

Introduction

*За все, за все спасибо. За войну,
За революцию и за изгнание.
За равнодушно-светлую страну,
Где мы теперь “влачим существование.”
Нет доли сладостней—все потерять.
Нет радостней судьбы—скитальцем стать,
И никогда ты к небу не был ближе,
Чем здесь, устав скучать,
Устав дышать,
Без сил, без денег,
Без любви, в Париже. . .*

*[Thank you for everything: for the war,
The revolution, and the exile,
For the indifferently bright country
Where we are now “dragging our existence.”
No fortune is greater than to lose everything.
No fate is more joyous than that of a wanderer,
And you have never been closer to heaven
Than here, tired of missing home,
Tired of breathing,
Powerless, penniless,
Loveless, in Paris.]*

FROM GEORGY ADAMOVICH, “TWO POEMS,” 1936¹

Before leaving for America in 1918, Sergey Prokofiev paid a visit to Anatoly Lunacharsky, Lenin’s commissar for education. According to Prokofiev’s short autobiography, written in 1941 for the readership of *Sovetskaya muzika* (Soviet Music), Lunacharsky, an enthusiast of contemporary art, tried to persuade him to stay: “You are a revolutionary in music, as we are in life—we should work together.”² Lunacharsky’s assumption that Russian artists with progressive leanings should serve the most politically progressive state called into question Prokofiev’s intention to practice modernism in the West, which the new Soviet State regarded as politically regressive. For the Soviets, the innovative aspect of Western modernism meant little more than the meeting of market requirements, innovation for innovation’s sake.³ When Stalin’s power consolidated in the 1930s, state support for

modernist art morphed into increased censorship and eventual persecution, but in the 1920s Russian emigrants with modernist ambitions had still been haunted by the Soviet accusation that having chosen to leave Russia they had acted “against history, and therefore, against art, and would be punished by artistic sterility and death.”⁴ The myth of Russian artistic sterility abroad was an important propaganda tool on the pages of *Krasnaya nov’* (Red Virgin Soil, 1921–41), the first Soviet literary review created in response to the émigré journal *Sovremenniy zapiski* (Contemporary Notes, 1920–40) in Paris. The Soviets’ insistence on dividing Russian culture into “old” and “dying” émigré art and “young” and “thriving” Soviet art was all the more pronounced because it had no basis in Soviet reality, where modernism, notwithstanding the Futurists’ early attempts to find common ground with the Revolution, never thrived and was driven to the brink of extinction during the anti-modernist campaigns during Stalin’s reign. As Leonid Livak shows, modernism as a concept and as a cultural practice proved to be problematic both in the Soviet Union and in the context of Russian emigration.⁵

Seeing Prokofiev’s determination, Lunacharsky granted the composer permission to leave the country, “owing to poor health” and “artistic necessity.” Lunacharsky’s liberal attitude toward artists who wanted to leave the Soviet Union inadvertently facilitated what came to be known as the “first wave” of emigration, which led to the division of Russian culture into two: one at home, the other in exile. Likely inspired by literary historian Gleb Struve, Marc Raeff has dubbed this exiled culture “Russia Abroad.”⁶ Struve’s term, together with its variants (“Russia outside Russia” and “zarubezhnaya Rossiya”), indicates the belief that after the Revolution the culture of prerevolutionary Russia continued outside of the Soviet Union. Unlike the word emigration, Struve’s term was intended to mark the exiled Russians as a community deprived of the possibility of return. Throughout this book I use “Russia Abroad” and emigrant culture interchangeably to signal that for Russians in Paris the hope that the Soviet experiment would eventually fail and they could return home was central to their cultural identity.⁷

The culture of Russia Abroad was hardly uniform, covering geographically vast areas and consolidating its center in Paris in the middle of the 1920s when, for economic reasons, Berlin yielded its leading role to the French capital. Focusing on exilic literature, Maria Rubins visualizes extraterritorial Russian culture as an archipelago, a seemingly independent and isolated, but culturally interconnected chain of islands with shifting centers and in constant flux, “owing their origin to a series of volcanic eruptions.” Most of the Russian emigrants in Paris from the first wave still adhered to what Rubins calls the “victim tradition” of exile, which slowed integration and interaction with the host country.⁸

Artists and intellectuals of all stripes fled the Bolshevik utopia, sometimes under hair-raising circumstances. Of this book’s protagonists, Boris de Schloezer (1881–1969), music critic and brother-in-(common)-law of Alexander Scriabin, moved

with his sister and her three children from starving Petrograd to German-occupied Kiev in 1918, then to Yalta, where he was conscripted into the White Army. Only after contracting typhoid was he spared from being sent to the front.⁹ The young composer Vladimir Dukelsky (1903–1969) escaped from Odessa on the last over-crowded cargo ship to leave before the Red Army entered the city.¹⁰ Even Nicolas Nabokov (1903–1978), cousin of the writer Vladimir Nabokov, whose emigration was greatly helped by influential family connections, had the emigrants' share of hardship after he escaped with his family trying to settle first in Athens, then in The Hague, and then in Stuttgart and Berlin, where he had pursued his music education before moving to Paris in 1923.¹¹ Igor Stravinsky and Sergey Diaghilev, already living abroad before the Revolution, became stateless in 1921 when Lenin stripped expatriates of their citizenship. On September 28, 1922, Lenin sent more than one hundred Russian intellectuals suspected of being unsympathetic to the new regime into exile on the German steamer *Oberbürgermeister Hacken*, remembered as the “philosophy steamer.”¹² The composer Arthur Lourié (1892–1966), Stravinsky's confidant in Paris in the 1920s, had left voluntarily on the same ship the previous month. By 1926, the year Soviet music critic Leonid Sabaneyev (1881–1968) arrived in Paris, about 80,000 Russians were living in France, some 45,000 of whom had settled in the capital.¹³

