedy, where Kozintsev used Samuel Marshak's translation.

⁹²⁵ Boris Ravdin, 'Sergei Radlov – k postanovke Rizhskoi biografii', in Irina Tsygal'skaia (ed.), *Rizhskiy al'manakh No. 3(8)*, Riga, LORIK, 2012, 182-184.

⁹²⁶ N. Farinovskii, 'Podgotovka spektaklia "Gamlet"', *Krasnoe znamia Daugavpils*, 21 May 1954; I. Dubashinskii, 'Na stsene tragediia Shekspira "Gamlet"', *Krasnoe znamia*, 5 June 1954; Ia. Borodovskii, 'Tragediia "Gamlet" na stsene Daugavpilskogo teatra', *Sovetskaia Latvija*, 1954/138 (12 June), 3. And after tours to Riga: J. Jurovskis, 'Hamlets', *Daugavpils krievu teātri*, 1954/154 (1 July), 3; V. Pigulevskii, 'Gamlet k gastroljam Daugavpilskogo russkogo teatra v Rige', *Sovetskaia molodezh'*, 1954/129 (2 July), 3; L. Pāberzs, 'Radoša drosme un degsme', *Literatūra un Māksla*, 1954/27 (4 July), 3. To this day, 29 May 1954 is regarded as a red calendar day for the Daugavpils theatre history - see <http://www.grani.lv/daugavpils/53860-29-maya-1954-goda-premera-gamleta-na-daugavpilsskoy-scene.html>, accessed 22 November 2015.

⁹²⁷ Other aspects of Kozintsev's production may be deduced or inferred from his letters, diary entries, and advice to actors and publications, as well as from reminiscences of his contemporaries. Some of these are collected in Valentina Kozintseva and Iavov Butovskii (eds.), *Ot balagana do Shekspira: Khronika teatral'noi deiatel'nosti G.M. Kozintseva*, St Petersburg, Dmitrii Bulanin, 2002, 368-453.

⁹²⁸ Kozintsev restored Fortinbras for his 1964 film adaptation of *Hamlet* but still reduced the lines to the bare minimum.

hastily drafted translation of the sonnet were among reasons why Kozintsev preferred to use Samuel Marshak's translation for this epilogue to Pasternak's intense displeasure.⁹²⁹

Notwithstanding Senelick's claims, Okhlopov's *Hamlet* with Evgenyi Samoilov (later replaced by Mikhail Kozakov) in the title role was described as 'absolute nightmare' by Innokentii Smoktunovskii, the *Hamlet* of Kozintsev's 1964 screen version, to the point that he almost rejected the role, since it seemed empty of any life.⁹³⁰ But the real 'star' of Okhlopov's production, which for many became the main object of study, was the stage design by Vadim Ryndin and above all the multi-purpose 'vast metal gates or castle doors, bolted and heraldically decorated'.⁹³¹ It was these gates that gave the production its Western nickname, 'The Iron Curtain *Hamlet*', overshadowing Al'tman's design for Kozintsev's production with another iconic element, a statue of Nike. The assumptions regarding Okhlopov's *Hamlet* – whether concerning its originality or its stage-concept - could be explained by the time and context of its premiere and its stage life. Kozintsev's production in Leningrad, which was indeed the first post-Stalin *Hamlet* in the Soviet Union, opened on 31 March 1954, shortly before the publication of Ilya Ehrenburg's novel *The Thaw (Ottepel')*, whose title has come to epitomise the Soviet era from the death of Stalin to the deposing of Khrushchev, i.e. 1953-64. For outside observers the period 1953-54 was still one of questioning the change of the political wind rather than conviction that it would actually change at all.⁹³² Okhlopov's grand Moscow premiere, on the other hand, took place at the end of 1954, and it remained on the stage almost throughout the Thaw, well into the mid-1960s. Okhlopov's was the production chosen to be played alongside Peter Brook's *Hamlet* during the first ever tour by a British theatre troupe to the Soviet Union in December 1955. Of course when performed parallel to Brook's staging and Paul Scofield's performance, the Russian *Hamlet* appeared heavy, highly stylised and slow.⁹³³ Yet, this historical event turned a bright international spotlight on Okhlopov's production. Hence even its shortcomings,

⁹²⁹ For correspondence between Pasternak and Kozintsev (as well as between Pasternak and Ol'ga Freydenberg), see Grigori Kozintsev and Boris Pasternak, 'Pis'ma o *Gamlete*', *Voprosy literatury* (1975/1), 212-223; Valentina Kozintseva and Iavov Butovskii (eds.), *Ot balagana do Shekspira*, 397-401 and 411-413.

⁹³⁰ Interview Anna Gereb with Smoktunovskiy, 8 October 1993: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUc7OIK7CUc>, accessed 24 August 2016.

⁹³¹ Dennis Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, 192.

⁹³² Philippe Sabant, 'Est-ce la fin du jdanovisme?', *Esprit*, Nouvelle série, 1954/212 (3) (March), 387-403.

⁹³³ For a comparison of a few scenes from each production, see Mikhail Kozakov, *Risunki na peske: Akterskaia kniga*, Moscow, AST/Zebra E2007, 129-134 (excerpts translated in Senelick and Ostrovsky, *The Soviet Theatre*, 524-525).

notably its excessive monumentality, once observed through the lens of the Thaw, became attractive subject matter for Western commentators.

However, what is often overlooked is the difference between the Western and the Russian understanding of the metaphor that defined this period. If for a Western reader the Thaw is most often associated with renewal and anticipation of the spring, it ‘belonged to, but also worked against, some of the most stable and meaningful associations in Russian poetry and lyrical imagination.’⁹³⁴ With reference to the Russian climate, for many poets the Thaw was synonymous with the season of mud and far from a favoured time of the year.⁹³⁵ At the same time the melting of the accumulated snow would reveal ‘what lies beneath, what was always there’ – in other words a return rather than an advance, and even a recurring event in the cycle of the seasons.⁹³⁶ Each of these readings highlights a different nuance to the nature of the liminal 1950s, suggesting, as Clark observes, that much of what was considered new was in fact a restored continuity with trends that had emerged in the 1930s. Maia Turovskaia is among the few scholars and critics to observe that the widely discussed decorations and set design of Okhlopkov’s *Hamlet*, as well as its overall style, were in fact not new at all but belonged to the tradition of historical monumentality that had been fully explored in Shakespeare productions of the 1930s.⁹³⁷

With this in mind, notwithstanding the tumultuous programme of reform and de-Stalinisation that Khrushchev was soon to embark on,⁹³⁸ Stalin’s death in March 1953 ‘did not mark an absolute BC/AD dividing line.’⁹³⁹ For the theatre, for example, the Thaw came in several phases including the abolition of the Glavrepertkom - the Central Repertoire Board - with its function taken over by the Ministry of Culture (1953), the publication of an editorial in *Kommunist* advocating diversity in arts (1955), and the posthumous rehabilitation of Meyerhold (1955).⁹⁴⁰ But as Philip Sabant observed in 1954, the theatrical Thaw was already set in motion when the distribution of Stalin prizes for 1951 Theatre contained no first- or

⁹³⁴ Denis Kozlov and Eleonora Gilburd (eds.), *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2013, 18.

⁹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹³⁶ Katerina Clark, ‘“Wait for Me and I Shall Return”: The Early Thaw as a Reprise of Late Thirties Culture?’, in Kozlov and Gilburd (eds.), *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s*, 86.

⁹³⁷ Maia Turovskaia, ‘Gamlet i my’, in Turovskaia, *Pamiati tekushchego mgnoveniia: ocherki, portreti, zametki*, Moscow, Sovetskii pisatel’, 1987, 8-10.

⁹³⁸ With hindsight, Lenin’s ‘one step forward, two steps back’ would provide a better description of this period Vladimir Lenin, ‘One step Forward, Two Steps Back’, in *Lenin’s Collected Works*, Vol. 7, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1964, 203-425.

⁹³⁹ Katerina Clark, ‘Wait for Me and I Shall Return’, 86.

⁹⁴⁰ Birgit Beumers, ‘The “Thaw” and After, 1953-1986’, in Leach and Borovsky (eds.), *A History of Russian Theatre*, 358.

even second-class prizes awarded to a Soviet play, revealing the stagnated status of drama and theatre.⁹⁴¹ More generally the ‘first Thaw’⁹⁴² has been seen as beginning with the publication of lead articles in *Pravda* on 7 April 1952, attacking the theory of ‘conflictlessness’ promoted by Nikolai Virda and Boris Lavrenev.⁹⁴³ The key-note address by Malenkov at the Nineteenth Party Congress of the same year further established the campaign rejecting the ‘varnishing of reality’ in favour of ‘the truth of life’.⁹⁴⁴ In this light, the 1954 productions of *Hamlet* had their roots not in Stalin’s death but in ‘the shift of the ideological trajectory in 1952’, which ‘judging by the scope, breadth, and intensiveness ... came straight from Stalin.’⁹⁴⁵ This is one aspect that sets the *Hamlets* of 1954 apart from preceding and later productions of the tragedy: in line with Dobrenko’s arguments regarding literature in 1952, the new *Hamlets* (Okhlopkov’s and Kozintsev’s) found ‘a balance’ between ‘vigilance’ and ‘heightened class struggle’ alongside portraying ‘the beauty of our life’. Both Okhlopkov and Kozintsev succeeded in providing the audience with ‘the image of Soviet man ... portrayed in all of his colossal height, in all the wealth and multi-facetedness of his character and his fate’, whilst avoiding a ‘blue-skied and idyllic’ image of life and staying true to ‘the severe truth of our era – the era of difficult, but beautiful heroic tasks’.⁹⁴⁶

This aesthetic trend could provide an alternative explanation to Bartoshevich’s theory for Kozintsev’s re-scripting of the hero’s denouement as a way of complying with the authorities and censorship,⁹⁴⁷ since it could be argued that Kozintsev was restoring the balance which had been tipped over by the production’s ‘atmosphere of tyranny and cruelty in which the Danish prince had been suffocating’,⁹⁴⁸ whilst adhering to his personal reading of Shakespeare’s tragedy as a celebration of poetry.⁹⁴⁹ Such a balance was absent from Akimov’s ostensibly dialectical materialist reading and from Radlov’s realist celebration of Shakespeare’s optimism. In succeeding years, this balance would be increasingly skewed by other factors, such as political immediacy, whether as a catalyst for a production’s reception

⁹⁴¹ Philippe Sabant, ‘Est-ce la fin du jdanovisme?’, 387-8.

⁹⁴² Birgit Beumers, ‘The “Thaw” and After, 1953-1986’, 358.

⁹⁴³ ‘Preodolet’ otstavanie dramaturgii’, *Pravda*, 7 April 1952.

⁹⁴⁴ Dobrenko, ‘Literary Criticism and the Institution of Literature, 1941-1953’, 180.

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁶ B. Riurikov, ‘V zhizni tak ne byvaet’, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 1952/110 (11 September), 1, quoted in Dobrenko, ‘Literary Criticism and the Institution of Literature, 1941-1953’, 181.

⁹⁴⁷ Bartoshevich, ‘Russkii Gamlet: XX vek’, *Teatr*, 2011/2, also at <http://oteatre.info/russkij-gamlet-xx-vek/>, accessed 2 September 2016.

⁹⁴⁸ Iurii Golovashchenko, ‘“Gamlet” spektakl’ v Teatre imeni A.S. Pushkina’, *Leningradskaia pravda*, 27 May 1954.

⁹⁴⁹ Kozintsev, ‘Gamlet, prints datskii: “Gamlet” i gamletism’, in Kozintsev, ‘Nash sovremennik Shekspir’, in Kozintsev, *Sobranie sochineniiv piati tomakh*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1983, Vol. 3, 282-353, esp. 321-336.

(Lyubimov's of 1971) or directly implied by the adaptation (Slonimsky's opera of 1991). At the same time, Kozintsev's decision to finish his production with a reading of Sonnet 74 might have well resulted from the director's knowledge of Shakespeare's works. Indeed, this Sonnet has strong associations with *Hamlet*, and in particular with the dying words of the Danish prince; the opening lines (*But be contented when that fell arrest/ Without all bail shall carry me away*) echoes Hamlet's *Had I but time, as this fell Sergeant, Death/ Is strict in his arrest* (V/2/320-321).⁹⁵⁰

5.2 Kozintsev's concept and Shostakovich's music (theatre and film)

In order to reinforce the multifaceted portrait of this new Soviet *Hamlet*, and given the dominating power of set designs, all other components of Kozintsev's production, particularly the incidental music, needed to be flexible enough to be freely manipulable by the director. In this respect, it was easier to refer back to already known music than to take the risk of dealing with a complex, more or less autonomous, score such as Shostakovich had provided for Akimov's *Hamlet*. While Radlov in Daugavpils referred back to Prokofiev's music composed for their 1938 *Hamlet* collaboration, Okhlopov's choice of Tchaikovsky's *The Tempest* and *Hamlet* was more backward-looking, and was even criticised for being 'in the manner of a Hollywood film'.⁹⁵¹ Kozintsev, too, looked for familiarity as well as plurivocality when he turned to his long-standing collaborator, Shostakovich, to provide the incidental music. In fact, as it turned out, he ended up using music that was almost entirely pre-composed. The contract between the Pushkin Theatre and Shostakovich, signed on 15 December 1953, suggests that the composer was supposed to provide the theatre with fifteen new musical numbers by the following February: 1. Opening number, 2. Claudius's exit, 3. The Ghost's appearance, 4. Music accompanying the start of the play-within-a-play 5. Pantomime, 6. Gigue, 7-12: Ophelia's songs, 13-14. Gravedigger's songs, 15. Finale.⁹⁵² Exactly one month prior to the contract Shostakovich had informed Kozintsev that he would not be able to take on the music of *Hamlet* due to his excessively busy schedule, and had suggested that his pupil Kara Karayev could replace him.⁹⁵³ It seems, however, that during his visit to Leningrad prior to the signing of the contract, Kozintsev had managed to convince

⁹⁵⁰ See, Rupin Desai, "'But I have that within which passeth show": Shakespeare's Ambivalence towards his Profession', in Desai (ed.), *Shakespeare the Man: New Decipherings*, Madison, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2014, 101-120, here 104.

⁹⁵¹ Ossia Trilling, 'How Different Can One Be?', *World Theatre* 8/1-2 (1964), 96.

⁹⁵² 'Dogovory s dramaturgami, kompozitorami o napisanyi p'es i muzyki k nim i oformlenyi spektaklei: 5 Ianvar 1953 do 30 Dekabre 1953', TsGALI, f. 354, op. 1, ed. khr. 635, 43.

⁹⁵³ Letter from Shostakovich to Kozintsev, 13 November 1953, TsGALI, f. 622 op.1, ed. khr. 1000, Letters (6 January 1948 to 21 November 1956), 15.

Shostakovich, reassuring him that the production could re-use some of his previous scores; and in January 1954 Shostakovich wrote to Kozintsev, inquiring whether he had ‘managed to sort out my musical heritage (*nasledie*)’.⁹⁵⁴

As Kozintsev later admitted, his affinity with the music of Shostakovich was such that he would often envision his work whilst imagining Shostakovich’s music.⁹⁵⁵ His diaries and working notebooks (*zapisnie knizhki*) of this time reveal how he was at work at creating a harmony between his concept of *Hamlet* for each scene and his choice of Shostakovich’s score to his 1941 production of *King Lear* at the Bolshoi Dramaticheskii Teatr.⁹⁵⁶ Studying Kozintsev’s choice of musical numbers from *King Lear* and the new functions that he assigns to them for his *Hamlet* provides an insight into his reading of each tragedy and the affinities that he found between the characters and events of the two plays.⁹⁵⁷ The fact that Kozintsev was able to re-use most musical numbers that had been specifically and to his requirements composed for a different play also points to the plurivocal nature of Shostakovich’s musical language and its capacity to be interpreted in multiple manners. The importance of this incidental music is even more apparent when considered in parallel with Shostakovich’s subsequent music for Kozintsev’s film version of *Hamlet* in 1964, some of whose numbers originate in the composer’s 1954 theatre score. This is particularly true for the Gigue, one of the very few newly composed episodes for the 1954 production. This balagan-style number, an equivalent to Radlov/Prokofiev’s minuet/pantomime, was to appear following Claudius’s storming out of the ‘Mousetrap’ and Hamlet’s inviting the musicians and actors to play in celebration of his success in confirming his uncle’s guilt. A variation of the opening bars reappears in the musical number, ‘The Ball at the Palace’, an as-yet-unpublished cue around ten minutes into the film, immediately after the first fanfare, which had been played to the scene of Claudius naming Hamlet as his successor (see Ex. 5.1). Like the Gigue from the 1954 *Hamlet*, ‘The Ball’ is supposed to be diegetic; however, the very fast tempo (marked *presto*) and the melody quite removed from the opening B flat major make this music highly unsuitable for dancing to. With the functional dominant-tonic accompaniment juxtaposed with complex melody it seems that only the accompaniment is meant to serve as music for the ball, while the melody might best be described as representing Hamlet’s tortured

⁹⁵⁴ Letter from Shostakovich to Kozintsev, 7 January, 1954, TsGALI, f. 622 op. 1, ed. khr. 1000, Letters, 17.

⁹⁵⁵ Kozintsev, *King Lear, the Space of Tragedy: The Diary of a Film Director*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977, 254.

⁹⁵⁶ TsGALI f. 622, op.1, ed. khr. 308-310.

⁹⁵⁷ See also ‘Zadanie D.D. Shostakovichu na muzyku k spektakliu’, in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds.), *Ot balagana do Shekspira*, 383-384, where, however, the commentary to this document wrongly states that Shostakovich composed a complete new score for the 1954 production of *Hamlet*.

thoughts. This duality also has its roots in the 1954 theatre production: Kozintsev, as his notes show, required that the music of the Gigue ‘went against the ongoing tragic events on the stage’.⁹⁵⁸

Ex. 5.1: a) Shostakovich, *Hamlet* (1954), ‘Gigue’; b) Shostakovich, *Hamlet* (1964) Op. 116, ‘Ball at the Palace’

a) **Presto**

b) **Presto**

Soon the film music goes to a second plane as Hamlet’s shortened first soliloquy starts as voice over the thoughtful (rather than tragic) prince walking among the guests. The music gradually disappears, as Hamlet wanders out of the ballroom to welcome Horatio and the frightened soldiers. The use of music as a connecting device between different scenes is a recurring feature throughout the film, as is also pointed out in Kozintsev’s journal notes: ‘The boundaries that separate scenes must be destroyed. ... No film transitions: no black-outs, fade-outs, or double exposures. ... Hamlet’s thought penetrates this motley, speeding world, and exposes the cancer cells and the decomposition of the organism.’⁹⁵⁹

In his film Kozintsev cuts out the night patrol and the Ghost’s first appearance to the soldiers. As such is the Ghost is mentioned for the first time here, as Horatio reports to Hamlet against a background of an open fire. Accordingly Shostakovich’s music introduces the theme of the Ghost, which continues as the men separate and Hamlet remains alone with his thoughts and fears; a close-up on the fire establishes this elemental symbol of the film.

The theme of the Ghost, particularly the string tremolos and their punctuating chords, echoes the storm music of the 1941 *King Lear*, which according to Kozintsev’s notes was also chosen to represent the Ghost of Hamlet’s father at the 1954 production (Ex. 5.2).

⁹⁵⁸ Kozintsev, *Materiali k postanovke Gamleta*, TsGALI, f. 622 op 1, ed. khr. 310, 52-53.

⁹⁵⁹ Kozintsev, *Shakespeare: Time and Conscience*, 231.

Ex. 5.2: a) Shostakovich, *Hamlet* (1964), ‘The Ghost’; b) *King Lear* (1941), ‘Approach of the Storm’

a) **[Largo]** side drum, bass drum.

b) **Andante**

Even the three punctuating chords with which the film opens, and which are always linked to, if not part of, Hamlet’s theme, have a precedent in Kozintsev’s musical requirements for his theatre production. In his notes regarding the change of scenery, Kozintsev suggests three gongs as a signal. However, he insists that the transition to Hamlet’s room should be signaled with three chords of a different nature and then adds in parenthesis: ‘Hamlet’s theme’.⁹⁶⁰ This clarification goes against Tatiana Egorova and Erik Heine’s identification of the three chords as a ‘leitmotif’ for Elsinore.⁹⁶¹

It is a different matter with Ophelia’s songs, where uncovering material belonging to the theatre production actually further complicates an already unclear picture. Unlike the 1954 theatre production, where Ophelia sang all six of her songs, four of them having instrumental accompaniment,⁹⁶² Kozintsev kept only three of Ophelia’s songs in the film: ‘How should I

⁹⁶⁰ Kozintsev, *Materiali k postanovke Gamleta*, TsGALI, f. 622, op. 1, ed. khr. 310, 54.

⁹⁶¹ Tatiana Egorova, *Soviet Film Music: An Historical Survey*, Amsterdam, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997, 177; Erik Heine, ‘The Film Music of Dmitri Shostakovich in *The Gadfly*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*’, PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2005, 178.

⁹⁶² See, Shostakovich’s letter of 11 February 1954 to Kozintsev: ‘I am sending you the instrumentation of four songs. For the 5th and 6th I didn’t do an instrumentation, as you told me that they go without music’, TsGALI, f. 622, op.1, ed. khr. 1000, 21.

your true love know', 'Valentine's Day' and 'My Robin'. These are all sung a cappella and in a natural, non-professional manner by the actress Anastasia Vertinskaia. However, the melodies from the first and third are incorporated in other musical cues of the film: respectively Hamlet's farewell to Ophelia, which depicts Ophelia reading Hamlet's love poem before being interrupted by a strange visit from him, and the Death of Ophelia, a montage that links Laertes and Claudius's plot to Hamlet's return via shots of Ophelia's empty chambers, her dead body in the water and a seagull's flight. While Egorova unaccountably considers these songs to be influenced by Russian folk music,⁹⁶³ Olga Dombrovskaia correctly observes that Shostakovich turned to songs that 'were traditionally used for these scenes from the 18th century and possibly from Shakespeare's time.'⁹⁶⁴ However, when it comes to Shostakovich's source for these songs, Dombrovskaia admits that the picture is incomplete and only points out an inference that might be drawn from a letter from Kozintsev to Jay Leyda in June 1952, where the director mentions having looked for a volume of Shakespeare music in bookshops but failing to find it.⁹⁶⁵ More importantly she reports the existence of two unknown and undated manuscripts in the Shostakovich archives, with the harmonised melodies of the three songs.⁹⁶⁶ Findings from the Pushkin Theatre archive and RGALI may help with the chronology. The former holds the orchestral parts from the 1954 production, and since the whereabouts of the main score (or piano score) are unknown, these have been used to reconstruct the Gigue and the Finale. However, a separate manuscript sheet containing the melody to Ophelia's 'How Should I your true Love Know?' seems to have remained undetected to this day. As witnessed and reported by Sergei Slonimsky, the 1954 Ophelia definitely sang this traditional melody with Shostakovich's harmonisation.⁹⁶⁷ The Pushkin Theatre manuscript suggests that the mysterious manuscripts Dombrovskaia mentions may have belonged to Shostakovich's now missing score for 1954 *Hamlet*, particularly given that, according to their correspondence, Kozintsev sent Shostakovich's theatre score to him in January 1963, while the composer was working on his film music and was still considering reusing his previous material.⁹⁶⁸ Thus the approximate dating of the manuscripts of the songs goes at least as far back as the time of Shostakovich's

⁹⁶³ Egorova, *Soviet Film Music*, 182-183.

⁹⁶⁴ See Olga Dombrovskaia, Introductory Essay to Shostakovich Film Music for *Hamlet*, *New Collected Works*, Vol. 140 (forthcoming).

⁹⁶⁵ The letter appears in Kozintsev's correspondence: Valentina Kozintseva and Iakov Butovskii (eds.), *Perepiska G.M. Kozintseva 1922-1973*, Moscow, Artist. Rezhisser. Teatr, 1998, 224.

⁹⁶⁶ Dmitri Shostakovich Archive, f. 2, op. 1, del. 166.

⁹⁶⁷ Interview with Slonimsky, 28 March 2013.

⁹⁶⁸ Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds.), *Perepiska Kozintseva*, 230-231.

work on the 1954 production, and this in turn suggests that the composer's source for this traditional melody was other than what Dombrovskaia had suggested. At the same time, a document in the archived collection of the actress Mariia Babanova contains the manuscript of I.M. Meerovich, responsible for the music for Okhlopkov's *Hamlet*, where the composer writes out two melodies belonging to Ophelia's songs, once using Shakespeare's words and then words from a traditional song. One of these songs is 'How should I your true love know?', to the same melody used by Shostakovich. The reference for the English text of Shakespeare is given on the verso as '*Hamlet* H[orace] F[urness], Philadelphia, 1877'; but no reference or indication is provided for the melodies.⁹⁶⁹ The same melody had been used by William Walton in his music for Laurence Olivier's 1948 film version of *Hamlet*; and given that Okhlopkov was appointed a deputy of the Ministry of Culture in 1953 in charge of foreign films, it is possible that he had viewed and known of Olivier's film and had suggested the songs to his composer. In fact the most authoritative account of the origins of this melody states that it was transcribed from an actress who had played the part of Ophelia prior to the burning down of Drury Lane Theatre in 1812, where the manuscripts handed down from original sources had been housed (see Ex. 5.3).⁹⁷⁰

Ex. 5.3: 'How should I your true love know?' (traditional)⁹⁷¹

How should I your true love know? from a-noth - er one? By his
 cock - le___ hat and staff. And his san - dal shoon.

5.3 The Shakespeare celebrations of 1964

In 1964 the Soviet Union celebrated Shakespeare's 400th anniversary on an unprecedented grandiose scale, marked by an outpouring of conferences, books, articles, theatre productions and other forms of adaptation.⁹⁷² Among many publications was an entire section of the

⁹⁶⁹ I.M. Meerovich, 'Pesni Ofelii na slova narodnye i U. Shekspira dlia golosa s arfoi, ispolnennye v spektakle Moskovskogo teatra Revolutsii *Gamlet*', RGALI, f. 3021, op. 1, ed. khr. 8.

⁹⁷⁰ Louis Elson, *Shakespeare in Music*, London, David Nutt, 1901, 234-235, with the melody and bass-line given at 236.

⁹⁷¹ As given in Edward Naylor, *Shakespeare and Music*, London, Dent, 1896, 196.

