

*Mobilizing Performers, Scores,  
and Avant-Gardes: The Warsaw Autumn  
International Festival of Contemporary  
Music in the 1960s<sup>1</sup>*

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In September 1964, after stops in Paris, London, Venice, and Prague, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company arrived in Poland to perform at the Warsaw Autumn. The company presented four dances (Rune, Story, Night Wandering, and Antic Meet), Robert Rauschenberg supplied the décor, and resident musicians John Cage and David Tudor provided the sound. For most of the program, Cage and Tudor managed on their own; for the last number, however, they had requested a cohort of chamber musicians to augment a rendition of Cage's Concert for Piano and Orchestra.<sup>2</sup> They found their collaborators in Musica Viva Pragensis, a new-music ensemble that had assisted the Cunningham Dance Company with its recent appearances in Czechoslovakia, and that, serendipitously, was also scheduled to appear at the 1964 Warsaw Autumn.<sup>3</sup>

Established at the Prague Conservatory in 1961, Musica Viva Pragensis testified to the rising cultural temperature in Eastern Europe: the

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  - <sup>2</sup> ZKP 11/24. Letter, 17 January 1964, David Vaughan to Leokadia Malinowska.
  - <sup>3</sup> Jaroslav Štastný, “Diabolus in Musica Bohemica et Slovaca: The Reception of John Cage’s Music in the Czech Lands and Slovakia,” *Czech Music Quarterly* 9/1 (2012), 32–33.

group was the first ensemble of its kind to be connected with an official Czechoslovak music institution. The formation of Musica Viva Pragensis likewise testified to the appeal (and circulation) of avant-garde ideals across Cold War boundaries. Flautist and composer Petr Kotík, one of the group's founding members, was initially exposed to Western European trends through his artist father.<sup>4</sup> By the time Kotík launched Musica Viva Pragensis, he had already met Nono and was well on his way to becoming a Cage devotee.<sup>5</sup> These affinities were made palpable when, in a literal moment of East-West convergence, Musica Viva Pragensis collaborated with Cage and Tudor at the Warsaw Autumn.

We might understand this episode as one instance in what Richard Toop has called the avant-garde's "expanding horizons." He observes that, during the 1960s, "the number of composers affiliated to the notion of an avant-garde swelled dramatically—even globalized."<sup>6</sup> Musica Viva Pragensis was certainly a sign of this expansion; the Warsaw Autumn's first presentation in 1964 of unofficial (because serial) Soviet composition suggested that notions of a technically progressive postwar avant-garde had spread even farther afield. According to Toop, avant-garde movements in countries such as Cuba, Yugoslavia, and Japan challenged the presumed authority of an international avant-garde that was concentrated in the traditional centers of Italy, France, and West Germany. However, he has less to say about the processes by which this globalization took place.

Charting these processes is my aim in this chapter. The Warsaw Autumn contributed to the development and dissemination of avant-garde music in the 1960s by mobilizing performers and compositions. As with the journeys of the festival's tourists and invited guests, this mobility involved physical as well as metaphorical border crossings. And to an even greater extent than with the visiting nonperformers, the movement of

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4 Viktor Pantůček, "Some Experimental Trends in Post-war Czech Music," *Czech Music Quarterly* 5/1 (2008), 15-17.

5 Štastný, "Diabolus in Musica Bohemica et Slovaca," 33.

6 Richard Toop, "Expanding Horizons: The International Avant-Garde, 1962-1975," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook, Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 453.

musicians and works to and from the Warsaw Autumn illuminates the complex interplay of international and transnational dynamics at festival events, for performers and compositions were visible as state proxies in ways other participants were not. Institutional practices reinforced perceived links between musicians, works, and singular, defined national points of origin: for instance, the flags hung each year at the National Philharmonic Hall during the Warsaw Autumn publicly broadcast the state affiliations of the composers on the program. At the same time, collaborations involving performers from different countries had the potential to suggest alternative groupings—ones that did not conform to state borders or the Cold War's geopolitical oppositions. Perceived affinities between musical works could also suggest the presence of transnational ties.

To highlight the dynamic interplay between mobility that was literal and metaphorical, as well as international and transnational, I will trace the separate paths that brought the Cunningham Dance Company and *Musica Viva Pragensis* to Warsaw in 1964. I am interested not just in these ensembles' individual trajectories, but also in how those journeys intersected with the routes of some of the Warsaw Autumn's other performers. Thus, I will preface my discussion of the Cunningham company's festival appearance by taking a look at the other group of Americans that performed at the 1964 Warsaw Autumn: the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (PSO). Each of these ensembles was traveling as part of an extended, multicountry tour; each of these performances has much to tell us about how festival organizers discovered and imported new music from the West, contributing to the circulation of people, information, ideas, and values across Cold War geopolitical divides. The second half of the chapter then turns to the circulation of new music within the Eastern Bloc. I will juxtapose a discussion of the Warsaw Autumn's dissemination of official music with an examination of the festival's first presentation of unofficial Soviet composition: *Musica Viva Pragensis*'s 1964 performance of Edison Denisov's *Concerto for Flute, Oboe, Piano, and Percussion*.

Although the structure of this chapter reproduces Cold War geopolitical divisions, we will see many similarities between the stories from each side. Regardless of where they were looking for new music in the

early 1960s, festival organizers privileged the composers and performers they believed to be avant-garde. This interest did not mean that festival planners had abandoned the goal of presenting a comprehensive overview of twentieth-century music. But stylistic pluralism at the Warsaw Autumn had always coexisted with hierarchies of aesthetic value, and this remained the case into the 1960s, when avant-garde music was the festival's most prestigious import and export. Organizers' advocacy of abstract, complex, and self-consciously innovative styles of composition and performance therefore challenged some presumptive cultural hierarchies while simultaneously upholding others. More broadly, performances of avant-garde music at the Warsaw Autumn exposed and encouraged the development of cultural affinities that were based on shared aesthetic values of sonic exploration and ongoing technical exploration. In other words, the festival's mobilization of postwar avant-gardes contributed to the formation and perception of a transnational new-music community, one that bypassed state borders and mitigated the Cold War's broadly drawn divides. But although festival organizers were motivated in part by a desire to present an accurate composite image of postwar modernity, the resulting overview was often highly contingent—limited by political factors, access to resources, and the performers themselves. Demonstrations of mobility at the Warsaw Autumn also depended, paradoxically, on rooting musicians and musical works in defined points of origin.

### **Americans in Warsaw, 1964: The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra**

In the Warsaw Autumn's first decade, organizers' curiosity about American music outweighed their access to repertoire and performers. Bringing large Western ensembles to the festival was hugely expensive, and although orchestras from the United States had performed in Poland as part of American government-sponsored cultural diplomatic tours, until

1964 these tours had never included a Warsaw Autumn appearance.<sup>7</sup> It was typically more feasible to engage touring chamber ensembles and to feature soloists who had active performance schedules elsewhere in Europe. Limited access to performers meant that festival audiences tended to encounter American composition in smaller works rather than the orchestral repertoire.

The 1964 visit by the PSO was therefore a unique opportunity for the Warsaw Autumn to present an alternative view of contemporary American music. The orchestra's eleven-week tour in 1964 took the ensemble to fourteen countries in Europe and the Middle East; it included stops in Paris, Edinburgh, Belgrade, and Tehran. When the festival organizing committees began discussing the PSO's program in October 1963, they hoped the group would play music by Gunther Schuller, Elliott Carter, Milton Babbitt, and Charles Ives—a lineup that would foreground post-war American modernism in addition to cementing the increasingly widespread perception of Ives as the father of new music in the United States.<sup>8</sup> These choices reflected what Warsaw Autumn planners already knew about American music. Schuller and Carter were both on the program in 1962; the 1960 Warsaw Autumn had featured Carter's *String Quartet no. 1*.<sup>9</sup> That festival organizers wanted to program these composers' music again in 1964 attests to the persistent prestige in Poland of modernist compositional styles. The request for Ives was part of this larger trend, but likely also sprang from specific acts of advocacy by Americans seeking to shape Polish views on art music from the United States. Carter, for example, had sought to encourage the interest in American culture he discovered during the 1962 Warsaw Autumn by sending his Polish colleagues

7 Jan P. Lee, "Musical Life and Sociopolitical Change in Warsaw, Poland: 1944-1960" (PhD diss., The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1979).

8 ZKP 11/22. Protokół z zebrania Komisji Programowej [Minutes of the Meeting of the Programme Commission], 30 October 1963. For a probing study of Ives's reception, see David C. Paul, *Charles Ives in the Mirror: American Histories of an Iconic Composer* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2013).

9 Tadeusz Kaczyński and Andrzej Zborski, *Warszawska Jesień/Warsaw Autumn* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1983), 275 and 280.

scores by “some older Americans like Ives, Ruggles, Riegger, and Cowell that did not seem to be known.”<sup>10</sup> As Carter explained in his private letter to Paul Fromm, his motivations in selecting these particular composers were very much rooted in Cold War concerns: “I have promised to try and find scores that will support their vision and admiration of us and not just conservative ones that will make us seem too close to the USSR.”<sup>11</sup>

The repertoire the PSO proposed for its Warsaw Autumn performance was no less entangled with the stratagems of Cold War cultural diplomacy, but their selections represented a very different estimation as to the music that would sway Polish public opinion. Festival organizers were hoping for a series of orchestral works by exclusively American composers, but the PSO initially proposed Szymanowski’s *Violin Concerto no. 2*, op. 61, Webern’s *Six Pieces for Orchestra*, op. 6, Hindemith’s *Pittsburgh Symphony*, and Schuller’s *Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee*.<sup>12</sup> This program was aligned with standard cultural diplomatic practices by including works from the host country (the Szymanowski), the visiting nation (the Schuller), as well as some local color from the PSO’s hometown (the Hindemith). It also conformed to the tendency in Cold War diplomacy to treat European music as an implicit universal—the playing field upon which competing ensembles could test their mettle and thereby assert their preeminence on the world stage. According to Jessica Gienow-Hecht, “during the Cold War, orchestras both east and west of the Iron Curtain played the same music on similar instruments according to the same scores.” She argues that these diplomatic encounters were meaningful precisely because they were not “culturally peculiar.”<sup>13</sup> By favoring a roster of mostly European composers, including an acknowledged heavyweight of early twentieth-century modernism, the PSO’s initial Warsaw Autumn program appears to have been designed expressly to display the ensemble’s artistic

10 Elliott Carter, “Letter from Europe,” *Perspectives of New Music* 1/2 (Spring 1963), 203.

11 Harvard University [Cambridge, MA], Houghton Library, b. 90M-52 [Shelved as MS Storage 90]. Letter, September 1962, Elliott Carter to Paul Fromm.