In 1929, Ivan Bunin, who would later win the Nobel Prize in Literature, could jokingly report that in Paris it was only the Eiffel Tower that had not been captured by the Russians: “on the Champs Élysées the Don Cossacks are singing . . . On the Grand Boulevards balalaikas are playing.” Nothing escaped the Russian invasion. “In the dressmaking shops—Russian hands. In the ballet—Russian legs.” The papers carried front-page articles about the defection of Soviet diplomat Grigory Besedovsky; the French author Maurice Rostand was writing a play about the last tsar of Russia (*Le dernier tsar*, 1929), featuring the Russian-born French actress Ludmilla Pitoëff; the movie theaters played Russian films and films with Russian topics, such as Vsevolod Pudovkin's *Storm over Asia* (1928), Fyodor Otsep's *Living Corpse* (1929), Hanns Schwarz's *Wonderful Lies of Nina Petrovna* (1929), Ernst Lubitsch's *Patriot* about Tsar Paul I (1928), and Alexander Ivanov-Gai's *Ivan the Terrible* (1915). Russian pianist Alexander Brailowsky was all the rage, and the “symphony orchestras never stopped playing Stravinsky.”¹⁴

The main protagonists of this book are Russian composers in Paris, especially those who inhabited Stravinsky's orbit. Who were they? According to Sabaneyev, who in 1927 summed up the state of Russian music at home and abroad, they could not be considered a unified group because they lacked a common aesthetics.¹⁵ Lourié took the opposite view, arguing that Russian music ceased to exist in Russia after the Communist coup, and that now it was the Russian composers in Paris who represented the homeland.¹⁶

Lourié's argument is familiar to scholars who study the double existence of postrevolutionary Russian culture. The official Soviet line at home, they claim, had

little connection with the exiled branch, which became a shadowy reflection of the Russian culture that “might have been” without the traumatic break of 1917. The exiled culture gave at least temporary home to intellectuals, many of whom, like Lourié, believed that they continued where prerevolutionary Russia left off. In his recent book, Livak gives a detailed account of what was at stake at this political and cultural border patrolling.¹⁷ The cultural category of Russia Abroad is well established, and numerous studies have been written about the literary work of Russian emigrants in the first half of the twentieth century. Yet aside from Stravinsky and Prokofiev, the most famous Russian composers of their generation, musicians are strikingly absent from studies of Russia Abroad. Richard Taruskin’s 2005 essay “Is There a ‘Russia Abroad’ in Music?” is the best entrée into the topic—and it serves as the inspiration for my study.¹⁸ Like Sabaneyev and Lourié, Taruskin asks the crucial question: “Can one profitably view the musicians of the Russian interwar diaspora as a group?” To put it differently, “Can one speak collectively of ‘Russia Abroad’ when speaking of music, or only of various Russians abroad?” I attempt to answer this question by taking a somewhat narrower focus, limiting my study to Russian Paris, especially to Stravinsky’s circle, and “charting personal relationships,” which ultimately determined how composers responded to the experience of exile.¹⁹ Whereas prerevolutionary Russia, the imagined cultural center for Russian intellectuals, became a phantom land, the real center for Russian musicians was Stravinsky, the star of Parisian musical life, whose alliance to Russian musical traditions was ambiguous at best.

Grouping exiled Russian composers together, even in a limited geographical area, has its risks. One is the danger of seeing their work from a Western European perspective as mere *exotica*, a limiting category that both Stravinsky and Lourié tried to escape. Another potential pitfall is to succumb to the essentialist view that assumes that these composers share some mysterious Russian “essence” that intuitively enables them to speak a stylistically unified musical language, an argument French musicologist Gisèle Brelet made in her contribution to Pyotr Suvchinsky’s two volumes of essays on Russian music in 1953.²⁰ Such a view can easily gain political meaning and is thus part of a nationalistic historical narrative currently thriving in Russia as the country gradually reclaims its formerly exiled intellectuals, aiming to close the gap between the artificially separated two Russian cultures and retroactively create a unified cultural identity. Belated unification can occur with the protagonist’s eager consent, as Stravinsky demonstrated in 1962 during his first return to his homeland since 1914, when he embraced his Russianness in no uncertain terms: “I have spoken Russian all my life. I think in Russian, my way of expressing myself is Russian. Perhaps this is not immediately apparent in my music,” Stravinsky, who by that time had defected to the twelve-tone camp, added, “but it is latent there, a part of its hidden nature.”²¹ He seems to have forgotten that by the late 1920s he had declared himself a cosmopolitan whose only remaining Russian quality was that he liked music “the way all Russians like music.”²²