⁹⁷² For a video of the jubilee celebration at the Bolshoi Theatre, see

magazine *Sovetskaia muzyka*, dedicated to the theme of Shakespeare and music.⁹⁷³ This contained articles by such prominent Shakespeare scholars as Aleksandr Anikst, presenting an overview of the ‘musicality of Shakespeare’ and the different functions of music in his plays,⁹⁷⁴ as well as from musicologist and composer Adolf Gotlib reporting from international concerts performing music from Shakespeare’s time.⁹⁷⁵

The ‘broad spectrum’ of the anniversary activities not only showcased the Soviet ‘reverence and enthusiasm’ for Shakespeare but also reflected the continuous Soviet view of culture as a primary ‘sphere of power and contestation’.⁹⁷⁶ With ‘multivalent internal purposes’ these jubilee events, as Makaryk observes, contained three strategies: ‘double-voicing, or the expression of admiration [of Shakespeare] coupled with castigation [of the Western approach to him], claims of ownership and superiority’, which echoed Turgenev’s claims a hundred years earlier and finally ‘the Stakhanovite idea of exceeding all norms of adulation’.⁹⁷⁷ Thus the Shakespeare anniversary became ‘our own special occasion, a red-letter day in the calendar of a country in which Shakespeare has truly found a second home – a vast country, generous in love and gratitude, always ready to bring his great works to life again and again, pouring into them her own feelings and emotions.’⁹⁷⁸

But by far the best-known product of the celebrations, at least in the West, was Kozintsev’s cinema adaptation of *Hamlet* with Shostakovich’s music, which went on to be nominated for several international prizes (including the Golden Globe and BAFTA) and won the Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival in 1964. Apart from being one of the most successful cinematic exports of the Soviet Union, this film also provided a first encounter with Soviet Shakespeare appropriations for most non-Russian speakers, and hence it has been widely discussed and written about. Although many of the resulting readings are reductionist in their insistence, without any scientific/archival proof, on Kozintsev’s film being solely a criticism of the Soviet regime,⁹⁷⁹ there also exist more scholarly and objective studies of Kozintsev’s

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/shakespeare-anniversary-in-russia/query/Shakespeare>, accessed 18 December 2015.

⁹⁷³ *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 1964/4, 75-91.

⁹⁷⁴ Aleksander Anikst, ‘Shekspir i muzyka’, *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 1964/4, 76-8.

⁹⁷⁵ Adolf Gotlib, ‘Eto zvuchalo v Shekspirovskom teatre’, 79-81.

⁹⁷⁶ Irena Makaryk, ‘“Here is my space”: The 1964 Shakespeare Celebrations in the USSR’, in Erica Sheen and Isabel Karremann (ed.), *Celebrating Shakespeare in Cold War Europe*, London, Palgrave Pivot, 2016, 51-62.

⁹⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁸ Roman Samarin, ‘Preface’, in Samarin and Aleksandr Nikoliukin (eds.), *Shakespeare in the Soviet Union: a Collection of Articles*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1966, 14.

⁹⁷⁹ For an example from a respected scholar, see, Tiffany Ann Conroy Moore, *Kozintsev’s Shakespeare Films: Russian Political Protest in ‘Hamlet’ and ‘King Lear’*, London, McFarland, 2012.

cinematic language and his appropriation of Shakespeare, as well as of Shostakovich's film music.⁹⁸⁰ Apart from this music's genesis, its musical properties and its relation to the film, it is interesting to observe the afterlife of the score - not just of the orchestral suite that emerged from it, but also Shostakovich's own more cryptic use of its motifs and ideas in other non-programme works, chiefly his string quartets. The third movement of his ninth quartet, for example, features an exact quote from the scene of the graveyard, with Hamlet reminiscing on his childhood while holding Yorick's skull. As Dombrovskaja points out, in his sketches for the quartet at this point Shostakovich simply wrote 'Hamlet' in the middle of the page, without any musical notation.⁹⁸¹ The flourishes of the violin solo during Ophelia's mad scene, as well as the short lament motif in the same scene, both reappear in the eleventh String Quartet (movement 3, opening) and fourteenth String Quartet (movement 3, R89⁴⁻¹⁰), the latter having already appeared in the slow movement of the Seventh Quartet of 1960. It is also possible to trace the dotted-rhythm theme of Hamlet in the funeral march of the Fifteenth String Quartet. It is, of course, tempting to interpret such instances as the composer's hidden programme or message incorporated in the non-programmatic works, but it is just as possible to understand them in a more mundane fashion: for example, in the case of the quotation from the graveyard scene, the noises and spoken words in the film prevent the music from being heard, leaving open the possibility that Shostakovich simply did not want such a strong musical idea to be wasted.

Back in the early 1940s, when working on the score for Kozintsev's theatre production of *King Lear*, Shostakovich had admitted that 'at each encounter with Shakespeare, my thoughts go far beyond that humble task at hand; there appear musical dreams and beyond them the hope and desire of one day adapting the Shakespearean theme.'⁹⁸² The composer's friend and secretary Isaak Glikman remembers how he was asked on several occasions to write a libretto

⁹⁸⁰ On Kozintsev's film and various aspects of it see, for example: Courtney Lehmann, 'Grigori Kozintsev' in: Mark Thornton Burnett, Courtney Lehmann, Marguerite H. Rippey and Ramona Wray (eds.), *Welles, Kurosawa, Kozintsev, Zeffirelli*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, 92-140; Natalia Khomenko, 'The Cult of Shakespeare in Soviet Russia and the Vilified Ophelia', *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, 9/2 (2015), available at <http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/1360/show>, accessed 1 October 2016. On Shostakovich's music for the film see two articles in Alexander Ivashkin and Andrew Kirkman (eds.), *Contemplating Shostakovich: Life, Music and Film*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2012: Erik Heine, 'Madness by Design: Hamlet's State as Defined Through Music', 97-120, and Olga Dombrovskaja, 'Hamlet, King Lear and Their Companions: The Other Side of Film Music', 141-166; also other articles by Dombrovskaja, including her forthcoming preface to the *Hamlet* film music in *New Complete Collection of Shostakovich's Works*, Vol. 140.

⁹⁸¹ Dombrovskaja, 'Hamlet, King Lear and their Companions', 156.

⁹⁸² Dmitri Shostakovich, 'Zametka o muzyke k postanovke "Korolia Lira" v BDT im. M. Gor'kogo v 1941 godu', in "Korol Lir" v Bolshom Dramaticheskome teatre im. M. Gor'kogo, Leningrad-Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1941, 62.

on a Shakespeare play ‘except *Othello*’ (perhaps because of the status of Verdi’s opera),⁹⁸³ and after the completion of the *Hamlet* film-score, Shostakovich had asked his opinion about the possibility of a symphonic poem on the subject.⁹⁸⁴ During work on the film and its music, Kozintsev reported how Shostakovich even told him that he was working on a *Hamlet* symphony.⁹⁸⁵ None of these plans ever came to anything. However, the references to the film music in his quartets suggest that he may have been incorporating *Hamlet*-related ideas in his other works in a similar way to Meyerhold with excerpts from his never-realised production of *Hamlet* (see Chapter 1.6.3).

5.4 *Hamlet* after the Thaw: a multi-generic affair

Perhaps prompted by the 1964 anniversary celebrations, from the mid-1960s there was a distinct rise in the number of non-theatrical adaptations of *Hamlet*. The play and/or its heroes and themes were used as subject matter for opera, ballet, film-ballet and songs (both art songs and popular/estrada), a trend which continued all the way to the collapse of the Soviet Union and beyond.

As Dobrenko observes, the end of the Thaw in non-political spheres is not easy to define. The political end is generally considered to be marked by the resolution of the October plenary session of the Central Committee (CPSU) in 1964, which toppled Khrushchev and handed power to Leonid Brezhnev. In other respects, however, such as the economy, the Thaw continued for a few more years. As for cultural history, the final chords were sounded by the trial of Andrei Siniavskii and Iulii Daniel in winter 1966, the Fourth Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers in spring 1967 with Solzhenitsyn’s call for an end to censorship, and finally Aleksandr Tvardovskii’s February 1970 resignation from the post of editor-in-chief of the journal *Novii mir*, ‘which had been the center of the liberal intelligentsia’.⁹⁸⁶ Later Mikhail Gorbachev would refer to this period of ‘creeping re-Stalinisation’⁹⁸⁷ as the Era of Stagnation (*zastoi*).⁹⁸⁸

⁹⁸³ Isaak Glikman, ‘Commentaries to letters of 1964’, *Pis'ma k drugu: Dmitri Shostakovich – Isaaku Glikmanu*, Moscow, DSCH, St Petersburg, Kompozitor, 1993, 195, trans. Anthony Phillips as *Story of a Friendship: The Letters of Dmitri Shostakovich to Isaak Glikman 1941-1975*, London, Faber, 1993, 116.

⁹⁸⁴ Glikman, *Diaries*, Shostakovich archive, f. 4, r. 2/4, diary entry for 30 March 1954, file 38.

⁹⁸⁵ Grigori Kozintsev, ‘Prostranstvo tragedii’, *Sobranie sochineniiv p'iaty tomakh*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1984, Vol. 4, 258. Also in Kozintsev, *King Lear: The Space of Tragedy*, 247.

⁹⁸⁶ Dobrenko and Il'ia Kalinin, ‘Literary Criticism during the Thaw’, in Dobrenko and Tihanov (eds.), *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism*, 184-5.

⁹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸⁸ See Edwin Bacon and Mark Sandle, *Brezhnev Reconsidered*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2002, 1.

Senelick and Ostrovsky point out the paradox that ‘the period known as Stagnation, owing to the smug, stolid, and increasingly arteriosclerotic leadership of Leonid Brezhnev, also saw the most exciting upsurge in theatrical creativity since the 1920s.’⁹⁸⁹ This was despite or perhaps even thanks to the mechanisms of theatre censorship maintained by the Ministry of Culture under the leadership from 1960 to 1974 of Ekaterina Furtseva, as it forced theatre directors to come up with innovative creative ideas that could nevertheless successfully pass through the censorship filters. The theatre was, after all, where people flocked in order to ‘hear messages they could not hear elsewhere.’⁹⁹⁰ In many ways the situation is paralleled by the new realist Iranian cinema, particularly the works of Abbas Kiarostami, which have risen to international acclaim but were in effect a result of painful censorship, which the director avoided by choosing simple subject matter and exploring the lives of distant villages. In the case of Soviet Union, once these conditions were removed by the collapse of the system, there remained no need for such Aesopian language or scenic metaphors. The creative results were themselves therefore somewhat paradoxical. For instance, when the Lithuanian theatre company headed by Eimuntas Nekrosius performed *Hamlet* in London as a part of the 2012 Globe to Globe festival, the actor of the title role, Andrius Mamontovas (also Lithuania’s leading rock star) admitted that: ‘I miss those secret messages... there were always little secret messages from the artist to the audience. But there’s no need for that now because you can say what you want openly – it’s more entertainment now.’⁹⁹¹

5.4.1 ‘I am Hamlet’: Songs

Casting a rock star as Hamlet, who performs his music as a part of the production, was probably prompted by Yuri Lyubimov’s *Hamlet* starring the Russian bard, poet and actor, Vladimir Vysotsky as the Danish prince, premiered on 29 November 1971. Dressed in sweater and jeans, Vysotsky opened each night of the production, singing to his seven-string guitar accompaniment. The production was so successful that it ran for nine consecutive seasons until Vysotsky’s death in 1980, overshadowing along the way Andrey Tarkovsky’s *Hamlet* at the Lenkom (Leninskii Komsomol) Theatre in Moscow in 1976. This was not the first collaboration of Vysotsky and Lyubimov, but by casting such an iconic figure against other more blank characters and against his scenic metaphor in the form of a heavy cloth curtain, Lyubimov confirmed his new theatrical path. As Birgit Beumers observes, in the

⁹⁸⁹ Senelick, Ostrovsky, *The Soviet Theater*, 555.

⁹⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁹¹ David Sillito, ‘Hamlet - the Play Stalin Hated’, *BBC News Magazine*, 23 April 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17770170>, accessed 5 December 2015.

early 1970s ‘Lyubimov gave prominence to the sincerity of the individual and his tragic loneliness’ in a hostile environment.⁹⁹² In the case of *Hamlet*, the individual (Hamlet) was set apart from society with the help of the scenic solutions of the designer David Borovsky, such as the now legendary omnipresent curtain woven from thick yarn, and by matching all the costumes to the earthy colour of the curtain against Hamlet’s black sweater. In this way ‘it was left to him to resolve the conflict between his action and his conscience.’⁹⁹³

A year after the premiere⁹⁹⁴ Vysotsky composed a poem and song entitled ‘My Hamlet’ (*Moi Gamlet*), in which he spoke from Hamlet’s point of view of the prince’s inner turmoil and conflict.⁹⁹⁵ Vysotsky’s impersonation of Hamlet - whether as an actor or singer - helped Shakespeare’s tragedy to penetrate deeper into the popular culture of the country, all the way to such genres as Soviet estrada. For example, the moment that defined Alla Pugacheva’s ‘rush to the spotlight’ of Soviet pop culture is defined by the performance of her song ‘Arlekino’ at the Golden Orfeo festival in Bulgaria in 1975, which, apart from public recognition, brought her the Grand Prix of this socialist pop competition.⁹⁹⁶ The song’s melody, by Bulgarian Emil Dmitrov, received a new arrangement and lyrics wherein the harlequin of the song describes his fate as a tired clown who has been playing Hamlet for himself for many years and who could reveal his tears only if he could only take off his mask, which he cannot. As in Vysotsky’s song, the phrase ‘I am Hamlet’ (*Ia Gamlet*) refers to Alexander Blok’s 1914 poem with the same title. The tragic middle section of Pugacheva’s song, which is overall a merry tune with grotesque accompaniment, together with her interpretation, created what has been called ‘a synthetic theatre of estrada’⁹⁹⁷

From the perspective of concert vocal repertoire, Shostakovich, following his two incidental music scores for the tragedy (1932 and 1954) and his film score of 1964, had two further encounters with *Hamlet*, specifically with the figures of Hamlet and Ophelia and their relationship. The first of these was the opening song of his 1967 cycle, *Seven Romances on the Poems of Alexander Blok* (Op. 127), for which he chose an early poem of Blok -

⁹⁹² Birgit Beumers, *Yuri Lyubimov at the Taganka Theatre: 1964-1994*, Amsterdam, Harwood, 1997, 101.

⁹⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁴ For a detailed description of the production, see *ibid.*, 109-117.

⁹⁹⁵ Vysotsky, *Sochineniia v 2 tomakh*, Vol. 2, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1991, Vol. 2, 64.

⁹⁹⁶ For a detailed account of Pugacheva’s career see David MacFadyen, *Red Stars: Personality and the Soviet Popular Song, 1955-1991*, Montreal, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001, 210–243, and Olga Partan, ‘The Jester-Queen of Russian Pop Culture’, *The Russian Review*, 66/ 3 (July 2007), 483-500.

⁹⁹⁷ B. Serebrennikova, *Pevtsy sovetskoi estrady*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1977, quoted in Macfadyen, *Red Stars*, 220.

‘Ophelia’s Song’, written in 1899.⁹⁹⁸ From an early age Blok had enormous admiration for Shakespeare, and for *Hamlet* in particular. This fascination grew and took a more mystical shape after 1 August 1898, when he acted some scenes of the tragedy alongside his future bride and embodiment of the Eternal Female, Liubov Mendel’eva, as Ophelia.⁹⁹⁹ Blok’s nine Hamlet-themed poems have dual significance in that they both represent the poet’s understanding and interpretation of *Hamlet* and ‘comment upon Blok’s personal experience in his relentless quest to define himself and his relation to Feminine Ideal’.¹⁰⁰⁰ What may have attracted Shostakovich to Blok’s *Hamlet* is the shift in the poet’s interpretation of the play from the theme of revenge or philosophical meditation on life to the theme of the tragedy of Hamlet-Ophelia’s love. In this regard Blok assumes the role of both Hamlet and Ophelia when describing their dependence on one another. In ‘Ophelia’s Song’, Blok identifies with Ophelia’s longing heart in her grieving for her beloved’s departure to the faraway lands from which he shall never return. Although Blok’s Ophelia does not sound particularly mad, the poem could also be seen as a variation on one of Ophelia’s songs from her mad scene, ‘He is dead and gone’. This hypothesis is backed up by Blok’s wife, who remembers one night when she and Blok were reading various translations of Ophelia’s songs and suddenly Blok showed her this poem, telling her: ‘There is yet another translation [of Ophelia’s mad songs]!’¹⁰⁰¹

Shostakovich’s setting of this song – unusually for voice and cello, since it was written for the famous husband-and-wife musicians Mstislav Rostropovich and Galina Vushnevskaja – opens with a declamatory cello line, as if reciting a monologue which from the start shows darkening tendencies by means of its flattening of scale-degrees. With the entrance of the voice, which unlike the cello is almost entirely diatonic (C minor), the song turns into two parallel monologues rather than a dialogue. This continues throughout the first strophe, which could be described as a memory of promises made and broken (Ex. 5.4a). The second verse, however, which is more rooted in the present and Ophelia’s realisation of the tragedy at hand, sees the cello trying to interact with the voice, for example by the clash in bar 24 of its G flat against the soprano’s G natural (Ex. 5.4b). This gesture proves fatal as when singing the word

⁹⁹⁸ Shostakovich quotes as his source Blok, *Sochineniya v dvukh tomakh*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1955, Vol. 1, 11; see *Letters to a Friend*, 226, letter of 3 February 1967.

⁹⁹⁹ For more on this performance, see M. Beketova, *Vospominaniia ob Aleksandre Bloke*, Moscow, Izdatel’stvo Pravda, 1990, 50-1, 540-1; M. Rybnikova, *Blok-Gamlet*, Moscow, Svetlana, 1923, 25-32.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Richard Byrns, ‘Aleksandr Blok and “Hamlet”’, *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes* 18/1, 1976, 58–65, here 58.

¹⁰⁰¹ See commentaries to ‘Ophelia’s Song’, in Blok, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii 20 tomakh*, Vol. 1, Moscow, Nauka, 1997, 293.

‘tears’ the voice goes to G flat and the second verse, which is sung entirely in the lower register ends with this flattened note. The third verse goes back to the opening, but as with other numbers of this cycle, despite Shostakovich’s tendency towards strophic construction, it changes, here by stretching the lines and gradually unflattening the cello’s previous modal deviations: now, it seems, it is Ophelia’s tragic destiny that is affecting Hamlet and his conscience.

Ex. 5.4: a) and b): Shostakovich, *Blok cycle*, No. 1 ‘Ophelia’s Song’

a) **Moderato** ♩ = 66

Raz-lu - cha - ias' s de-voy mi-loy, drug, ty klial -s'ia mne liu- bit!..

b)

Tam, za Da ni - ei scha - stli-voy be-re ga tvo - i vo mgle... Val ser-di - tyi, go-vor-

li - vyi mo-et sle-zy na ska- le...

The juxtaposition of the transparent diatonic vocal line representing Ophelia against the ‘hyperminor’ (or flatter-than-minor) cello (Hamlet) makes this song at some level a musical parallel to Mikhail Vrubel’s 1888 painting, *Hamlet and Ophelia* (see Plate 5.1). The painting, set at dusk by the water, depicts Hamlet talking to Ophelia. The painting does not correspond to any particular moment of the tragedy, yet each of the figures contains the essence of the Shakespearean characters: Ophelia, ‘a study in blue and violet’ is the more vertical component, evoking, as with Gustave Moreau (for example in his 1885 *Eve*), purity and spirituality, which is enhanced by her near-dematerialisation into the vegetation that surrounds her; she is becoming one with the nature. Ophelia’s near-transparency is set against Hamlet’s density. Yet a gentle arabesque curve joins the two figures, suggesting a dialogue or even a ‘dédoublement’ of the tragic hero.¹⁰⁰² The ‘somber hues of the evening scene’, which Byrns links to the atmosphere ‘of premonition and foreboding’,¹⁰⁰³ are evoked in Shostakovich’s music by the ever-flattening degrees in the cello part. Similarly, despite the overall melancholic character of Shostakovich’s song, the opposition of masculine and feminine, of translucent and dense, gives the setting the same underlying dramatic tension as Vrubel’s painting and Blok’s *Hamlet*-themed poems.

¹⁰⁰² For the notion of ‘double’, see Michel Guiomar, *Principes d’une esthétique de la mort*, Paris, José Corti, 1988 (orig. pub. 1967), 285-324.

¹⁰⁰³ Richard Byrns, ‘The Artistic Worlds of Vrubel’ and Blok’, *The Slavonic and Eastern European Journal*, 23/1 (Spring 1979), 38-50, here 44-5.

Plate 5.1: Mikhail Vrubel', *Hamlet and Ophelia*, 1888



In this, as in the later 'I am Hamlet' (III, 91), where the poet is Hamlet himself, Blok intimates that the prince has lost a spiritually necessary part of his own being with Ophelia's death; he is in a frigid world from which the life force has disappeared. Like Vrubel', Blok is able to shift back and forth between the two roles, finding male and female aspects in embodiments of the title-figure.

Blok felt a great affinity with and admiration for Vrubel'. Although from different generations, the two held comparable views in terms of apocalyptic visions and the Eternal Feminine.¹⁰⁰⁴ Just as in Shostakovich's song, both Vrubel' and Blok indulge in role-play by assuming the mask of Hamlet and Ophelia in turn and shifting roles back and forth, finding 'male and female aspects in the embodiments of the Central Figure.'¹⁰⁰⁵

Something similar can be detected in Shostakovich's next *Hamlet*-themed song, 'Hamlet's Dialogue with his Conscience', the third number in the 1973 song cycle, *Six Poems of*

¹⁰⁰⁴ Byrns, 'The Artistic Worlds of Vrubel' and Blok', 38.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

Marina Tsvetaeva for voice (contralto) and piano (Op. 143).¹⁰⁰⁶ Tsvetaeva wrote her three Hamlet poems in 1923 and later included them as autonomous lyrics in her poetry collection, *After Russia*.¹⁰⁰⁷ ‘Hamlet’s Dialogue’ is placed last, and in it Ophelia’s voice, which had been heard in the two previous poems, is replaced by that of Hamlet’s conscience addressing him by his name and by repeated evocations of Ophelia’s ‘muddy’ death.¹⁰⁰⁸ Each of these references is then confronted by a reminder of Hamlet’s love for Ophelia, paraphrasing Shakespeare’s ‘Forty thousand brothers could not, with all their quantity of love, make up my sum’ (V/1) in his defence. But these attempts are gradually deflected, and the poem ends with Hamlet questioning his love for Ophelia: I *perplexed* loved her?¹⁰⁰⁹ Given Tsvetaeva’s harsh judgement of Hamlet, which seems to refer back to a Turgenevian reading of the Dane, Shostakovich’s selecting of this poem seemingly contradicts his affinity with the character of Hamlet as shown in his film music. However, his song removes both the stage direction ‘perplexed’ and, more importantly, the final question mark, providing further evidence of his compassion with Hamlet.

Although Tsvetaeva does not clarify which words belong to Hamlet and which to his conscience, each verse combining the two roles, it is often assumed that it is the conscience who evokes the image of Ophelia’s death and Hamlet who placates these accusations with ‘his protestations of love’.¹⁰¹⁰ Support for this view may be found in the poetic construction itself, since the death evocations of the conscience, with their ‘cross-stanzaic boundaries’, ‘contain more enjambments and are endowed with greater thematic and rhythmic variety’ than Hamlet’s repeating of ‘ever smaller’ contributions.¹⁰¹¹ If this view is accepted, Shostakovich’s treatment reverses the roles, or at least their power: Hamlet’s ‘conscience’ is restrained by setting his words to repeated notes, whereas his own defence features a wider variety of intervals, rhythm and dynamics. Only in the second verse, which contains the image of Ophelia’s garland, does Shostakovich move away from his initial repeated notes and instead deploys a variation of Hamlet’s first protestation of love, thus beginning the process of the fusion of the two roles earlier than Tsvetaeva.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Shostakovich also arranged the cycle for voice and chamber orchestra in 1974 as Op. 143a.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Olga Peters Hasty, *Tsvetaeva’s Orphic Journeys in the Worlds of Word*, Evanston IL, Northwestern University Press, 1996, 72.

¹⁰⁰⁸ From Shakespeare’s own description of Ophelia’s death, Act V, Scene 7.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Tsvetaeva adds the word ‘perplexed’ in a similar manner to a stage direction.

¹⁰¹⁰ Hasty, *Tsvetaeva’s Orphic Journeys*, 71.

¹⁰¹¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

On the other hand, it seems that Shostakovich's reading of this poem is greatly influenced by his obsession with death. In this respect the song can be heard as a disguised variation on 'To be or not to be', rather than on its ostensible topic of Hamlet and Ophelia. The song opens with a descending and ever-flattening piano introduction, which leads to the first reference to Ophelia (albeit unnamed) in the 'muck'. Attributing both parts (Hamlet and his conscience) to the same voice and setting the evocation of death by repeated notes suggest a deep-seated affinity with Schubert's famous 'Death and the Maiden', as well as echoing the repeated notes that accompanied the scene of Ophelia's madness in Kozintsev's film (Ex. 5.5).¹⁰¹² The repeated notes are then taken over by the piano, which continues to act as a representation of death until its postlude, where the prelude is restated an octave lower, finishing with a G-based dyad. The major-minor ambiguity at the very end could suggest that through this song Shostakovich was restoring what has been missing from almost all Soviet Hamlets in general and from his own previous depictions of this character in particular: his doubts. Himself increasingly infirm and facing the void, having experienced Akimov's power-thirsty Hamlet and Kozintsev's decisive one, Shostakovich could finally refer back to the existential essence of Hamlet's dilemmas: 'To be or not to be'.¹⁰¹³

¹⁰¹² This gesture is also present in the composer's String Quartet No. 15, composed in the same year.

¹⁰¹³ For more on Shostakovich's song cycles, see Philip Bullock, 'The Poet's Echo, the Composer's Voice: Monologic Verse or Dialogic Song?', in Pauline Fairclough (ed.), *Shostakovich Studies 2*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, 207-228; Caryl Emerson, 'Shostakovich and the Russian Literary Tradition', in Laurel Fay (ed.), *Shostakovich and His World*, Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2004, 183-226; Francis Maes, 'Between Reality and Transcendence: Shostakovich's Songs', in Pauline Fairclough and David Fanning (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shostakovich*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, 231-258.

Ex. 5.5: a) Shostakovich, *Six Poems of Marina Tsvetaeva*, No.3; b) Shostakovich, *Hamlet*, Op. 116, No. 26, ‘Madness of Ophelia’

a)

Largo ♩ = 80

p legato

ten.

p

Na dne o-na, gde il i vo-do-ros-li

b)

Andantino

pp

p

5.4.2 Hamlet moves: The tragedy as ballet

Shostakovich had still other connections with *Hamlet*, albeit indirect ones, when selections of his music (mainly from his film and 1932 theatre music) were used for various ballet adaptations, the first of them appearing as a ballet-film created specifically for the small screen and televised in 1969, and the latest being a 2015 production by Declan Donnellan and Radu Poklitaru at the Bolshoi Theatre using material from Shostakovich’s fifth and fifteenth symphonies.

The Soviet phenomenon of the TV ballet-film (*khoreodram*) on Shakespearean themes, which developed in the mid-1950s, shows the gradual stripping of the tragedies to a Romantic core, excising all political and sociological elements and subplots. This is particularly true for those on *Hamlet*. Here, as for operas and ballets in general, the diminishing role of secondary characters was as much a matter of practicality as a creative choice. In particular, choreographers seem to have preferred to base their ballets on the contrasts between mass scenes with cameo background and intimate settings with just a few main dancers. In her 1991 tele-ballet, *Meditation on the Theme of Hamlet (Razmysshlenie na temu Gamlet)*, Svetlana Voskresenskaia takes such reductions to the bare minimum of four characters: Hamlet, Ophelia, Gertrude and Claudius.¹⁰¹⁴ Relying on journalistic Aesopian readings of everything Soviet, Nancy Isenberg tries hard to ‘decode’ what she considers a network of ‘political clues’ in this rendition, going so far as to suggest such clichés as Gertrude representing ‘Mother Russia’. What she evidently does not appreciate is that Voskresenskaia is above all offering a take on Robert Helpmann’s 1948 ballet, *Hamlet*, where the choreography depicts images in the mind of a dying Hamlet.¹⁰¹⁵ Instead of Tchaikovsky’s music, which accompanied Helpmann’s ballet, here a medley of Shostakovich’s music, including his score for the 1932 *Hamlet*, his fifteenth String Quartet and his fourth Symphony, provides the musical canvas.