12 ZKP 11/24. Letter, 8 January 1964, Wallace A. Littell to Paulina Semkow-Horodecka.

13 Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, “*The World Is Ready to Listen: Symphony Orchestras and the Global Performance of America*,” *Diplomatic History* 36/1 (2012), 23.

prowess as well as to demonstrate its adherence to international standards of new-music performance.

Yet cultural specificity was precisely what festival planners desired from the PSO. Considering that Polish ensembles had already performed the Szymanowski and the Webern at previous Warsaw Autumns, organizers saw little point in hearing these works again in renditions by an American orchestra. The Festival Committee negotiated alternatives with the PSO during the first half of 1964. The Festival Committee readily agreed to replace the Szymanowski with Walter Piston's Violin Concerto no. 1.<sup>14</sup> They were less enthusiastic about the PSO's proposed substitution for the Webern: a work by Pittsburgh-based Russian-American composer Nikolai Lopatnikoff.<sup>15</sup> In that case, they were willing to take Webern's op. 6, or, failing that, Schoenberg's Five Pieces for Orchestra or *Verklärte Nacht*.<sup>16</sup> None of these pieces would be possible, the PSO's manager explained; the Webern "had to be dropped" from the tour, and it was impractical for the group to spend time learning either Schoenberg work when they could only perform it once during their eleven-week tour. He suggested Aaron Copland's *Billy the Kid* as a replacement.<sup>17</sup> Festival organizers agreed to the change. With the exception of Schuller's *Seven Studies*, the program finalized on 4 July 1964 was a far cry from the one Warsaw Autumn planners had initially hoped the PSO would present.<sup>18</sup> As for Ives, his music was on the 1964 festival program, but the visiting American musicians would not be the ones to introduce this composer to Warsaw Autumn audiences: that

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14 ZKP 11/24. Letter [undated], Leokadia Malinowska to William Steinberg (Polish draft; English version sent 6 June 1964).

15 ZKP 11/24. Letter, 25 January 1964, Stefan Śledziński to William Steinberg.

16 ZKP 11/24. Letter [undated], Leokadia Malinowska to William Steinberg (Polish draft; English version sent 6 June 1964); Letter, 30 June 1964, Leokadia Malinowska to Wallace Littell.

17 ZKP 11/24. Letter, 27 June 1964, John S. Edwards to Leokadia Malinowska.

18 ZKP 11/24. Letter, 8 July 1964, Wallace W. Littell to Leokadia Malinowska.

task fell to the Kraków Philharmonic, which performed *Tone Roads no. 3* under the direction of new-music advocate Andrzej Markowski.<sup>19</sup>

Festival planners were not simply negotiating what music would best represent twentieth-century American culture as they communicated with the PSO. Selecting performers for the Warsaw Autumn, and determining the repertoire they would play, also affected the prestige that might be generated and circulated by festival concerts. Drawing on accounts in *Trybuna Ludu*, the PZPR's national daily, the U.S. Department of State proclaimed that the PSO's appearance in Warsaw was a "triumph" that had contributed positively to the promotion of American culture abroad.<sup>20</sup> PSO lore continues to laud the 1964 tour as garnering "the Smoky city a reputation for producing more than steel"; just as important to the furthering of national diplomatic interests, then, was the boost this tour gave to local pride.<sup>21</sup> And there certainly was no question in Poland as to the quality of the PSO's playing.

Yet Carter had been right to worry about Polish responses to contemporary American orchestral repertoire. For, according to the *New York Herald Tribune*, audiences at the 1964 Warsaw Autumn had responded to the American conservatives as if they were virtually interchangeable with the official Soviet composers whose music was also on the program that year.<sup>22</sup>

19 This does not mean, however, that the United States was uninterested in promoting Ives in Poland. For information on their efforts, see Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 72–73.

20 *Strengthening Cultural Bonds between Nations . . . through the Performing Arts. A Report on the Cultural Presentations Program of the Department of State, July 1, 1964–June 30, 1965*. U. S. Department of State Publication 8038, International Information and Cultural Series 90 (1966), 10. I am grateful to Danielle Fosler-Lussier for sharing this material with me.

21 "A History of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra," Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra website, [www.pittsburghsymphony.org/ps\\_o\\_home/web/orchestra-history](http://www.pittsburghsymphony.org/ps_o_home/web/orchestra-history) (last accessed 7 August 2014).

22 Eric Salzman, "Festiwal Jesień Warszawska. Wielki pokaz nowej muzyki" [Warsaw Autumn Festival. A Great Show of New Music], in *Warszawska Jesień 1964 i 1965 – fragmenty recenzji (biuletyn na prawach rękopisu)* [Warsaw Autumn 1964 and 1965—excerpts from reviews (newsletter)] (Warsaw: Związek Kompozytorów Polskich, 1966), 39. Polish translation of an article first published in *The New York Herald Tribune* (30 September 1964).



Thus, although the PSO's festival appearance may have boosted the reputation in Poland of American orchestras, this performance did much less to disseminate a view that American composers were on the cutting edge.

The apparent conservatism of American composition mattered because prestige circulated symbiotically at the Warsaw Autumn. Just as festival exposure could further performers' and composers' careers, the players and works on the Warsaw Autumn roster broadcast messages about the institution's relative standing within postwar new-music networks. Considering the expense of bringing large Western ensembles to the Warsaw Autumn, it is doubtful that the PSO could have performed at the festival without American government funding. That the PSO's itinerary included a Warsaw Autumn appearance could be understood as a sign of Poland's strategic importance to the United States more generally—as well as a confirmation of the festival's specific relevance during the Cold War as a site for cultural diplomatic encounters. By performing Hindemith, Piston, and Copland, however, the PSO's program was hardly suited to promote the Warsaw Autumn as a vital European center for new-music performance, because these composers' styles did not enjoy high status among the postwar avant-garde. From the standpoint of the PSO's technical facility, its Warsaw Autumn performance may have indeed been a triumph. But in terms of convincing festival audiences of the sophistication and relevance of contemporary American composition, the PSO's program was a diplomatic misfire.

### **Americans in Warsaw, 1964: John Cage, David Tudor, and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company**

Engaging the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, on the other hand, had the potential to sate Polish appetites for avant-garde culture from the United States. Especially enticing was the prospect of encountering John Cage, the company's music director, in a live performance. *Trybuna Ludu* reminded its readers that Cage was a “famed innovator in the realm of creative techniques” and reported that the Cunningham company's

appearance had been “anticipated with great interest.”<sup>23</sup> This interest was so great that, Cunningham dancer Carolyn Brown recalls, the performance “was sold out well in advance,” despite being scheduled for an “odd” noontime slot on the festival’s last day.<sup>24</sup>

Cage’s visit to Warsaw earned him new fans in Poland. Among the most effusive was critic and musicologist Bohdan Pocij, who rhapsodized in the Catholic publication *Tygodnik Powszechny* that Cage was “a dreamer, visionary, poet, and musician in one.” Because Cage’s tactics emphasized “creative freedom,” and because the composer wielded this freedom in opposition to “all mechanical schemata” as well as “the unifying tendencies of contemporary civilization,” Cage, for Pocij, was not simply a defender of music’s fundamental essence: he was a potential savior of the modern world.<sup>25</sup> Stefan Wysocki viewed the Cunningham company’s performance from the opposite extreme. Caustically denouncing “Cage-ism” for its renunciation of individual subjectivity, he fretted about the young musicians who were falling prey to Cage’s siren song. Wysocki nevertheless applauded the event for being true to the Warsaw Autumn’s mission: “It is good that this performance was presented, for the task of our festival is to present all of the trends that are currently pervading the creative world, and this trend is vigorous at the moment (though it may not have a future).”<sup>26</sup> Because the American avant-garde was considered relevant in the new-music networks that crisscrossed postwar Europe,

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23 ERG, “Zakończenie VIII ‘Warszawskiej Jesieni’. Balety amerykańskie — opera Szostakowicza” [The End of the 8th Warsaw Autumn. American Ballets—Shostakovich’s Opera], *Trybuna Ludu* (1964).

24 Carolyn Brown, *Chance and Circumstance: Twenty Years with Cage and Cunningham* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 415–416.

25 Bohdan Pocij, “VIII Jesień” [The 8th Warsaw Autumn], in *Warszawska Jesień w zwierciadle polskiej krytyki muzycznej: Antologia tekstów z lat 1956–2006* [Warsaw Autumn Festival in Polish Music Criticism. An Anthology of Texts from 1956 through 2006], eds. Krzysztof Droba, Ewa Radziwon-Stefaniuk (Warsaw: Warszawska Jesień, 2007), 83–84. Originally published in *Tygodnik Powszechny* 43, 44 (1964).

26 Stefan Wysocki, “Po Warszawskiej Jesieni” [After Warsaw Autumn], *Kultura* (11 October 1964), 5.

Cage's participation in the Warsaw Autumn ensured that the festival, too, would be considered internationally relevant.

Cage and Tudor's contribution to the Cunningham company's performance differed markedly from the PSO's glimpse of twentieth-century American composition. These ensembles also came to Warsaw by different paths. The divergences point to some of the myriad ways that festival organizers were learning about—and subsequently importing—Western music during the early 1960s. As befits an appearance that was made possible by American government funding, the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw helped plan the PSO's festival concert. Poland's state-run concert agency, PAGART, was also involved in handling the details of the PSO's Warsaw Autumn appearance. The Cunningham company likewise worked with PAGART to add stops in Poland to its watershed 1964 world tour. By and large, however, bringing the American avant-garde to the 1964 Warsaw Autumn depended on informal contacts, nonstate communication channels, and personal recommendations—not official communiqués routed via government institutions. When David Vaughan, the Cunningham company's manager, was putting together the group's 1964 world tour, he actively sought engagements in Poland, writing first to PAGART and later, at composer (and Repertoire Commission member) Włodzisław Kotoński's suggestion, contacting the Warsaw Autumn Festival Office directly.<sup>27</sup> Unlike the negotiations with the PSO, Vaughan's correspondence with Festival Secretary Leokadia Malinowska appears to have taken place without the U.S. Embassy's intercession. While the Festival Committee, as a rule, translated its letters to the PSO into English, Vaughan and Malinowska communicated almost exclusively in French—a language in which, Vaughan admitted, he did not feel entirely comfortable.<sup>28</sup> U.S. government institutions were so little involved with the Cunningham company's journey to Poland that, Brown remembers, local American diplomats

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27 ZKP 11/24. Letter, 21 October 1963, David Vaughan to Szymon Zakrzewski; Letter, 17 January 1964, David Vaughan to Leokadia Malinowska.