This study rejects both the essentialist and the politically charged attempts to unify Soviet and exiled Russian cultures. But I also argue against presenting postrevolutionary Russian culture as existing in two unrelated versions: a distorted form in Soviet Russia and a hermetically preserved old form in the cultural space of exile, an approach that dominated studies of Russian culture during the Cold War.²³ As I demonstrate, the cultural border between the Soviet Union and interwar Paris was porous, allowing interactions between the two Russian cultures at least for a while. As the émigré critic Mark Slonim recalled nostalgically in 1931, Russian culture in the 1920s was still a “system of communicating vessels” with a constant flow of ideas, people, and texts between Soviet Russia and the Russian communities in European capitals.²⁴ As such, it functioned as what Andreas Huysen defined as a “transnational” cultural space, a term that underlines “the dynamic processes of cultural mingling.”²⁵

I do not present a comprehensive chronicle of Russian music in interwar Paris. Rather, I highlight cultural transformations that occurred as prerevolutionary Russian culture migrated West, interacting with French culture as well as with newly minted Soviet trends that were aggressively showcased in Paris to the delight of the French intellectual elite and to the despair of Russian emigrants. I focus on the composers Lourié listed in an important article on the “Russian School” in 1932 as the most important—Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Nabokov, and Dukelsky—leaving out Igor Markevich (1912–1983), the youngest Diaghilev composer on Lourié’s list, whose compositional career was hampered by the impresario’s death in 1929.²⁶ Instead of Markevich, I give voice to Lourié both as an insightful critic and a composer. No study of Stravinsky’s orbit could be complete without giving due consideration to such an important satellite.

Nor is this book primarily an account of these Russian composers and their work in emigration. My focus is instead the emigrant space they inhabited and shaped. Several interrelated topics that characterize this cultural space run through the book, first among them the conflict between the narrative of modernism, which requires constant innovation, and the narrative of exile, which considers its mission the preservation of past culture. As Livak points out, this “innovative paradigm” of modernism was problematic both in the exiled Russian culture, in which emigrants insisted on the double mission of preserving and developing the best of prerevolutionary Russian culture, and in Soviet Russia, where political and aesthetic innovations had never been easy bedfellows.²⁷ By combining the perspective of modernism and exile, my study responds to Livak’s call for “the integration of the unduly separated academic fields—modernist and exilic studies—in a single domain of scholarly inquiry.”²⁸ My study also explores the conflict between the Bolsheviks’ and the emigrants’ visions of Russia and its past, which explains the emigrants’ attraction to neoclassicism, a transnational artistic vision that gave them the opportunity to both reconnect to their own past and embrace the French

idealization of classicism. Equally important in this study are St. Petersburg and its golden poet Pushkin as symbols and cultural foci of emigrant nostalgia. Nostalgia clashed with the political and artistic temptation of Bolshevism, which attracted even Russian emigrants in Paris, where Soviet artistic and political products provided emigrants with an irritant against which they had to measure their cultural aspirations. The emigrants' musical space in Russian Paris was defined by the centripetal and centrifugal force of Stravinsky's disproportionate influence. In turn, Stravinsky's philosophy of musical time, formulated by Suvchinsky and later Bretet, bore the mark of the peculiarity of the emigrants' perception of time.

In broader terms, my topic is emigrants' responses to the trauma of the Revolution and the consequent exile. I argue that Russian emigrants in the 1920s and 1930s reacted to the trauma by redefining their relationship to modernism's threefold division of time into past, present, and future. Most fixated on the past with nostalgia, recreating and transforming it with loving care and a self-delusional refusal to accept the modern idea of time as irreversible and progressive. Emigrant nostalgia fits both of Svetlana Boym's definitions of nostalgia: retrospective nostalgia that thrives on *nóstos* (return) and attempts to reconstruct the lost home, believing in it as truth and tradition; and reflective nostalgia that focuses on *álgos* (longing) and "cherishes shattered fragments of memory" without contemplating return. Both, she writes, can be viewed negatively as "an abdication of personal responsibility, a guilt-free homecoming, an ethical and aesthetic failure."²⁹ As Joseph Brodsky put it, emigrants' obstinacy for keeping their gaze fixed on the past translated into "the repetitiveness of nostalgia," which resulted in "a failure to deal with the realities of the present or uncertainties of the future."³⁰ Being nostalgic also meant wearing the label "emigrant" openly, preventing, or at least significantly limiting, potential interaction with the host country.

One way to escape the trap of nostalgia was to go in the opposite direction and at least experiment with marching in step with the Bolsheviks and their obsession with revolutionary progress, an attitude that required a radical detachment from the past and a commitment to a utopian future. Predictably, few emigrants chose that route. Those who did, like Prokofiev, were easy targets for the Soviet government's efforts to lure back its intellectual luminaries.