The popularity of ballet settings of Shakespeare tragedies coincided with the growing success of Soviet dancers in the West, particularly that of Rudolf Nureyev, who defected in June 1961.¹⁰¹⁶ As Nancy Isenberg observes, the post-Stalin ‘brief but powerful’ encounter between Soviet dancers and their Western counterparts proved costly for what had been ‘held to be the perfect mirror of Soviet grandeur.’¹⁰¹⁷ When in 1964 the Sadler’s Wells ballet troupe revived Robert Helpmann’s above-mentioned *Hamlet* with the title role assigned to Nureyev, the Soviet reply came in the form of the 1969 ‘choreographic suite’, produced as a telefilm by the studio ‘Ekran’, starring Latvian Maris Liepa and set to a hybrid of Shostakovich scores to both the 1932 theatre production and the 1964 screen version of *Hamlet*. Directed by Sergei Evlakhishvili (who would later direct other tele-spectacles on literary classics, such as *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Richard III*) and lasting some 40 minutes, the Suite was designed as

¹⁰¹⁴ Nancy Isenberg, ‘Dramatic Leaps and Political Falls: Russian Hamlet Ballet’, in Ruth J. Owen (ed.), *The Hamlet Zone: Reworking Hamlet for European Cultures*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars, 2012, 23.

¹⁰¹⁵ Alan Brissenden, ‘Ballet’ in: Michael Dobson, Stanley Wells, Will Sharpe and Erin Sullivan (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, 26.

¹⁰¹⁶ For more on dancers’ defection during the Cold War, see David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003.

¹⁰¹⁷ Nancy Isenberg, ‘Dramatic Leaps and Political Falls’, 21.

a syrupy love-story, or more precisely love triangle, made up of Hamlet, Laertes and Ophelia. Using a minimalist setting of a beige staircase against a beige and blue background, the choreography alternates between solo, pas-de-deux, trios and group scenes featuring the corps de ballet of the Bolshoi Theatre as actors, courtiers and personifications of Hamlet's disturbed thoughts. Claudius and Polonius feature as catalysers of the lovers' misery, while Gertrude's brief appearance has only accessory significance.

The next two Hamlet-themed ballet-telefilms used extracts from Tchaikovsky's *Hamlet*. With only six feature roles (Hamlet, the Ghost, Claudius, Gertrude, Ophelia and Laertes) the 1971 production of Lentelefilm was a 19-minute suite choreographed by and starring Nikita Dolgushin, which was most likely influenced by Kozintsev's film with its use of black-and-white cinematography and the setting at the gates of a castle. In 1988, Lentelefilm issued a composition of three mini-ballets based on Shakespeare tragedies: *Pavana mavra* (with the title taken from José Limon's 1949 *The Moor's Pavane*, based on *Othello* and with music of Henry Purcell), *Hamlet* (using Tchaikovsky's music) and *Romeo and Juliet* (to Tchaikovsky's fantasy-overture). Here *Hamlet* once again had only four main characters: the prince, Ophelia, Gertrude and Claudius. In compensation it enjoyed an over-elaborate visual style, being set in several different locations, mostly with heavy decors making extensive use of montages for flashbacks (probably inspired by Helpmann's concept of depicting Hamlet's mind) and even included a scene that closely followed the setting of Vrubel's 1888 *Hamlet and Ophelia* (see Plate 5.1 above).

Unlike *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* had to wait until the late 1960s to attract original Soviet ballet music, and none of the three major *Hamlet* ballets that ensued could match the success of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* or even Aleksi Machavariani's 1957 *Othello*. Of the three *Hamlets*, two came from outside the metropolitan hub of Moscow/Leningrad: Tbilisi, Georgia in the case of Revaz Gabichvadze's score choreographed by Vakhtang Chabukiani (who had also been the mastermind of Machavariani's *Othello*), and Almaty (Alma-Ata), Kazakhstan in the case of Aida Issakova's, choreographed by Bulat Ayukhanov. These were both premiered in 1971 and preceded by a few months by the Kirov's premiere of Nikolai Chervinsky's *Hamlet* choreographed by Konstantin Sergeev; the latter had been the first performer of Romeo in Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* in 1940, alongside Galina Ulanova. For Chervinsky's ballet the role of Hamlet was assigned to the young Mikhail Baryshnikov, who soon rejected the academism of Sergeev, before defecting to the West in 1974 while on tour in Toronto; to add insult to injury, two years later he took up the role of Hamlet in John

Neumeier's *Hamlet Connotations*, to Aaron Copland's music, which was premiered in New York in January 1976.

5.4.3 Opera vs theatre: Hamlet and other characters

In his negative review of Ambroise Thomas's 1868 operatic *Hamlet*, Tchaikovsky questioned the composer's and the librettists' respect for 'the sacredness of Shakespeare's art'. He went on to praise German composers who, according to him, had realised the inability of music to convey the irony that pervades Hamlet's speeches and his intellectual processes, and who therefore avoided any temptation to turn *Hamlet* to an opera. He complained that 'the light-minded Frenchman' just saw in Hamlet 'the usual tragic hero' and did not 'stop for long to dwell on the fine points of Hamlet's psychology.'¹⁰¹⁸ As Winton Dean has observed, one of the reasons for the fact that of nearly 300 Shakespearean operas, very few – if any - have joined the canonic repertoire, is that 'Shakespeare characters constitute a more formidable obstacle to a composer than his plots'.¹⁰¹⁹ According to Dean, the job of an operatic setting of Shakespeare plays can be done 'only by a composer who is not afraid to impose his own personality on the text.'¹⁰²⁰ For *Hamlet*, that task was addressed by two Soviet composers, Aleksi Machavariani and Sergei Slonimsky, who did so by incorporating meta-musical socio-political commentaries in their operas composed in 1967/8 and 1991 respectively.

Identifying himself with the Danish prince, Machavariani commented that his was a 'Hamlet with Georgian spirit'. Insistent that Shakespeare would always remain a contemporary, he regarded *Hamlet*'s main themes as symbolising the war of new and old ideas - truth and justice versus falsehood and treason. Criticising those productions of the tragedy where Hamlet is depicted as a weak and indecisive character, Machavariani described his Hamlet in a similar way to Radlov, as a brave, strong person who is capable of true love and at the same time of great disgust for evil, whilst remaining a tragic figure. This heroic reading is reflected in the music's epic, even oratorical, style, with a substantial role assigned from the outset to the chorus. Where this concept departs from the apparently similar interpretation of Radlov in 1938 is in the allegorical nationalist agenda. In the Machavariani's words: 'This is a personified tragedy signalling the renaissance of a man. I see common features in the fate of

¹⁰¹⁸ B.L. (pseud. for P. Tchaikovsky), 'Ital'ianskaia opera – "Gamlet" opera Ambruaza Toma', *Russkie vedemosti*, 16/28 December 1872, also at http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/The_Italian_Opera_Ambroise_Thomas'_Opera_%22Hamlet%22#ref5, accessed 17 December 2015.

¹⁰¹⁹ Winton Dean, 'Shakespeare and Opera', 94.

¹⁰²⁰ *Ibid.*, 95.

Hamlet and Georgia.¹⁰²¹ Accordingly, having selected Ivan Machabeli's translation from the original,¹⁰²² the composer insisted that his opera should be first performed in Georgian. This condition, together with other circumstances, such as his twice turning down membership of the Party, his insistence on his Georgian identity whilst abroad, and jealousy caused by the great international success of his *Othello*,¹⁰²³ placed the composer in disfavour among his colleagues and in the eyes of officials. Consequently Machavariani's *Hamlet* remained unstaged.¹⁰²⁴

If, for Machavariani, 'in the character of Hamlet... most important is tragedy as an outcome of fate, rather than tragedy caused by the vicissitudes of life',¹⁰²⁵ Slonimsky in his opera, which was premiered at Samara's Academic Theatre for Opera and Ballet on 1 October 1993, regarded the uneducated and corrupt crowd as the root of all miseries.

Casting the opera in three acts and with only six main roles, Machavariani decided to reduce the role of Horatio radically, a decision that invites comparison both with the productions of the 1930s and with Slonimsky's opera, regarding not only Horatio but also the secondary roles in general. For Akimov in 1932, Horatio had represented an Erasmus figure, acting as Hamlet's partner and even double, to the point of sharing the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy with him. Radlov, on the other hand, advising his actors, in what he called a replacement for a *doklad*, explained that his heroic Hamlet had his parallel in Laertes' lines: both young men had lost their beloved fathers and Ophelia; both were seeking revenge and the rightful throne of Denmark; Laertes, however, was driven by his uncontrollable emotions rather than by his sense of duty.¹⁰²⁶ Accordingly Radlov, probably due to objections raised during the discussions (*obsuzhdenie*) of the production, chose the young Boris Smirnov as a more passionate and energetic actor for the leading role; Smirnov had previously been acting as the hot-blooded Laertes to Dudnikov's more introvert Hamlet, suggesting that for the director the two roles were, to some extent, interchangeable. Later, during the Radlov Theatre's evacuation in Pyatigorsk and then in Daugavpils after Radlov's release, he chose Konstantin Kriukov, the Laertes to Smirnov's Hamlet, as his new Danish prince.

¹⁰²¹ Manana Kordzaia, *Alexi Matchavariani: Creator and Time*, Tbilisi, n.p., 2013, 64.

¹⁰²² Machavariani, 'Opera *Gamlet*', *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 1964/1, 152.

¹⁰²³ Reported by the composer's son, conductor and composer Vakhtang Machavariani – email exchange with the author, November 2015.

¹⁰²⁴ As claimed by Vakhtang Machavariani, *ibid*.

¹⁰²⁵ Manana Kordzaia, *Alexi Matchavariani: Creator and Time*, Tbilisi, n.p., 2013, 63-64.

¹⁰²⁶ Radlov, 'Gamlet iz besedy s akterami', *Iskusstvo i zhizn*, 1938/3, 17-20.

Slonimsky had a much more socio-dramatic reason for removing Horatio from the libretto of his ‘dramma per musica’.¹⁰²⁷ The composer centred his opera on the theme of the faceless crowd (*tol’pa*), who are ready to salute any ruling dictator so long as they are safe. He represented this crowd in the figures of two gravediggers of old and new generations, who feature in the added Prologue and Postlude to Shakespeare’s text. Slonimsky has explained that ‘the idea was to prove that the slogan “vox populi vox dei” (*glas narodi glas bozhe*) is not true.’ Hence he gave them a long prologue in ‘the lowest possible genre of “bardic songs” (*bardovskie pesni*)’. To demonstrate the illiteracy and ignorance of the people, Slonimsky made them sing even the name of Hamlet with the wrong accentuation (*gamLET*). This was not only added in the text but also emphasised musically. ‘Hamlet is afraid of such people. And in my opinion that is why Shakespeare gave Hamlet Horatio, whom Hamlet calls his friend and asks to tell the truth.’ Slonimsky decided that only pure instrumental music would be capable of ‘telling the truth’ and consequently accorded the role of Horatio to the orchestra. On the stage his Hamlet ‘was left to be even lonelier and more tragic than Shakespeare had intended’.

If the orchestra was to be Horatio, then the instrumental overture that follows the gravediggers’ song (prologue) echoes the opening of Akimov’s opening of his *Hamlet*, with Horatio announcing the story he was about to tell. This resemblance is reinforced by the fact that the overture introduces all the major themes of the opera, and, in Slonimsky’s words: ‘tells the truth about the story of *Hamlet*’. The composer prefers the term ‘thematic system (*tematizm*)’ to ‘leitmotif in the Wagnerian manner’, since each character has several themes related to their emotional and actual state. Most of these appear in one form or another during the overture, among them: the theme of the Ghost of the father (R13), the theme of Hamlet’s duel (from R16), the theme of prophecy of death (*predchuvstvie smerti*) (R19), themes of Ophelia in natural tones (R20), the theme of ‘To be or not to be’ (R24), and the theme of Ophelia’s madness and death (R28) (Ex. 5.6).

¹⁰²⁷ According to the composer, this classification had to do with his desire to distinguish his work from the traditional genre of opera. This and the following quoted remarks are derived from an interview with Sergei Slonimsky at his apartment in St Petersburg, 28 March 2013.

Ex. 5.6: 'Thematic system' in Sergei Slonimsky, *Hamlet*

Largo $\text{♩} = 40$

a) 13



b) 16 **Allegro marziale** $\text{♩} = 80$
marcato
p cresc.



c) 19 [**Allegro marziale** $\text{♩} = 80$]
mf
p



d) 20 **Moderato** $\text{♩} = 60$
mp cant.
p
ten.
mf



e) 14 **L'istesso tempo** ($\text{♩} = 66$)
p



f) 28 [$\text{♩} = 66$]
p
f



The musical medium helped Slonimsky's treatment of the scene of 'the Mousetrap' scene to remain closer to the instructions in Shakespeare's text than is the case in most theatrical productions. The presence of a pantomime version of 'the murder of Gonzago' prior to its theatrical (mise-en-abîme) performance has often confused producers. Only few theatrical productions have striven, as those of Radlov and Akimov did, somehow to keep the double play-within-a-play (see Chapter 2.10.3 and Chapter 3.5.3). Slonimsky, however, uses music most advantageously to create a twofold 'mousetrap' scene: 'a ballet-within-the-opera followed by opera-within-the-opera'. Both episodes, however, are constructed from similar musical material. The ballet starts as an ordinary court presentation in antique modes and style (R170-R173); the music then turns into an 'infernal dance' with extensive use of tritones (R174-178) pointing to the poisoning of the sleeping King. This is followed by a funeral march for the deceased King-actor, during which the Queen expresses her sorrow (R180). A similar pattern develops in the 'opera-within-the-opera' section, with the addition of vocal lines.

Not only did Slonimsky use Pasternak's translation for his libretto, but he also followed many aspects of Pasternak's reading of the tragedy. The composer has described the essence of the tragedy as residing in the prince's loneliness caused by his debt to his father, which stops him from being himself and forces him to follow the will of his father and accomplish the duty that has been entrusted upon him. Apart from this, Slonimsky has often referred to the importance of religious and moral values to Hamlet and even to his surroundings, an example of which appears in Claudius's confession scene and Hamlet's unwillingness to kill a praying man: 'This is the religious conscience that reigned back then, the same that Boris Godunov shows when repenting his crimes.' Such a reading echoes Pasternak's 'perception of a hidden strength and religious motivation in the character and the role of Hamlet';¹⁰²⁸ Pasternak, too, believed that 'From the moment of the ghost's appearance, Hamlet renounces himself in order to "do the will of him who sent him".'¹⁰²⁹

The idea of self-denial and succumbing to the will of a 'father' and God also points to Andrey Tarkovsky's final film, *The Sacrifice* (1986), where the protagonist sacrifices himself and his family in order to save humanity from an imminent nuclear attack. Despite dreaming of creating a film version of *Hamlet* and incorporating Hamletian themes in his films,

¹⁰²⁸ Barnes, *Boris Pasternak*, 171.

¹⁰²⁹ Ibid. See also Anna France, 'Boris Pasternak's Interpretations of Hamlet', *Russian Literature Triquarterly* 7 (1972), 219-222.

Tarkovsky only managed to direct a theatrical version of the tragedy for the 1976-7 season of the Moscow Lenkom (Leninskii Komsomol) Theatre. The mixed reaction to the production meant that very few materials concerning it are available.¹⁰³⁰ The published discussion between Tarkovsky and the crew, some short clips and interviews, as well as Tarkovsky's subsequent diary entries on his work on the production and later on his plans regarding the film version of *Hamlet*, all indicate that he had a very different reading of the tragedy from Pasternak's. Indeed, despite using an edited version of the latter translation for his staging, he had serious reservations about it preferring Mikhail Morozov's 'literal translation'.¹⁰³¹ For Tarkovsky

the true *tragedy* of Hamlet consists of the fact that he still turned into a vulgar person (*poshliakom*) - he became a killer, a dirty killer, an avenger! ... I wonder what was more frightening for him: the first time he kills or the first time he realises that he is capable of killing?¹⁰³²

For Tarkovsky the drama of Hamlet was not in that 'he is doomed to die and thus perishes', but rather that 'tragically the protagonist is threatened by a moral, spiritual death. And because of this, he is impelled to reject his spiritual pretensions and become an ordinary murderer. He has to stop living, and in other words, to commit suicide. That is, not to carry out his moral duty.'¹⁰³³

The fact that Tarkovsky convinced the main director of Lenkom Theatre, Mark Zakharov, to accept the film-maker's own preferred composer, Eduard Artemiev, and his two favourite actors, Anatolii Solonitsyn and Margarita Terekhova as Hamlet and Gertrude respectively, suggests how important these three components were to the director's personal understanding of the tragedy. Indeed, the very few excerpts from rehearsals and interview clips that have survived suggest the significance of the relationship between Hamlet and his mother.¹⁰³⁴ In this regard, Tarkovsky's interpretation of Ophelia had little or no trace of romanticism: as the actress, Inna Churikova, who was a member of the troupe of Lenkom, stated in an interview: 'Ophelia is a normal human being. And I don't really know if she loves Hamlet out of love or

¹⁰³⁰ Robert Bird, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Elements of Cinema*, London, Reaktion, 2008, 181.

¹⁰³¹ 'Pasternak's [translation] is appalling, opaque; there are moments when I feel he is deliberately obfuscating the sense of the play, or at any rate of some passages' – see Andrey Tarkovsky, *Time Within Time: The Diaries, 1970-1986*, London, Faber, 1994, 121.

¹⁰³² O. Surkova, "'Gamlet'" Andreia Tarkovskogo: Besedy na Lomonosovskom', *Iskusstvo Kino*, 1998/3, also at <http://tarkovskiy.su/texty/vospominania/Hamlet.html>, accessed 25 August 2016.

¹⁰³³ John Gianvito (ed.), *Andrey Tarkovsky: Interviews*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2006, 135.

¹⁰³⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dswRWrch3xc>, accessed 17 December 2015.

just because he is a prince. In any case she loves a prince and she really desires to be a queen. In this regard, Hamlet's mother is her rival.'¹⁰³⁵ Depicting Ophelia as 'a strong woman (*krepkaia baba*)', Tarkovsky described during the rehearsals a scene featuring Hamlet and the two women: whilst classical music is playing, Hamlet is lying in his dirty clothes pondering about his having to become a 'swine (*svoloch*)' in order to complete his task; at this moment Ophelia gets up from the ever-present on-stage bed and opens her mouth to say something, but she is interrupted by the graceful passage of the Queen, which is signalled only by the sound made by the latter's clothes. Ophelia throws herself at the Queen and tears up her clothes, holding them in front of herself: 'Oh, oh, the queen (*U-U, Koroleva ...*) then all becomes clear'. Ophelia's striving for power resonates with Akimov's Hamlet and his goal of retrieving the throne of Denmark; she has no marionette-like features as in Kozintsev's film, and nothing in common with Radlov's well-behaved obedient daughter.

Compared to this multi-layered and somewhat Machiavellian Ophelia, Slonimsky's heroine follows a more Pasternakian/Russian reading of her as an ethereal, bright (*svetlaia*) innocent figure, who was indeed 'the true victim' and 'the most tragic image' of the play. Pasternak's treatment of Ophelia, in line with his 1917 poem, 'English lesson', featuring the Shakespearean heroine, has been described as a 'serious distortion of Shakespeare's tragic vision'. In what Rowe calls 'a purposeful simplification', Pasternak, and hence similarly Slonimsky, strives to convey 'a sense of sorrow at the destruction of a fragile precious beauty'.¹⁰³⁶ This 'one-dimensional' Ophelia resonates with Berlioz's depiction of the heroine in his cantata 'La mort d'Ophélie' (1848), and it follows her idealisation as a part of Russian literary tradition of the 19th century.¹⁰³⁷ Akimov's Ophelia might have turned into the opposite image but would have remained one-dimensional had it not been for Shostakovich's music, which helped turn Akimov's femme fatale into a woman with almost as many emotional layers as the heroine of the composer's opera *Lady Macbeth*.

In line with his reading of the play, Slonimsky gave his Ophelia some of his most tender melodies, including songs imbued with the spirit of English traditional music. Elsewhere, he harmonised the same melody for 'How should I your true love know?' as used previously by Walton and Shostakovich (see Chapter 5.2). Slonimsky's Ophelia has several themes,

¹⁰³⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰³⁶ Rowe, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, 149-50.

¹⁰³⁷ For more on various Russian readings of Ophelia, see Natalia Khomenko, 'The Cult of Shakespeare in Soviet Russia and the Vilified Ophelia', *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, 9/2 (2014), available at <http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/1360/show>, accessed 26 July 2016.

particularly during her mad scene (starting at R285): this is what the composer calls a ‘*vinok*’ (bunch) of themes. However, there is one theme in particular that Slonimsky identifies as ‘her poetic image’, to which she comes back regularly. This same theme appears in the orchestra as if depicting Hamlet’s thoughts as he awaits his death, followed by the theme of the Ghost for whom Hamlet has given his life.

Given Pasternak’s negative reaction to Kozintsev’s omission of Fortinbras in his 1954 theatre production, the poet would surely not have been wholly satisfied with Slonimsky’s treatment of this character. The composer had little faith in Fortinbras’s legitimacy as successor to the throne and regarded him as yet another ‘tyrant’. Consequently he transferred the triumphant final march of the Norwegian prince, which musically alludes to the famous Triumphant March from Verdi’s *Aida*, to the second act (Ex. 5.7). As a result the final scene, ‘the culmination of the opera’, according to Slonimsky, ends with Hamlet’s ‘the rest is silence’, followed by an orchestral postlude. Reports of Tarkovsky’s theatre rehearsals suggest that he too considered the duel to be the apotheosis of the tragedy. But his reasons differed somewhat: he believed there was no ‘note of triumph’ (*nota torzhestva*) in Hamlet’s murderous acts, whether directed at Laertes or at Claudius: ‘what triumph? To spill blood is humiliation (*unizhenie*).’¹⁰³⁸ This view was, of course, still not as dark and violent as Ingmar Bergman’s 1986 production, where the play ends with Fortinbras and his ‘gang’ marching to Danish rock music and dressed in leather, killing everyone with machine guns.¹⁰³⁹

¹⁰³⁸ Surkova, “‘Gamlet’ Andreia Tarkovskogo: Besedy na Lomonosovskom’.

¹⁰³⁹ Birgitta Steene, *Ingmar Bergman: A Reference Guide*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2005, 468; for reviews of the production and list of tours, see *ibid.*, 688-700.

Ex. 5.7: Slonimsky, *Hamlet* Act II, Prologue

[Allegro marziale ♩ = 132]

162

SOPRANO *f*

ALTO *f*
For - tin - bras vo - i - tel' sme - lyi

TENOR *f*

BASS *f*

Piano [Allegro marziale ♩ = 132]

mo - re kro - vi ni po - chem!

Still, both Tarkovsky's and Slonimsky's solemn endings and the latter's sceptical view of Fortinbras are far removed from Radlov's Norwegian prince on a white horse and Prokofiev's positive, if complex, accompanying music, with the emergence of a sunny final C major. Likewise composed during a liminal period – of the collapse of the Soviet Union – Slonimsky's *Hamlet* has nothing in common with the post-Soviet tendency for 'neo-

Shakespearisation’ and ‘neo-Hamletisations’, a complex process of adaptation of other Shakespearean adaptations and/or appropriation of Shakespeare according to current tendencies and popular culture.¹⁰⁴⁰ An example of this latter process is Vladimir Kobekin’s opera, *Gamlet (Datskii) (Rossiiskaia) Komediia (Hamlet (Danish) (A Russian) Comedy)*, based on Arkadii Zastyrets’s comedy, composed in 2001 and premiered seven years later at Moscow’s Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Music Theatre (Moskovskii Akademicheskii Muzykal’nyi Teatr).¹⁰⁴¹ At first glance, this ‘musical drama’, as the composer labels it, has quite a lot in common with Akimov’s 1932 production: Ophelia portrayed as a drunk, ‘easy’ girl who sings, among other things, cabaret songs (Shostakovich’s ditty in Akimov’s production echoed by ‘Ochi chernye’¹⁰⁴² in Kobekin’s); manipulation/paraphrasing of the text, including ‘To be or not to be’, which Kobekin/Zastyrets change to ‘To have or to be’; added shower scenes. But unlike Akimov’s *Hamlet*, Kobekin’s was widely praised (even if not by Shakespeare scholars) and even received the prize of ‘Golden Mask’, the Russian equivalent of the Olivier awards. Yet this show was devoid of the most important element of Akimov’s production: a political stance. In this respect, Valerii Fokin’s 2010 production at St Petersburg’s Alexandrinsky Theatre, which consciously included allusions to Akimov’s version, came closer, and as Bartoshevich and Zakharov observe, restored the political element that was notably absent from most Russian *Hamlets* of the 1990s and 2000s.¹⁰⁴³ From a different perspective, the referencing of stylistic features and/or the conception of Akimov’s production in so many contemporary *Hamlets* might lead one to conclude that, contrary to Rudnitsky’s hypothesis, Akimov’s production was not – or not just - too late for the avant-garde of the 1920s but was in fact strikingly ahead of its time, to the point of portraying a Russian Hamlet fit for emulation in the 21st century.

¹⁰⁴⁰ For a detailed description of the process of ‘neo-Shakespearisation’, see Boris Gaidin, ‘Neoshekspirizatsia’, *Znachenie. Ponimanie. Umenie*, 2014/4, 345-54, also available at http://www.zpu-journal.ru/zpu/contents/2014/4/Gaydin_Neo-Shakespearisation/37_2014_4.pdf, accessed 18 December 2015.

¹⁰⁴¹ For a review of the premiere see: http://www.smotr.ru/2008/2008_stdn_hamlet.htm, accessed 3 September 2016.

¹⁰⁴² ‘Dark eyes’ was originally a cabaret song from the repertoire of gypsies - see James J. Fuld, *The Book of World-famous Music: Classical, Popular, and Folk*, New York, Courier Dover Publications, 2000, 417 and 684 (notes).

¹⁰⁴³ Nikolai Zakharov, ‘Hamlet on the Post-Soviet Stage’, *Global Shakespeare Journal*, I/2 (March 2014), 184, and Aleksei Bartoshevich, ‘Gamlety nashikh dnei’, in Bartoshevich (ed.), *Shekspirovskie chteniia*, Moscow, Moskovskii Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2010, 215.

Conclusion

There is something peculiarly, even dangerously, attractive about cultural topics in the Stalin era. They exert an appeal on the level of *Schadenfreude* that can be hard to escape. At the same time they feed the temptation towards hero-worship: to discover and/or rehabilitate individuals who can plausibly be cast as resistant to tyranny, and who did what we fantasise we would have done ourselves.

Even if these baser urges can be resisted, there are intellectual pitfalls that need to be recognised as such and dealt with. A prime example is the issue of Stalin's supposed 'ban' on productions of *Hamlet*, discussed in Chapter 4 above. Gaining some clarity about its status opens the way to subtler accounts of what motivated artists in the late- and post-Stalin eras. At the same time, the fact that it was acted on at the time as though it was a reality rather than fiction itself offers an insight into Russian society and culture at the time.