28 ZKP 11/24. Letter, 19 February 1964, David Vaughan to Leokadia Malinowska.

were utterly flabbergasted when the group showed up for their post-festival engagements in the city of Poznań.<sup>29</sup>

The steps to bring the Cunningham ensemble to the Warsaw Autumn adhered to a larger pattern in which festival organizers used personal contacts, nonstate communication channels, and their ability to travel internationally as the means to seek out and pull the most up-to-date music into Poland. During the 1960s, Lutosławski was an especially important link between Poland and the West. His work with the ISCM gave him access to scores from all over the world. An extensive web of personal contacts kept him apprised of emerging developments. One of these contacts, Luigi Nono, ferried new works by Italian composers to Lutosławski in 1960; Lutosławski, in turn, passed these pieces on to the Warsaw Autumn Festival Committee.<sup>30</sup> Other members of the Festival Committee and Repertoire Commission used their personal connections in similar ways. Western new-music institutions were essential conduits of information, especially about the music by the postwar avant-garde. Darmstadt was, in this respect, an essential point of reference. Polish musicians participated in the Summer Courses for the first time in 1957; subsequent pilgrimages occurred annually well into the 1960s.<sup>31</sup> Nearly all of the works Polish musicians encountered at Darmstadt in the late 1950s soon appeared on the Warsaw Autumn program.<sup>32</sup>

When festival planners traveled abroad, they were not simply looking for scores: they were also looking for people. Along with the festival's official observers and informal tourists, Western performers played vital roles in the cross-border circulation of new music via the Warsaw Autumn.

29 Brown, *Chance and Circumstance*, 417.

30 ZKP 11/74. Protokół z zebrania Prezydium Komitetu Festiwalowego [Minutes of the Meeting of the Presidium of the Festival Committee], 17 December 1960.

31 Gianmario Borio and Hermann Danuser, *Im Zenit der Moderne: die Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik Darmstadt 1946-1966: Geschichte und Dokumentation in Vier Bänden* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1997).

32 Cynthia E. Bylander, "The Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music, 1956-1961: Its Goals, Structures, Programs, and People" (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, Columbus, 1989), 196-199.

Festival planners viewed these musicians as emissaries of their home countries, regardless of whether they were privately funded or appearing in Poland as part of state-sponsored cultural diplomatic tours. Organizers hoped that these performers would convey information about the local and national new-music scenes to which festival audiences lacked direct access. High-profile Western musicians were also the bearers of specialist knowledge, which enabled them to present the works that their Polish counterparts were not always equipped to perform. The Warsaw Autumn boasted performances in its first decade by many of the same virtuosi who were fixtures at Western European new-music institutions: Italian flautist Severino Gazzelloni, West German cellist Siegfried Palm, and powerhouse American pianist David Tudor, among many others. Even before the Cunningham company's 1964 tour, the Festival Committee was seeking to lure Tudor back to Warsaw for a repeat of his 1958 performance—this time with Cage's collaboration.<sup>33</sup>

But the flow of music, people, and ideas into Poland was not always unimpeded. Scores and parts were not always readily available. At times Warsaw Autumn planners had trouble engaging performers. Some reasons for this were financial. When the festival began, Western performers were typically paid in hard currency. This practice changed in 1963, when the Ministry of Culture and Art (MKiS) decreed that all of the festival's international performers were to be paid in złoty, Poland's nonconvertible currency.<sup>34</sup> By 1965, the Festival Committee was complaining that "it is increasingly rare that foreign musicians are willing to appear at our Festival only for złoty."<sup>35</sup> They urged MKiS to set aside a fixed amount of hard currency each year to pay performers from nonsocialist countries. Because Western musicians ferried vital information about contemporary

33 ZKP 11/74. Protokół z zebrania Prezydium Komitetu Festiwalowego, 21 March 1962.

34 ZKP [uncataloged document]. "Działalność Komitetu Międzynarodowego Festiwalu Muzyki Współczesnej w okresie VII 'Warszawskiej Jesieni' — 1963 roku. (Sprawozdanie Sekretarza Festiwalu)" [Activities of the International Festival of Contemporary Music Committee during the 7th Warsaw Autumn—1963. (Festival Secretary's Report)], 2–3.

35 ZKP [uncataloged document]. "Działalność Komitetu Międzynarodowego Festiwalu Muzyki Współczesnej w okresie IX 'Warszawskiej Jesieni' — 1965 roku," 2.

music into Poland, it was important to organizers that they keep this channel open. They were also concerned to remove financial impediments because their ability to attract high-profile Western performers was one way that the Warsaw Autumn maintained its status as an institution that was contributing to the development and dissemination of contemporary music.

The musicians themselves could erect other barriers that interrupted the influx of information from the West. Pierre Boulez consistently thwarted organizers' efforts to bring him to the festival in the 1960s. Negotiations with Boulez began in 1960. After returning from that year's ISCM Festival in Cologne, Lutosławski told the Festival Committee that Boulez and Le Domaine musical's resident instrumental ensemble could potentially participate in the 1962 Warsaw Autumn; PAGART was already taking steps to arrange the group's appearance.<sup>36</sup> The anticipated performance was pushed to 1964 before ultimately failing to materialize. In the meantime, organizers attempted to engage Boulez as a conductor; they hoped he would lead Poland's National Philharmonic in a performance of *Pli selon pli*.<sup>37</sup> Boulez reportedly asked that the concert, originally scheduled for 1964, be postponed for a year.<sup>38</sup> The Repertoire Commission sought to renew negotiations for the 1965 festival, only to be disappointed once again.<sup>39</sup> *Pli selon pli* would not be heard at the Warsaw Autumn until 1988, and although Boulez's music has remained a staple of festival programming, he never participated in the Warsaw Autumn in person.<sup>40</sup>

36 ZKP 11/74. Protokół z zebrania Prezydium Komitetu Festiwalowego, 28 May 1960, 22 June 1960, and 7 June 1960.

37 ZKP 11/75. Protokół z zebrania Prezydium Komitetu Festiwalowego, 10 December 1963.

38 ZKP [uncataloged document]. "Działalność Komitetu Międzynarodowego Festiwalu Muzyki Współczesnej w okresie VIII 'Warszawskiej Jesieni' — 1964 roku," 2.

39 ZKP [uncataloged document]. "Działalność Komitetu Międzynarodowego Festiwalu Muzyki Współczesnej w okresie IX 'Warszawskiej Jesieni' — 1965 roku," 2.

40 Kazimierz Nowacki, Jolanta Bilińska, Małgorzata Kosińska, Marcin Majchrowski, Izabela Malec, Beata Bolesławska-Lewandowska, and Ewa Radziwon-Stefaniuk, "Composers, Compositions, Performers 1956–2011," in *Warsaw Autumn. 55th International Festival of Contemporary Music. 21–29 September 2012* (Warsaw: Warszawska Jesień, 2012), 325.

In Cage's case, the blocks were political. Seeking to make the most of his 1964 visit to Warsaw, festival planners asked Cage to present a half-recital with David Tudor in addition to participating in the Cunningham company's performance. Cage and Tudor agreed, and by the end of March 1964, everything appeared to be settled.<sup>41</sup> But there was a problem, ZKP President and Festival Committee Chair Stefan Śledziński explained several weeks later. Because the PSO was also appearing at that year's Warsaw Autumn, organizers had become concerned about maintaining "proper balance" in the program—that is, avoiding the impression that the concerts were biased in favor of American music. Could they perhaps give their recital another year?<sup>42</sup> No, Cage parried, using Vaughan as an intermediary. After all, traveling to Poland was no easy matter. He was especially disappointed that he and Tudor would be unable to premiere the new work Cage had commissioned from Christian Wolff especially for the occasion.<sup>43</sup> Festival organizers did not want to lose the chance to feature Cage and Tudor in a world premiere, so they devised a makeshift solution: a twenty-minute interlude between the first and second halves of the Cunningham company's performance.<sup>44</sup> Cage and Tudor accepted, proposing a program of Cage's Variations II and Variations III.<sup>45</sup>

Not even Cage, then, was immune to the headaches of Cold War cultural diplomacy as it was practiced at the Warsaw Autumn. The irony was that the U.S. Department of State had rejected the Cunningham company's application for financial support; the company cobbled together funds from a variety of private sources to subsidize its 1964 world tour. Cage was piqued by the lack of recognition that the absence of government aid had implied. Lewis L. Lloyd, the dance company's tour manager, has speculated that it was precisely Cage's loudly expressed displeasure

41 ZKP 11/22. Protokół z zebrania Komisji Programowej, 5 February 1964; ZKP 11/24. Letter, 13 February 1964, Leokadia Malinowska to John Cage; Letter, 4 March 1964, John Cage to Leokadia Malinowska; Letter, 30 March 1964, John Cage to Leokadia Malinowska.

42 ZKP 11/24. Letter, 22 May 1964, Stefan Śledziński to John Cage and David Tudor.

43 ZKP 11/24. Letter, 29 May 1964, David Vaughan to Stefan Śledziński.

44 ZKP 11/24. Letter, 11 July 1964, Leokadia Malinowska to David Vaughan.

45 ZKP 11/24. Letter, 7 August 1964, David Vaughan to Leokadia Malinowska.

with the U.S. Department of State's decision that eased the group's entry into Czechoslovakia in September 1964.<sup>46</sup> But the Warsaw Autumn's bureaucratic practices were less attuned to such distinctions. Even though, from the standpoint of government aid, the Cunningham company was not traveling to Poland as officially funded cultural ambassadors of the United States, Warsaw Autumn organizers and Polish officials nevertheless viewed these performers as representatives of American culture. And because, like the PSO's players, Cage and Tudor were American, their appearances had to be contained so as not to upset the festival's precarious East-West balance.

