

Goodwill Tour or Cold War Competition? The Portrayal of Cultural Exchange in the American Press

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In the 1950s at the height of Cold War tensions, the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a number of cultural exchanges in the hope of generating goodwill. During a decade dominated by space-race competition and the threat of nuclear war, US and Soviet musicians, dancers and orchestras toured each other's countries for mutual benefit. Both powers hoped that this form of cultural diplomacy would lead to greater mutual understanding through meetings between peoples of the two nations. In the most high profile exchange of this period, the New York Philharmonic Orchestra undertook a ten-week tour to Europe and the Soviet Union in 1959 as part of President Eisenhower's Special International Program for Cultural Presentations. This was the largest cultural exchange tour by an American orchestra at that time and the first tour to follow the signing of a formalised exchange agreement in 1958. The highly publicised tour was led by Leonard Bernstein and saw the Philharmonic give a string of very well received performances in the Soviet Union.¹

Following the New York Philharmonic's tour to Europe and the Soviet Union from August to October 1959, Soviet artists paid reciprocal visits to the United States as part of the increasing pattern of cultural exchanges. A group of Soviet composers, led by Dmitri Shostakovich, visited the United States in late October 1959 for a month and the Moscow State Symphony toured for six weeks from January 1960, resulting in only a short interval between the end of the Philharmonic tour and the arrival of the first group of Russian musicians. Consequently,

¹ For a further detailed examination of the New York Philharmonic's 1959 tour, see Jessica Black, 'The New York Philharmonic behind the Iron Curtain: Goodwill Tour or Cold War Propaganda?' MMus thesis, University of Melbourne, 2012.

these visits offer a comparison between the reception of Soviet and American artists in the United States and the portrayal of cultural exchange in the American press. By examining the American press reports upon the Philharmonic's return to the United States and during the Soviet composers and orchestra visit, it can be demonstrated how musical tours with the aim of generating goodwill still exhibited inevitable Cold War competition in a period of intense rivalry. In particular, the competition between the Soviet Union and the United States that was present during this period of the Cold War is apparent, as direct comparisons were made between the quality of American and Soviet orchestras. The reception of the Soviet musicians in the American press reflected how Soviet music and culture was perceived by the United States and revealed American feelings of cultural superiority in the Cold War.

The New York Philharmonic's visit was part of a ten-week tour to Europe and the Soviet Union. The orchestra spent three weeks touring Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev, and presented twenty concerts to local audiences. The orchestra was generally very well received, with local and foreign press commenting on the high standard of the playing and Bernstein's leadership.² Performing the music of American composers abroad was an important part of the Philharmonic's tour, and at least one American work featured on each of the orchestra's programs. The composers programmed were predominantly men in Bernstein's circle of acquaintances, or people that had influenced his career, including Charles Ives, Walter Piston, Aaron Copland, David Diamond and Samuel Barber. Bernstein also presented his own Symphony No. 2, 'Age of Anxiety,' to Soviet audiences. In addition to appearing as a conductor and composer, Bernstein performed as soloist in Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Mozart's Piano Concerto in G major, conducting from the piano.

The orchestra's time abroad was extensively covered by the American and international press, but the scope of this discussion is limited to the American press's reporting on the orchestra's return to the United States at the conclusion of the tour. On 12 October 1959 the New York Philharmonic arrived in Washington from London; the orchestra presented a concert that night, before returning to New York the next day. Bernstein remained in Washington to address the National Press Club on 13 October 1959, and then joined the orchestra in New York for the opening of the 1959–60 season on 15 October 1959, just three days after returning from a strenuous ten-week tour. The extensive coverage of the orchestra's arrival home by American press outlets and the small period of time before the Soviet visits allows for a direct comparison between the reception of cultural tours by American and Soviet artists in the United States.

The majority of American press coverage while the Philharmonic was abroad had been focused on the impact of the orchestra and Bernstein in the Soviet Union, and the Soviet visit continued to be the focal point of the press on the orchestra's return. Immediately upon the Philharmonic's arrival home, the orchestra was described as having 'the echoes of the unbridled ovations they received in Russia probably still ringing in their ears' and as creating a 'sensation' in the Soviet Union.³ While the European component of the tour was still mentioned, the

² See, for example, Osgood Caruthers, 'Moscow Cheers Bernstein at Philharmonic Triumph,' *New York Times*, 23 Aug. 1959, 1; Leonid Kogan, 'High Mastery,' *Pravda* [Soviet Union], 24 Aug. 1959, translation from 023-13/03, New York Philharmonic Archives (hereafter NYPA); Editorial, 'Mr. Bernstein Conquers Moscow,' *New York Herald Tribune*, 27 Aug. 1959.

³ 'Bernstein & Co. Home Today,' *New York Post*, 12 Oct. 1959; Editorial, 'Fanfare for the Philharmonic,' *New York Herald Tribune*, 15 Oct. 1959.

American press emphasised that the greatest triumphs were had in the Soviet Union and, subsequently, this measured the success of the New York Philharmonic's tour.