In a more abstract sense, there is also something tantalising about *Hamlet* as an acknowledged summit of directorial/acting ambitions colliding with a culture of (self-) censorship and ideological constraint. Was anyone involved in productions of the time free to put their concepts into practice? Can the candour of surviving documents be asserted? And if not, how may they or the artefacts they relate to be understood?

Addressing these questions is the tall order I have set myself in this dissertation and which I hope to continue to act upon in research projects arising out of it. It is one for which no off-the-peg methodology exists, but which may yet be addressed by a combination of several. In this instance I have taken into account (though not necessarily referenced at every turn) principally Patrice Pavis's theories regarding the analysis and intercultural reading of performance, Alexa Huang's writings on Global Shakespeare, Aleksei Semenenko's studies of translations of *Hamlet* and Christopher Wilson's approaches to music in Shakespeare, alongside musicological analysis blending topic and intonation theory (Agawu *et al.*¹⁰⁴⁴) and dramaturgical concepts such as Freitag's pyramid.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music*, Princeton University Press, 1991; Malcolm Hamrick Brown, 'The Soviet Russian Concepts of "Intonazia" and "Musical Imagery"', *The Musical Quarterly*, 60 (1974), 557-567.

Interest in the context for the theatrical scores of Shostakovich and Prokofiev was a prime motivation for my research, and their respective scores for *Hamlet* (1932 and 1938) are by common acknowledgment their finest in this area. Since the productions by Akimov and Radlov for which they were written are also landmarks for Russian stagings of the tragedy, falling a mere six years apart, my core topic quickly fell into place, at least once I had determined that the entire sweep of Russian music for Shakespeare was far too broad. As my work moved increasingly into theatrical and cultural areas, I soon encountered the imagery of the ‘mirror’ or the ‘window’ as metaphors for defining the place of *Hamlet* within Russian culture; this proved a strong secondary motivating force. It is enshrined memorably in Eleanor Rowe’s pioneering *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, which gave me an authoritative voice to enter into dialogue with. My project, however, nuances Rowe’s study by adding archival sources and offers complementary materials and details on theatre productions and on *Hamlet*-inspired music, in order to paint a more accurate and complete picture of the assimilation of *Hamlet* (and Hamlet the character) in Russian culture, or in other words: how *Hamlet* in Russia became Russian *Hamlet*. Rowe’s book (whose narrative stops in the 1970s) relies uncritically on others’ analyses, and despite its title she concentrates on literary individuals and ideas. Hence it does not really show how, as Bartoshevich has repeatedly noted, any interpretation of *Hamlet* in Russia offers a mirror that reflects the specifics of a society at that given moment.¹⁰⁴⁵ Hence this project has aimed to demonstrate through detailed analysis and contextualisation of productions *Hamlet* in Russia, particularly in the Stalin era, that the image of tragedy as a mirror that reveals or even distorts the social context is indeed relevant.

However, individual creative artists go far beyond mere passive acceptance of such concepts. They have their own agendas and personalities, which in turn play an important role in determining – in this case - the surface of the ‘mirror’. The mirror that was already significantly shaped by the conditions and political climate of the Stalin era was slanted and faceted by artists who evidently sought to find reflections of themselves and their ideologies in it. The Russian *Hamlet* may always have sought to remain, in Jan Kott’s words, ‘our contemporary’; but both ‘our’ and ‘contemporary’ are notions jointly shaped by society and artists themselves. It follows that the creative backgrounds of directors and composers are

¹⁰⁴⁵ Aleksei Bartoshevich has repeatedly referred to the image of mirror in his writings, lectures and interviews about *Hamlet*, for example, ‘Gamlety nashikh dnei’, in Karina Melik-Pashaeva (ed.), *Teatr, Zhivopis’, muzyka, Kino: Ezhekvartal’nyi al’manakh*, No. 4, Moscow, GITIS, 2010, 9-21, here 20.

closely intertwined with the productions studied in this dissertation, and this I have sought to convey in a fuller manner than before.

In this attempt at contextualising pivotal moments in Russian history through the prism of *Hamlet*, the present study has features in common with Richard Taruskin's benchmark collection of revisionist essays, *Defining Russia Musically*.¹⁰⁴⁶ Taruskin identified various threads and case studies at various historical junctures, each representing a different strand of Russian identity, and each forming the basis of, as it were, a short story. My study, which might be pretentiously subtitled *Defining Russia Hamletly*, chooses a single, if multi-coloured, thread and attempts to weave it into a single, continuous novel. The thread encompasses the process of how the Russian temperament and socio-political conditions have redefined *Hamlet*, and at the same time how *Hamlet* and its Russian afterlife have helped to clarify what it is to be Russian. One can certainly learn much about the Russian temperament from those aspects of the play that have resonated with and inspired Russian artists and translators, and from those interpretations (or to use Gaydin's terminology Hamletisations) that were approved. This reflection of the Russian temperament continued with the multi-generic adaptations of *Hamlet* in the post-Stalin era, as my selective survey in Chapter 4 (with a certain bias towards opera and ballet) has tried to show.

The place of Shakespeare in the works of Shostakovich and Prokofiev

This dissertation seeks to contribute to a fuller understanding of the creative development of the Soviet Union's two star composers. As in any meeting of two imposing creative figures, Shostakovich and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* configure one another, without completely submitting to the shape of the other. *Hamlet* was not quite the same after Shostakovich had got his creative hands on it, and Shostakovich was not quite the same after *Hamlet* got under his skin. As I have argued in Chapter 2, working with *Hamlet* and big personalities in the Soviet Union's theatrical world shaped Shostakovich's creative persona(e) in ways that have yet to be fully appreciated. As a composer in his mid-twenties, prodigiously talented, but not as yet with defined ethical goals, Shostakovich was far from fully formed. Although he was soon to be compelled into self-reflection by official denunciations, he was already being buffeted by the cultural pressures. The already multi-faceted nature of *Hamlet*, compounded by the tragi-comic fusion that Akimov drew from it, gave Shostakovich's music a double-voiced quality, whether he intended it or not, and while the chronological relationship to his

¹⁰⁴⁶ Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 1997.

no less tragi-comic second opera, *The Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*, remains frustratingly obscure, it is clear that this dual engagement with generic ‘doubleness’ was a watershed in his creative output, becoming a fundamental part of his creative profile, and indeed a prime creative coping strategy, in years to come. As shown in Chapter 5, the composer returned to Hamletian dualities not only in his famously bleak film-score for Kozintsev but also in his later works (the Blok and Tsvetaeva song-cycles), further exploring those aspects of the tragedy that resonated with his growing obsession with death. It could therefore be argued that alongside Gogol, Shakespeare was one of the most important literary figures for Shostakovich, who was more a literary-minded composer than one interested in the visual/fine arts. As studies by Zhitomirsky¹⁰⁴⁷ and Orlov¹⁰⁴⁸ indicate, the theme of ‘Shostakovich and Shakespeare’ is one that does feature in Shostakovich studies, but such studies scarcely do justice to its significance, and they are remarkably few.

Compared to Shostakovich, Prokofiev came to *Hamlet* at a later stage in his career, with his creative identity long since established, and, as shown in Chapter 3, after having already worked with major theatrical personalities such as Tairov and Meyerhold. Even so, his work on *Hamlet* coincided with the period when he was trying to find his feet in the Soviet Union in terms of what he was allowed to do and how he might wrest the place of most prominent Soviet composer from Shostakovich. Still wounded from the experience of the non-production of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Bolshoi, he was concerned to do the right thing, and despite renewing his collaboration with Sergei Radlov, the nature of his work on *Hamlet* was very different from their ballet. Its effect on his output, in terms of taking on abstract philosophical subject matter, was almost immediate. It was certainly closely aligned with his very next opus – the collaboration with Eisenstein on the heroic-patriotic film, *Alexander Nevsky*.

Starting from 1939, Prokofiev wrote the most epic of his instrumental works: the Piano Sonatas Nos. 6, 7, 8 (1939-44) differed drastically from their predecessors in terms of heightened ethical ambitions, just as his Symphonies Nos. 5 (1944) and 6 (1945-47) were quite different from his previous ones in their epic, heroic and Beethovenian qualities, while his long-gestated First Violin Sonata (1938-1946) was one of his most profound statements. Prior to these works, *Hamlet* was the most philosophical subject matter he had ever taken on,

¹⁰⁴⁷ Daniil’ Zhitomirskii, ‘Shekspir i Shostakovich’, in Givi Ordzhonokidze (ed.), *Dmitry Shostakovich*, Moscow, Sovetskii Kompozitor, 1976, 121-131.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Gentikh Orlov, ‘O Shekspirovskom u Shostakovicha’, in Lev Raaben (ed.), *Shekspir i muzyka*, Leningrad, Muzyka, 1964, 276-302.

enabling and encouraging him to move into the kind of territory that Shostakovich was known for, and hence to compete with the latter's claims to leading status among Soviet composers. Hence, although *Hamlet* might not have as obviously pivotal a role in Prokofiev's development as it does in Shostakovich's, this study has been driven in part by the conviction that it is more significant in this respect than it is often given credit for. Collaboration with a Shakespeare scholar and director of the calibre of Radlov was an important part of the process of Prokofiev's search for greater profundity of utterance, and of his building a much more serious conception of himself as an artist and continuing to purge his creative persona of exhibitionist display.

Reconstruction of Akimov's *Hamlet*: Quixotic or realistic?

It could be argued that Akimov's *Hamlet* was the most seminal production of the tragedy during the Stalin era. It was certainly the most discussed. Despite its apparent shortcomings, which as explained in Chapter 2 were the result of many different factors, the production consolidated Akimov's reputation, disseminated his ideas, and contributed to the return of *Hamlet* to the Soviet stage, as well as opening a door to the possibility of future iconoclastic productions: a door that was promptly shut, but never definitively locked and bolted. The production, which saw the collaboration of several up-and-coming theatre and music personalities, was indeed an epicentre where several creative art movements of the time came together.

One of the secondary objectives of this study has been to provide material derived and worked from archival sources, reviews and testimonies as well as other secondary sources that could potentially contribute to a partial or complete reconstruction of this production. As Senelick observes, any attempt at a reconstruction is complicated by contradictory reports of the production that appeared at the time, and by the myth-making attached to the individuals involved.¹⁰⁴⁹ However, in the case of the Akimov/Shostakovich *Hamlet*, such reports, when viewed in the light of available sources outlining the theatre director's original ideas and creative manifestos, only reinforce the desirability of such a reconstruction. Given the changes that meant that much of Akimov's concept got lost in the process of realisation, it could be argued that Akimov's *Hamlet* was never truly staged in the first place, and certainly Shostakovich's incidental music still awaits reception in the context it was intended for.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Senelick, *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet: A Reconstruction*, xv. By 'reconstruction' Senelick does not mean a literal restaging but rather an abstract recreation of the procedure and the materials, for the purposes of historical understanding.

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, and given the resonance that the production (even in its distorted form) has with many post-Soviet tragi-comedy interpretations of Shakespeare in general and *Hamlet* in particular, the purpose of such a seemingly quixotic project goes beyond historian/antiquarian restoration. This could be a viable theatrical experience in its own right.

This study hence has aimed to provide a detailed account of the thinking processes of its main protagonists (Akimov and Shostakovich, Radlov and Prokofiev) in the context of the challenges thrust upon them by the Stalinist cultural climate. It suggests that a confluence of factors threw up creative solutions that were, certainly in Akimov's case, iconic/scandalous at the time and arguably remain so. My demythologized account of Akimov's *Hamlet* proves that radical yet serious productions of the tragedy such as Matthew Warchus's at the Royal Shakespeare Company (1997) and Robert Lepage's *Elseneur/Elsinore* in Montreal and Toronto (1995/6), have almost as long a pre-history as female Hamlets.¹⁰⁵⁰ At the same time, it could be argued that the West has increasingly tended to separate experimental/radical interpretations from 'serious' ones, especially when it comes to Shakespeare.¹⁰⁵¹ The negative press and popular reaction to Lyndsey Turner's idea of moving 'To be or not to be' to the beginning of her production of the play with Benedict Cumberbatch in the title role at the Barbican Theatre (2015), and the mixed reviews of Emma Rice's disco-inspired *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Globe Theatre (2016), are cases in point. A reconstruction of the Akimov *Hamlet* would not only have intrinsic shock value but would serve as a reminder that such radicalism could go hand-in-hand with an agenda that was entirely serious and in its own way rooted in a search for authenticity.

As for Radlov and his *Hamlet*, an important outcome of this study has been to show in him the genesis of the hybrid figure (Shakespeare scholar and Shakespeare practitioner), with which Kozintsev came to be associated from the 1960s. Tracing Radlov's Shakespearean career from his earliest activities to the outbreak of War, also reinforces the important place that Russian/Soviet theatre has allotted to *Hamlet* and other (though by no means all)

¹⁰⁵⁰ Sarah Siddons (1755-1831) experimented with playing Hamlet. For a historical survey of female performers of Shakespeare plays, see Hannah Manktelow, "'Do you not know I am a woman?': The Legacy of the First Female Desdemona, 1660", in Gordon McMullan and Zoë Wilcox (eds.), *Shakespeare in Ten Acts*, London, British Library, 2016, 81-100, esp. 94-96.

¹⁰⁵¹ For a study of *Hamlet* as an avant-garde play and as material for avant-garde productions, see Richard White, *Avant-Garde Hamlet: Text, Stage, Screen*, Lanham MD, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015. With frequent reference to Jan Kott, White argues that *Hamlet* as a play exhibits aspects of vanguard movements and accordingly invites unorthodox, experimental and avant-garde adaptations.

Shakespeare. His is one among numerous examples of *Hamlet* as the highest point in the creative career of a theatre artist, one for which years of preparation is required.

By setting these two productions against a background of Shakespeare/*Hamlet* appropriations before and after the Stalin era, this study demonstrates that despite the strictest doctrines of this most repressive period of Soviet cultural history, its *Hamlet* (re-)productions were no less creative and ‘contemporary’, and indeed no less ‘sponge’-like, in their absorptions of the problems of their time.¹⁰⁵²

The notion of *Hamlet* as a political play has come to be regarded as much more an Eastern European characteristic than a Western one. A comparison of Olivier’s and Kozintsev’s screen adaptations, for example, reveals the fundamental contrast between the psychological concerns of the former and the politico-social ones of the latter. In fact the influence of Russian/Soviet *Hamlets* in the West and on Western consciousness has been somewhat patchy. By comparison with the influence of certain pre- and post-Stalin productions (such as those by Craig and Stanislavsky in 1911, or Liubimov and Vysotsky in 1971), the closed nature of Stalinist society and the Iron Curtain that persisted after his death meant that the Central- and Eastern-European approach to Shakespeare in general and Russian stagings of *Hamlet* in particular have had much less international impact that they might have done. Asian adaptations, for example, have made far more impression.¹⁰⁵³

All this represents one of the great might-have-beens of the theatre and Shakespeare worlds. The picture that studies of Kozintsev’s Shakespearean films paints – to take the most widely known of Russian appropriations – fails to take proper account of the continuity of Russian engagement with *Hamlet* (see Chapter 5.2 and 5.3). And the fact that there is no authoritative study whatsoever of Shakespeare in Central and Eastern Europe suggests that we are only at the beginning of a new phase of scholarly endeavour. If scholarship and practical reconstruction could go hand in hand in filling the gap, there would surely be potential for some truly dramatic rediscoveries.

¹⁰⁵² Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, 52.

¹⁰⁵³ See Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan (eds.), *Shakespeare in Asia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Bibliography

Note: the form YEAR/NUMBER indicates the number of a journal or newspaper in a particular year, where that journal has no volume number. For ease of identification this detail is in some cases followed by the exact date or month.

‘A Marxist Hamlet’, *The Manchester Guardian*, 18 July 1932.

Abensour, Gérard, *Nicolas Evreinov, L'apôtre russe de la théâtralité*, Paris, Institut d'études slaves, 1981.

Agawu, Kofi, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991.

Akimov, Nikolai, ‘Kak teatr im. Vakhtangov stavit “Gamleta”’, *Izvestiia Moskva*, 26 March 1932.

Akimov, Nikolai, *Ne tol'ko o teatre*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1966.

Akimov, Nikolai, ‘O “Gamlete”’, *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo*, 3 March 1932.

Akimov, Nikolai, ‘O postanovke “Gamleta” v Teatre im. Vakhtangova v 1932 g.’, in Aleksandr Gvozdev (ed.), *Nasha rabota nad klassikami*, Leningrad, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1936, 125-168.

Akimov, Nikolai, ‘Shekspir, pročitannyi zanovo: O “Gamlete” v teatre im. Vakhtangova’, *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 11 May 1932.

Akimov, Nikolai, *Teatral'noe nasledie*, 2 Vols., Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1978.

Aksenov, Ivan, ‘Tragediia o Gamlete printse Datskom i kak ona byla igrana akterami teatra im. Vakhtangova’, *Sovetskii Teatr*, 1932/9, 19-22.

Aksenov, Ivan, *Gamlet i drugie opyty v sodeistvie otechestvennoi shekspirologii*, Moscow, Federatsiia, 1930.

Al'tshuller, Anatolii, *Ocherki istorii russkoi teatral'noi kritiki*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1975.

Al'tshuller, Anatolii, *Teatr praslevlennykh masterov: ocherki istorii Aleksandriinskoi stseny*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1968.

Albright, Daniel (ed.), *Berlioz. Verdi. Wagner. Britten*, Great Shakespeareans, Vol. 11, London and New York, Continuum, 2012.

Albright, Daniel, *Musicking Shakespeare: A Conflict of Theatres*, Rochester NY, University of Rochester Press, 2007.

- Alekseev, Mikhail (ed.), *Shekspir i russkaia kul'tura*, Moscow and Leningrad, Nauka, 1965.
- Alexander, Edward, 'Shakespeare's Plays in Armenia', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 9/3 (1958), 387-394.
- Anikst, Aleksandr, 'Byt' ili ne byt' u nas Gamletu', *Teatr*, 1955/3, 62-81.
- Anikst, Aleksander, 'Shekspir i muzyka', *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 1964/4, 76-78.
- Anikst, Aleksandr (ed.), *Shekspirovskii sbornik*, Moscow, Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo, 1967.
- Anikst, Aleksandr, *Tvorchestvo Shekspira*, Moscow, Izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1963.
- Arutiunian, Babken, 'Virmenskii teatr', in Inna Vishnevskaiia (ed.), *Istoriia sovetskogo dramaticheskogo teatra v shesty tomakh*, Vol. 5 1941-1953, Moscow, Nauka, 1969, 333-364.
- Ashperger, Cynthia, *The Rhythm of Space and the Sound of Time: Michael Chekhov's Acting Technique in the 21st Century*, Amsterdam and New York, Rodopi, 2008.
- Autant-Mathieu, Marie-Christine and Yana Meerzon (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Michael Chekhov*, New York and London, Routledge, 2015.
- Autant-Mathieu, Marie-Christine, 'Le dressage du théâtre soviétique', *Cahiers Slaves*, 8 (2004), 19-41.
- Autant-Mathieu, Marie-Christine, *Le Théâtre soviétique durant le dégel (1953-1964)*, Paris, CNRS Editions, 1993.
- Axline-Morgan, Kimberley, "'Through a Glass Darkly": The Ghost of Hamlet on the 20c Russian Stage', PhD dissertation, University of Colorado-Boulder, 2000.
- Baccarelli, Eridano, 'O perevode *Bozhestvennoi komedii* Lozinskim: Sistema ekvivalentov', in Aleksandr Lavrov (ed.), *Sravnitel'noe izuchenie literature: Sbornik Statei k 80-letiu M.P. Alekseeva*, Leningrad, Nauka, 1978, 315-323.
- Bacon, Edwin and Mark Sandle, *Brezhnev Reconsidered*, London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2002.
- Bailey, Helen Phelps, *Hamlet in France from Voltaire to Laforgue, with an Epilogue*, Geneva, Droz, 1964.
- Baldwin, Jane, 'Meyerhold's Theatrical Biomechanics: An Acting Technique for Today', *Theatre Topics*, 5/2 (1995), 181-201.
- Banham, Martin, 'Nikolai Akimov', *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, 13.

- Bardovskii, Alexei, 'Russkii Gamlet', in Sergei Platonov, A. Presniakov and Ju. Gessen (eds.), *Russkoe proshloe: istoricheskii sbornik*, Moscow, Petrograd, 1923/ 4, 135-145.
- Barnes, Christopher, *Boris Pasternak: A Literary Biography*, 2 vols., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, 1998.
- Barsova, Liudmila, *Vrubel': No comments*, St Petersburg, Baltiiskie sezony, 2012.
- Barthes, Roland, *Image, Music, Text*, London, Fontana Press, 1977.
- Bartig, Kevin, *Composing for the Red Screen: Prokofiev and Soviet Film*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Bartoshevich, Aleksandr, *Akimov*, Leningrad, Teakluba, 1933.
- Bartoshevich, Aleksei, 'Gamlety nashikh dnei', in Bartoshevich (ed.), *Shekspirovskie chteniia*, Moscow, Moskovskii Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2010, 209-216.
- Bartoshevich, Aleksei, 'Gamlety nashikh dnei', in Karina Melik-Pashaeva (ed.), *Teatr, Zhivopis', muzyka, Kino: Ezhekvartal'nyi al'manakh*, No. 4, Moscow, GITIS, 2010, 9-21.
- Bartoshevich, Aleksei, 'Khronika shekspirovskogo goda', *Znanie. Ponimanie. Umenie*, 2014/2, 224–235.
- Bartoshevich, Aleksei, 'Gamlet nashego vremeni [interv'iu]', in Bartoshevich, *Teatral'nye khroniki: Nachalo dvadtsat' pervogo veka*, Moscow, Artist - Rezhisser - Teatr, 2013, 359-364.
- Bartoshevich, Alexei, 'Hamlet for Russia and the Russian Hamlets now', unpublished paper given at *International Shakespeare Association Annual Conference*, Stratford-upon-Avon, July 2014.
- Bassnett, Susan, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1993.
- Bassnett-McGuire, Susan, *Translation Studies*, London, Routledge, 1980.
- Baston, Kim, 'Scoring Performance: The Function of Music in Contemporary Theatre and Circus', PhD dissertation, La Trobe University, 2008.
- Beketova, Mariia, *Vospominaniia ob Aleksandre Bloke*, Moscow, Izdatel'stvo Pravda, 1990.
- Belinsky, Vissarion, 'Mochalov v roli Gamleta', in Vsevolod Vsevolodskii-Gerngross (ed.), *Khrestomatiia na istorii russkogo teatra*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1936, 222-241.
- Belinsky, Vissarion, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 13 tomakh*, Moscow, Akademiia Nauk SSSR, 1953-1956.
- Benedetti, Jean, *Stanislavski*, New York, Routledge, 1988.

- Benedetti, Jean (ed.), *The Moscow Art Theatre Letters*, New York, Routledge, 1991.
- Bennet, Susan and Christie Carson (eds.), *Shakespeare beyond English*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Bennett, Susan, *Theatre Audience: A Theory of Production and Reception*, 2nd edn., London, Routledge, 1997.
- Berezark, Iliia, 'Avantiurist i gumanist', *Rabis*, 1932/16, 7.
- Berezark, Iliia, *Gamlet v teatre imeni Leningradskogo Soveta*, Leningrad-Moscow, Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo, 1940.
- Berezkin, Aleksandr, 'Shekspirovskie postanovki na sstene russkogo teatra v pervoi polovine tridtsatykh godov XX veka', Dissertation [Diplomnaia rabota], Moscow, State Humanitarian University of Russia [RGGU], 2000, also at <http://www.sibkursy.ru/pages/download>, accessed 28 August 2016.
- Berman, Antoine, *Towards a Translation Criticism: John Donne*, Françoise Massardier-Kennedy (ed.), Ohio, Kent University Press, 2009.
- Beumers, Birgit, *Yuri Lyubimov at the Taganka Theatre: 1964-1994*, Amsterdam, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997.
- Bevington, David (ed.), *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Hamlet: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1968.
- Bevington, David, *Murder Most Foul: Hamlet through the Ages*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Bibikova Irina and N. Levchenko (eds.), *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo: Oformlenie prazdnetstv*, 2 vols., Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1984.
- Bida, Constantine, 'Shakespeare's Entrance to the Slavic World', *Proceedings of the Third Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*, The Hague, Mouton, 1962, 340.
- Billington, James, *Icon and Axe: An Interpretative History of Russian Culture*, New York, Knopf, 1966.
- Bird, Robert, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Elements of Cinema*, London, Reaktion, 2008
- Birillo, Stepan, "'Gamlet" v mesto retsenzii', *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, 23 June 1939, 3.
- Blavatskii, Volodymir, 'Try roky Lvivskoho opernoho teatru', *Kyiv (Philadelphia)*, 1951/1, 20-22.
- Blok, Aleksandr, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 20 tomakh*, Moscow, Nauka, 1997.
- Blok, Aleksandr, *Sochineniya v dvukh tomakh*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1955.

- Blok, Liubov', 'Facts and Myths about Blok and Myself', in Lucy Vogel (ed.), *Blok: An Anthology of Essays and Memoirs*, Ann Arbor, Ardis, 1982, 8-63.
- Bloom, Harold, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, London, Fourth Estate, 1999.
- Bloom, Harold, *William Shakespeare's Hamlet*, New York, Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2009.
- Bloom, Peter, 'Berlioz', in Daniel Albright (ed.), *Berlioz, Verdi, Wagner, Britten*, Great Shakespeareans series, Vol. 11, London and New York, Continuum, 2012, 7-76.
- Bloom, Peter, *Berlioz Studies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Blume, Bernhard, 'Das ertrunkene Mädchen: Rimbauds Ophélie und die deutsche Literatur', *Germanisch-Romanische Monatshefte* 4 (1954), 108-119.
- Borodovskii, Ia., 'Tragediia "Gamlet" na stsene Daugavpilskogo teatra', *Sovetskaia Latvii*, 1954/138 (12 June), 3.
- Bradley, A.C., *Shakespearean Tragedy*, London, Macmillan, 1905.
- Brandenberger, David, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity 1931-1956*, Cambridge MA and London, Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Braun, Edward, *The Director and the Stage*, New York, Holmes and Meier, 1982.
- Braun, Edward, *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre*, Iowa, University of Iowa Press, 1995.
- Briggs, Murray, "'He's Going to his Mother's Closet": Hamlet and Gertrude on Screen', *Shakespeare Survey*, 45 (1993), 53-62.
- Brissenden, Alan, 'Ballet' in Michael Dobson, Stanley Wells, Will Sharpe and Erin Sullivan (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, 25-26.
- Briusov, Valerii, 'Nenuzhnaya Pravda (po povodu Moskovskogo khudozhestvennogo teatra)', *Mir Iskusstva*, 1902/4, 67-74.
- Brown, David, *Tchaikovsky: A Biographical and Critical Study - The Years of Fame (1878-1893)*, London, Gollancz, 1992.
- Brown, John Russell, 'Foreign Shakespeare and English-speaking Audiences', Dennis Kennedy (ed.), *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, 21-35.
- Brown, John Russell, *Hamlet: a Guide to the Text and its Theatrical Life*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

- Brown, Malcolm Hamrick, 'The Soviet Russian Concepts of "Intonazia" and "Musical Imagery"', *The Musical Quarterly*, 60/4 (1974), 557-567.
- Brooks, Jean, 'Hamlet and Ophelia as Lovers: Some Interpretations on Page and Stage', *Aligarh Critical Miscellany*, 4/1 (1991), 1-25.
- Bruce, Michael, *Writing Music for the Stage: A Practical Guide for Theatremakers*, London, Nick Hern, 2016.
- Bullock, Philip, 'The Poet's Echo, the Composer's Voice: Monologic Verse or Dialogic Song?', in Pauline Fairclough (ed.), *Shostakovich Studies 2*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, 207-228.
- Bullock, Philip, 'Staging Stalinism: The Search for Soviet Opera', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 18/1 (2006), 83-108.
- Burt, Richard. *Shakespeares after Shakespeare: An Encyclopedia of the Bard in Mass Media and Popular Culture*, 2 vols., Westport, Greenwood Press, 2007.
- Byrns, Richard, 'Aleksandr Blok and "Hamlet"', *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes*, 18/1 (1976), 58-65.
- Byrns, Richard, 'The Artistic Worlds of Vrubel' and Blok', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 23/1 (Spring 1979), 38-50.
- Campbell, Stuart (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music: 1830-1880: An Anthology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Campbell, Stuart (ed.), *Russians on Russian Music 1880-1917: An Anthology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Carlson, Marvin, *Theories of Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey from the Greeks to the Present*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Carnicke, Sharon M., *Stanislavsky in Focus*, Newark, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999.
- Chamberlin, William Henry, 'Shakespeare and Flaubert on the Soviet Stage', *British Russian Gazette and Trade Outlook* 13/10 (1932).
- Chappell, William, *Old English Popular Music*, Vol. 1 (2nd edn.), London, Chappell and MacMillan, 1893.
- Charlton, Andrew, *Music in the Plays of Shakespeare: A Practicum*, New York and London, Garland, 1991.
- Charney, Maurice, *Hamlet's Fictions*, London and New York, Routledge, 2014 (orig. pub. 1988).
- Chekalov, Ivan, *Russkii shekspirizm v XX veke*, Moscow, Reka veremen, 2014.