The examples of the PSO and the Cunningham company demonstrate that, when it came to the Warsaw Autumn's Western performers, the distinction between state and nonstate actors was frequently unclear, so that there was no clear bifurcation between international and transnational forms of cross-border contact. The PSO's concert could be understood as presenting a bounded image of American music within an international system of cultural exchange. But audience responses to the orchestra's performance also suggested the existence of transnational affinities that blurred distinctions between American and Soviet contemporary music. Conversely, Cage and Tudor's contributions to the Cunningham Dance Company's performance undermined state borders by unsettling singular notions of an "American" music; their collaboration with the Czechoslovak performers of *Musica Viva Pragensis* further suggested the existence of a transnational new-music community. Yet the Warsaw Autumn's bureaucratic logic also reinforced national divisions by viewing Cage, Tudor, and the Cunningham company's dancers as representatives of the United States.

These examples also point to an essential contradiction in the festival's status as a site of cultural mobility. On one hand, the festival contributed to the cross-border mobilization of people, music, and ideas—extending, for example, the reach of the American avant-garde into Cold War Eastern

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46 Lewis L. Lloyd, in *Merce Cunningham*, ed. James Klosty (New York: Saturday Review Press/E. P. Dutton, 1975), 49.



Europe by hosting the Cunningham company, Tudor, and Cage in 1964. At the same time, however, the Warsaw Autumn's bureaucratic procedures (especially the requirement to ensure balanced coverage of music from the East and the West) confined musicians and musical works in defined points of origin. Cage and Tudor's difficulties in 1964 demonstrate that such definitions had the potential to be limiting.

The festival's circulation of new music across East-West geopolitical borders therefore involved complexities as well as contingencies. In 1964, Warsaw Autumn planners were not able to get everything they wanted from either the PSO or the Cunningham Dance Company. In each instance, organizers most desired repertoire that represented the postwar avant-garde or early-twentieth-century modernism. Yet this was also the repertoire that required the most careful management.

### **Moving New Music Diplomatically in the Eastern Bloc**

It was no easier to circulate music by the avant-gardes that were appearing within the Eastern Bloc. We have seen that festival planners sought music from the West that they considered to be stylistically advanced and technically progressive. They desired similar music from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. But although Warsaw Autumn planners may have wanted to promote postwar avant-gardes regardless of where they had sprung up, socialist cultural politics affected the information they could obtain about this music and often determined whether performances of it could take place. One complicating factor was the distinction between official and unofficial music that was in force during the 1960s to varying degrees throughout the Eastern Bloc. Negotiating this boundary created fundamental differences between the ways in which festival organizers were able to disseminate new music from the West and the processes by which they circulated contemporary composition from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

We should also keep in mind that the Warsaw Autumn was not just a platform for the exercise of soft power across the Cold War's large

geopolitical divides; the festival was equally an arena for cultural diplomatic maneuvers within the Eastern Bloc. Through the repertoire and performers it sent officially to the Warsaw Autumn, the Soviet Union broadcast messages to the nations of Eastern Europe about modern socialist culture. Like Poland, other Eastern European states also sought to use the festival as a way to further their particular cultural diplomatic agendas and to promote their distinctive visions of socialist modernity. At the Warsaw Autumn, citizens of the Eastern Bloc were often speaking as much to each other as to the outside world.

Many of these conversations took place through official channels. A well-developed system of cultural exchanges guaranteed festival organizers a steady stream of compositions and performers representing the official musical cultures of the Eastern Bloc. Yet, in any given year, there was not enough time to present music from every Eastern European country while still providing an overview of new pieces from Poland and the West. The Soviet Union's place at the top of the Eastern Bloc's cultural hierarchy meant that there would always be room at the Warsaw Autumn for Soviet performers and compositions. To manage international relations among the "people's democracies," Warsaw Autumn planners proposed a rotation system in which the same Eastern European country could not appear on the festival program in successive years.<sup>47</sup>

Aside from deciding which countries to showcase, there was also the question of what the Eastern European ensembles would play. From the outset, Warsaw Autumn organizers were aware that "new music" had divergent meanings in the East and the West, and that there were also gradations of difference within Eastern Europe.<sup>48</sup> Initially they opted to give Eastern European musicians free rein to choose their concert programs, as part of their project to present a complete, multifaceted view of postwar

47 ZKP 12/23. Protokół z posiedzenia rozszerzonego Plenum Zarządu Głównego Związku Kompozytorów Polskich [Minutes of the Meeting of the Extended Plenum of the Main Board of the Polish Composers' Union], 17 October 1958, 2.

48 ZKP 12/23. Stenogram z obrad Plenum Zarządu Głównego Związku Kompozytorów Polskich [Transcript from the Plenum of the Main Board of the Polish Composers' Union], 5 April 1957, 28.

composition.<sup>49</sup> Festival organizers and Polish cultural officials soon began to question this strategy. By 1961, state administrators were advising Warsaw Autumn planners to help the Eastern European ensembles select suitable repertoire.<sup>50</sup> This was because, despite the Warsaw Autumn's overt self-positioning as a site for objective comparison, covertly the festival was a means of asserting cultural parity with the West, and so its tacit rules privileged Western definitions of avant-garde music. Socialist-realist compositions were thus virtually guaranteed a poor reception at festival concerts. The Bulgarians chose the Sofia Philharmonic's repertoire on their own in 1961, which resulted in a string of works whose folksy lyricism and clear indebtedness to nineteenth-century Russian classics hewed closely to an official ideological line.<sup>51</sup> The Festival Committee described this concert as an "unfortunate" event, one that had probably "done more harm than good" in advertising contemporary Bulgarian music. "We should no longer allow such bad experiences to happen," they concluded.<sup>52</sup> Far from demonstrating geopolitical unity, presentations of unabashedly socialist-realist works at the Warsaw Autumn could contribute to tensions between Poland and its socialist neighbors if these performances led festival observers to conclude that contemporary composition in Eastern Europe was hopelessly backward compared to what was considered to be new music in the West.

One question, then, was what *socialist music* might mean in the 1960s, and who had the power to define it. This question intersected with the larger problem of what state sovereignty would look like in the Eastern Bloc, especially after the upheavals of the mid-1950s had demonstrated the potential for limited expressions of national difference. The Warsaw

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49 Ibid., 31–32.

50 ZKP 12/23. Protokół III Zebrania Plenarnego ZG ZKP [Minutes of the 3rd Plenary Meeting of the Main Board of the Polish Composers' Union], 20 November 1961, 1.

51 ZKP [uncataloged document]. "Sprawozdanie z działalności Komitetu Międzynarodowego Festiwalu Muzyki Współczesnej 'Warszawska Jesień' w okresie V Warszawskiej Jesieni (1961 r.)" [Report on the Activities of the International Festival of Contemporary Music Committee during the 5th Warsaw Autumn (1961)], 2.

52 Ibid., 5.

Autumn's Polish organizers were not inclined to accept the Soviet Union's leading role in setting the Eastern Bloc's cultural agenda. They balked at a Soviet proposal to devote three days of the 1964 Warsaw Autumn to Soviet music, with appearances by leading soloists and performances of "the most distinguished compositions, with an emphasis on Shostakovich."<sup>53</sup> The date was significant: 1964 would mark the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet "liberation" of Nazi-occupied Poland. Highlighting Soviet music at that year's Warsaw Autumn would therefore have made a larger point about the presumed cultural (and, by extension, political) hierarchies that were at work in Eastern Europe. ZKP's representatives on the Festival Committee and Repertoire Commission attempted to turn the situation to their advantage. Józef Patkowski cited bureaucratic procedure—the general policy of not repeating works—to argue against adding large amounts of Shostakovich to the 1964 program. Tadeusz Baird reasoned that three concerts—not three full days—could be allotted to Soviet music and performers, provided that the repertoire foregrounded young composers whose music had never been heard in Poland.<sup>54</sup> He did not quite get his wish: among the Soviet composers featured in 1964, only Estonian Jaan Rääts could conceivably be counted as part of the rising generation. But neither was Soviet music a dominant force that year: instead of the imagined three-day extravaganza, there was only a single midweek concert, when the Moscow Chamber Orchestra performed under Rudolf Barshai's direction.<sup>55</sup>

If the goal was to maintain Polish autonomy in the face of Soviet influence, then we might view this episode as a Warsaw Autumn success story. Typically, though, festival planners failed to make much of an impact on the Soviet and Eastern European concert programs. This spottiness resulted, in part, from how the festival was planned. Both PAGART and

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53 ZKP 11/74. Protokół z zebrania przedstawicieli Komitetu Festiwalowego z przedstawicielami PAGARTu [Minutes of the Meeting of the Festival Committee with PAGART's Representatives], 10 October 1962.

54 Ibid.

55 Kaczyński and Zborski, *Warszawska Jesień*, 284.

the BWKZ (International Cultural Relations Bureau) were linked to sister institutions in the Eastern Bloc. Goskontsert, the state-run Soviet concert agency, was one of them. These institutional connections ostensibly eased cross-border flows of people and information in the service of increased regional cohesion. When it came to the Warsaw Autumn, however, such contacts were just as likely to put roadblocks in festival planners' way. Organizers had little direct control over which Eastern European performers might appear at the festival. Instead, these arrangements were dictated by the cultural exchange agreements that were negotiated over their heads, between government ministries.<sup>56</sup> Contact with Eastern European musicians also typically took place through intermediaries. These circuitous channels of cross-border communication could bring Warsaw Autumn planning to a halt. In March 1961, for example, desperate Festival Committee members begged MKiS to speed up its negotiations with Bulgaria and East Germany, because "the lack of information from both countries has completely paralyzed our work on the festival program."<sup>57</sup> Lack of direct contact meant that there were few opportunities for Warsaw Autumn committee members to influence the festival concert programs of their Eastern European neighbors.

Even more importantly, because Warsaw Autumn concerts gave Westerners a glimpse into the Eastern Bloc, cultural officials had an interest in controlling what these observers might see within the festival showcase. Handling music by émigrés therefore required special sensitivity. The festival was not necessarily closed to Poles living in the West. Its programs featured works by members of the diaspora, including Michał Spisak, who had lived in Paris since the 1930s, and Konstanty Regamey, who settled in Switzerland in 1944. Roman Haubenstock-Ramati emigrated from Poland to Israel in 1950; he later returned to Europe and became an Austrian

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56 For example, a 1956 cultural exchange agreement indicated that Poland would invite a Bulgarian music ensemble to perform to the Warsaw Autumn. AAN KC PZPR WK, 237/XVIII-140, 84.