Neither nostalgia nor yielding to the Bolshevik temptation proved to be productive in the context of emigrant existence. Neoclassicism provided an alternative sense of temporality: an illusory past scrubbed of historical associations—light, unconcerned, emotionally detached, free of historical guilt. Like nostalgia, neoclassicism involves a backward gaze but lacks its emotional charge, remaining instead cold and calculating in its creation of a carefully constructed, imaginary past. As Scott Messing and Richard Taruskin pointed out, the neoclassical impulse in French music appeared as a strong reaction against German influence, first in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. The trauma of World War I under-

standably exacerbated the anti-German bias of neoclassicism and offered Stravinsky the opportunity to become “Wagner’s Antichrist.”³¹ In an ironic twist neoclassicism, an artistic trend deeply rooted in French nationalist resentment, allowed the Russian Stravinsky to turn into “the paragon of Frenchness.”³² This part of the story is well known. But neoclassicism was not simply Stravinsky’s passport to Europe. It was also his effort to recover his Russian past, as Schloezer, the first critic who applied the term to Stravinsky in 1923, insisted. Integrating various French definitions of neoclassicism into exilic studies, I offer the context of Russian exile to shed light on a little-explored aspect of this infinitely elusive term.

In the remainder of the introduction I provide a short overview of the musical life of Russian Paris, relying on Lev Mnukhin’s exhaustive four-volume chronicle of Russian emigrant events in Paris,³³ as well as on Prokofiev’s witty, sharp-tongued commentary on the hustle and bustle of interwar Paris and the rivalries in its Russian musical subculture, preserved in his diaries. From Stravinsky’s and Prokofiev’s exalted positions, Paris in the 1920s was a veritable mecca for musicians, where in the 1927–1928 season alone 267 symphonic concerts took place, with premieres of 133 new compositions by 105 composers.³⁴ Opportunities were obviously much more limited for Russian composers of less fame. Sabaneyev’s analyses of the scene, both his optimistic description from the late 1920s and his depressed survey from 1937, reflect the perspective of a failed composer.³⁵ Not always a trustworthy music critic, Sabaneyev was nevertheless an astute social observer whose views resonated with other marginalized Russian composers struggling in the French capital. Lourié’s analysis of Russian Paris is more ideologically tendentious. Although, like Sabaneyev, he ultimately ended up on the margins, for almost a decade he was a vocal proponent of Stravinsky’s aesthetics and thus played a significant role in shaping the narrative of Russian music in Paris. In spite of their opposing conclusions about the existence of a Parisian Russian school of composition, Lourié’s and Sabaneyev’s analyses both focus on Stravinsky, whose music and aesthetic beliefs exerted an especially potent gravitational pull for Russians in Paris.

SOUNDING RUSSIAN IN PARIS

The poet Vladislav Khodasevich once remarked that Russians, even when all else disappeared, would assemble into the strangest groups, founding, for instance, societies “of those who once walked in the Summer Garden,” or “of those who prefer *Anna Karenina* to *War and Peace*.”³⁶ Musicians were a bit more practical. They formed ensembles, founded a conservatory, started concert series, orchestras (among them several balalaika orchestras), choruses, musical societies, opera companies, and music publishers. *Posledniye novosti*, the most important daily émigré newspaper in Paris between 1920 and 1940, and *Vozrozhdeniye*, a more conservative Russian paper, provided daily listings of concerts and musical events

of interest to Russian audiences. Surveying just one year, 1927 (a year explored in detail in chapter 2), demonstrates a pervasive Russian presence in Paris's musical life. In January, lovers of Russian opera could attend Alexander Borodin's *Prince Igor* and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. In February, they could hear a concert performance of Anton Rubinstein's *Demon*, in April Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sadko* in the Théâtre Trocadéro, in September his *Snow Maiden* in concert performance at the Salle Gaveau, and in October Modest Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, also a concert performance, at the Salle Pleyel. Professors and students of the Russian Conservatory gave concerts at least once a month. Russian musicians were also frequently featured with French orchestras. The Colonne Orchestra engaged the opera singer A. I. Mozzhukhin in January, and the singers of the Kedrov Quartet and Vladimir Horowitz in February. In February and March, the singers V. I. Braminov and G. F. Leonov performed with the Padeloup Orchestra. Russian singers, violinists, and pianists performed Russian music besides the standard repertory. In April pianist R. Otsup slipped the premiere of a work by Nikolai Medtner into a program of Rameau, Scarlatti, and Chopin in the Salle de Géographie. In May Nikolai Orlov played Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Scriabin, and Prokofiev in the Salle des Agriculteurs, with Prokofiev in attendance. Musicians were engaged to play not only at concerts but at Russian clubs, evenings of music and poetry, balls, banquets, and fundraising events.

Mnukhin's *Russkoye zarubezh'ye* chronicles a flourishing musical life, with Russian musicians at the center of attention in the French capital. Until 1928, when Sergey Koussevitzky ended his concerts in Paris to give his full attention to the Boston Symphony, and 1929, when Diaghilev's death put an end to his Russian Ballet, the highlights of the Parisian musical season were unquestionably Koussevitzky's concerts and Diaghilev's dazzling spectacles. Between 1921 and 1928 Koussevitzky not only gave premieres of important works by Stravinsky and Prokofiev, but he also introduced works by such other living Russian composers as Maximilian Steinberg, Alexander Kastalsky, Alexander Glazunov, Alexander Gretchaninov, Dukelsky, and Nikolai Lopatnikov to the Parisian public. He even risked performing excerpts from Nikolai Obukhov's *Book of Life* in 1926, a premiere that left many in the audience bewildered.³⁷ Diaghilev served a somewhat smaller circle of living Russian composers. Besides Stravinsky, only Nikolai Tcherepnin, Steinberg, Prokofiev, Dukelsky, and Nabokov made his roster. For Russian composers who wanted to rise, it was crucial to belong to either Koussevitzky's or to Diaghilev's circles. Even Stravinsky's and Prokofiev's careers needed the steady support of both.