Chekalov, Ivan, 'Perevody *Gamleta* M. Lozinskim, A. Radlovoi i B. Pasternakom v otsenke sovetsskoi kritiki 30-kh godov', in *Shekspirovskie chteniia 1990*, Moscow, Nauka, 1991, 177-200.

Chekhov, Anton, *Khmurye liudi: Rasskazy*, St Petersburg, Izdanie A.S. Suvorina, 1890.

Chekhov, Anton, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v 30 tomakh*, Moscow, Nauka, 1978.

Chekhov, Michael, *On the Technique of Acting*, New York, Harper Collins Publishers, 1991.

Chion, Michel, *L'Audio-Vision. Son et image au cinéma*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1991 (rev. edn. Paris, Nathan, 2005), English edition, edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman, as *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994.

Chushkin, Nikolai, *Gamlet-Kachalov: Iz stsenicheskoi istorii Gamlet Shekspira*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1966.

Clark, Katerina, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2011.

Clark, Katerina, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1995.

Clark, Katerina, 'Sergei Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* and the Renaissance: An Example of Stalinist Cosmopolitanism?', *Slavic Review* 71/1 (Spring 2012), 49-69.

Clark, Katerina, *The Soviet Novel: History As Ritual*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Clark, Katerina, "'Wait for Me and I Shall Return': The Early Thaw as a Reprise of Late Thirties Culture?", in Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gildburd (eds.), *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2013, 85-108.

Clayton, Jay and Eric Rothstein (eds.), *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1991.

Clayton, Jay Douglas, 'The Hamlets of Turgenev and Pasternak: On the Role of Poetic Myth in Literature', *Germano-Slavica* 2/6 (1978), 455-461.

Clayton, Jay Douglas, *Pierrot in Petrograd. The Commedia dell'Arte/Balagan in Twentieth-Century Russian Theatre and Drama*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994.

Clutton-Brock, Arthur, *Shakespeare's "Hamlet"*, London, Methuen, 1922, repub. together with John Mackinnon Robertson, *The Problem of "Hamlet"* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1919), London, New York, Routledge, 2014.

Collini, Stefan (ed.), *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

- Conklin, Paul, *A History of 'Hamlet' Criticism, 1601-1821*, New York, Humanities Press, 1957.
- Cormac, Joanne, 'Liszt as Kapellmeister: The Development of the Symphonic Poems on the Weimar Stage', PhD dissertation, University of Birmingham, 2012.
- Craig, Edward Gordon, *On the Art of the Theatre*, London, Mercury Books, 1962.
- Craig, Edward Gordon and J. Michael Walton, *Craig on Theatre*, London, Methuen, 1983.
- Craig, Edward Gordon, *Vospominanie, stat'i, pis'ma*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1988.
- Danilov, Sergei, *Revizor na stsene*, Leningrad, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1934.
- Davies, Anthony and Stanley Wells (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Moving Image: The Plays on Film and Television*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Dawson, Anthony, *Hamlet: Shakespeare in Performance*, New York, Manchester University Press, 1995.
- Deák, František, 'Russian Mass Spectacles', *The Drama Review*, 19/2 (1975), 7-22.
- Desai, Rupin (ed.), *Shakespeare the Man: New Decipherings*, Madison, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2014.
- Desmet, Christy and Robert Sawyer (eds.), *Shakespeare and Appropriation*, New York, Routledge, 1999.
- Dessen, Alan and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Dirk Delabastita and Lieven D'Hulst (eds.), *European Shakespeare: Translating Shakespeare in the Romantic Age*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, J. Benjamins, 1993.
- Dmitriev, Iuri and A. Klintchin, *Pavel Stepanovich Mochalov*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1953.
- Dobrenko Evgeny and Galin Tihanov (eds.), *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism*, Pittsburg, University of Pittsburg Press, 2011.
- Dobrenko, Evgeny, 'Literary Criticism and Transformation of the Literary Field during the Cultural Revolution, 1928-1932', in Dobrenko and Tihanov (ed.), *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism*, 42-62.
- Dolinskaia, Elena, *Teatr Prokof'eva*, Moscow, Kompozitor, 2012.
- Dombrovskaja, Olga, 'Hamlet, King Lear and their Companions: The other Side of Film Music', in Alexander Ivashkin and Andrew Kirkman (eds.), *Contemplating Shostakovich: Life, Music and Film*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2012, 141-166.

Dubashinskii, I., 'Na stsene tragediia Shekspira "Gamlet"', *Krasnoe znamia*, 1954/110 (5 June).

Duffin, Ross, *Shakespeare's Songbook*, New York, Norton, 2004

Dunn, Leslie, 'Ophelia's Songs in *Hamlet*: Music, Madness, and the Feminine', in Leslie Dunn and Nancy Jones (eds.), *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, 50-64.

Dymshits, Aleksandr (ed.), *Pushkin v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov*, Moscow, Gosudarstvennyi Institut Khudozhestvennoi Literaturny, 1950.

Egorova, Tatiana, *Soviet Film Music: An Historical Survey*, Amsterdam, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997.

Eisenstein, Sergei, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia v shesti tomakh*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1964.

Elagin, Iurii, *Ukrashchenie iskusstv*, New York, Chekhov, 1952 (see also Jelagin, Juri).

Elsom, John (ed.), *Is Shakespeare Still Our Contemporary?*, London, Routledge, 1989.

Elson, Louis, *Shakespeare in Music*, London, David Nutt, 1901.

Emerson Caryl and Simon Morrison, 'Princeton's Boris Godunov, 1936/2007: after seventy years, Prokofiev's music is attached to Meyerhold's vision of Pushkin's play', *Three Oranges*, 14 (November 2007), 2-6.

Emerson, Caryl, 'Shostakovich and the Russian Literary Tradition', in Laurel Fay (ed.), *Shostakovich and His World*, Princeton NJ and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2004, 183-226.

Erdman, Nikolai and Vladimir Mass, *A Meeting About Laughter: Sketches, Interludes and Theatrical Parodies*. Luxembourg, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995

Erlich, Victor, *Russian Formalism: History – Doctrine*, The Hague, Mouton, 1980.

Etkind, Mark, *N.P. Akimov – Khudozhnik*, Leningrad, Khudozhnik RSFSR, 1960.

Etkind, Mark, *Nikolai Akimov: stsenografiia, grafika*, Moscow, Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1980.

Evreinov, Nikolai, 'Teatrokratiia Prigorshnia raz navsegda vsveshennikh slov', in Nikolai Evreinov, *Teatr dlia sebia*, Vol. 1, St Petersburg, Butkovskaia, 1915, reprinted in A. Zubkov and Vadim Maksimov (eds.), *Nikolai Evreinov, Demon teatral'nosti*, Moscow, St Petersburg, Letnyi sad, 2002, 117-131.

Evreinov, Nikolai, *Teatr kak takovoi*, St Petersburg, Butkovskaia, 1912.

Ewington, Amanda, *A Voltaire for Russia: A.P. Sumarokov's Journey from Poetic-critic to Russian Philosophe*, Evanston IL, Northwestern University Press, 2010.

- 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*, 65/1 (Spring 2012), 67-111.
- Fanning, David, ‘Shostakovich: “The Present-Day Master of the C major Key”’, *Acta musicologica*, 73 (2001), 101-140.
- Fanning, David (ed.), *Shostakovich Studies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Farinovskii, N., ‘Podgotovka spektaklia “Gamlet”’, *Krasnoe znamia Daugavpils*, 1954/99 (21 May).
- Fay, Laurel, *Shostakovich A Life*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Fay, Laurel (ed.), *Shostakovich and His World*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Fevral'skii, Aleksandr (ed.), *V.E. Meierkhol'd: Stat'i, pis'ma, rechi, besedy*, Vol. 2, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1968.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila, *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1978.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila, *Stalinism: New Directions*, London, Routledge, 2000.
- Fletcher, Anne, *Rediscovering Mordecai Gorelik: Scene Design and the American Theatre*, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 2009.
- Floyd-Wilson, Mary, ‘Ophelia and Femininity in the Eighteenth-Century: Dangerous Conjectures in Ill-Breeding Minds’, *Women's Studies*, 21 (1992), 397-409.
- Foakes, Reginald A., *Hamlet versus Lear: Cultural Politics and Shakespeare's Art*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Folkerth, Wes, *The Sound of Shakespeare*, London, Routledge, 2002.
- France, Anna Kay, ‘Boris Pasternak's Interpretation of Hamlet’, *Russian Literature Triquarterly* 7 (1972), 201-226.
- France, Anna Kay, *Boris Pasternak's Translations of Shakespeare*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978.
- Freytag, Gustav, *Die Technik des Dramas*, Leipzig, S. Hirzel, 1876.
- Fridshtein, Iurii (ed.), *Uil'iam Shekspir: Bibliograficheskii ukazatel' russkikh perevodov i kriticheskoi literatury na russkom iazyke 1976-1987*, Moscow, Vsesoiuznaia gosudarstvennaia ordena Trudovogo Krasnogo Znameni biblioteka inostrannoi literatury, 1989.

- Frolova-Walker, Marina, 'The Soviet Opera Project: Ivan Dzerzhinsky vs. Ivan Susanin', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 18/2 (2006), 181-216.
- Fuld, James J., *The book of world-famous music: classical, popular, and folk*, New York, Courier Dover Publications, 2000.
- 'Gastroli teatra imeni Leningradskogo soveta', *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, 16 June 1939.
- 'Gastroli teatra im. Vakhtangova', *Rabochii i teatr*, 1933/13, 21.
- Gaidebura [Haidebura], Valerii, *Gulag i svitlo teatru*, Kyiv, Fakt, 2009.
- Gaidebura, Valerii, 'Pis'ma S.E. Radlova k V.Ia. Chobur', *Teatr*, 1992/10, 123-4.
- Gaidebura, Valerii, 'Tak raskazhi pravdivo ...', *Sovetskaia kul'tura*, 22 August 1989, 6.
- Gaidin, Boris, 'Neoshekspirizatsia', *Znanie, Ponimanie, Umenie*, (2014/4), 345-54, also at http://www.zpu-journal.ru/zpu/contents/2014/4/Gaydin_Neo-Shakespearisation/37_2014_4.pdf, accessed 18 December 2015.
- Gaidin, Boris, 'Obraz Gamleta na otechestvennom ekrane vtoroi poloviny XX - nachala XXI veka', *Znanie, Ponimanie, Umenie*, 2013/4, 170-182.
- Galski, E., 'Muzyka k Gamletu', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 1932/24 (May 1932).
- Gauss, Rebecca B., *Lear's Daughters: The Studios of the Moscow Art Theatre 1905-1927*, American University Studies, Vol. 29, New York, Peter Lang, 1999
- Geldern, James von, *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917-1920*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993.
- Geraci, Robert, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Gerra, Rene (René Guerra) (ed.), *Iurii Annenkov: Dnevnik moikh vstrech, tsikl tragedii*, Vol. 2, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1991.
- Gershtovich, Alexander, *The Theater of Yuri Lyubimov: Art and Politics at the Taganka Theatre in Moscow*, New York, Paragon, 1989.
- Gibian, George, 'Measure for Measure and Pushkin's Angelo', *PMLA* [Publications of the Modern Language Association of America] 66/4 (1951), 426-431.
- Gibian, George, 'Shakespeare in Soviet Russia', *The Russian Review*, 11/ 1 (January 1952), 24-34.
- Gillepsie, David, 'Adapting Foreign Classics: Kozintsev's Shakespeare', in: Stephen Hutchings and Anat Vernitskii (eds.), *Russian and Soviet Adaptations of Literature, 1900-2001: Screening the World*, London and New York, Routledge Curzon, 2005, 75-88.

Gladkov, Aleksandr, *Meierkhol'd v 2 tomakh, tom 2: Piat' let s Meierkhol'dom, vstrechi s Pasternkom*, Moscow, Soiuz teatral'nikh deiatelei RSFSR, 1990.

Gladkov, Aleksandr, *Meyerhold Speaks/Meyerhold Rehearses*, Amsterdam, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997.

Gladkov, Aleksandr, 'Iz vospominanyi o Meierkhol'de', in Tat'iana Lukina *et al.* (eds.) *Moskva teatral'naiia*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1960, 347-376.

Gladkov, Aleksandr, 'Master rabotaet', in Mariia Valentei and L. Vendrovskaiia (eds.), *Vstrechi s Meierkhol'dom: Sbornik vospominanii*, Moscow, Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo, 1967, 500-502.

Gladkov, Aleksandr, *Teatr: Vospominanye i razmyshleniia*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1980.

Glebova, Lina, 'Delo Kolesnikova: povest' v piati priznaniikh', *Zvezda*, 1968/ 9, 110-150 and 1968/10, 111-142.

Glikman, Isaak, *Pis'ma k drugu: Dmitri Shostakovich – Isaaku Glikmanu*, Moscow, DSCH, St Petersburg, Kompozitor, 1993, trans. Anthony Philips as *Story of a Friendship: Letters of Dmitry Shostakovich to Isaak Glikman, 1941-75*, London, Faber, 2001.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, *Wilhelm Meister: Apprenticeship and Travels*, Vol. 1, London, G.T. Foulis, 1947 (orig. pub. 1795-1796).

Golovashchenko, Iurii, "'Gamlet" spektakl' v Teatre imeni A.S. Pushkina', *Leningradskaia pravda*, 27 May 1954.

Golub, Spencer, 'Between the Curtain and the Grave: The Taganka in the *Hamlet* Gulag', in Dennis Kennedy (ed.), *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, 158-177.

Golub, Spencer, *The Recurrence of Fate: Theatre and Memory in Twentieth Century Russia*, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1994.

Gooch, Bryan and David Thatcher (eds.), *A Shakespeare Music Catalogue*, 5 vols., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991.

Gorbunov, Andrei (ed.) *Shekspir Gamlet: Izbrannye perevody*, Moscow, Raduga, 1985.

Gorchakov, Nikolai, *The Theater in Soviet Russia*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1957.

Gordon, Mel, 'Radlov's Theatre of Popular Comedy', *The Drama Review* (1975/19), 113-116.

Gordon, Mel, *The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia*, New York, Applause Theatre Books, 1987.

Gorelik, Mordecai, 'The Horses of Hamlet', *Theatre Arts* (November 1932), 883-886.

- Green Michael (ed.), *Russian Symbolist Theatre: An Anthology of Plays and Critical Texts*, New York, Ardis, 1986.
- Griffin, Alice V., 'Shakespeare through the Camera's Eye: IV', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 17/4 (1966), 383-387.
- Gromov, Pavel, 'Dva "Gamleta"', *Neva*, (1956/1), 146-155.
- Gromov, Viktor, *Tvorcheskoe nasledie V.E. Meierkhol'da*, Moscow, Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo, 1978.
- Grossman-Roshchin, Iuda, 'Strashnaya mest', *Sovetskiy teatr* (1932/6), 7-11.
- Gruber, Roman Ilich, 'Responses of Shostakovich to a Questionnaire on the Psychology of the Creative Process', in Laurel Fay (ed.), *Shostakovich and His World*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004, 31.
- Guiomar, Michel, *Principes d'une esthétique de la mort*, Paris, José Corti, 1988 (orig. pub. 1967).
- Günther, Hans F. K., 'Shakespeares Mädchen und Frauen aus lebenskundlicher Sicht', *Jahrbuch der deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, 73, Neue Folge 14 (1937), 85-108.
- Gutjahr, Ortrude, 'Literary Modernism and the Tradition of Breaking Tradition', in Christian Emden and David Midgley (eds.), *Cultural Memory and Historical Consciousness in the German-Speaking World since 1500: Papers from the Conference 'The Fragile Tradition'*, Cambridge 2002, Oxford and New York, Peter Lang, 2004, 69-92.
- Guzovskaia, Liudmila (ed.), *Russkii teatr: ilustrirovannaia khronika rossiiskoi teatral'noi zhizni*, Moscow, Interros, 2006.
- Gvozdev, Aleksei, 'Klassiki na sovetskoi stsene', *Rabochii i teatr* 1932/29-30 (November), 5.
- 'Hamlet in Moskau', *Der Weltspiegel* [supplement to Berliner Tageblatt], 31 July 1932 (No. 31).
- "'Hamlet' Produced as a Comedy: Daring Experiment in Russia", *The Observer*, 26 June 1932.
- Haggin, Bernard H., *Music for the Man who Enjoys 'Hamlet'*, New York, Alfred Knopf, 1944.
- Hall, James, *Illustrated Dictionary of Symbols in Eastern and Western Art*, London, John Murray, 1994.
- Hartnoll, Phyllis (ed.), *Shakespeare in Music*, London, Macmillan, 1964.
- Hasty, Olga Peters, *Tsvetaeva's Orphic Journeys in the Worlds of Word*, Evanston IL, Northwestern University Press, 1996.

- Hattaway, Michael, Boika Sokolova and Derek Roper (eds.), *Shakespeare in the New Europe*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.
- Heine, Erik, 'Madness by Design: Hamlet's State as Defined through Music', in Alexander Ivashkin and Andrew Kirkman (eds.), *Contemplating Shostakovich: Life, Music and Film*, 97-120.
- Heine, Erik, 'The Film Music of Dmitri Shostakovich in *The Gadfly*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*', PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2005.
- Hodgin, Barbara, *The Shakespeare Trade: Performances and Appropriations*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998
- Hoffmann, David, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Holland, Peter, "'More a Russian than a Dane": The Usefulness of Hamlet in Russia', in Shirley Chew and Alistair Stead (eds.), *Translating Life: Studies in Transpositional Aesthetics*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1999, 315-338.
- Hoover, Marjorie, 'A Mejerxol'd Method? - Love for Three Oranges (1914-1916)', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 13/1 (Spring 1969), 23-41.
- Howard, Tony, *Women as Hamlet: Performance and Interpretation in Theatre, Film and Fiction*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Huang, Alexa, 'Boomerang Shakespeare: Foreign Shakespeare in Britain', in Bruse Smith (ed.), *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare, Vol. 2: The World's Shakespeare, 1660-Present*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016, 1094-1101.
- Huang, Alexa, 'Global Shakespeare', in Michael Dobson, Stanley Wells, Will Sharpe, and Erin Sullivan (eds.), *Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, 2nd edn., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, 146-147.
- Huang, Alexa, 'Intercultural Theatre and Shakespeare Productions in Asia', in Siyuan Liu (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Asian Theatre*, New York, Routledge, 2016, 504-526.
- Huang, Alexa, 'Translation as a Theme in Shakespeare's Plays', *A Quarterly Publication of the American Translators Association's Literary Division*, 65 (Autumn 2015), 24-32.
- Huang, Alexa, and Elizabeth J. Rivlin, *Shakespeare and the Ethics of Appropriation*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Hulme, Derek, *Dmitri Shostakovich: A Catalogue, Bibliography, and Discography*, 3rd edn., Oxford, Scarecrow Press, 2002.
- Hutcheon, Linda, *A Theory of Adaptation*, New York, Routledge, 2006.

- Isenberg, Nancy, 'Dramatic Leaps and Political Falls: Russian Hamlet Ballet', in Ruth J. Owen (ed.), *The Hamlet Zone: Reworking Hamlet for European Cultures*, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars, 2012, 17-30.
- Iuzovski, Iurii, 'Chelovek li Otello?', *Literaturnyi kritik*, 1936/4, 167.
- Iuzovskii, Iurii, 'O Dame s kameliami i krasote zhizni', *Literaturnyi kritik*, 1934/6, 152.
- Ivanov, Sergey, *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Ivanov, V., 'MKhAT Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvoroi rabotaet nad "Gamletom": Gamlet - Mikhail Chekhov', in Aleksandr Anikst (ed.), *Shekspirovskie chtenia 1985*, Moscow, Nauka, 1987, 216-243.
- Jackson, Russell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Jelagin, Juri, *The Taming of the Arts*, trans. Nicholas Wreden, New York, Dutton, 1951.
- Jensen, Eric Frederick, *Schumann*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2012 (orig. pub. 2001).
- Jestrovic, Silvija, 'Theatricality as Estrangement of Art and Life in the Russian Avant-garde', *SubStance*, 31/2-3 (2002), 42-56.
- Johnson, Bruce, 'Hamlet: Voice, Music, Sound', *Popular Music*, 24/22 (May 2005), 257-267.
- Jurovsis, J., "'Hamlets'", *Daugavpils krievu teātrī*, 1 July 1954 (No. 154), 3.
- 'K gastroliam teatra imeni Leningradskogo Soveta', *Krasnoe znamia* (Sochi), 6 September 1940.
- K-ov, Al., "'Byt ili ne byt": Postanovki "Gamleta" v teatre imeni Vakhtangova', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 13 May 1932, 3.
- K Shekspirovskomu festivaliu: Otello, Romeo i Djulietta, Gamlet*, Leningrad and Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1939.
- K.R., 'Gamlet na stsene', in Shekspir, Uil'iam, *Tragediia o Gamlete, prints Datskom*, trans. K.R. [Konstantina Romanova], St Petersburg, Tipografiia Imperatorskoi akademii nauk, 1899, Vol. 2, 141-223.
- Kapadia, Parmita, 'Transnational Shakespeare: Salman Rushdie and Intertextual Appropriation', *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, 3/2 (2008), 1-20, also at <http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/781652/show>, accessed 16 August 2016.
- Kawachi, Yoshiko, *Shakespeare Worldwide: Translation and Adaptation*, Tokyo, Yushodo Shoten, 1986-1995.

Kelly, Catriona, *Petrushka: The Russian Carnival Puppet Theatre*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Kelvin, Norman (ed.), *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, Vol. 2, 1885-1888, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987.

Kennedy, Dennis (ed.), *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Kennedy, Dennis, *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Kennedy, Dennis and Yong Li Lan (eds.), *Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Kennedy, Dennis, 'Shakespeare without his Language', in James C. Bulman (ed.), *Shakespeare, Theory, Performance*, London, Routledge, 1996, 133-148.

Kennedy, Dennis, 'Shakespeare Worldwide', in Margareta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, 251-264.

Keyishian, Harry, 'Shakespeare and Movie Genre: The Case of *Hamlet*', in Russell Jackson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 72-81.

Khol'mskaia, Zinaida, 'Vospominanie', *Teatral'naia zhizn'*, 2000/4, 15.

Khomenko, Natalia, 'The Cult of Shakespeare in Soviet Russia and the Vilified Ophelia', *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* 9/2 (2014), at <http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/1360/show>, accessed 26 July 2016.

Kiefer, Carol Solomon (ed.), *The Myth and Madness of Ophelia*, Amherst, Mead Art Museum, 2001.

Kidnie, Margaret Jane, *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation*, London, New York, Routledge, 2009.

Kim, Anastasiia, 'Obrazy Shekspira na sovetskoi stsene 1920-1930-kh godov: k probleme akterskoi tekhniki v rezhisserskom teatre', PhD dissertation, St Petersburg, St Petersburg State Academy of Theatre Art, 2012.

Kirillova, Nataliia, 'P'esa Konstantina Trepleva v poeticheskoi strukture "Chaiki"', in Anatolii Al'tshuller, L. Danilova, and Aleksandr Ninov (eds.), *Chekhov i teatral'noe iskusstvo: sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, Leningrad: LGITMiK [Leningrad State Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinematography], 1985, 97-117.

Kitto, Humphrey, 'Hamlet', *Form and Meaning in Drama: A Study of Six Greek Plays and of Hamlet*, London, Methuen, 1956 (repr. London, Routledge, 2014), 246-337.

- Kleberg, Lars, 'The Nature of the Soviet Audience: Theatrical Ideology and Audience Research in the 1920s', in Robert Russell and Andrew Barratt (eds.), *Russian Theatre in the Age of Modernism*, London, Macmillan, 1990, 172-195.
- Kleberg, Lars, *Theatre as Action: Soviet Russian Avant-Garde Aesthetics*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1993.
- Kliman, Bernice W., *Hamlet: Film, Television and Audio Performances*, Rutherford, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988.
- Kordzaia, Manana, *Alexi Matchavariani: Creator and Time*, Tbilisi, n.p., 2013.
- Korte, Barbara and Christina Spittel, 'Shakespeare under Different Flags: The Bard in German Classrooms from Hitler to Honecker', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 44/2 (April 2009), 267-286.
- Kott, Jan, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, New York, Norton, 1964.
- Kozakov, Mikhail, *Risunki na peske: Akterskaia kniga*, Moscow, AST/Zebra E, 2007, 129-134.
- Kozintsev, Grigori and Boris Pasternak, 'Pis'ma o Gamlete', *Voprosy literatury*, 1975/1, 212-223.
- Kozintsev, Grigori, 'Chelovek, kotoryi daval slishkom mnogo voli svoemu umu', in Aleksandr Anikst (ed.), *Shekspirovskii Sbornik 1961*, Moscow, Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo, 1962, 134-161.
- Kozintsev, Grigori, *Chernoie, Likhoe Vremia...*, Moscow, Artist-Rezhisser-Teatr, 1994.
- Kozintsev, Grigori, 'Desiat' let s "Gamletom"', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1965/9, 51-88.
- Kozintsev, Grigori, 'Glubokii ekran', *Novyi mir*, 1961/3, 142-171.
- Kozintsev, Grigori, *King Lear, the Space of Tragedy: The Diary of a Film Director*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977 [orig. pub. *Prostranstvo tragedii*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1973].
- Kozintsev, Grigori, *Shakespeare: Time and Conscience*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1966. (orig. pub. as *Nash sovremennik Uil'am Shekspir*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1962).
- Kozintsev, Grigori, *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1982-1986.
- Kozintsev, Grigori, *Vremia Tragedii*, Moscow, Plius-minus, 2004.
- Kozintseva, Valentina and Yavov Butovskii (eds.), *Perepiska G.M. Kozintseva 1922-1973*, Moscow, Artist - Rezhisser - Teatr, 1998.
- Kozintseva, Valentina and Yavov Butovskii (eds.), *Ot balagana do Shekspira: khronika teatral'noi deiatel'nosti G.M. Kozintseva*, St Petersburg, Bulanin, 2002.