57 ZKP 11/74. Protokół z posiedzenia Prezydium Komitetu Festiwalowego [Minutes of the Meeting of the Presidium of the Festival Committee], 31 March 1961.

citizen in 1957.<sup>58</sup> Like Spisak and Regamey, Haubenstock-Ramati had several Warsaw Autumn performances. For the Polish government, the question was one of émigrés versus defectors. With the exception of a 1958 performance of his Symphony no. 4, defector and regime opponent Roman Palester was blacklisted at the Warsaw Autumn until the late 1970s. Andrzej Panufnik's works suffered the same fate.<sup>59</sup>

What to do, then, with a composer like György Ligeti? In the 1960s Ligeti undoubtedly was on the Western European cutting edge and consequently could not be ignored at an institution that purported to present a comprehensive overview of new music. At the same time, his emigration to the West in the wake of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution meant that performances of his music in the Eastern Bloc had the potential to be politically problematic. Thus, although Stockhausen had already presented *Artikulation* during his 1958 lecture on electronic music, festival organizers had to negotiate with the Hungarian Embassy during the first half of the 1960s to clear subsequent Warsaw Autumn performances of Ligeti's works. These conversations were not always successful. Festival Secretary Witold Rudziński could not persuade the Hungarian ambassador to approve a performance of *Atmosphères* in 1961; the piece would not be heard at the Warsaw Autumn until 1985.<sup>60</sup> Repertoire Commission member Włodzimierz Kotoński had better luck when he spoke to a Hungarian cultural attaché in 1965: the Helsinki Philharmonic was able to add

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58 Polish Jews were allowed to immigrate legally to Israel during a period in which emigration from Poland was otherwise nearly impossible. For more on the "Israel option," see Dariusz Stola, *Kraj bez wyjścia? Migracje z Polski 1949-1989* [A Country with No Exit? International Migrations from Poland 1949-1989] (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2012), 49-65.

59 Warsaw Autumn performances, however, did not guarantee lasting prominence in Poland. In 1989, ZKP's Musicology Section mounted an academic conference to redress the lack of knowledge about émigré composers—among them Haubenstock-Ramati, Palester, Panufnik, and Spisak. See *Muzyka źle obecna* [Music Badly Present], ed. Krystyna Tarnawska-Kaczorowska, 2 vols. (Warsaw: Związek Kompozytorów Polskich, 1989).

60 ZKP 11/74. Protokół z posiedzenia Prezydium Komitetu Festiwalowego, 15 November 1961.

*Apparitions* to its festival program.<sup>61</sup> The example of Ligeti demonstrates that it was not impossible for music by émigré composers to appear on the Warsaw Autumn program. But mounting these performances required careful maneuvering, and there is the sense that, when it came to the Warsaw Autumn at least, émigré composers remained subject to Eastern European cultural policies even after they had seemingly left Eastern Europe behind.

The Soviet Union was especially concerned with controlling its self-presentation at the Warsaw Autumn: strategic selections of performers and repertoire illuminated some facets of Soviet musical life while veiling others. One problem was the group of unofficial composers who had started experimenting with abstract, modernist compositional techniques from the West. Another was pianist Maria Yudina, who became notorious in the early 1960s for her allegiance to modernism both old and new. Peter Schmelz describes her performances of Andrey Volkonsky's *Musica Stricta* for solo piano as electrifying audiences in Moscow and Leningrad in 1961. This was not just because Volkonsky's idiosyncratic serial techniques challenged prevailing Soviet compositional orthodoxy, though the work did play a seminal role in the development of unofficial Soviet music.<sup>62</sup> Yudina's flinty playing also highlighted all that was hard-edged, uncompromising, and therefore potentially oppositional about the piece. A repeat Leningrad performance in November 1961 cemented *Musica Stricta*'s connection with antiauthoritarian sentiment. Yudina began her recital by playing Webern's Variations, op. 27; she ended with the Volkonsky. In between, she read poetry by Boris Pasternak and Nikolai Zabolotsky. From this point on, Soviet officials took measures to reduce Yudina's domestic visibility and freedom of movement. She was first barred from performing

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61 ZKP 11/75. Protokół z zebrania Komisji Repertuarowej [Minutes of the Meeting of the Repertoire Commission], 7 April 1965.

62 Peter J. Schmelz, "Andrey Volkonsky and the Beginnings of Unofficial Music in the Soviet Union," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58 (2005), 139–207.

in Leningrad; by March 1963, she was unable to concertize or teach anywhere in the Soviet Union, a ban that lasted until the autumn of 1966.<sup>63</sup>

News of Yudina's scandalous November 1961 recital quickly traveled to Poland. Just one month after the performance occurred, Warsaw Autumn planners approached the pianist to see if she might be interested in a 1962 festival appearance. The repertoire they requested was precisely the pieces Yudina had recently played in Leningrad, Volkonsky's *Musica Stricta* and the Webern Variations, along with two additions: Szymanowski's *Maski* (Masks) and a piano sonata by fledgling Romanian modernist Aurel Stroe, a significant choice given that music from that country had not been performed at the Warsaw Autumn since 1956.<sup>64</sup> By late January 1962, the Festival Committee was corresponding with Yudina to hammer out the details of her program.<sup>65</sup> They were confident enough to list *Musica Stricta* as a coming attraction in the festival's 1962 promotional brochure.<sup>66</sup>

But there was a catch—Yudina's participation in the Warsaw Autumn had to be confirmed via official channels, and she was having trouble getting permission to go to Poland. After weighing their options in early March 1962, ZKP's executive board decided to attempt to influence the situation through diplomatic channels: they sent a plea for help to Poland's ambassador to the Soviet Union.<sup>67</sup> This effort came to naught. In early April, Goskontsert sent a telegram to the Festival Committee with its final decision: Yudina would not be allowed to perform in Warsaw.<sup>68</sup> In this instance, the inability of the performer to travel also prevented the planned performance of Volkonsky's piece at the 1962 festival.

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63 Peter J. Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 89–96.

64 ZKP 11/74. Protokół z posiedzenia Prezydium Komitetu Festiwalowego, 22 December 1961.

65 ZKP 11/74. Protokół z zebrania Prezydium Komitetu Festiwalowego, 31 January 1962.

66 ZKP 11/16. *Automne de Varsovie. Festival International de Musique contemporaine 15–23. IX.1962* [promotional pamphlet] (Warsaw: Związek Kompozytorów Polskich, 1962), 3.

67 ZKP 11/74. Protokół Nr. 5/62. (38) z zebrania Prezydium ZG ZKP, 3 March 1962.

68 ZKP 11/75. Protokół z posiedzenia Prezydium Komitetu Festiwalowego, 7 April 1962.



In the meantime, the Soviet concert agency had already begun to make alternative arrangements. They proposed violinist Mikhail Vayman, accompanied by pianist Maria Karandashova; Warsaw Autumn planners approved the choice in late March 1962, when negotiations with Yudina were still ongoing.<sup>69</sup> The works Vayman and Karandashova performed were not exactly ingratiating. There was little consistent uplift in Prokofiev's Violin Sonata no. 1 in F Minor, op. 80. The pair also performed Stravinsky's neo-classic *Duo concertant*. Gritty sonatas by Galina Ustvol'skaya and Boris Klyuzner impressed one American observer as "surprisingly dissonant."<sup>70</sup> The example of Ustvol'skaya's Sonata for Violin and Piano demonstrates that the official Soviet music presented at the Warsaw Autumn in the early 1960s could go beyond the consonant, mellifluous accessibility associated with socialist realism. The opening sets the tone for the piece, which unfolds in a continuous movement over approximately twenty minutes. Meter is reduced to a relentlessly plodding quarter-note pulsation. The harmony is saturated with dissonant vertical clashes. The violin repeats a brittle, five-note motive whose pitches are separated from one another through up-bow articulation. While the motive's pitch material—A-flat and E-flat—might imply a tonic-dominant relationship, this relationship is not supported by the piano. Ustvol'skaya's sonata is acerbic. But from the official Soviet perspective, the important thing was that it was not serial. Unlike the juxtaposition of Webern and Volkonsky that would have occurred in Yudina's performance, Vayman and Karandashova's program did not make uncomfortable suggestions about the dependence of new Soviet music on formalist trends from Western Europe. Their self-contained repertoire was limited to composers who were part of the Soviet fold—including the newly rehabilitated Stravinsky, whose triumphal homecoming occurred nearly simultaneously with the 1962 Warsaw Autumn. This concert was thus a carefully calibrated exposition of Soviet modernity, one that had been generated from within before its export to Poland.

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69 ZKP 11/74. Protokół z zebrania Prezydium Komitetu Festiwalowego, 21 March 1962.

70 Elliott Carter to Paul Fromm, September 1962.

The repertoire Soviet performers brought to the 1962 Warsaw Autumn presumably represented their home country's official point of view. In Poland, however, these pieces were understood as misrepresenting the more complex realities of Soviet musical life. Before the 1962 festival, Wiktor Weinbaum, director of MKiS's music division, asked composer-critic Stefan Kisielewski and musicologist Zofia Lissa to review a draft of the program. Kisielewski and Lissa had opposing musical tastes and divergent political views. Yet neither could understand why festival organizers had been so unadventurous when it came to the Soviet music scheduled for that year. Kisielewski complained that focusing on composers like Prokofiev was taking the path of least resistance.<sup>71</sup> Lissa advocated performing pieces by the fledgling group of Moscow-based radicals (including Volkonsky), because, as she put it, "this would counteract the prevailing view of the 'backwardness' of Soviet music."<sup>72</sup> As we have seen, adding such works to the Warsaw Autumn program was easier said than done. Weinbaum admitted in a letter to Minister of Culture Tadeusz Galiński that powerful figures in the Eastern Bloc's other composers' unions "do not always agree with the creative explorations of young composers."<sup>73</sup> Outside Poland, that is, modernist experimentation was not always viewed as an appropriate official representation of "socialist" music.