Concerts were only one of many venues where musicians interacted. Prokofiev's diaries paint a vivid picture of the constant buzzing that energized him during his years in Paris. During the Paris season of Diaghilev's Russian Ballet and Koussevitzky's concerts, which in the 1920s lasted from the end of May until the end of June, Prokofiev attended at least one, if not two concerts, a day. In the 1927 season

he had important premieres with both Koussevitzky and with Diaghilev. On May 26, 1927, by no means a unique example in Prokofiev's calendar, he worked with Leonid Massine, the choreographer of his new Diaghilev ballet, *Pas d'acier*, went to hear Koussevitzky's rehearsal of his Overture, op. 74, and attended a performance of his Third Piano Sonata. He was not so preoccupied with his own premieres as to miss the dress rehearsal of Stravinsky's new opera *Oedipus Rex*, on May 30, the rehearsal and concert of his friend Dukelsky's Piano Concerto, or a concert demonstrating mechanical instruments. If not attending concerts in the evening, he would socialize with musicians, attending a party to celebrate Koussevitzky's opening concert, a soiree at the Princess de Polignac featuring Horowitz, or a gathering at the house of Henry Prunières, editor of the *Revue musicale*, with Maurice Ravel, Manuel de Falla, Arthur Honegger, Koussevitzky, and Arthur Rubinstein. At these events he learned what his fellow musicians thought of the highlights of the season—the most entertaining part of the evening at Prunières' was hearing Koussevitzky and Rubinstein's vicious critique of "both *Oedipe* and Stravinsky's abominable conducting."³⁸

Musicians also visited each other. On January 25, 1924, for instance, Prokofiev entertained the family of Nikolai Tcherepnin by playing them his opera *Love for Three Oranges* and his Fifth Piano Sonata. A month later he tried out the sonata again at the Prunières. He was eager to show his new piece to Stravinsky, who graciously agreed to listen. On June 18, 1927, he played his Overture, op. 42, and his ballet *Pas d'acier* for music critic Jean Marnold, a Prokofiev enthusiast who, the composer reported, wanted to start a new journal "with a pro-Prokofiev" agenda. Suvchinsky brought Dukelsky over to Prokofiev's so that the young composer could pay him his Piano Concerto. Prokofiev showed his Second Concerto to Koussevitzky in the Pleyel shop, where by chance they also managed to overhear the concluding bars of Stravinsky's Piano Concerto, being rehearsed in the same building.³⁹

Composers listened, overheard, and gossiped. A convenient gathering place was the music store of Koussevitzky's publishing house, *Rossiskoye muzikal'noye izdatel'stvo* or Édition russe de musique, on rue d'Anjou, the only music store outside Russia that carried scores of new Russian music written both inside and outside that country.⁴⁰ Prokofiev, who had no permanent address, had his mail sent to Édition russe, where he also stored his manuscripts. He dropped by frequently to pick up mail, collect manuscripts, discuss the publication of his work, peruse new scores, and encounter other composers. In his diary he recorded his meetings with Stravinsky, another frequent visitor on rue d'Anjou, with whom he often discussed new projects. On November 11, 1928, after running into Stravinsky at the publisher, Prokofiev accompanied him to the rehearsal of *Le Baiser de la fée*, which Stravinsky conducted. Seeing them together always thrilled Russian composers. Spotting Prokofiev greeting Stravinsky once at a concert, Nabokov exclaimed: "How fascinating to witness the very essence of Russian music saluting itself."⁴¹

Koussevitzky's *Édition russe* was also a source of much needed financial support for underemployed composers. Stravinsky recommended his friend Lourié to prepare piano transcriptions of his *Octet* and *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* for publication. Sabaneyev, who had little sympathy from Prokofiev and Stravinsky because of his anti-modernist stance,⁴² ended up doing copying work there, "slaving away over manuscripts by [Alexander] Gretchaninov," as Prokofiev noted maliciously in his diary.⁴³ Sabaneyev was indeed quite desperate. A highly educated music critic and pianist with a degree in mathematics, he had unfulfilled ambitions as a composer. In 1933 he moved his musical activities to Nice to write music for the film studio "La Victorine," accompany ballet performances at hotels and casinos, and, after 1937, to give two-piano recitals with his wife, occasionally featuring his own compositions.⁴⁴