- Kozlov, Denis and Eleonora Gilburd (eds.), *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2013.
- Kovnatskaia, Liudmila (ed.), *Shostakovich mezhdu mgnoveniem i vechnost'iu: dokumenty, materialy, stat'i*, St Petersburg, Kompozitor, 2000.
- Kregor, Jonathan, *Program Music*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Kut, A., 'Nuzhno li stavit' "Gamleta"? Mozhno li perekinut' most ot "Gamleta" do sovremennosti?', *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 12 May 1932.
- Lang, David M., 'Sumarokov's *Hamlet*: A Misjudged Russian Tragedy of the Eighteenth Century', *Modern Language Review*, 43 (1948), 67-72.
- Lanier, Douglas, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Lavender, Andy, *Hamlet in Pieces - Shakespeare Reworked: Peter Brook, Robert Lepage, Robert Wilson*, New York, Continuum, 2001.
- Law, Alma, 'Chekhov's Russian *Hamlet* (1924)', *The Drama Review*, 27/3 (Autumn 1983), 34-45.
- Law, Alma, '*Hamlet* at the Vakhtangov', *The Drama Review*, 21/4 (December 1977), 100-110.
- Law, Alma and Mel Gordon, *Meyerhold, Eisenstein, and Biomechanics*, London, McFarland, 1996.
- Leach, Robert, and Victor Borovsky (eds.), *A History of Russian Theatre*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Leach, Robert, *Revolutionary Theatre*, London, New York, Routledge, 1994.
- Leach, Robert, *Vsevolod Meyerhold*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Leaming, Barbara, *Grigori Kozintsev*, Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1980.
- Leech, Clifford, 'Studies in *Hamlet*, 1901-55', *Shakespeare Survey* 9 (1956), 1-15.
- Lehmann, Courtney, 'Grigori Kozintsev', in Mark Thornton Burnett, Courtney Lehmann, Marguerite H. Rippey, and Ramona Wray (eds.), *Welles, Kurosawa, Kozintsev, Zeffirelli*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, 92-140.
- Leighton, Laurent G., 'Romanticism', in Victor Terras (ed.), *Handbook of Russian Literature*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985, 372-376.
- Lemaire, Frans, *La musique du XXe siècle en Russie et dans les anciennes républiques soviétiques*, Paris, Fayard, 1994.

Lemaire, Frans, *Le destin russe et la musique: Un siècle d'histoire de la Révolution à nos jours*, Paris, Fayard, 2005.

Lenin, Vladimir, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, in *Lenin's Collected Works*, Vol. 7, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1964, 203-425, also at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1904/onestep/>, accessed 19 October 2016, (orig.pub. *Shag vpered, dva shaga nazad (krizis v nashei Partii)*, Geneva, Tipografiia Partii, 1904).

Leonard, Kendra Preston, "'Cheer Up Hamlet!' - Using Shakespearean Burlesque to Teach the Bard", *This Rough Magic* 4/1 (June 2013), 1-20, also available at <http://www.thisroughmagic.org/leonard%20essay.html>, accessed 9 September 2016.

Leonard, Kendra Preston, *Shakespeare, Madness, and Music: Scoring Insanity in Cinematic Adaptations*, Toronto and Plymouth, Scarecrow Press, 2009.

Levidova, Inna (ed.), *Shespir: Bibliografiia russkikh perevodov i kriticheskoi literatury na russkom iazyka 1748-1962*, Moscow, Kniga, 1964, also available at http://az.lib.ru/s/shekspir_w/text_0220.shtml, accessed 9 September 2016.

Levidova, Inna, *Uil'iam Shespir: Bibliograficheskii ukazatel' russkikh perevodov i kriticheskoi literatury na russkom iazyke 1963-1975*, Moscow, Kniga, 1978.

Levin, Iurii, 'Russkii gamletizm', in M.P. Alekseev (ed.), *Ot romantizma k realizmu: iz istorii mezhdunarodnykh svyazei russkoi literatury*, Leningrad, Nauka, 1978, 189-236.

Levin, Iurii, *Shespir v russkoi literature XIX veka*, Moscow, Nauka, 1988.

Levin, Iurii, 'Shekspirovskie geroi u Dostoevskogo', in Nico Kiasashvili (ed.), *Gruzinskaia Shekspiriana*, Vol. 4, Tbilisi, Tbilisi University Press, 1975, 209-230.

Levitt, Marcus, 'Sumarokov's Russianized "Hamlet": Texts and Contexts', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 38/2 (Summer 1994), 319-341.

Levit, Markus, 'Sumarokov – chitatel' Peterburgskoi biblioteki Akademii nauk', *XVIII vek*, 1995/19, 43-59.

Li Lan, Yong, 'Shakespeare and the Fiction of the Intercultural', in Barbara Hodgdon and W.B. Worth (eds.), *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2005, 527-549.

Lindley, David, *Shakespeare and Music*, London, Arden Shakespeare, 2006.

Lirondelle, André, *Shakespeare en Russie, 1748-1840: Étude de littérature comparée*, Paris, Hachette, 1912.

Lischke, André, *Histoire de la musique russe: Des origines jusqu'à la révolution*, Paris, Fayard, 2006.

Livanov, Vasili, *Liudi i kukli*, Moscow, Astrel', 2012.

- Livanov, Vasilii, *Nevydumannyi Boris Pasternak*, Moscow, Drofa, 2002.
- Logan, Terence P., 'Review of Grigorij Kozintsev's *Shakespeare: Time and Conscience*', *The Modern Language Journal*, 51/8 (1967), 502-521.
- Long, John, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: A Study of the Music and its Performance in the Original Production of Seven Comedies*, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1955.
- Long, John, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: The Final Comedies*, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1961.
- Long, *Shakespeare's Use of Music: The Histories and Tragedies*, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1971.
- Lotman, Iurii, *Semiotika kino i problem kinoestetiki*, Tallinn, Eesti Raamat, 1973.
- Low, Ivy, 'Hamlet in Soviet Dress', *Moscow Daily News*, 24 May 1932.
- Low, Ivy, 'Mr Shakespeare's "Hamlet", Soviet Style', *The New York Times*, 26 June 1932.
- Lozinskii, Mikhail, 'Iskusstvo stikhotvornogo perevoda', *Druzhiba narodov*, 1955/7, 158-166.
- Lunacharsky, Anatoly, *Sobranie sochinenie*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1963-67.
- Lunacharskii-Rozenel', Nataliia, *Pamiat' serdtsa: Vospominania*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1962.
- Lund, Sigvard, 'Hamlet i Sovjetklæder', *Politiken*, 23 January 1934.
- Lupton, Julia Reinhard, *Thinking with Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- MacFadyen, David, *Red Stars: Personality and the Soviet Popular Song, 1955-1991*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001.
- MacDonald, Ian, *The New Shostakovich*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991; rev. Raymond Clarke, London, Pimlico, 2006.
- Machavariani, 'Opera Gamlet', *Sovetskaya muzyka*, 1964/1, 152.
- Maes, Francis, 'Between Reality and Transcendence: Shostakovich's Songs', in Pauline Fairclough and David Fanning (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shostakovich*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, 231-258.
- Maher, Mary Z., *Modern Hamlets and their Soliloquies*, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1992.
- Makaryk, Irena (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1993.

Makaryk, Irena, “‘Here is my space’: The 1964 Shakespeare Celebrations in the USSR”, in: Erica Sheen and Isabel Karremann (eds.), *Celebrating Shakespeare in Cold War Europe*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 51-62.

Makaryk, Irena, ‘Russia and the former Soviet Union’, in Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, 474-476.

Makaryk, Irena R. *Shakespeare in the Undiscovered Bourn: Les Kurbas, Ukrainian Modernism, and Early Soviet Cultural Politics*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2004.

Makaryk, Irena, ‘Wartime Hamlet’, in Irena Makaryk and Joseph G. Price (eds.), *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, 119-135.

Makaryk, Irena and Diana Brydon (eds.), *Shakespeare in Canada: A world elsewhere?* Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2002.

Makaryk, Irena and Joseph G. Price (eds.), *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2006.

Makaryk, Irena and Marissa McHugh (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Second World War: Memory, Culture, Identity*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2012.

Makaryk, Irena and Virlana Tkacz (eds.), *Modernism in Kyiv: Jubilant Experimentation*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2010.

Mar’iamov, D., *Kremlevskii tsenzor: Stalin smotrit kino*, Moscow, Kinotsentr, 1992.

Marcus, Leah, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and its Discontents*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988.

Markov, Pavel, ‘Gamlet v postanovke N. P. Akimova’, *Sovetskii teatr*, 1932/7-8, 12.

Markov, Pavel, *O teatre: v chetyrekh tomakh*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 4 vols., 1974-1977.

Markov, Vladimir, ‘An Unnoticed Aspect of Pasternak’s Translations’, *Slavic Review*, 20/3 (1961), 503-508.

Marsden, Jean (ed.), *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Post-Renaissance Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth*, New York, St Martin’s Press, 1991.

Marshall, Herbert, *The Pictorial History of the Russian Theatre*, New York, Crown, 1977.

Massai, Sonia (ed.), *World Wide Shakespeares: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance*, London, Routledge, 2005.

Mazing, Boris, ‘Meierkhol’d na tribune (doklad v zale soiuzov)’, *Krasnaia gazeta*, 20 September 1927.

McBurney, Gerard, 'Shostakovich and the Theatre', in Pauline Fairclough and David Fanning (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion To Shostakovich*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, 147-178.

McCreless, Patrick, 'The Politics of D minor and its neighbours, 1931-1949', in Pauline Fairclough (ed.), *Shostakovich Studies 2*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, 121-189.

McMullan, Gordon and Zoë Wilcox (eds.), *Shakespeare in Ten Acts*, London, British Library, 2016.

Meierkhol'd, Vsevolod, 'Klass Vs. Meierkhol'da', *Liubov' k trem apel'sinom*, 1915/4-7, 208-211.

Meierkhol'd, Vsevolod, 'Meierkhol'd o svoem Lese', *Novyi Zritel'*, 1924/ 7, 6.

Meierkhol'd, Vsevolod, 'Meierkhol'd protiv meierkhol'divshchiny', in Aleksandr Fevral'skii (ed.), *V.E. Meierhol'd: Stat'i, pis'ma, rechi, besedy*, Vol. 2, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1968, 341.

Meierkhol'd, Vsevolod, *Perepiska*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1976.

Mendel, Arthur P., 'Hamlet and Soviet Humanism', *Slavic Review*, 30/4 (December 1971), 733-747.

Milling, Jane and Graham Ley (eds.), *Modern theories of performance: From Stanislavski to Boal*, New York, Palgrave, 2001.

Minchkovskii, Arkadii, *Povesti o moem Leningrade*, Leningrad, Sovetskii pisatel', 1986.

Mirskii, D., 'Otello Teatr Studia p/r S. Radlova', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 1935/42, 5.

Moore, Gerald, 'The Russian Hamlet', *Transition*, 20 (1965), 55-56.

Moore, Tiffany Ann Conroy, *Kozintsev's Shakespeare Films: Russian Political Protest in 'Hamlet' and 'King Lear'*, London, McFarland, 2012.

Morgan, Edward, 'Prokofiev's Shakespearean Period', *Three Oranges*, No. 10 (November, 2005), 8.

Morozov, Mikhail, 'Falsifikatory Shekspira', *Teatr*, January 1949, 53-56.

Morozov, Mikhail (ed.), 'Shekspirovskaia konferentsia VTO', in Mikhail Morozov (ed.), *Biuleten' No. 1 Kabineta Shekspira i zapadno-evropeiskoi klassiki vserossiiskogo teatral'nogo obshchestva*, Moscow, Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo, 1939, 7-8.

Morozov, Mikhail, 'Teatrovedcheskaia ekspansiia Uall Strita', *Teatr*, May 1949, 85-88.

Morozov, Mikhail, G. Boiadzhiev and M. Zagorskii (eds.), *Shekspirovskii sbornik*, Moscow, Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo, 1947.

Morozov, Mikhail, *Shakespeare on the Soviet Stage*, London, Soviet News, 1947.

- Morris, Harry, 'Ophelia's "Bonny Sweet Robin"', *PMLA*, 1958/73, 601-603.
- Morrison, Simon, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Naef, Irene, *Die Lieder in Shakespeares Komödien: Gehalt und Funktion*, Berne, A. Francke, 1976.
- Nattiez, Jean-Jaques, *La musique, les images et les mots*, Montreal, Fides, 2010.
- Naylor, Edward, *Shakespeare and Music*, London, Dent, 1896 (rev. edn. 1931).
- Naylor, Edward, *Shakespeare Music (Music of the Period)*, London, Curwen, 1913, rev. edn. 1928.
- Nel's, Sof'ia, *Shekspir na Sovetskoi stsene*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1960.
- Nemirovich-Danchenko, Vladimir, *My Life in the Russian Theatre*, New York, Theatre Arts Books, 1968.
- Nemirovich-Danchenko, Vladimir, *Nezavershennye rezhisserskie raboty: Boris Godunov, Gamlet*, Moscow, Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo, 1984.
- Nice, David, *Prokofiev: From Russia to the West 1891-1935*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2003.
- Noble, Richmond, *Shakespeare's Use of Song: With the Text of the Principal Songs*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1923.
- Novák, Josef, *On Masaryk: Texts in English and German*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1988.
- O'Malley, Lurana Donnels, *The Dramatic Works of Catherine the Great: Theatre and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Russia*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006.
- Okhlopkov, Nikolai, 'Iz rezhisserskoi eksplikatsii "Gamleta"', *Teatr*, 1955/1, 60-73.
- Olesha, Yuri, *A List of Assets, Envy and Other Works by Yuri Olesha*, New York, Anchor Books, 1967.
- Olivier, Laurence, 'Shakespeare, William, "Hamlet": the Play and the Screenplay', *Hollywood Quarterly*, 3/3 (1948), 293-300.
- O'Neil, Catherine, *With Shakespeare's Eyes: Pushkin's Creative Appropriation of Shakespeare*, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2003.
- Orkin, Martin, *Local Shakespeare: Proximations and Power*, London, Routledge, 2005.

- Ostrovsky, Arkady, 'Shakespeare as a Founding Father of Socialist Realism: The Soviet Affair with Shakespeare', in Irena Makaryk and Joseph G. Price (eds.), *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, 56-83.
- 'Pervii dispiut o "Gamlete" v teatre Vakhtangova', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 1932/25 (5 June),
- 'Preodolet' otstavanie dramaturgii', *Pravda*, 7 April 1952.
- 'Prokofiev hopes for the arrival of a period of "new simplicity" in music', *Los Angeles Evening Express*, 19 February 1929.
- P.E., 'Otello v Malom Teatre', *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 1935/68 (9 December), 5.
- Pāberzs, L., 'Radoša drosme un degsme', *Literatūra un Māksla*, 1954/27 (4 July), 3.
- Palmer, Daryl W., *Writing Russia in the Age of Shakespeare*. Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004.
- Parker, Patricia and Geoffrey Hartman (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, London, Methuen, 1985.
- Partan, Olga, 'The Jester-Queen of Russian Pop Culture', *The Russian Review*, 66/ 3 (July 2007), 483-500.
- Pasternak Slater, Ann, 'Indirect Dissidence, Pasternak, and Shakespeare', in Ruth Morse (ed.), *Hugo, Pasternak, Brecht, Césaire*, Great Shakespearians Vol. 14, London, Bloomsbury, 2014, 55-112.
- Pasternak, Boris, 'K perevodam shekspirovskikh dram', in Kornei Chukovskii (ed.), *Masterstvo perevoda*, Vol. 6, Moscow, Sovetskii pisatel', 1970, 341-363.
- Pasternak, Boris, 'Zametki perevodchika', *Znamia* 1/2 (1944), 165-168.
- Pasternak, Boris, *I Remember: Sketch for an Autobiography*, Cambridge MA and London, Harvard University Press, 1983.
- Pasternak, Boris, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, s prilozheniiami: v odinnadtsati tomakh*, Moscow, Slovo, 2003-2005.
- Pasternak, Evgenii, *Boris Pasternak: materialy dlia biografii*, Moscow, Sovetskii pisatel', 1989.
- Pasternak, Evgenii, 'K istorii perevoda "Gamleta"', in Vitalii Poplavskii (ed.), *Gamlet Borisa Pasternaka: Versii i varianty perevoda shekspirovskoi tragedii*, Moscow and St Petersburg, Letnyi sad, 1944, 5-11.
- Pavis, Patrice, *Analyzing Performance: Theatre, Dance, and Film*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 2003.
- Pavis, Patrice, *L'Analyse des spectacles: théâtre, mime, danse, danse-théâtre, cinéma*, Paris, Nathan, 1996.

Pavis, *Vers une théorie de la pratique théâtrale: Voix et images de la scène*, Villeneuve, Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2000.

Petchenina, Ludmilla and Gérard Abensour, 'Egyptian Nights In Search of the "New Simplicity"', *Three Oranges*, No. 7 (May 2004), 11-15.

Petukhova, Svetlana, 'Pervaia redaktsiia baleta Prokof'eva "Romeo i Dzhul'etta": Istochnikovedcheskie problem izucheniia', PhD dissertation, MGK im. P.I. Chaikovskogo, 1997.

Philips, Anthony (ed.) *Sergey Prokofiev: Diaries 1924–1933: Prodigal Son*, London, Faber, 2012.

Picon-Vallin, Béatrice, 'Vers un théâtre musical: Les propos de Vsevolod Meyerhold', in Laurent Feneyrou (ed.), *Musique et Dramaturgie: Esthétique de la Représentation au Xxe Siècle*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 2003, 45-64.

Pigulevskii, V., 'Gamlet: K gastroliam Daugavpilskego russkogo teatra v Rige', *Sovetskaia molodezh'*, 1954/129 (2 July), 3.

Piotrovskii, Adrian, 'Diktatura', *Zhizn' iskusstva*, 1920/584-585 (17-18 October), 2.

Piotrovskii, Adrian, 'Romeo i Djulietta v teatre-studii p/r Radlova', *Rabochii i teatr*, 1934/14, 10.

Pocknell, Pauline (ed.), *Franz Liszt and Agnes Street-Klindworth: A Correspondence*, New York, Pendragon Press, 1999

Poplavskii, Vitalii (ed.), "'Gamlet" Borisa Pasternaka: Versii i varianty perevoda shekspirovskoi tragedii, Moscow and St Petersburg, Letnyi sad, 2002.

Popovich, Anton, *Problemy khudozhestvennogo perevoda*, Moscow, Tcherniavskoi, 1980.

Posner, Dassia, 'Life, Death and Disobedient Obedience', in Dassia Posner, Claudia Orenstein and John Bell (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*, New York and London, Routledge, 2014, 130-143.

Price, Joseph G. (ed.), *Hamlet: Critical Essays*, London and New York, Routledge, 2014 (orig. pub. 1986).

Prikhod'ko, Irina and A. Riabova (eds.), *Slovo i obraz Shekspira v poezii XX veka*, Vladimir, Vladimirkii Gosudarstvennyi Pegagogicheskii Universitet, 2002.

Proffer, Carl (ed.), *The Critical Prose of Alexander Pushkin*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1969.

Prokhorov, Aleksandr, *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, 3rd edn., Moscow, Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1970-.

Prokof'ev, Sergey, 'Izuchaite tekst, teatr, orkestr: Beseda s S.S. Prokof'evym', *Teatr i dramaturgiia*, 1936/41, 489-491.

- Prokofieff, Serge, 'Soviet Audience and My Work', *Soviet Travel* 1934/3, repr. in *Three Oranges*, No. 7, (May 2004), 17.
- Prokofiev, Serge, *Soviet Diary 1927 and Other Writings*, Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1991.
- Pyman, Avril, *The Life of Aleksander Blok*, Vol. 2 (*The Release of Harmony: 1908-1921*), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Raaben, Lev (ed.), *Shekspir i muzyka*, Leningrad, Muzyka, 1964.
- Rabinovich, David, *Dmitry Shostakovich*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1959.
- Rackin, Phyllis, *Shakespeare and Women*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Radek, Karl, 'Na shekspirovskom fronte', *Izvestiia*, 1936/141, 3.
- Radlov, Sergei, *Desyat' let v teatre'*, Leningrad, Priboi, 1929.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Gamlet iz besedy s akterami', *Iskusstvo i zhizn'*, 1938/3, 17-20.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Iubilei Shekspira v SSSR v 1939 g.', *Moskovskii nabliudatel'*, 1997/1-2, 22-26.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Iunost' teatra', *Teatr i dramaturgiia*, 1935/6, 23.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'K postanovke v Akdrame', *Rabochii i teatr*, 1927/16 (19 April), 6.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'K sovetskoi opere', *Zhizn' iskusstva*, 1929/1 (1 January), 6.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Kak ia stavliu Shekspira', in Aleksandr Gvozdev (ed.), *Nasha Rabota nad klassikami*, Leningrad, Goslitizdat, 1936, 11-71.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Kak nam igrat' Shekspira?', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 20 April 1939, 4.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Kak stavit' Shekspira', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 10 February 1935, 4.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Massovye postanovki', in Radlov, *Stat'i o teatre: 1918-1922*, 41-45.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Meierhol'd i Meierhol'dovshchina', *Literaturnyi Leningrad*, 27 March 1936, 6.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Moi vstrechi s Ostuzhevym', in V. Finkel'shtein, *Ostuzhev – Otello*, Leningrad and Moscow, Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo, 1938, 39.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Moia vstrecha s Gosetom', *Rabochii i teatr*, 1935/8, 23.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Nashi plani na 1940 god', *Iskusstvo i zhizn'*, 1940/1, 48.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Oktiabrskaiia instsenirovka na Neve', *Desiat' let v teatre'*, Leningrad, Priboi, 1929.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Rabota nad Shekspirom', *Teatr*, 1939/4, 61-69.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Romeo i Dzhulietta – baleta', *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo*, 1935/29 (23 June), 3.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Shekspir i problemy rezhissury', *Teatr i dramaturgiia*, 1936/2, 57-62.

- Radlov, Sergei, *Stat'i o teatre: 1918-1922*, Petrograd, Mysl', 1923.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'V boiakh za Lira', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 5 January 1935, 2.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Vindzorskie prokaznitsy', *Zhizn' iskusstva*, 1920/607 (12 November), 1.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Voin li Otello?', *Literaturnyi kritik*, 1936/3, 110-117.
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Yunost' teatre', *Teatr i dramaturgiia*, June 1935, 23
- Radlov, Sergei, 'Zapiski o Gamlete', *Teatral'naia zhizn'*, 2001/2, 46-48.
- Radlova, Anna, 'Kak ia rabotaiu nad perevodom Shekspira', in *Literaturnyi sovremennik*, 3 (1934), 138-145.
- Radlova, Anna, 'O perevode', *Leningradskii gosudarstvennyi teatr pod rukovodstvom zaslužennogo artista respubliki S.E. Radlova – 'Gamlet'*, Leningrad, Isskustvo, 1938, 23-30.
- Radlova, Anna, 'O roli i otvetstvennosti perevodchika', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 11 April 1934, 4.
- Radlova, Anna, 'Perevody Shekspira', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 4 December 1935, 4.
- Ravdin, Boris, 'Sergei Radlov – k postanovke Rizhskoi biografii', in Irina Tsygal'skaia (ed.), *Rizhskii al'manakh No. 3(8)*, Riga, LORK, 2012, 182-184.
- Riley, John, *Dmitri Shostakovich: A Life in Film*, London, I. B. Tauris, 2005.
- Robertson, Robert, *Eisenstein and the Audiovisual: The Montage of Music, Image and Sound in Cinema*, London and New York, I.B. Tauris, 2009.
- Robinson, Harlow (ed.), *Selected Letters of Sergei Prokofiev*, Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1998.
- Robinson, Harlow, 'Love for Three Operas: The Collaboration of Vsevolod Meyerhold and Sergei Prokofiev', *The Russian Review*, 45 (1986), 287-304.
- Roesner, David, *Musicality in Theatre: Music as Model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre Making*, Farnham and Burlington, Ashgate, 2014.
- Roesner, David, 'The Pgolitics of the Polyphony of Performance', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 18 (2008/1), 44-55.
- Rokotov, T., "'Sheksperiment" realisticheskogo teatra', *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 19 April 1936.
- Rosenberg, Marvin, 'Hamlet and Russian Culture', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 31/1 (1980), 103-104.
- Rosenberg, Marvin, *The Masks of Hamlet*, London, Associated University Press, 1992.
- Rothwell, Kenneth, *A History of Shakespeare on Screen: A Century of Film and Television*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Roubine, Jean-Jacques, *Introduction aux grandes theories du théâtre*, Paris, Dunod, 1998.
- Rowe, Eleanor, *Hamlet: A Window on Russia*, New York, New York University Press, 1976.

- Rudnitsky, Konstantin, *Meyerhold the Director*, Ann Arbor, Ardis, 1981.
- Rudnitskii, Konstantin (ed.), *Mikhoels: Stat'i, besedy, rechi. Vospominaniia o Mikhoelse*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1965.
- Rudnitsky, Konstantin, *Russian and Soviet Theatre: Tradition and the Avant-Garde*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1988.
- Russell, Robert and Andrew Barratt (eds.), *Russian Theatre in the Age of Modernism*, Houndmills, Macmillan, 1990.
- Rutter, Carol, *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare's Stage*, London, Routledge, 2001.
- Rybnikova, Mariia, *Blok-Gamlet*, Moscow, Svetlana, 1923.
- Rylance, Mark. *The Big Secret Live 'I am Shakespeare' Webcam Daytime Chatroom Show!: A Comedy of Shakespearean Identity Crisis*, London, Nick Hern Books, 2012.
- Rzhevsky, Nicholas, *The Modern Russian Theater: A Literary and Cultural History*, Armonk NY, M.E. Sharpe, 2009.
- Rzhevsky, Nicholas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Sabant, Philippe, 'Est-ce la fin du jdanovisme?', *Esprit*, Nouvelle série 1954/212 (3) (March), 387-403.
- Samarin, Roman and Aleksandr Nikoliukin (eds.), *Shakespeare in the Soviet Union: a Collection of Articles*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1966.
- Sammons, Eddie, *Shakespeare: A Hundred Years on Film*, Lanham MD, The Scarecrow Press, 2004.
- Sanders, Julie, *Adaptation and Appropriation: The New Critical Idiom*, London and New York, Routledge, 2006.
- Sanders, Julie, *Shakespeare and Music: Afterlives and Borrowings*, Cambridge, Polity, 2013.
- Sarnov, Benedikt (ed.), *Stalin i pisateli*, Moscow, Eksmo, 2008.
- Schmidgall, Gary, *Shakespeare and Opera*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Schoch, Richard, *Not Shakespeare: Bardolatry and Burlesque in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Schuler, Catherine, *Theatre & Identity in Imperial Russia*, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 2009.