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71 MKiDN. Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki. Wyd. Konkursów i Festiwalu (14). VI MFMW „Warszawska Jesień” (Projekt programu i uwagi do projektu programu) 1961–1962. [The 6th International Festival of Contemporary Music ‘Warsaw Autumn’ (draft of the program with comments) 1961–1962]. Letter, 1 June 1962, Stefan Kisielewski to Wiktor Weinbaum.

72 Ibid. Letter, 27 May 1962, Zofia Lissa to Wiktor Weinbaum.

73 Ibid. Letter, 9 June 1962, Wiktor Weinbaum to Tadeusz Galiński. Weinbaum's language is loaded: at the time, the phrase "young composers" (*molodiye kompozitori*) had thoroughly negative connotations in the Soviet Union, where it referred specifically to the group of composers (including Volkonsky) that had come of age in the post-Stalin era and was fascinated by modernist techniques from the West. For more on this phrase, see Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical*, 5–6 n. 11.

## Moving New Music Informally in the Eastern Bloc

But official exchanges were not the only way to circulate contemporary music within the Eastern Bloc. Informal contacts opened alternative channels of communication between festival organizers and their colleagues in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Many of these informal connections were forged through tourism. As we saw in the previous chapter, an influx of Soviet tourists attended the Warsaw Autumn in the 1960s. While cultural consumption was an important aspect of their festival visits, the Warsaw Autumn not only provided opportunities for Soviet tourists to absorb modernist music from Poland and the West. As a zone of cross-border contact that brought together people who were unlikely to meet in any other way, the Warsaw Autumn was an excellent place for Soviet musicians to network—to contribute, in other words, to the exchanges of information that were taking place during and between festival performances. In what follows, I will trace the journey of one such traveler—Edison Denisov—to demonstrate how tourism and informal networking created transnational ties that enabled unofficial Soviet music to begin traveling westward across the Polish border.

Like Volkonsky, the composer of *Musica Stricta*, Denisov wrote music using the abstract, serial methods that were officially suspect in the Soviet Union during the 1960s. He attended the Warsaw Autumn for the first time in 1962. Denisov's aesthetic predilections disqualified him from the official Soviet delegation. Instead, he paid his own way to Warsaw, traveling as a tourist with a group from the Soviet Union of Composers.<sup>74</sup> That he was able to go to Poland at all suggests that Denisov's status was still ambiguous in 1962: too questionable to represent the Soviet Union officially, but not so problematic that he was barred from traveling altogether, as he frequently would be in subsequent years.

Denisov took full advantage of the opportunities to network at his first Warsaw Autumn. He met Elliott Carter, who was so impressed by the Soviet composer that, in a private letter to Paul Fromm, he hyperbolically

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74 Ibid., 48-49.

described Denisov as a “23-toner from Moscow” and said that he was planning to acquire the score of Denisov’s Piano Variations.<sup>75</sup> Denisov also connected with Polish composers—including the members of the Warsaw Autumn organizing committees. After the 1962 Warsaw Autumn, Denisov wrote a private letter to Kazimierz Serocki; he proposed his new work, the Concerto for Flute, Oboe, Piano, and Percussion, as a potential addition to one of the upcoming festival programs. Serocki relayed the idea to the Repertoire Commission, which responded favorably.<sup>76</sup> The world premiere of Denisov’s composition took place at the 1964 festival, during a cosmopolitan concert that also featured works by Bulgarian, Polish, British, and Italian composers.<sup>77</sup> This was the first time that unofficial Soviet music had been heard at the Warsaw Autumn.

Denisov’s sound world and handling of serial techniques would not have been radical for festival audiences in 1964. After an initial tritone leap, the concerto’s source row consists primarily of major and minor thirds. Denisov treats the Po row form as a theme in a brisk first movement that is aurally reminiscent of Bartók and whose clear formal stages draw on sonata principles of exposition, development, and recapitulation. At the work’s outset, Po gradually emerges in the piano in three lengthening statements, a process Denisov repeats as the first movement ends. Starting at rehearsal 14, the piano presents the first seven, the first nine, and finally all twelve pitches of Po as similar processes unfold in the flute (playing I6) and oboe (playing P3). The slow middle movement features a succession of rhapsodic, rhythmically supple cadenzas for the concerto’s four performers, whereas the pointillistic third movement evokes Webern and the postwar serialists. Here Denisov manipulates his row forms using segmentation and reordering, while also engaging in the pitch repetition that was a hallmark of his serial style.<sup>78</sup> Although the third movement’s harmonic design is rooted in serial procedures, tonal elements

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75 Elliott Carter to Paul Fromm, September 1962.

76 ZKP 11/75. Protokół z zebrania Komisji Programowej Festiwalu, 15 January 1963.

77 Kaczyński and Zborski, *Warszawska Jesień*, 284.

78 Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical*, 141.

occasionally emerge in the sounding surface, and this is due not least to the row's intervallic construction. Take, for instance, the work's closing moments. At rehearsal 33, the piano straightforwardly presents Ro. The flute and oboe begin the passage by collectively playing R10 in full. Then, while the piano completes its row, the flute, oboe, and marimba loudly repeat B-flat, E-flat, and G-flat, which are the first three pitches of Ro, as well as being the components of an E-flat minor triad. So it was not Denisov's particular approach to serialism that made the Concerto for Flute, Oboe, Piano, and Percussion newsworthy at the 1964 Warsaw Autumn. What was groundbreaking was that a Soviet composer was using these techniques, and his music was receiving a festival performance.

In some respects, this performance occurred because Denisov had been in the right place at the right time. Through traveling to Poland and communicating directly with Warsaw Autumn planners, Denisov circumvented the official channels that had, to that point, blocked performances of unofficial Soviet music. It also helped that the festival's Polish organizers were keen to promote the musical avant-gardes that were springing up throughout Eastern Europe. Although a performance of Volkonsky's *Musica Stricta* never came to pass, the Repertoire Commission continued to hunt for music by the Soviet Union's "young composers."<sup>79</sup> Meanwhile, the Festival Committee pledged in 1963 that it would "establish contacts with the People's Democracies and present their compositions, especially works by young, avant-garde composers."<sup>80</sup> Committee members were perhaps responding to the criticism their programming received in 1962, when peer reviewers in Poland had objected that the Soviet offerings were too staid. Their interest also had a more pragmatic motivation: finding adventurous new music from the Eastern Bloc was part of a broader strategy to ensure that Warsaw Autumn concert programs would remain varied, up-to-date, and provocative, and therefore continue to attract the large audiences that were crucial to ensuring the institution's legitimacy in

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79 ZKP 11/75. Protokół z zebrania Komisji Repertuarowej Festiwalu, 30 January 1963.

80 ZKP 11/75. Protokół z zebrania Komitetu Festiwalowego, 12 October 1963.

socialist Poland.<sup>81</sup> But there was a streak of idealism as well. A member of the Repertoire Commission throughout the 1960s, composer Włodzimirz Kotoński has recalled that programming unofficial Soviet music furthered festival organizers' goal to present as in-depth a picture as possible of contemporary musical life in various countries.<sup>82</sup> At the time, Kotoński traveled frequently on cultural exchanges throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In addition to conducting official business while he was abroad, he also used these trips to find new works that might fit the Warsaw Autumn's predominantly modernist profile.<sup>83</sup>

Locating the Eastern Bloc's avant-gardes was one thing. As we have seen, information might come from the composers themselves; members of the Warsaw Autumn organizing committees also turned official cultural exchanges to their advantage. Performing this music was another matter entirely: it was often easier to transport music scores across borders than it was for musicians to travel. Polish performers gave Warsaw Autumn planners a way to circumvent potential Soviet resistance to presentations of unofficial music. In 1959, ZKP higher-ups discussed using local players as a way to present a wider variety of music from Eastern Europe.<sup>84</sup> The Warsaw Autumn Festival Committee returned to this idea in 1963, when it proposed that Polish orchestras might perform works from other socialist countries.<sup>85</sup> Two unofficial Soviet composers—Alfred Schnittke and Arvo Pärt—had their festival debuts in just this way. On 28 September 1965, Witold Krzemieński led the Poznań State Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of Schnittke's forbiddingly abstract *Music for Piano and Chamber Orchestra*. One night later, Andrzej Markowski conducted the same ensemble in the Polish premiere of Pärt's *Perpetuum Mobile*, an audience favorite whose immediately apprehensible build-up of musical tension (and its release) is structured according to a serially ordered formal

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81 Ibid.

82 Interview with Włodzimirz Kotoński, 13 June 2008 (Warsaw, Poland).

83 ZKP 11/75. Protokół zebrania Prezydium Komitetu Festiwalowego, 21 January 1963.

84 ZKP 12/23. Protokół z zebrania plenarnego Zarządu Głównego ZKP (III), 18 November 1959.

85 ZKP 11/75. Protokół z zebrania Komitetu Festiwalowego, 12 October 1963.

plan.<sup>86</sup> Aside from presenting unofficial Soviet music to an international audience, these performances were noteworthy for two additional reasons. Neither took place during the opening gala or closing concert, the festival's two most prestigious time-slots and the events that were most likely to have a substantial government presence. Instead of Poland's premiere symphonic ensemble, the Warsaw-based National Philharmonic, a regional orchestra performed Schnittke's and Pärt's compositions. These decisions suggest that festival organizers were concerned to minimize the antagonisms that could result from their promotion of unofficial Soviet composers.

Musicians from other Eastern European countries provided additional options. Even during the Stalinist years, musical life in Eastern Europe had not been entirely uniform; the cultural changes of the Thaw further increased the limited possibilities for diversity. *Musica Viva Pragensis*—the new-music ensemble we encountered collaborating with Cage and Tudor—was one manifestation of the shifts that were occurring in Czechoslovakia. During the late 1940s, Czechoslovak cultural institutions had followed the larger pattern in the emerging Eastern Bloc when they were restructured along Stalinist lines. By April 1962, members of the Union of Czechoslovak Composers were publicly criticizing official policy during their Third Congress.<sup>87</sup> Attitudes about the Warsaw Autumn were likewise changing in the atmosphere of relative relaxation and cautious openness to the West. *Hudební Rozhledy* (Music Review), mouthpiece of official composers' union views, had published accounts of the festival since 1956; whereas earlier essays deployed standard socialist-realist formulae to lambast the Western—and, soon, the Polish—avant-garde, reviewers from 1962 to 1964 ventured some positive (albeit highly qualified) comments about the Warsaw Autumn.<sup>88</sup>

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86 Kaczyński and Zborski, *Warszawska Jesień*, 286–287.