OUT OF ORBIT: SABANEYEV

As Sabaneyev's failed compositional career demonstrates, the musical scene in Paris did not benefit all living Russian composers. In Russian Paris, most musical events featured standard Russian fare that was played and replayed ad nauseam. As the discouraged Sabaneyev complained in an article he wrote for *Sovremenniy zapiski* (Contemporary Annals) in 1937, the average Russian emigrant was not particularly musical. Even those who loved music would rather hear balalaika orchestras and Gypsy music than a new symphony by Prokofiev. If they were lovers of classical music, they loved the classics—Chaikovsky's "Pathétique" Symphony and Beethoven's Ninth—music that reminded them of the Russian musical scene they had left behind. Russian composers who emigrated lost the small audience for contemporary music that had just begun to materialize a few years before the war in Russia. At concerts where works by Russian emigrant composers were played, such as the concerts sponsored by the Russian Musical Society Abroad (RMOZ), the organizers could recruit only about two hundred Russian emigrants to attend, two-thirds of them too poor to pay the admission fee.⁴⁵ For Sabaneyev and other composers of his ilk, having RMOZ or lectures on Russian music as their only concert venue was virtually a public announcement of their failure.⁴⁶

As Sabaneyev knew fairly well, Russian composers did not want to write exclusively for the emigrant audience. Dreaming of international success when they left Russia, they wanted a broader public.⁴⁷ Paris became their mecca less for its vibrant musical life than as the place where Stravinsky had gained world fame. More than the city itself, it was Stravinsky's example that drew them. Those, like Sabaneyev, who could not break out of their emigrant circles, quietly faded away. Only those who could enter Stravinsky's circle and connect to a broader audience through Russian music's two most influential enterprises, Diaghilev's Russian Ballet or Koussevitzky's concerts, had a chance of a significant career.

No wonder that the two stars of the Russian music scene, Prokofiev and Stravinsky, kept a certain distance from émigré circles. Prokofiev, who traveled on a Soviet passport that he had to renew periodically at the Soviet Embassy in Paris, was especially cautious. On February 16, 1924, he attended a meeting of the Russian colony and listened to talks by the writers Ivan Bunin and Dmitry Merezhkovsky, the historian and theologian Anton Kartashov, and others. He had little sympathy for what they said: "They all inveighed against the Bolsheviks, wept for trampled-upon Russia and in the name of Christ called for hatred." Although he listened to them with interest, he tried to remain neutral.⁴⁸ He was flattered when in 1925 B. A. Zak, secretary of the Russian Conservatory in Paris, approached him to sound him out whether he would consider becoming the director of the institution. But after learning more about the conflicts between different factions from the music administrator Pierre Blois, he lost interest.⁴⁹ If not always to Prokofiev, to his friends at least it was clear that he should distance himself from the Russian emigrant community. On January 8, 1926, he was invited to play at a festive meeting of Russian writers, poets, and composers celebrating the "Day of Russian Culture," "to demonstrate to Parisians that the Soviet Revolution has not yet entirely destroyed Russian culture," as Prokofiev reported sarcastically in his diary. Suvchinsky, Prokofiev's Eurasianist friend, blew up at what he considered the composer's incomprehension of his stature. Declaring that Russian music was "wholly sustained" by Stravinsky and Prokofiev, he advised Prokofiev to avoid such pitifully nostalgic emigrant gatherings.⁵⁰

Neither did Stravinsky have any need for emigrant support. On February 8, 1931, Lourié, who was serving as his unofficial secretary at the time, reported to him that members of RMOZ came to him to "test the waters" about whether Stravinsky would be willing to become a member. Likely offended by not being invited himself, Lourié gave Stravinsky a sarcastic account of the rebirth of the musical society that he had considered passé already in Russia. Tcherepnin and "his hangers on" called a general meeting in the Salle Gaveau, he informed Stravinsky, hoping to find "gullible and stupid people who are ready to serve the 'cause' of Russian art."⁵¹ Stravinsky, who two days later declared to Gavriil Paichadze, managing director of Édition russe, "God preserve me from getting mixed up with these activities of the Russian emigration!!!!!!," was obviously not interested.⁵²

In Sabaneyev's position it was hard not to feel bitter. Instead of a coherent group of Russian composers, he saw only those who rubbed shoulders with Stravinsky and Prokofiev, and thus with success, and had the luxury of ignoring those who could barely cobble together a living. Obviously irritated by Stravinsky's overwhelming influence, Sabaneyev devoted his initial reports from Paris to the Soviet Union to the demystification of his famous contemporary. Although politically biased, his social analysis of Stravinsky's immense success and of the failure of most of his compatriots was not without insight. He did not question Stravinsky's talent, especially since he

admired *Firebird* and *Petrushka*, which, in Sabaneyev's view, were the only works that would survive their creator.⁵³ But Stravinsky, Sabaneyev argued, would not have been so stratospherically successful without Diaghilev, whose magic turned Russian works into a sensation in the West. Nobody would deny, Sabaneyev wrote, that the fame of Stravinsky and Prokofiev, as well as the Western reputation of Musorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, was due in large part to Diaghilev's sorcery. Unfortunately, by the time most Russian composers reached Paris, Diaghilev's magical powers were on the wane. With no one to fill Diaghilev's role, perplexed Russian composers came to realize that the Parisian public was moving on to a new type of exotica, the art seeping out of Soviet Russia. While emigrants were being unapologetically pushed aside, "everything 'Soviet' was arousing snobbish interest," Sabaneyev complained.⁵⁴ In 1927 Diaghilev made a feeble attempt to meet the new demand by producing Prokofiev's Bolshevik ballet *Pas d'acier*, but the work failed to catch on. Sensitive to changing fashions, Diaghilev began to worry that "Bolsheviks were no longer *à la mode*" already before the premiere and proposed changes to the ballet's scenario.⁵⁵