- Schultze, Brigitte, 'Shakespeare's Way into the West Slavic Literatures and Cultures', in Dirk Delabastita and Lieven D'Hulst (eds.), *European Shakespeares: Translating Shakespeare in the Romantic Age*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, J. Benjamins, 1993, 55-74.
- Schwarz, Boris, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia: Enlarged Edn. 1917-1981*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1983.
- Semenenko, 'No Text is an Island: Translating Hamlet in Twenty-first-century Russia', in Brian Baer (ed.), *Contexts, Subtexts and Pretexts: Literary Translation in Eastern Europe and Russia*, Amsterdam, J. Benjamins, 2011, 249-264.
- Semenenko, Aleksei, "'Gamletovskii kontekst" Borisa Pasternaka', *Scando-Slavica*, 51 (2005), 31-48.
- Semenenko, Aleksei, 'Making the Soviet Shakespeare Canon: The "Realist" Translation', unpublished paper read at World Shakespeare Congress, London, August 2016.
- Semenenko, Aleksei, *Hamlet the Sign: Russian Translations of Hamlet and Literary Canon Formation*, Stockholm, Stockholm University, 2007
- Senelick, Laurence (ed.), *Russian Dramatic Theory from Pushkin to the Symbolists: An Anthology*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1981.
- Senelick, Laurence and Sergei Ostrovsky (eds.), *The Soviet Theatre: A Documentary History*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2014.
- Senelick, Laurence, 'Mikhail Chekhov and Shakespeare', in Marie-Christine Autant-Mathieu and Yana Meerzon (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Michael Chekhov*, New York, London, Routledge, 2015, 149-155.
- Senelick, Laurence, *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet: a Reconstruction*, Westport CT, Greenwood, 1982.
- Senelick, Laurence, *Serf Actor: The Life and Art of Mikhail Shchepkin*, Westport CT, Greenwood Press, 1984.
- Seng, Peter, *The Vocal Songs in the Plays of Shakespeare: A Critical History*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1967
- Senin, M. 'Gamlet: spektakl' teatra im. Leningradskogo soveta', *Kurortnaia gazeta Sochi*, 15 September 1940.
- Sergay, Tomothy, 'Boris Pasternak's "Christmas Myth": Fedorov, Berdiaev, Dickens, Blok', PhD dissertation, University of Yale, 2008.
- 'Sezon v Teatre imeni Lensoveta', *Leningradskaia pravda*, 2 November 1940.
- Shakespeare, William, *Hamlet*, H.H. Furness (ed.), New York, J. B. Lippincott, 1877.

- Shakespeare, William, *Hamlet*, Susanne Wofford (ed.), Boston and New York, Bedford, 1974.
- Shebalina, Alisa, V.Ia. *Shebalin: Gody zhizni i tvorchestva*, Moscow, Sovetskii kompozitor, 1990, 129.
- Sheinberg, Esti, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000.
- Sherekh, Iurii [George Shevelev], *Druha cherha: literatura, teatr, ideolohii*, New York, Suchasnist, 1978.
- Sherry, Samantha, 'Censorship in Translation in the Soviet Union in the Stalin and Khrushchev Eras', PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2012, also at <https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/7586>, accessed 4 November 2013.
- Shlifstein, Semyon (ed.), *Sergei Prokofiev: Autobiography, Articles, Reminiscences*, Moscow, Foreign Language Publishing House, 1959.
- Shostakovich, Dmitri, 'Zametka o muzyke k postanovke "korolya Lira" v BDT im. M. Gor'kogo v 1941 godu', in "*Korol' Lir*" v Bolshom dramaticheskome teatre im. M. Gor'kogo, Leningrad-Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1941, 62.
- Shostakovich, Dmitri, 'Deklaratsiia obiazennosti kompozitora', *Rabochii i teatr*, 1931/31, (20 November), 6.
- Shurbanov, Aleksandr and Boika Sokolova (eds.), *Painting Shakespeare Red: An East-European Appropriation*, London, Associated University Presses, 2001.
- Shurbanov, Alexander, 'The Translatability of Shakespearean Texts into an Unrelated Language/Culture', in Rui Carvalho Homem and Ton Honselaars (eds.), *Translating Shakespeare for the Twenty-First Century*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2004, 51-64.
- Shurbanov, Alexander and Boika Sokola, 'Translating Shakespeare under Communism: Bulgaria and Beyond', in Ton Hoenselaars (ed.), *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation*, London, The Arden Shakespeare, 2004, 82-97.
- Shurbanov, Alexander and Boika Sokolova, 'From the Unlove of *Romeo and Juliet* to *Hamlet* without the Prince: A Shakespearean Mirror held up to the fortunes of the New Bulgaria', in Michael Hattaway, Boika Sokolova and Derek Roper (eds.), *Shakespeare and the New Europe*, Sheffield. Sheffield University Press, 1994, 24-53.
- Sillito, David, 'Hamlet: The Play Stalin Hated', *BBC News Magazine*, 22 April, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17770170>, accessed 26 November 2015.
- Simmons, Ernest, 'Catherine the Great and Shakespeare', *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 47/3 (September 1932), 790-806.

- Simmons, Ernest, *English Literature and Culture in Russia (1553-1840)*, New York, Octagon Books, 1964.
- Slonim, Marc, *Russian Theatre from the Empire to the Soviets*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1961.
- Smeliansky, Anatoly, *The Russian Theatre after Stalin*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999
- Smirnov, Aleksandr, 'O russkikh perevodakh Shekspira', *Zvezda*, (1934/4), 165-172.
- Smirnov, Aleksandr, *Tvorchestvo Shekspira*, Leningrad, Bolshoi dramaticheskii teatr im. Gorkogo, 1934.
- Sokolianskii, Mark, 'Osnovnye tendentsii v otechestvennom shekspirovedenii 1960-1980-ikh godov', in G. Krasnov and A. Viktorovich (eds.), *Iz istorii filologii: sbornik statei i materialov: k 85-letiiu G.V. Krasnova*, Kolomna, KTPI, 2006, 72–83.
- Sokolova, Boika, 'Between Ideology and Religion: Some Russian Hamlets of the Twentieth Century', in Peter Holland (ed.), *Shakespeare Survey Vol. 54: Shakespeare and Religion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, 140-151.
- Sokolyansky, Mark, 'Grigori Kozintsev's *Hamlet* and *King Lear*', in Russell Jackson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 199-211.
- Sollertinskii, Ivan, 'Vozmozhnye printsipi sovetskoi operi', *Zhizn' iskusstva*, 1929/32 (11 August), 3.
- Solov'ev, B., 'V poiskakh Gamleta', *Literaturnyi sovremennik*, 1940/12, 140-148.
- Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago: 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, New York, Harper and Row, 1974.
- Sommer, Erich F., *Geboren in Moskau: Erinnerungen eines baltendeutschen Diplomaten 1912-1955*, Munich, Langen Müller, 1997.
- Soule, Charles Carroll, *A Travesty without a Pun!: Hamlet revamped, modernized, and set to music*, St. Louis, G.I. Jones, 1880.
- Stanislavski, Konstantin, *My Life in Art*, London and New York, Routledge, 2008.
- Stanislavskii, Konstantin, *Moia zhizn' v iskusstve*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1972.
- Stalin, Joseph, 'Dialectical and historical materialism', in Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1976, 835-873.
- Steene, Birgitta, *Ingmar Bergman: A Reference Guide*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2005.

- Steinegger, Catherine, *La musique à la Comédie-Française de 1921 à 1964 : Aspects de l'évolution d'un genre*, Sprimont, Pierre Mardaga, 2005.
- Steiner, Goerge, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 3rd edn, 1998 (orig. pub. 1975).
- Stern, Tiffany, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, Oxford, Clarendon, 2000.
- Sternfeld, Frederick, 'The Use of Song in Shakespeare's Tragedies', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 86 (1959), 47.
- Sternfeld, Frederick, *Music in Shakespearean Tragedy*, rev. edn., London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.
- Stites, Richard, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Stites, Richard, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society since 1900*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Stříbrný, Zdeněk, *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Strobl, Gerwin, 'The Bard of Eugenics: Shakespeare and Racial Activism in the Third Reich', *Journal of Contemporary History* 34/3 (1999), 323-336.
- Sumarokov, Aleksandr, *Polnoe sobranie vseh sochinenii*, 2nd edn., Moscow, Izdanie N. Novikova, 1787.
- Sumarokov, *Izbrannii sochineniia*, Leningrad, Sovetskii pisatel', 1957
- Surkova, Ol'ga. "'Gamlet" Andreia Tarkovskogo: Besedy na Lomonosovskom', *Iskusstvo Kino*, 1998/3-4, also at <http://tarkovskiy.su/texty/vospominania/Hamlet.html>, accessed 25 August 2016.
- Tairov, Alexander, 'How we produce the Classics', *Soviet Travel*, 1934/3.
- Tarkovsky, Andrey, *Interviews*, John Gianvito (ed.), Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2006.
- Tarkovsky, Andrey, *Time within Time: The Diaries, 1970-1986*, London, Faber, 1994.
- Taruskin, Richard, 'The Opera and the Dictator: the peculiar martyrdom of Dmitri Shostakovich', *The New Republic*, March 20th 1989, 38-39.
- Taruskin, Richard, *Defining Russia Musically*, Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Taruskin, Richard, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996.

Tchaikovsky, Petr (under pseudonym B.L.), 'The Italian Opera—*Hamlet*, an Opera by Ambroise Thomas', *Russkie vedemosti*, 16/28 December 1872, also at [http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/The Italian Opera. Ambroise Thomas' Opera %22Hamlet%22#ref5](http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/The_Italian_Opera_Ambroise_Thomas'_Opera_%22Hamlet%22#ref5), accessed 17 December 2015.

'Teatr imeni Leningradskogo soveta', *Leningradskaja pravda*, 4 May 1939.

'Teatr v dni otechestvennoi voini', *Leningradskaja pravda*, 1941/ 245 (14 October 1941), 4.

Terras, Victor, *A History of Russian Literature*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1991.

Thomas, Vivian and Nicki Faircloth, *Shakespeare's Plants, Gardens and Landscapes: A Dictionary*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.

Thompson, Ann and Neil Taylor (eds.), *William Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'*, London, Arden/Thomson Learning, 2006.

Thornton Burnett, Mark, Adrian Streete and Ramona Wray (eds.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Shakespeare and the Arts*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2011

'The Soviet "Hamlet": A Strange Production', *The Manchester Guardian*, 30 July 1932.

Thurston, Gary, *The Popular Theatre Movement in Russia, 1862-1919*, Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 1998.

Tolstoy, Vladimir, Irina Bibikova and Catherine Cooke (eds.), *Street Art of the Revolution: Festivals and Celebrations in Russia 1918-33*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1990.

Trilling, Ossia, 'How Different Can One Be?', *World Theatre* 8/1-2 (1964), 96.

Trippett, David, 'Individuation as Worship: Wagner and Shakespeare', in Albright, *Berlioz. Verdi. Wagner. Britten*, 135-157

Trismechistov, A. (Apollon Grigor'ev), 'Gamlet na odnom provintsial'nom teatre', *Repertuar i panteon*, 1846/1, 37-48.

Turchinskaia, Aleksandra, 'Gamlet, Shut datski', *Teatr*, 2011/2, also at <http://oteatre.info/gamlet-shut-datskij/>, accessed 10 September 2016.

Turgenev, Ivan, 'Rech' o Shekspire', in *Turgenev: Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v dvadtsati vos'mi tomakh: Sochineniia v piatnadtsati tomakh*, Moscow, Akademiia Nauka, 1968, Vol. 15, 50, orig. pub. in *SPB vedemosti*, 1864/89 (24 April).

Turovskaia, Maia, *Pamiati tekushchego mgnoveniia: ocherki, portreti, zametki*, Moscow, Sovetskiy pisatel', 1987.

Turovskaia, Maia, 'Vmeste s akterom ili vmesto aktera?', *Sovetskaia Kultura*, 25 November 1954, 219.

Tvarkoi, Konstantin, 'Printsiipial'nyi spektakl': Zametki rezhissera', *Literaturnyi Leningrad* 1934/2, 2.

Urnov, Dmitrii, 'Kak Stalin "Gamleta" zapretil', *Nash sovremennik*, 2012/2, 218-237, also at <http://nash-sovremennik.ru/archive/2012/n2/1202-19.pdf>, accessed 14 October 2016.

'Uspekh *Otello*', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 17 February 1936 [No. 8], 4.

Vendrovskaiia, Liubov', 'Rabota Kabinetna Shekspira Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo', in Mikhail Morozov *et al.* (eds.), *Shekspirovskii sbornik 1947*, Moscow, Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo, 1948, 254-263.

Vendrovskaiia, Liubov', Fevral'skiy, A., *et al.* (eds.), *Tvorcheskoe nasledie Vs.E. Meierkhol'da*, Moscow, Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo, 1978.

Venuti, Lawrence (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000.

Venuti, Lawrence, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*, London and New York, Routledge, 1998.

Venuti, Lawrence, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, London, Routledge, 1995.

Vertsmann, Izrail', *Gamlet Shekspira*, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1964.

Vest, James M., *The French Face of Ophelia from Belleforest to Baudelaire*, New York: University Press of America, 1989.

Viktorov, Veniamin, *et al.* (eds.), *KPSS o kul'ture, prosveshchenii i nauke: Sbornik dokumentov*, Moscow, Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1963.

Vilenkin, Vitalii, (ed.), *Perepiska (1896-1959), Vospominaniia ob O.L. Knipper-Chekhovoi*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1972.

Vishnevskaiia, Inna, *et al.* (eds.), *Istoriia sovetskogo dramaticheskogo teatra v shesty tomakh*, Vol. 5: 1941-1953, Moscow, Nauka, 1969.

Vlasova, Ekaterina, *1948 god v sovetskoy muzyke*, Moscow, Klassika-XXI, 2010.

Volkov, Nikolai, *Meierkhol'd*, Moscow and Leningrad, Akademiia, 1929.

Volkov, Solomon, *Testimony*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1979.

Vovsi-Mikhoels, Nataliia, *Moi Otets Solomon Mikhoels (vospominaniia o zhizni i gibeli)*, Tel-Aviv, Iakov Press, 1984.

Vronchenko, Mikhail, 'Ot perevchika', Shekspir, Uilyam, *Gamlet: Tragediia v 5 deystviiakh*, Saint Petersburg, V tipografii med. departamenta Ministerstva vnutrennikh del, 1828, i-xxiv.

- Vygotskii, Lev, *Psikhologiia iskusstva*, Moscow, Iskustvo, 1986.
- Vyshnevetskii, Igor, *Sergei Prokof'ev*, Moscow, Molodaya Gvardiia, 2009.
- Vysotsky, Vladimir, *Sochineniia v 2 tomakh*, Vol. 2, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1991.
- Vysotsky, Vladimir, *Vladimir Vysotsky: Hamlet with a Guitar*, Yuri Andreyev and Iosif Boguslavsky (eds.), Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1990.
- Wagner, Linda W. 'Ophelia: Shakespeare's Pathetic Plot Device', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 14/1 (1963), 94-98.
- Wagner, Richard, 'Art and Revolution', in William Ashton Ellis (ed.), *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, New York, Broude, 1966, Vol. 1, 21-65.
- Warren, Jill, 'Acculturating Shakespeare: The Tactics of Translating his Works under Stalin in the Light of Recent Theoretical Advances in Translation Studies', PhD dissertation, University of Nottingham, 2015.
- Weber, Samuel, *Theatricality as Medium*, New York, Fordham University Press, 2004.
- Wells, Stanley, *The Poet and His Plays*, London, Methuen, 1994.
- White, Richard, *Avant-Garde Hamlet: Text, Stage, Screen*, Lanham MD, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015.
- White, Richard, 'Shakespeare Criticism in the Twentieth Century', in Margareta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, 279-295.
- Wilcock, Mike, *Hamlet – the Shakespearean Director*, Dublin, Craysfort, 2002.
- Wilson, Christopher R. and Michela Calore, *Music in Shakespeare: A Dictionary*, New York and London, Continuum, 2005.
- Wilson, Christopher R., 'Shakespeare, William', *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn., Vol. 23, 192-198, London, Macmillan, 2001, also at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/public/page/shakespeare_william, accessed 21 June 2016.
- Wilson, Christopher R., *Shakespeare's Musical Imagery*, London, Continuum, 2011.
- Wilson, Christopher, *Shakespeare and Music*, London, The Stage, 1922.
- Wilson, Deborah, 'Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet: History of a Compromise', PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 2003.
- Wilson, Elizabeth, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, rev. edn., London, Faber, 2006.

- Wilson, John Dover, *What Happens in Hamlet*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1935.
- Winner, Thomas, 'Chekhov's "Seagull" and Shakespeare's "Hamlet": A Study of a Dramatic Device', *The American Slavic and East European Review*, 15/1 (February 1956), 103-111.
- Witt, Susanna, 'Arts of Accommodation: The First All-Union Conference of Translators, Moscow, 1936, and the Ideologization of Norms', in Leon Burnett and Emily Lygo (eds.), *The Art of Accommodation*, Oxford, Peter Lang, 2013, 141–184.
- Wood, Paul, *The Challenge of the Avant-Garde*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1999.
- Worrall, Nick, *Modernism to Realism on the Soviet Stage: Tairov-Vakhtangov-Okhlopkov*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989
- Young, Alan R., 'Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Visual Representations of the Graveyard Scene in *Hamlet*', in Hardin L. Aasand (ed.), *Stage Directions in Hamlet: New Essays and New Directions*, Madison, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003, 189-213.
- Young, Alan R., *Hamlet and the Visual Arts, 1709-1900*, Newark, University of Delaware Press and London, Associated University Press, 2002.
- Zabolotniaia, Marina, 'Gamlet v postanovke N.P. Akimova', in Vladimir Zaitsev, M. Liubimova and V. Mironova (eds.), *Akimov - eto Akimov!*, Saint Petersburg, Rossiiskaia natsional'naia biblioteka, 2006, 78-120.
- Zabolotniaia, Marina, Introductory article to 'Obsuzhdenie akimovskogo Gamleta: VTO Kabinet Shekspira, 29 sent. 1943 g.', in Vladislav Ivanov, *Mnemozina: Dokumenty i fakty iz istorii otechestvennogo teatra XX veka*, Vypusk 3, Moscow, Artist – Rezhisser - Teatr, 2004, 393-396.
- Zabolotniaia, Marina, 'Ironia sud'by, ili oshibka v istorii gamletyady', *Teatral'naia zhizn'*, 2000/4, 13-14.
- Zaitsev, Vladimir, M. Liubimova and V Mironova (eds.), *Akimov – eto Akimov!*, St Petersburg, Rossiiskaia natsional'naia biblioteka, 2006.
- Zakharov, Nikolai and Vladimir Lukov, 'Shekspir i shekspirizm v Rossii', *Znanie. Ponimanie. Umenie*, 2009/1, 98-106.
- Zakharov, Nikolai, 'Hamlet on the Post-Soviet Stage', *Global Shakespeare Journal*, I/2 (March 2014), 179-191.
- Zakharov, Nikolai, *Shekspirizm russkoi klassicheskoi literatury: Tezarusnyi analiz*, Moscow, Moskovskii Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2008.
- Zapadov, Aleksandr, *Zabytaia slava: Opasnyi dnevnik*, Moscow, Sovetskii pisatel', 1976.
- Zhezhelenko, Leonid, 'V soiuze s Shekspirom', *Rabochii i teatr*, 1934/14, 11.

Zhirmunskii, Viktor, *Bajron i Pushkin. Pushkin i zapadnye literatury*, Leningrad, Nauka, 1978.

Zhitomirskii, Daniil', 'Shekspir i Shostakovich', in Givi Ordzhonokidze (ed.), *Dmitry Shostakovich*, Moscow, Sovetskii kompozitor, 1976, 121-131.

Zinkevich, Elena, 'Muzyka k pervomu Gamletu', *Sovetskaia muzyka*, 1971/5, 94-100.

Zoilova, Armans, 'V plane i razreze', *Krokodil*, 1932/17 (June).

Zolotnitskii, David, 'Gody, lichnost', sud'ba', *Sovetskaia kul'tura*, 22 August 1989, 6.

Zolotnitskii, David, 'Sergei Radlov v Molodom teatre', in M. Mironova, T. Zabozlaeva and O. Skorochkina (eds.), *Rezhisser i vremia*, Leningrad, Leningradskii gosudarstvennyi institut teatra, muzyki i kinotografii, 1990, 44-62.

Zolotnitskii, David, (ed.), *V sporakh o teatre*, St Petersburg, Rossiiskii Institut Istoriia Isskustv, 1992.

Zolotnitskii, David, *Zory teatral'nogo Oktiabria*, Leningrad, Iskusstvo, 1976.

Zolotnitsky, David, *Sergei Radlov: The Shakespearean Fate of a Soviet Director*, Luxembourg, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995.

Zorkaia, Neia and A. Sandler (eds.), *Mir i fil'my Andreia Tarkovskogo: razmyshleniia, issledovaniia, vspominaniia, pis'ma*, Moscow, Iskusstvo, 1991.

Scores

Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, The, John A. Fuller Maitland and William Barclay Squire (eds.), 2 vols., Leipzig, Breitkopf und Härtel, 1899; repub. New York, Dover, 1963; rev. edn., New York, Dover, 1979, Vol. 1.

Prokofiev, Sergei, *Boris Godunov, soch. 70 bis; Gamlet, soch. 77: Muzyka k spektakliam 'Boris Godunov' A. Pushkina i 'Gamlet' U. Shekspira*, Moscow, Sovetskii kompozitor, 1973.

Sats, Il'ia [Incidental music to *Hamlet*, 1911] – see Sats, Natal'ia (ed.), *Il'ia Sats: Iz zapisnykh knizhek - vospominaniia sovremennikov*, Moscow, Sovetskii kompozitor, 1968, 229-232. The manuscripts of the incidental music and musical instructions are kept at the Museum of the Moscow Art Theatre.

Shostakovich, Dmitri, *Collected Works*, Vols. 27, 28, 31, 42, Moscow, Muzyka, 1982-1987.

Shostakovich, Dmitri, *New Collected Works*, Vols. 53, 91, Moscow, DSCH, 2010, 2011.

Slonimsky, Sergei, *Gamlet: Damma per Musica: V trekh deistviakh po tragedii Shekspira*, St Petersburg, Kompozitor, 1997.

Tchaikovsky, Pyotr, *Incidental Music to "Hamlet": Op. 67 bis*, New York, E.F. Kalmus, no date [1974?], (orig. pub. Moscow, Jurgenson, 1892).

Tchaikovsky, Pyotr, *Hamlet: Overture-fantaisie Pour Orchestre, Op. 67*, Moscow, Jurgenson, 1890.

Discography and filmography

Almeryda, Michael (dir.), *Hamlet*, 2000.

Branagh, Kenneth, (dir.), *Hamlet*, 1989.

Kozintsev, Grigori (dir.), *Gamlet*, 1964.

Shostakovich: Hamlet & King Lear, various soloists, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Mark Elder (Signum SIGCD052, 1994).

Webography

‘DSCH : the Life and Creative Work of Dmitri Shostakovich’ - <http://live.shostakovich.ru/>, accessed 14 October 2016.

‘Hamlet Globe to Globe’ - <http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/theatre/whats-on/globe-theatre/hamlet-globe-to-globe> , accessed 30 May 2016.

‘Music in Shakespeare’ database housed at the University of Hull, curated by Christopher R. Wilson, <http://www.shakespeare-music.hull.ac.uk/>, accessed 9 May 2016.

‘Nicolas Evreinov Pièces du répertoire du Miroir tordu: Couverture de Nicolas Akimov’ - <http://bibliophilierusse.blogspot.com/archive/2011/03/16/nicolas-evreinov-pieces-du-repertoire-du-miroir-tordu.html>, accessed 14 October 2016.

Recording of Radlov’s 1935 *Othello* with Ostuzhev - <http://www.maly.ru/news/4433>, accessed 28 August 2016.

Sharifzade, Abbas Mirza, “‘Gamlet’ v azerbaidzhanskom khudozhestvennom teatre’ - http://abbasmirzasharifzade.info/index.php?lang=rus#!/page_ARTICLES, accessed 28 March 2016.

Tchaikovsky Research, Letter 486 - http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/Letter_486, accessed 14 October 2016.

“‘The Amleto Project’: The Discovery and Reconstruction of Faccio’s Hamlet by Anthony Barrese’ - <http://www.operade.org/amleto-project>, accessed 16 August 2016.

29 maia 1954 goda: prem’era ‘Gamleta’ na daugavpilsskoi sstene’ - <http://www.grani.lv/daugavpils/53860-29-maya-1954-goda-premera-gamleta-na-daugavpilsskoy-scene.html>, accessed 14 October 2016.

Appendices

Appendix Table 1: Sergei Radlov's theatre career: An overview

Significant Life Events	Year	Theatre (Petrograd/Leningrad unless stated)	Production	Author/Composer	Remarks
Involvement at Meyerhold's Studio on Borodinskaia Street; writes poems for the Studio's journal <i>Love for Three Oranges</i>.	1913- 1917				
Marries Anna Radlova (née Darmolatova) (1891-1949) Russian poetess and translator.	1914				
Graduates from Philological Faculty of St Petersburg State University.	1916				
Member of repertoire department of Petrograd Theatre Section (TEO) of Narkompros.	1918	Narodnyi dom and Theatre of Experimental Performances	<i>Menaechmi</i>	Plautus	Radlov's own translation, use of masks, costumes and acting techniques of ancient theatre
	1919	The Studio Theatre (<i>Teatr 'Studia'</i>)	<i>The Battle of Salamin</i>	Piotrovsky and Radlov	
Participates in the organisation and directing of two of Petrograd's mass spectacles of 1920.	1920	Mass spectacle	<i>The Siege of Russia</i>		
		Mass spectacle	<i>Towards the World Commune (Part II)</i>		Team project under leadership of K. Marzhanov
		Theatre of Popular Comedy	<i>The Corpse Bride</i>		
Funds and heads the Theatre of Popular Comedy (<i>Teatr narodnogo komediia</i>) together with Vladimir Solovyev, with actors and circus performers in its troupe. Extensive use of techniques of commedia dell'arte.					

After the closure of the Theatre of Popular Comedy, Radlov creates an experimental drama workshop. Experiments include cinema pantomimes – sketches of films never shot. ¹⁰⁵⁴		<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Shakespeare	
		<i>An Adopted Child</i>	Radlov	
	1921	Theatre of Popular Comedy	<i>La jalousie du Barbouillé</i> <i>A Friend</i>	Molière Radlov and Serge
	1922	The Pantomime Theatre of the First Company of Film Actors	<i>A Glass of Malaga</i>	Radlov An example of Radlov's experimental cinema-mimodrama
	1923	The State Academic Drama Theatre (Alexandrinsky)	<i>Poor Eugen</i>	Ernst Toller The playwright was reportedly surprised to encounter Radlov's serious treatment of the play. ¹⁰⁵⁵
	1924	The State Academic Theatre (Alexandrinsky)	<i>Lysistrata</i>	Aristophanes Using his and Piotrovsky's translation. 'In the style of a street show... creating a lively, powerful feeling of antiquity without falling into archaeology or a learned academism. His <i>Lysistrata</i> is both antique and modern.' ¹⁰⁵⁶
		Narodnyi Dom Drama Theatre	<i>Lucrece Borgia</i>	Victor Hugo

¹⁰⁵⁴ Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov: The Shakespearian Fate of a Soviet Director*, 27.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Er. Es. [R. Suslovich], 'Eugen dlia Toller', *Rabochii i teatr*, 1926/16 (20 April), 15.

¹⁰⁵⁶ S. Mokulskii, 'Lysistrata na akademicheskoy stsene', *Leningradskaia pravda*, 1924/229 (7 October), 7.