87 Pantůček, “Some Experimental Trends,” 18.

88 Lenka Křupková, “Das Warschauer Fenster in die *Neue Musik* zur Reflexion des Warschauer Herbstes in der tschechischen musikalischen Publizistik der 50er und 60er Jahre,” *Musikgeschichte in Mittel- und Osteuropa* 12 (2008), 297–299.

Foreign travel enabled Warsaw Autumn planners to keep tabs on the changes that were afoot across Poland's southern border. A Repertoire Commission member discovered *Musica Viva Pragensis* when he was traveling in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in 1962.<sup>89</sup> In keeping with its strategy to support the avant-gardes that were emerging throughout Eastern Europe, the Commission set plans in motion to bring *Musica Viva Pragensis* to the 1964 festival. The ensemble's primary task at the Warsaw Autumn would be to perform new music from Czechoslovakia. But *Musica Viva Pragensis* also enabled festival organizers to supply Cage and Tudor with the small chamber ensemble they had requested for the Cunningham Dance Company's performance. And the group's personnel included the necessary forces for Denisov's *Concerto for Flute, Oboe, Piano, and Percussion*.

Like the tactic of assigning Pärt and Schnittke to the Poznań State Symphony Orchestra in 1965, having members of the Czechoslovak ensemble play the Denisov appears to have been a calculated move. Warsaw Autumn planners originally thought that they would give Denisov's piece to a group of Western soloists who were scheduled to appear at the festival in 1963.<sup>90</sup> It is unclear why this performance did not take place. But the shift is suggestive, for it speaks to some of the complexities of circulating Eastern European and Soviet music via the Warsaw Autumn during the 1960s. In many respects, the festival facilitated movement across boundaries. Denisov and the players of *Musica Viva Pragensis* traversed two state borders when they converged on Warsaw; acting through informal communication channels, Denisov exported the score of his *Concerto for Flute, Oboe, Piano and Percussion* to Poland. Yet delegating Denisov's concerto to *Musica Viva Pragensis* preserved Cold War geopolitical divisions in ways that a presentation by Western musicians would not have done. For years to come, ensembles from the West would be unable to

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89 ZKP 11/75. Protokół z zebrania Komisji Programowej, 7 November 1962.

90 ZKP 11/75. Protokół z zebrania Komisji Programowej Festiwalu, 15 January 1963; Protokół z zebrania Komisji Repertuarowej, 9 March 1964.



perform works by unofficial Soviet composers at the Warsaw Autumn.<sup>91</sup> In 1964, the assumed political solidarity among the Eastern Bloc's musicians was another factor that facilitated the festival's first glimpse of unofficial Soviet composition.

### **Avant-Garde Transnationalism (and Its Repercussions)**

The festival's mobilization of Eastern European and Soviet avant-gardes had several consequences. Paradoxically, one of these effects was to underscore national difference within the Eastern Bloc. In the late 1950s, demonstrations of musical modernism at the Warsaw Autumn were one of the tactics Polish musicians had used to broadcast their cultural distance from the Soviet Union. As political and cultural changes took place elsewhere in Eastern Europe, local new-music scenes responded by taking what had become, by then, an obvious course: a belated, prestige-enhancing turn to Western modernism and the embrace of the Warsaw Autumn in official publications.<sup>92</sup> *Musica Viva Pragensis* was one manifestation of these broader trends, for the group specialized in music that was self-consciously new. And regardless of whether these works had been composed in the East or the West, the pieces tended to embody "newness" in similar ways—by eschewing defined national markers, pushing the boundaries of traditional performance situations, and challenging conventional ways of working with harmony and form. Yet precisely because *Musica Viva Pragensis* took a transnational approach to its programming, the group signaled that, even though de-Stalinizing political reforms were slow to come

91 One instance of this took place in 1972, when an orchestra from Brussels had to cancel its festival performance of a Denisov composition in response to Soviet pressure. I have written about this incident at greater length in Lisa Jakelski, "The Changing Seasons of the Warsaw Autumn: Contemporary Music in Poland, 1960–1990" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2009), 179–186.

92 Křupková, "Das Warschauer Fenster," 297–299; Marian Jurik, "Antytezy — Poglądy — Sztuka" [Antitheses—Views—Art], in *Warszawska Jesień 1964 i 1965*, 5. Polish translation of an article that first appeared in *Kulturny život* (24 October 1964).

to Czechoslovakia, the country's musical life nevertheless was diverging during the early 1960s from official practices in the Soviet Union, where the injunction to produce new music that was "national in form, socialist in content," was not wholly abandoned during the Thaw.

At the same time, musical practices that demonstrated national differences within the Eastern Bloc could also be understood as manifestations of increasingly close transnational ties across the Cold War's East-West divides. As the Warsaw Autumn demonstrated—first through performances of works by the Polish avant-garde, and then by programming an array of new music from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union—composers on both sides of the Cold War's geopolitical boundaries were exploring similar aesthetic territory. The innovative traits of new Polish music in the late 1950s had cemented its reputation in the West and enabled many Polish composers to take advantage of compositional opportunities abroad. Confronted with the nearly simultaneous mushrooming of local, socialist avant-gardes in the 1960s, Western observers again interpreted the festival's concert programs as evidence that the Iron Curtain was perhaps not so impenetrable after all. In 1965, West German new-music specialist Ulrich Dibelius proclaimed that the "Warsaw Autumn effect was rippling through Poland's neighbors, rejuvenating musical life in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the Soviet Union, and beyond."<sup>93</sup> That same year, Elliott Carter cited the diffusion of Polish avant-gardism throughout Eastern Europe as the only phenomenon worth reporting from a festival that was lackluster compared to the one that had so dazzled him in 1962.<sup>94</sup> Each of these accounts casts the mobility of modernist musical practices in terms of an eastward expansion of Western cultural influence via a Polish portal. Neither commentator questions the right of the West to set the terms of musical progress; each assumes that an alignment with modernism was, aesthetically at least, to be free.

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93 Ulrich Dibelius, "Muzyka promieniująca poza granicę" [Music that Radiates beyond the Border], in *Warszawska Jesień 1964 i 1965*, 46–50. Polish translation of an article that first appeared in *Die Welt* (15 October 1965).

94 Elliott Carter to Paul Fromm, 18 October 1965.

It is important to recognize that the apparent victory of modernism among Eastern European musicians was hardly the outcome of a fair fight, for like many of their counterparts in the West, these composers were also conceptualizing musical progress in terms of technical advancement. In other words, musicians on both sides of the Cold War honored the same criteria of prestige. This seeming paradox was a common phenomenon throughout the Eastern Bloc. It was present in other fields of cultural production: David Crowley has remarked that, when it came to design, “socialist modernity looked just like that found on the other side of the East–West divide.”<sup>95</sup> György Péteri argues that this paradox was, in fact, at the core of the entire socialist modernization project, which “followed deliberately and programmatically the universal standards of technological and economic success” (i.e., the standards of Western modernity) while also attempting to maintain a fundamental distinction between the socialist and capitalist systems.<sup>96</sup> We might understand the de facto adherence of both sides to Western criteria as a product of skewed power dynamics, in which those on the periphery seek legitimation by adopting the standards of the center.<sup>97</sup> The swerve toward modernism in music, however, was not just a matter of importing standards of aesthetic judgment that had been articulated elsewhere, because composers in both the East and the West were heirs to the same Romantic heritage from which modernist definitions of musical value were ultimately derived. Thus, we might also understand Eastern European and Soviet composers’ advocacy of modernism in the 1950s and ’60s as stemming from their perception of a shared cultural history.

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95 David Crowley, “Thaw Modern: Design in Eastern Europe after 1956,” in *Cold War Modern: Design 1945–1970*, eds. David Crowley, Jane Pavitt (London: V&A, 2008), 145.

96 György Péteri, “Introduction: The Oblique Coordinate Systems of Modern Identity,” in *Imagining the West in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, ed. György Péteri (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 11.

97 For an insightful treatment of this issue, see Piotr Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989*, trans. Anna Brzyski (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), 11–30.

The presence of common aesthetic values ensured that works manifesting modernist musical styles and techniques were mobile at the Warsaw Autumn during the 1960s in ways that other kinds of compositions were not. Works that were neotonal, traditionally constructed, or influenced by socialist-realist aesthetics circulated less readily via the festival, compared to those by musicians affiliated with an avant-garde. Cold War dynamics nevertheless ensured that the aftereffects of mobilizing modernist music were often more ambiguous for the Warsaw Autumn's Polish organizers and supporters than they were for likeminded musicians and critics in the West. One instance of this took place in 1965, when Zygmunt Mycielski's review of the Warsaw Autumn made the indecorous suggestion that it was clear that Polish composers "no longer have a monopoly on these things" when modernist music was being written and performed even in scattered locations in the Soviet Union.<sup>98</sup> He interpreted the appearance of young Soviet composers—such as Schnittke and Pärt—as final proof that modernist imperatives of compositional progress had triumphed over socialist realism's preservation of musical traditionalism. Pointing this out in print overstepped the bounds of decorum that governed Polish–Soviet international relations, even when these relations were musical: Mycielski's review provoked a truculent response in *Sovetskaya Muzika*, which was subsequently republished in *Ruch Muzyczny*.<sup>99</sup>

The consequences were similarly complex for the Eastern European avant-gardists the Warsaw Autumn promoted, especially if these exposés were interpreted as saying something more general about cultural relations within the socialist sphere. The case of *Musica Viva Pragensis* in 1964 illustrates how festival exposure could have multiple outcomes. The group's performances received a sympathetic response in the Polish musical press, where critic Bohdan Pocij hailed the new Czechoslovak works as signaling a breakthrough in that country's musical thought.<sup>100</sup> Travel to Warsaw also enabled ensemble member Petr Kotík to forge personal

98 Zygmunt Mycielski, "Do przyjaciół" [To My Friends], *Ruch Muzyczny* 9/21 (1965), 13.

99 "Listy o muzyce" [Letters about Music], *Ruch Muzyczny* 10/22 (1966), 15.