Especially after Diaghilev's death, composers, whose work Sabaneyev compared to delicate, greenhouse plants, had to face the rough conditions of the open market where money, connections, and advertising power mattered at least as much as talent. Destitute emigrant composers did not have the financial means to present themselves effectively to the Parisian audiences. Unlike poets, who could give poetry reading at virtually no expense, composers required financing.⁵⁶ Even Nina Berberova, who struggled to survive in Paris as a writer and thought that painters, artists of the theater, and musicians "lived a more 'normal' life," admitted that painting was an easier sell than music.⁵⁷

Apart from Stravinsky, Sabaneyev detected no center in the musical life of Russian Paris. He saw only warring factions, rapidly changing fashions, and the destabilizing effects of modernism. Composers, Sabaneyev tried to explain to his Soviet audience, acted like sportsmen: breaking records, chasing after novelties, reinventing themselves in order to secure their marketability. Most Russian composers could not negotiate this rapidly changing scene. Composers such as Sergei Rachmaninoff (who had no residence in Paris), Medtner, and Gretchaninov who, in Sabaneyev's account, represented the "Old Testament of music," continued to compose in the style they had already developed in Russia. Rachmaninoff especially stood firmly "in opposition to all currents of contemporary music."⁵⁸ Stravinsky and Prokofiev belonged to the New Testament of music, destroying earlier traditions and opening up new directions. In Sabaneyev's view, with *The Rite of Spring* Stravinsky "became the leader of the most leftist maximalistic currents in music," acting, he added with apparent enjoyment, as Lenin and Trotsky did in politics. Already by 1926 Sabaneyev declared Stravinsky victor in the battle between the two stars of Russian music, Stravinsky forcing Prokofiev, Sabaneyev added in 1937, to "escape" the rough capitalist battlefield by returning to the Soviet Union.

What was Stravinsky's secret? For Sabaneyev the answer was simple: Stravinsky's protean genius perfectly matched the demands of the Western market economy. His cold, dry, calculating, and soulless music, the critic argued, fit the spirit of his anti-musical epoch. According to Sabaneyev, Stravinsky's breathtaking career was built on a business model. By quickly changing styles he satisfied at once the thirst for novelty and dictated fashion. Sabaneyev recognized Stravinsky's gift for publicity, intimating that Stravinsky owned "a secret advertising apparatus" and was able to manipulate even negative reviews of his work to his advantage.⁵⁹ In the cutthroat atmosphere of Paris in the 1920s and 1930s, only Stravinsky managed to secure for himself immunity from real criticism, not because critics liked his music, but because nobody dared to cry out, "Look, the king is naked." And so, as in the fairytale, "the naked king coquettishly walked in the alleys of world fame, enjoying the universal confusion he created."⁶⁰

In Sabaneyev's belief it was precisely this businesslike attitude that distinguished Stravinsky from his fellow emigrants. Stravinsky, Sabaneyev argued, clearly did not belong to the Russian emigrant community. How could he be considered an emigrant when he had been living abroad since 1910 and had been a French citizen since 1934? Stravinsky could be called a Russian composer only by elimination: by being neither Soviet nor French. But did being Russian mean anything beyond Stravinsky's ambiguous national attachments? Sabaneyev detected nothing specifically Russian in Stravinsky. Although his fame was established with works that were still worthy successors of Russian national trends, the new Stravinsky seemed to have had a completely different psychological makeup than his Russian predecessors. His calculating mindset, Sabaneyev insisted, would have been more at home in warehouses than in Russian composers' workshops.⁶¹ Sabaneyev's unstated conclusion was that Stravinsky's fame ultimately did not promote the cause of Russian composers abroad. If they tried to follow in his footsteps, they ceased to be Russian; if they remained Russian, they had little chance of succeeding in the competitive Western market, dominated by Stravinsky.

Nevertheless, Stravinsky provided the only center in a musical scene in Paris that Sabaneyev otherwise described with a pun as "ex-centric," that is, lacking a center. In his *Modern Russian Composers* (1927) he recounted the experience of Russian composers finding themselves "under the heavy and despotic hand" of Stravinsky. But Stravinsky's influence, according to Sabaneyev, provided no coherence. In the penultimate chapter of his book he denied the very existence of what in the title of the chapter he called, misleadingly, "The Russian-Parisian School." Composers who ended up in Paris "did not possess any 'tendency' as a unit," he argued. They did not hold similar views or definite musical convictions. Their gathering in one geographical place was merely accidental, for they fled Russia not because of common political persuasion but "to escape the discomforts of life and out of fear of the social explosion."⁶² Not seeing any coherence among Russian

composers, Sabaneyev divided his discussion into a general introduction describing the musical scene, followed by a brief entry on a few individual composers. In his short survey in *Modern Russian Composers* he featured only three emigrant composers, Alexander Tcherepnin, Lourié, and Obukhov.⁶³ Curiously, in 1937 he replaced the three with composers of more conservative leanings: Medtner, Gretchaninov, and Nikolai Tcherepnin, father of Alexander, as the only ones, besides Stravinsky and Prokofiev, whom he considered at all successful in emigration.⁶⁴ The composers about whom he had written earlier still appeared in his discussion of Russian composers in 1937, but he gave them short shrift, assigning the evaluation of Obukhov's work to the psychiatrist rather than the music critic, and describing the music of Lourié, whom in 1927 he considered to be the composer most under the influence of Stravinsky, as only a clever assemblage of elements from the surrounding culture.⁶⁵