	1925	The Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre (Kirovsky/Mariinsky)	<i>Der ferne Klang</i>	Franz Schreker (own libretto)	Radlov also produces several operettas and musical
	1926	The Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre	<i>Love for Three Oranges</i>	Carlo Gozzi/Prokofiev	The first production of this opera in the Soviet Union after its premiere in Chicago in 1921
	1927	The Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre	<i>Wozzeck</i>	Berg based on Georg Buchner/Berg	
		The Opera Studio of the Conservatoire	<i>Rigoletto</i>	F. Piave, based on Hugo/Verdi	
		The Free Theatre	<i>Help! Murder!</i>	Schmidthoff	
		Leningrad Circus	<i>October in the Ring</i>	Radlov	
		The State Academic Drama Theatre (Alexandrinsky)	<i>Othello</i>	Shakespeare	
		The College for Stage Arts	<i>Othello</i>	Shakespeare	The same production as at the Alexandrinsky, but using his pupils and disciples who would later become part of Radlov's Theatre Studio
Opens the Young Theatre (<i>Molodoi teatr</i>) featuring his and Solovev's pupils.	1928	The Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre	<i>Boris Godunov</i> <i>Der Rosenkavalier</i>	Pushkin/Musorgsky Hugo von Hofmannsthal/Richard Strauss	
		The Youth Theatre	<i>Manaechmi</i>	Plautus	
	1930	The Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre	<i>Ice and Steel</i>	Deshevov	

Appointed artistic director of the Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre (Mariinsky). Keeps the post until 1934.	1931	The State Jewish Theatre (Moscow)	<i>Four Days (Iulis)</i>	M. Daniel	In collaboration with the actor, Solomon Mikhoels
	1932	Narodnyi Dom Summer Theatre	<i>Oedipus Rex</i>	Sophocles	Open-air performance, an attempt at revival of mass spectacles
		The Young Theatre	<i>Othello</i>	Shakespeare	A new version with Anna Radlova's translation
Awarded the title of Honoured Artist of the RSFSR (<i>Zasluzhenyi artist RSFSR</i>).	1933	The Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre	<i>Das Rheingold</i>	/Wagner	
		The Young Theatre	<i>Ghosts</i>	Ibsen	
The Young Theatre is re-named 'Theatre Studio Headed by Sergei Radlov' (<i>pod rukovodstve S. Radlova</i>). The Theatre soon becomes an authority for Shakespeare productions (using Anna Radlova's translations).	1934	Radlov's Theatre Studio (<i>Teatr studiia pod rukovodstvom Radlova</i>)	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Shakespeare	
		The Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre	<i>The Bakhchisarai Fountain</i>	Pushkin/Asafiev	Ballet
Alongside Adrian Piotrovsky works on the libretto of Prokofiev's ballet version of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>. The ballet will be premiered in 1938 in Brno (Czechoslovakia) and in 1940 in the USSR.	1935	Radlov's Theatre Studio	<i>Othello</i>	Shakespeare	Yet another version, again with Anna Radlova's translations
		The Academic Maly Theatre (Moscow)	<i>Othello</i>	Shakespeare	With the legendary actor, Ostuzhiev as Othello
		The State Jewish Theatre	<i>King Lear</i>	Shakespeare	With Solomon Mikhoels as Lear
Appointed artistic director of Pushkin Academic Theatre.	1936	The Pushkin Academic Theatre (Alexandrinsky)	<i>Saliut, Ispaniia!</i>	Aleksandr Afinogenov	With Akimov as artist and Shostakovich as composer
The word 'studio' disappears from Radlov's troupe. Parallel work on a production of <i>Boris Godunov</i> at Moscow Art Theatre, as a part of the centenary of Pushkin's death. Due to disagreements with Nemirovich-Danchenko work remains unfinished.	1937	Radlov's Theatre Studio	<i>Short tragedies (Malen'kie tragedii)</i>	Pushkin	To coincide with the centenary of Pushkin's death

Resigns from the post of artistic director of Pushkin Academic Theatre.	1938	Radlov's Theatre	<i>Hamlet</i>	Shakespeare	With Anna Radlova's translation, Dmitriev as artist
In May, Radlov's Theatre is renamed The Leningrad Soviet (Lensovet) Theatre (not to be confused with the current Lensovet Theatre in St Petersburg). The Theatre publishes a booklet on their Shakespearean productions and revives <i>Othello</i>, <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> and <i>Hamlet</i> as part of the Shakespeare festival to celebrate the 375th anniversary of his birth.	1939	Radlov's Theatre	<i>The Keys to Berlin</i>	Konstantin Finn	This production and Radlov's own <i>For the Motherland! (Za Rodinu!)</i> are considered unfavourably because of the ongoing Soviet-German non-aggression pact. <i>The Keys to Berlin</i> will return to stage, two months after the start of war in 1941
Radlov and his theatre tour to several Soviet Republics, with <i>Hamlet</i> and <i>An Ideal Husband</i> among other productions.	1940	The Leningrad Soviet (Lensovet) Theatre	<i>An Ideal Husband</i>	Oscar Wilde	
Due to departures and deaths of several members of the troupe, Radlov has to appear as an actor on the stage. Radlov has to abandon his work on a future production of Shakespeare's <i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i>.	1941	The Leningrad Soviet (Lensovet) Theatre	<i>La Dame aux camélias</i>	Dumas (fils)	The last theatre production to be premiered in besieged Leningrad
The Radlovs and Lensovet Theatre are evacuated to Piatigorsk in the Caucasian mountains), soon to be occupied by the Germans.	1942	Radlov's Theatre	Revival of several productions from their repertoire, including <i>Hamlet</i>		
Radlov smuggles in his Jewish mistress, the actress Tamara Jakobson, by changing one letter of her surname and pretending she was a Swedish actress by the name of Jakobsen.					

The Germans send the remaining members of the Theatre troupe, including the Radlovs, with a convoy to Zaparozhie (Ukraine). Radlov organises classes for young actors.	1943	Radlov's Theatre			
The Radlovs and remaining actors are sent to Berlin where they break up into a few groups with Radlovs and a few going to France (near Toulon) and after the liberation to Marseille and Paris.	1944-5	Radlovs and some of the actors of his Theatre	Revival of several productions among them <i>Wrongly accused (Bez vinni vinovat)</i>	Alexander Ostrovsky	
Upon their return to Moscow the Radlovs are arrested and accused of treason and sentenced to ten years in the Gulag. Anna Radlova dies in 1949.					
Radlov is freed in 1953 but not allowed to live in Moscow or Leningrad. He starts working at the Drama Theatre of the Latvian city of Daugavpils and then from 1954 until his death (1958) in Riga Theatre of Russian Drama.	1953	The Drama Theatre in			
	1954	Daugavpils (Latvia)	<i>Hamlet</i>	Shakespeare	
		Riga Theatre of Russian Drama	<i>King Lear</i>	Shakespeare	
	1957		<i>Macbeth</i>	Shakespeare	
	1958		<i>Tevye the Milkman (Tevie der Milchier)</i>	Sholom-Aleichem	Later to become <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i>

Appendix Table 2: Akimov and Shostakovich's Hamlet – musical numbers¹⁰⁵⁷

The order of musical numbers and scenes is here reproduced employing several previously unresearched archival materials, and special care is taken to arrive as close as possible to Akimov's original concept (for all the difficulties associated with that term). This order therefore differs from that suggested by Gerard McBurney for the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's CD recording of the incidental music (Signum SIGCD052, 1994), which in cases of doubt follows Shakespeare's text rather than Akimov's manipulations of it. Any future attempt at reconstructing the production should at least take the newly established order into account. On the other hand, contradictory reports, especially those by Iurii Elagin, suggest that some last-minute changes might have been made in the choice of scenes and music. The famous 'Flute Scene', which according to Elagin was accompanied by the parody of Davidenko's march, might well have been a case in point, given that the 'Hamlet and Rosencrantz' scene with this parody music was excised before the opening night.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Sources for information in columns 1-5 of Appendix Table 2 are in the archive of the Vakhtangov Theatre, Moscow (folder 26, individual items uncatalogued).

Act 1

Musical number according to 'repetiteur's summary' / number in parts	Name of fragment/ in parts (if different)	Scene number	Name of scene	Words or comments	Manuscript, including sketches, piano scores	Number in published full score (p) / suite (s)	Key and metre
1/1	Introduction						4/4 C
2/	Night patrol	1	Night Patrol (<i>Nochnoi dozor</i>)	'To be played complete here and after'			4/4 e
2a/2	Shepherd's pipe - Clarinet solo	2	Bonfire (<i>Koster</i>)	'After Koznovskii's words: "I heard this and I believe it"'	<i>Pastushii rozhok</i> RGALI 6 ¹⁰⁵⁸	3p	3/4 Bb
3/3	Funeral March	3	In the presence of the King (<i>U korolia</i>)	'According to the mise-en-scène after Simonov's words: "spend it at thy will (<i>trat' ego po mere luchshikh sil'</i>)"'	Vakhtangov 1/a	4p, 2s	4/4 bb
4/4	Dancing music; Exit of King and Queen			'After Simonov's "let's go" and finishes with the exit of Shchukin'	RGALI 1/a	5p	2/4 G
5/5	Dining (<i>obedennaia</i>) music			'After Goriunov's "In Denmark incontestably". It is played several times all through the change of scene and ends at the start of the next scene with the signal from Shikhimov'			3/4 G
		4	At Ophelia's	'No music'			
		5	Arsenal	'No music'			
6/6	Flourish	6	Ruins	'Right after the cannon fire following Kozlovskii's "when the vision starts to wander"'			4/4 C
7/7	Dancing music			'Once complete without repeats <i>attacca</i> after Flourish'	Vakhtangov 1/b + 2	8p	4/4 e
8/8	Finale of the First act			'After Goriunov's "I alone will address him"'			4/4 c

¹⁰⁵⁸ Piano score, RGALI, f. 2048, opis 2, ed. khr. 43.

Interval (but in orchestra parts: '30 minutes pause after number 10')

Act 2

Musical number according to 'repetiteur's summary' / number in parts	Name of fragment/ in parts (if different)	Scene number	Name of scene	Words or comments	Manuscript, including sketches, piano scores	Number in published full score (p) / suite (s)	Key and metre
	Passage of the beggars					Track 28a on CD recording ¹⁰⁵⁹	
9/9	The passage of Hamlet with boys/ entrance (<i>vykhod</i>) of Hamlet and boys	7	The court (<i>dvor</i>)	'After Shchukin's "he made haste"'	Vakhtangov 2a	10p	2/4 d (modal flat II and IV)
10/10	Galop of Ophelia and Polonius			'Is played several times after Shchukin's "more hazardous and noxious to hide love than to announce it" (<i>opasnee i vrednei ukrit' liubov, chem ob''iavit' o nei</i>). Finishes with the exit of Shchukin and Vagrin'	Vakhtangov 2b	11p	2/4 C (modal)
	No music	8	Portrait				
	No music	9	Library				
	Scene of Hamlet with Rosencrantz.					12p	2/4 C

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Shostakovich: Hamlet & King Lear*, various soloists, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Mark Elder (Signum SIGCD052, 1994).

11/14	The arrival of the actors – <i>pp</i>			‘Is played in the interlude after Rapoport’s “Too much is not enough” (<i>cherezchur nedostatochno</i>). Several times <i>pp</i> . Finishes with Shchukin’s “All the blessings to you gentlemen”, Polonius to Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern	RGALI 1/c, 1/d		4/4 e (modal)
12/15 (crossed out)	The arrival of the actors - <i>forte</i>			‘After Shchukin’s “On my honour” (<i>po chesti moei</i>), <i>forte</i> finishes with the start of the text of the next scene			
13/16	The arrival of actors - <i>forte</i>	10	The arrival of actors	‘After Goriunov’s “tomorrow we will give a performance”, ends at the same time as the curtains fall’			
/11	Exit (<i>ukhod</i>) of Polonius with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern				RGALI 1/b	14p	2/4 E
(14 crossed out) 12/17	Dialogue of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern			‘It is played during the intermedia after Goriunov’s “in order to ambush the King’s conscience” and his exit. It is played several times <i>pp</i> finishing with Rapoport’s words “Either no, or go” (<i>libo net, libo ukhodi</i>) is played to the end			4/4 c
15 crossed out, 13/18	Hunt	11	Hunt	‘Played complete after the previous number’	Vakhtangov 3 (No. 13) ¹⁰⁶⁰ , 3 ^v rephrase and repeat	16p, 4s	2/4 f#
16 crossed out, 14/19	Finale of the second act			‘After Simonov’s “Madness of the strong requires observation”			
Interval							

¹⁰⁶⁰ Shostakovich’s manuscripts at the Vakhtangov theatre carry two different paginations.

Act 3

Musical number according to 'repetiteur's summary' / number in parts	Name of fragment/ in parts (if different)	Scene number	Name of scene	Words or comments	Manuscript, including sketches, piano scores	Number in published full score (p) / suite (s)	Key and metre
17 crossed out, 15/20	Instruments tuning up	12	Cellar	'Together with rising of panel curtain (<i>paduga</i>) with the signal of pomrezh (assistant-director)'	Vakhtangov 2c (top of page: 3 rd Act: rehearsal of the show)	19p (only in piano score)	
18 crossed out, 16/21	Introduction (Hamlet's advice to actors)			'After Goriunov's "I beg you ...avoid this"'	Vakhtangov 2d	20p	4/4 d (modal)
17/22	Love scene (<i>kusok</i>) of King and Queen'			'After Goriunov's "vkhodit"'		21p	3/4 G
20 crossed out, 18A	First love bit (<i>kusochik</i>)			'After Ianovskii's "In High esteem and love"'			
21 crossed out, 18b	Second bit 'with another spouse'			'After Ianovskii's "with a different espouse"'			
22 crossed out, 18v	Third bit			'After Tutyshkin's "O mercy (<i>O poshchadi</i>)"'			
23 crossed out, 18g	Fourth bit/ 'and I shall become a wife again'			After Tutyshkin's "I give you my love for eternity"'			3/4 d flat
24 crossed out 19	'Dispel sleep'			'After Iankovskii's "and happy on the day of trouble, dispel sleep"'			4/4 D
25 crossed out, 20/ 25	Entrance of the poisoner			'After Goriunov's "he pours poison into the ear of the King"'		22p	3/4 non-tonal
26 crossed out, 21/ 26	Music of poisoning			'After Goriunov's "drop your silly jokes and start"'			4/4 non-tonal

27 crossed out, 22a/27	Drum roll, <i>attacca</i>			‘After Zhuravlev’s “to destroy life of the living”, just as the poison is being poured, after the container is dropped		
28 crossed out, 22b/28	Exit of the poisoner				24p	4/4 wandering tonal
29 crossed out, 23/29	Passionate action of the Queen			‘After Goriunov’s “the Queen returns”’	25p (Scene after exit of poisoner)	3/4 Eb
30 crossed out, 24/30	‘It will be a prison’/(no title)			‘After Tutyshkin’s “ my beloved, it will be a prison for me”’		
31 crossed out, 25/31	‘I give you my love for eternity’/ (no title)			‘After Tutyshkin’s “I give you my love for eternity”’		
32 crossed out, 26/32	Dialogue of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern / (mimo= to be left out)			‘After Goriunov’s “So I will pay the theft”’. It is played several times <i>pp</i> and finishes with Mironov’s “Most stupid people”, until the end .../ (pencilled in: “Pantomim”)		
33 crossed out 27/34	Entrance of guests / arrival of guests	13	Show (<i>spektakl</i>)	‘According to mise-en-scène when Goriunov goes up the stairs and hides’	6s (<i>shestvie</i>), 26p	4/4 C
34 crossed out, 28	Entrance of guests			‘After Shchukin’s “Oho, do you hear that?”’		
35 crossed out 29	Introduction of the show ‘4/4 Adagio, 3 bars (No. 16)’ ‘When patter (<i>govorok</i>) is heard from off-stage, <i>attacca</i> to ...’			‘After Goriunov’s “otherwise oblivion threatens him”’		

36	Love scene of King and Queen, 3/4 Andantino (No. 17) 9 bars	
37	First little piece, 3/4 , 1 bar (18a)	‘After Goriunov’s “this means villainy”’
38	Second little piece, 3/4, 1 bar (No. 18 b)	‘After Goriunov’s “How these moppets dance”’
39	Third little piece, 3/4, 1 bar (18v)	‘After Vagrina’s “ You are on a roll (<i>kachki</i>) my prince”’
40	Fourth little piece, 3/4, 1 bar (18 g)	‘After Goriunov’s “a tip before making jokes”’
41	‘Rasseiat snam’, ‘4/4, Andantino, 8 crossed out 4 bars (flute and horns) No. 19 (skipped) <i>attacca</i> to No. 42’	‘After Vagrina’s “what are they showing now?”’
42	Music of poisoning, 4/4, adagio, <i>fff</i> , 6 bars (21)	
/35	/ Exit of guests	
/36	/(no title)	
43/ 37	Drum roll (No. 22a)	‘After Zhuravlev’s “Yes, life is destroyed in the living”’ (Lucian at the end of mousetrap)

Numbers 35 to 43 are framed, probably indicating they belong to the off-stage performance of the Mousetrap.

44 crossed out, 30a/ 38	Flute scene, No. 30	‘After second line of Goriunov “Hey, music”’	27p	4/4, wandering tonality
--------------------------------	---------------------	--	-----	-------------------------

30b				‘Goriunov: “manage these holes using your fingers”’	RGALI 1d (scene with flute)	28p (title: the episode after flute scene)	2/4 g
45 crossed out 31/ 39	Pantomime/ musical pantomime	14	The king is unwell	‘After the closing of panel curtain, with signal of the assistant director’	RGALI (9, 9ob, 10, 10ob, 11, 11ob)	29p	2/4 g
	‘Without music’ (crossed out)	15 crossed out	Prayer (crossed out)				
46 crossed out 32/ 40	‘Hamlet carries body of Polonius’	16	Scene with mother	‘After Goriunov’s “good night mother”, the panel curtain closes; behind it stage wagons (<i>furki</i>) start moving and Hamlet with the body of Polonius on his shoulders, climbs the stairs’			4/4 C
	No music	15	Prayer	(in pencil)			
47, 33/ 41	‘The King drags (<i>tashchit</i>) the Queen’	17	Bedroom scene	‘After Simonov’s “fear and confusion fill my chest”’		31p (The King amuses the Queen)	2/4 Bb
48, 34/ 42	‘When the fencers converge as	18	Fight		RGALI 1 verso a	32p: Fight	2/4 d
/ 43	Rosencrantz’s whistle blows’				RGALI 1 verso b	33p: Carrying of the King (<i>Vynos’ Korolia</i>)	2/4 b
49, 35/ 44	Claudius’s monologue	19	Worms	‘After Simonov’s “what is coming next, I beg you”. (<i>Vynos korolia</i> with the signal of the assistant director)’			4/4 e
Interval (mentioned in parts only)							
/45, 46	/Signals of Fortinbras (mimo= to leave out?)						
50, 36a/	First signal	20	Fortinbras	‘With the signal from the assistant director at the same time as panel curtain rises’			

51, 36b/	I changed to II signal	After (...): ‘Onward slowly’
Crossed out: 52 38v	Crossed out: II signal	‘After Eykhov’s “God bless you ”’, (crossed out)
Crossed out 53, 38g	III signal	‘After Goryunov’s “His power rests in my chest” (all crossed out)?’

Act 4

Musical number according to ‘conductor’s summary’ / number in parts	Name of fragment/ in parts (if different)	Scene number	Name of scene	Words or comments	Manuscript, including sketches, piano scores	Number in published full score (p) / suite (s)	Key and metre
37	Romance for the feast (crossed out)	21	Feast	‘With the signal of the assistant director at the same time as panel curtain rising’			
38/ 47	Feast (crossed out) Cancan			‘As soon as the applauding finishes from previous scene <i>attacca</i> ’	Vakhtangov 7 (11)	8s (<i>Pir</i>), 37p (<i>Kankan</i>)	2/4 F (modal)
39 / 48	Ophelia’s song			‘After Orochko’s “follow her closely”’	RGALI 7, 7 verso, 8	9s, 38p	2/4 Bb
41	Dance (crossed out)						2/4 D
42	Coda (<i>Otygrish</i>) of Ophelia’s song			‘After Simonov’s “like the light in your eyes”’			
/49	/ Ophelia’s parting						
/50	/ Ophelia’s parting						
43/ 51	Flourish			‘After Simonov’s “ And where the guilt is, there fall the ax”’			
	‘No music’	22	Pirates				

		23	King and Laertes				
/52	/ dance music						
44/ 53	Lullaby			‘After Shikhmatov’s “and thus my noble father is murdered”’, crossed out and replaced with “but my revenge will come”	Vakhtangov 5/b (IV act)	39p, 10s	4/4, C
45	Introduction to graveyard	24	Graveyard	‘With the signal of the assistant director at the same time as panel curtain’		Only pianos score (Track 27 on CD)	
	Gravedigger’s song					Only piano score (Track 27b on CD)	
46a	Requiem			‘First 9 bars until the entrance of the chorus. After Goriunov’s “What! Ophelia?”’		11s	4/4 g
46b/ 54	Requiem, complete			‘After panel curtain falls’			
	No music	25	Bathroom (Vanna)				
47/ 55	Joust (<i>Turnir</i>)	26	Final	‘With the signal of assistant director’	RGALI 1 verso/c, Vakhtangov 4a +RGALI:3:Turnir Gamleta 3/4 in F minor	41 p, 12s	2/4 D
48/56	Signalling the beginning of the joust /two blows			‘After Simonov’s “And you watch with the watchful judging eye”’			
49/ 57	Fight, fast and slow, following/ fight A			‘After Shikhmatov’s “Prince starts” to cut on Goriunov’s words “to the judgement”’	Fast <i>boi</i> : RGALI 2b + second half different, Vakhtangov 4c,d Slow <i>boi</i> : Vakhtangov 4ob		

50/ 58	Flourish (<i>tush</i>)	‘After Simonov’s “good health”’		42p	
51/ 59	Fight fast and slow in succession/ fight B	‘After Goriunov’s “it can wait, let’s start”, to cut off on Goriunov’s “another blow”’			Fast: 2/4 around g Slow: 2/4 around g
52/ 60	Flourish	‘After Goriunov’s “ My Lady” to cut with the signal from Simonov’			
53/ 61	Fast and slow fight in succession/ fight A	‘After Shikhmatov’s “You think so? Let’s begin” to cut off on Simonov’s “Separate them! They are huddled”’			
54/ 62	End of joust (<i>turnir</i>)/ end of the tournament (<i>poedinok</i>)	‘After Goriunov’s “The blade is poisoned too”’	Vakhtangov 4 ^v	45p	2/4 g
55/ 63	Fortinbras’s march <i>attacca</i> ‘bodrii kusok’/ first section	‘After Goriunov’s “Pass on the truth about me” <i>pp</i> ’	Vakhtangov 5	46p	2/4 F ‘Bodrii’ from R3
56/ 64	‘Sil’nyi kusok’/ Fortinbras’s March 2 nd section	‘After Kozlov’s “He didn’t know that” (<i>togo ne znal</i>)’			From R6
/ 65	/ Fortinbras’s march 3 rd section				
/ 66	/ Trumpet signal				
57	Final	‘After “An army salute”’			From R7
/ 68	/ Epilogue				Only in piano score at Vakhtangov

Abstracts

Les mises en scène et les mises en musique d'*Hamlet* en ère stalinienne et après

Résumé

Hamlet a longtemps été une partie inséparable de l'identité nationale russe. Cependant, les mises en scène d'*Hamlet* en Union soviétique (surtout en Russie) durant l'époque de Staline présentèrent des problèmes spécifiques liés aux doctrines idéologiques imposées sur les arts et la culture en général ainsi qu'aux idées reçues concernant l'opinion personnelle de Staline envers de la tragédie. Les deux mises en scènes principales d'*Hamlet* en Russie au cours de cette période ont été celles réalisées par Nikolai Akimov (1932) et Sergei Radlov (1938). Un réexamen approfondi de ces mises en scène, entrepris dans les chapitres centraux de cette thèse, révèle des détails précédemment inconnus au sujet de leurs conceptions, réalisations, réceptions et au-delà. Cela met en évidence l'importance du rôle de la musique de scène composée pour elles par Dimitri Chostakovitch et par Sergei Prokofiev, respectivement, et suggère l'interaction complexe des agendas individuels et institutionnels. Ce travail a été rendu possible grâce à de nombreuses visites aux archives russes, qui contiennent de précieux documents tels que des livrets des mises en scène et les rapports sténographiques de discussions, précédemment non référencées à l'Ouest. Ces chapitres centraux sont précédés d'un aperçu historique d'*Hamlet* en Russie et de la musique et de Shakespeare en général. Ils sont suivis par une enquête au sujet des adaptations notables d'*Hamlet* à la fin de l'époque de Staline et après la mort de dictateur, se concentrant sur ceux qui contiennent les contributions musicales les plus importantes. Le résultat est un aperçu plus riche et plus complexe de l'image familière d'*Hamlet* comme miroir de la société russe / soviétique.

Mots-clés : *Hamlet*, Staline, Shakespeare et la musique, le théâtre russe et soviétique, Shakespeare en Russie, Boris Pasternak, Piotr Tchaïkovski, Nikolai Akimov, Dimitri Chostakovitch, Sergei Radlov, Sergei Prokofiev, Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Grigori Kozintsev, Vladimir Vysotsky, Sergei Slonimsky, Alexi Matchavariani, Global Shakespeare, l'appropriation et l'adaptation

Hamlet in the Stalin Era and Beyond: Stage and Score

Summary

Hamlet has long been an inseparable part of Russian national identity. Staging *Hamlet* in Russia during the Stalin era, however, presented particular problems connected with the ideological framework imposed on the arts and culture as well as with Stalin's own negative perceived view of the tragedy. The two major productions of *Hamlet* in Russia during this period were those directed by Nikolai Akimov (1932) and Sergei Radlov (1938). Thorough re-examination of these productions, as undertaken in the central chapters of this dissertation, reveals much previously unknown detail about their conception, realisation, reception and afterlife. It highlights the importance of the role of music composed for them by Dmitry Shostakovich and Sergei Prokofiev, respectively, and it suggests a complex interaction of individual and institutional agendas. This work has been made possible by numerous visits to Russian archives, which contain invaluable documents such as production books and stenographic reports of discussions, previously unreferenced in Western scholarship. These central chapters are preceded by a historical overview of *Hamlet* in Russia and of music and Shakespeare in general. They are followed by a survey of major adaptations of *Hamlet* in the late-Stalin era and beyond, concentrating on those with significant musical contributions. The outcome is a richer and more complex account of the familiar image of *Hamlet* as a mirror of Russian/Soviet society.

Keywords : *Hamlet*, Stalin, Nikolai Akimov, Dmitry Shostakovich, Sergei Radlov, Sergei Prokofiev, Shakespeare and music; Russian/Soviet Shakespeare, Russian/Soviet theatre, Grigori Kozintsev, Sergei Slonimsky, Vladimir Vysotsky, Alexi Machavariani, Boris Pasternak, Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Shakespeare commemorations in the Soviet Union, Global Shakespeare, Appropriation and adaptation.

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

UNIVERSITÉ PARIS-SORBONNE

ÉCOLE DOCTORALE :

ED 5 – Concepts et langages ; Maison de la Recherche, 28 rue Serpente, 75006 Paris, FRANCE

DISCIPLINE : Musique et Musicologie ; Etudes Slaves