100 Pocij, "VIII Jesień," 82.

ties with musicians from the West.<sup>101</sup> One of the composers Kotík met in Poland was the American Lejaren Hiller; this connection eventually enabled Kotík to leave post-1968 Czechoslovakia when Hiller invited him to participate in SUNY Buffalo's Creative Associates Program.<sup>102</sup>

Yet although Warsaw Autumn participation ultimately increased Kotík's mobility, the most immediate effect was to restrict his range of motion. A Polish reviewer described *Music for Three*, Kotík's contribution to the 1964 festival, as an experiment in "sonic extremity," in which the composer "instructs his string players to coax maximally 'ugly' and harsh sounds from their instruments"; the critic went on to note that the work had been "one of the few to provoke a scandal at this year's Autumn."<sup>103</sup> This was not necessarily a bad thing: the abrasive composition and its turbulent reception had the potential to increase Kotík's standing among the avant-garde musicians for whom envelope-pushing was a fundamental virtue. Czechoslovak cultural authorities were less convinced, however, that such deliberate provocations were an appropriate way to promote the national culture in a closely scrutinized international forum. They barred *Musica Viva Pragensis* from traveling to Yugoslavia in 1965 to perform at Zagreb's biennial new music festival; Kotík left the group to keep it from being dissolved altogether.<sup>104</sup>

Warsaw Autumn exposure likewise had mixed outcomes for unofficial Soviet composers. Through performances of his music, Denisov became increasingly visible outside the Soviet Union during the 1960s. His works continued to sound at the Warsaw Autumn: in 1966 a Slovak ensemble performed *Sun of the Incas* with French soprano Berthe Kal.<sup>105</sup> This work—for soprano, three speakers, and eleven instruments, to texts by the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral—was composed using serial methods, and it

101 Petr Bakla, "Petr Kotík: As a Composer, I've Always Been a Loner," *Czech Music Quarterly* 8/2 (2011), 4.

102 Renée Levine Packer, *This Life of Sounds: Evenings for New Music in Buffalo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 96–99.

103 Pocij, "VIII Jesień," 82.

104 Pantůček, "Some Experimental Trends," 18–19.

105 Kaczyński and Zborski, *Warszawska Jesień*, 289.

circulated widely throughout transnational new-music networks, receiving performances in West Germany, France, the United States, and the United Kingdom. As Denisov's scores were becoming increasingly mobile, however, the composer's position in the Soviet Union was becoming ever more fixed. Schmelz notes that, by the mid-1960s, Soviet cultural officials had ceased to view the composer as capable of reform. In other words, Denisov was incontrovertibly unofficial, a designation that affected his chances for promotion at home as well as his ability to travel abroad.<sup>106</sup>

At the most abstract level, presentations of Soviet and Eastern European modernism at the Warsaw Autumn could enable composers to make metaphorical, symbolic journeys even if they were prevented from crossing borders physically. My thinking on this point is indebted to Joy Calico, who has adopted the concept of "remigrating ideas" to argue that performances of Arnold Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw* allowed the aged and infirm composer to remigrate symbolically to postwar Europe, even though he remained physically confined to the United States, the country he adopted in 1933. One reason for this, she argues, is that, during a performance, composers are "most significantly present in the aural materiality of their music," rather than their persons.<sup>107</sup> Although Calico is concerned primarily with the particular issue of émigré artists in postwar Europe, her concept of symbolic musical remigration is also useful for thinking about the implications of new-music performance at the Warsaw Autumn. For Eastern European and Soviet composers who experienced travel restrictions, festival performances could constitute a kind of symbolic migration in which, through the medium of their works, these musicians could be understood as participating in the definition and dissemination of modernist aesthetic ideas, and therefore as present in a transnational new-music community whose boundaries were determined by the presence of shared

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106 Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical*, 134, 171–178.

107 Joy H. Calico, "Schoenberg's Symbolic Remigration: *A Survivor from Warsaw* in Postwar West Germany," *The Journal of Musicology* 26/1 (2009), 42. Calico explores similar ideas at greater length in *Arnold Schoenberg's A Survivor from Warsaw in Postwar Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

values and knowledge, rather than the presence of national, state, or geopolitical divisions. As a point of contact between East and West, the Warsaw Autumn was one of the most important sites where these symbolic migrations could take place.

### **Cross-Border Journeys, Cross-Border Relationships**

There were many ways in which new-music performance at the Warsaw Autumn contributed to the mobilization of cultural products and the formation of cross-border relationships. Mobility via the festival involved the physical movement of people: performers, composers, official observers, tourists, and many others. It entailed the transport of objects: music scores, recordings, and the festival program books. It also involved the circulation of ideas about new music. As we have seen, some forms of cross-border interaction took place at the level of cultural diplomacy, in which musical actors were presumed to be acting as nation-state representatives; other contacts were more informal. The multiplicity of cross-border relationships the Warsaw Autumn facilitated suggests that the same institution might simultaneously be involved in forging both international connections, which reinforce the identities of discrete nation-states, and transnational connections that blur the boundaries between them.

The Warsaw Autumn's success in disseminating postwar musical avant-gardes underscores Poland's importance in cementing East-West cultural ties. By enabling the cross-border transport of musical works, and providing a platform for traveling performers, the Warsaw Autumn encouraged the formation of cultural connections that mitigated the Cold War's geopolitical divisions. In part, these connections were formed because the festival provided a space in which concertgoers could engage in supranational modes of self-identification. Direct encounters with compositions and performers were a key element in making these mental leaps. When, for example, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company performed live in Warsaw, festivalgoers did not have to rely on secondhand reports to imagine the group's avant-garde approach to mingling music, art, and

dance. They could observe, evaluate, and debate the performance for themselves, and, in the process, experience themselves as active participants in an unfolding, globe-spanning phenomenon.<sup>108</sup> The festival can therefore be understood as playing a role in processes of globalization that Akira Iriye describes as ongoing throughout the twentieth century. While music festivals do not figure overtly in Iriye's analysis of nonstate international organizations, the history of cultural exchange at the Warsaw Autumn suggests that these institutions have contributed to the formation of an increasingly dense global network of cross-border ties.<sup>109</sup>

At the same time, the festival was also a catalyst for change within the Eastern Bloc. The Warsaw Autumn provided access to information, a function that was vitally important not just in Poland, but throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Festival performances additionally enabled Eastern European and Soviet musicians to enlarge their audiences. And the Warsaw Autumn's prestige—both in Poland and the West—offered legitimization, which could in turn encourage composers and performers to explore (or continue to work) in some musical styles, as opposed to others. Polish music thus had an impact that was similar to that of the Polish visual arts: Susan Reid, for example, has argued that exposure to modernist paintings from Poland contributed to Soviet processes of de-Stalinization.<sup>110</sup> The meaning of these changes depended on the Cold War's cultural politics, in which aesthetic strategies resonated in ways that went beyond their significance in specific artworks.

But even as the festival enabled people and artworks to travel from one place to another, its organizational procedures rooted them in specific

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108 This aspect of the Warsaw Autumn remained important well into the 1970s. In Krzysztof Droba et al., "Pamiętam, była 'Jesień' ..." [I Remember, It Was 'Autumn'...], *Ruch Muzyczny* 51/18–19 (2007) see reminiscences by Andrzej Chłopecki (p. 26) and Tadeusz Wielecki (p. 27).

109 Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

110 Susan E. Reid, "The Exhibition *Art of Socialist Countries*, Moscow 1958–9, and the Contemporary Style of Painting," in *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-war Eastern Europe*, eds. Susan E. Reid, David Crowley (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 101–132.



locations—within state borders (East or West) and, more metaphorically, in defined aesthetic regions. The perceived strength of these divisions was, in fact, what made the festival relevant during the Cold War. Thus, borders not only constrain; they can also be enabling. And during the 1960s, the Warsaw Autumn not only facilitated cross-border mobility. The festival also defined boundaries and contributed to maintaining them, even as it invited transgression.

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**ABSTRACT**

*Mobilizing Performers, Scores, and Avant-Gardes: The Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music in the 1960s*

This article examines efforts by the organizers of the Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music to seek out the latest avant-garde musical trends in the 1960s and provide a stage for them in Poland. It shows how this process differed depending on whether the desired performers and compositions were from East or West, official or unofficial, or émigrés from the Eastern Bloc. The article argues that performances of avant-garde music at the Warsaw Autumn promoted the formation of cross-border cultural ties that were based on shared aesthetic values of sonic exploration and ongoing technical innovation. These transnational

**STRESZCZENIE**

*Mobilizując wykonawców, partytury i awangardy: Międzynarodowy Festiwal Muzyki Współczesnej „Warszawska Jesień” w latach 60. XX wieku*

Artykuł analizuje wysiłki podejmowane przez organizatorów Międzynarodowego Festiwalu Muzyki Współczesnej „Warszawska Jesień” w celu wyszukiwania najnowszych trendów w awangardzie muzycznej w latach 60. XX w. i przedstawienia ich w Polsce. Autorka pokazuje, jak proces ten różnił się w zależności od tego, czy wykonawcy i utwory pochodziły ze Wschodu czy Zachodu, z obiegu oficjalnego czy nieoficjalnego, czy też chodziło o emigrantów z bloku wschodniego. Dowodzi ona, iż wykonania muzyki awangardowej na Warszawskiej Jesieni sprzyjały tworzeniu transgranicznych więzi kulturowych opartych o wspólnotę poszukiwań nowych jakości

connections destabilized presumptive hierarchies of cultural influence within the Soviet sphere and mitigated Cold War divisions. At the same time, the festival's organizational procedures reinforced nation-state and geopolitical borders by attaching musicians and musical works to singular, specific points of origin.

**KEYWORDS** avant-garde, Cold War, contemporary music, festival, new music, modernism, socialist realism, Warsaw Autumn

dźwiękowych oraz ciągłej innowacji technicznej. Te ponadnarodowe kontakty podważały domniemane hierarchie wpływów kulturowych w strefie sowieckiej i łagodziły zimnowojenne podziały. Jednocześnie procedury organizacyjne festiwalu wzmacniały granice państwowo-narodowe i geopolityczne, przypisując muzyków i dzieła muzyczne do określonych miejsc pochodzenia.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE** awangarda, zimna wojna, muzyka współczesna, festiwal, nowa muzyka, modernizm, realizm socjalistyczny, Warszawska Jesień