SATELLITE: LOURIÉ

Lourié, who for almost a decade acted as Stravinsky's confidant and thus had, or at least wanted to believe that he had, direct access to the sanctum sanctorum of Russian music abroad, had a different perspective on the state of Russian music than Sabaneyev. In 1931 he published a short essay on Russian composers in Paris in *La revue musicale* as part of a broad survey of "the situation of music in all countries." Like Sabaneyev, he felt obliged to give a short lesson on the history of Russian music, which he described as mainly a process of liberation from the German yoke. Also like Sabaneyev, he presented Stravinsky as the central figure who managed to break "the traditional bonds of Russian and German music." Unlike Sabaneyev, Lourié explained the stratospheric rise of Stravinsky not as the result of the composer's brilliant marketing ability but as a logical outcome of the development of Russian music. *The Rite of Spring*, Lourié declared, was "the coronation of Scythian-accented music and provided the inspiration for breaking with all the ideologies that sought to impose a Western language on Russian music."⁶⁶

Lourié distinguished the two postrevolutionary scenes of Russian music, calling the one in the Soviet Union "*intra muros*" and the one in Western Europe "*extra muros*," and defined the latter by the active engagement with Western life and its loosened ties with the homeland. Music in the Soviet Union was slow to react to the political changes, Lourié wrote, relying on his experience of working as a commissar of music under Lunacharsky. In his estimation, composers stuck to prerevolutionary decadent trends or retreated to academicism not knowing how to respond to the radically new political reality by a radically new musical language. Lourié did not deny that in the future music in the Soviet Union could overcome its provincial status and doctrinaire formulas, but he clearly saw the future of Russian music as outside the Soviet Union.

Who were the composers in the “*extra muros*” Russian group? Stravinsky was obviously too great to be listed as a member of any group, so Lourié created a separate category for him, the “European as only a Russian can be,” and placed him, at least in the French version of the article, “on the margins” of the Russian school, granting him the exalted genius status of a permanent outsider. The editor, Prunières, added a footnote to this statement: “The same could be said of the tendencies of Arthur Lourié.” This footnote was probably the biggest boost to Lourié’s ego at the time and seems to have emboldened him to include his own name directly after Stravinsky’s and Prokofiev’s in the significantly expanded English version of the article a year later. Since all of the composers Lourié considered first tier (Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Dukelsky, Nabokov, and Markevich) were employed by Diaghilev, he was obviously exaggerating his status by including his own name in the list. Even as Stravinsky’s satellite, he had never been included in Diaghilev’s circle.

Lourié’s choice of composers for his second tier was more random. In the French version, he included as Russian composers in Paris Nikolai Berezovsky and Lopatnikov, who had never lived in the city; Julian Krein, an eighteen-year old Russian composer who spent seven years in Paris before he returned to Soviet Russia in 1934; Obukhov, who had his fifteen minutes of fame when Koussevitzky premiered excerpts from his *Book of Life* in 1926; the more prominent Alexander Tcherepnin; and the quarter-tone composer Ivan Vishnegradsky. Not even a common geographical location unified this group. But like composers of the Mighty Five (or the French “Les Six”), seven of Lourié’s “Paris composers”—Vishnegradsky, Dukelsky, Lourié, Nabokov, Alexander Tcherepnin, and their lode stars Stravinsky and Prokofiev—appeared together in a concert on June 9, 1926, in the Salle Pleyel.⁶⁷ Lourié made no effort to justify his list, and in the English version of the article he dropped Krein without explanation. The only musical common ground he mentioned was the sentimental, nostalgic tendencies in some members of the “*extra muros*” Russian group. Lourié ended the French version of his essay on a brazenly optimistic note, declaring that “with the European Stravinsky and the Russian Prokofiev at the helm, our young school pursues its march unflinching, even if with some detours.”⁶⁸ There was little basis for such optimism.

The English version of the essay gave Lourié the opportunity to elaborate on the subject at greater length. But the expanded version revealed even more the logical glitch regarding Stravinsky’s status in Russian music, which Lourié, although practiced in ideologically tendentious polemics, was unable to evade. Could Stravinsky’s “desertion to international shores be regarded as treachery to Russian nationalism?” His answer to this crucial question was a resounding no, but, like most committed ideologues, he failed to support the assertion. He defended Stravinsky’s turn by the composer’s modernist obligation to seek novelties. After all, the “Scythian problem had been developed to its full extent, and further progress in this direction was impossible.” He declared that the new Stravinsky confined