The Philharmonic members were greeted as heroes upon their return to New York from Washington. Bernstein was presented with the key to the city by the Mayor, and a proclamation was issued that the week was now 'Philharmonic Week,' while 57th Street was renamed 'Philharmonic Street.'⁴ Macy's department store took out a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune* with the headline 'New York Welcomes Home a New Kind of Hero.'⁵ The accompanying text announced that Macy's wished to share New York's pride in its symphony, and welcomed the Philharmonic back from a tour 'that was part mission ... and all triumph.'⁶ An editorial in the *New York Herald Tribune* welcomed the Philharmonic home 'after one of the most spectacular road trips any American artistic organization has ever enjoyed' and reminded readers that it was not just New York's orchestra, but the city's 'cultural ambassador.'⁷ Howard Taubman, of the *New York Times*, declared that 'the Philharmonic deserves the accolade of the city and country for its achievement,' and praised the orchestra as an ambassador that had 'served the nation famously.'⁸ The *New York Daily News* announced 'Musical Heroes Back on the Job,' while the *New York World-Telegram and Sun* reported that all along 57th Street posters read 'Welcome home, international heroes!'⁹ *Life* magazine featured a three-page photo spread of the tour under the headline 'Triumphal Tour,' and declared that 'the tour will go down in history as the most successful an American orchestra has ever made.'¹⁰

The American press reports upon the Philharmonic's return to New York seemingly transformed the orchestra's cultural tour into a Cold War mission. Bernstein was likened to Richard the Lionheart in an article titled 'Bravo for Bernstein, Back from Crusade,' while the *Washington Post*, *Times Herald* announced that 'Europe Discovered Bernstein as Columbus Did the New World.'¹¹ Many headlines featured the word 'mission' to describe the tour, such as 'Musical Mission to Moscow' in the *Newark News* and "'Bernstein Tour" Proves a Mission' in the *Boston Herald*.¹² The tour was depicted as closer to a cultural conquest than a concert tour, with the words 'conquer', 'triumph' and 'mission' repeatedly featured. While the musical success and warm reception by overseas audiences was stressed in the American press, the focus on the Soviet performances and the use of battle terminology underlined the tour's Cold War context. The Philharmonic was portrayed as not only very successful musically but also as an accomplished cultural ambassador, with the resulting American press coverage

⁴ 'City Hails Returning Philharmonic,' *New York Times*, 16 Oct. 1959, 24.

⁵ 'New York Welcomes Home a New Kind of Hero,' *New York Times*, 15 Oct. 1959; *New York Herald Tribune*, 15 Oct. 1959, 7.

⁶ 'New York Welcomes Home a New Kind of Hero.'

⁷ Editorial, 'Fanfare for the Philharmonic.'

⁸ Howard Taubman, 'Music: Envoys Return,' *New York Times*, 16 Oct. 1959, 24.

⁹ Douglas Watt, 'Musical Heroes Back on the Job,' *New York Daily News*, 16 Oct. 1959; Louis Biancolli, 'Philharmonic Back on the Job,' *New York World-Telegram and Sun*, 16 Oct. 1959.

¹⁰ 'Triumphal Tour,' *Life International* (7 Dec. 1959).

¹¹ Joseph X. Dever, 'Bravo for Bernstein, Back from Crusade,' *New York World-Telegram and Sun*, 16 Oct. 1959; Paul Hume, 'Europe Discovered Bernstein as Columbus Did the New World,' *Washington Post*, *Times Herald*, 13 Oct. 1959.

¹² Tom Mackin, 'Musical Mission to Moscow,' *Newark News* [New Jersey], 24 Oct. 1959; Robert Taylor, "'Bernstein Tour" Proves a Mission,' *Boston Herald*, 19 Oct. 1959.

taking on a highly self-congratulatory air. In addition, the American firsts of the tour were listed to illuminate the national successes for the United States. In January 1960, *HiFi Review* pointed out that in the excitement of the Russian adventure and its repercussions, it had been overlooked that this 'conquest' had been attained 'under the conductorship of three musicians born and wholly trained in the US.'¹³ The American press also reported that this was the first US orchestra to play at the Salzburg Festival and that American compositions were featured on every program—further successes in the Philharmonic's Cold War cultural mission.

The improved quality of the New York Philharmonic under Bernstein was commented on frequently in the American press. The quality of the orchestra had been considered to be failing in the mid-1950s before Bernstein was appointed leader in 1958, but the tour was seen to have returned the Philharmonic to its previously high standard.¹⁴ Paul Hume of the *Washington Post, Times Herald* reviewed the Philharmonic's concert at Constitution Hall on 12 October 1959 and noted that it was the first real chance Washington had had to hear the orchestra since Bernstein had become its leader. Hume found the Philharmonic playing to be of the 'highest quality,' with a 'unity and incisiveness in the strings [and] a rich homogeneity in the brass.'¹⁵ But most of all, there was 'a responsiveness to Bernstein's soaring demands that is the mark of a great orchestra,' and the New York Philharmonic was considered to be once again 'among the greatest of these.'¹⁶ On 15 October 1959, the Philharmonic opened its season in New York and showcased the orchestra's improved standard to its home city. Howard Taubman of the *New York Times* reported that the Philharmonic had returned 'in excellent musical health' and its playing 'was what one expects from a first-rank ensemble.'¹⁷ Taubman commented that 'it was clear that the orchestra was once again, after some dispirited seasons, a vigorous, homogenous unit, responsive to its conductor and alert to every musical subtlety.'¹⁸ Miles Kastendieck also noticed this rejuvenation in the *New York Journal American*, commenting that 'the tour has undoubtedly restored all its former greatness to the orchestra. It played radiantly on this occasion ... New York can bask in the reflected glory won so artfully by the Philharmonic as Ambassadors Extraordinary.'¹⁹ Paul Henry Lang added to this sentiment in the *New York Herald Tribune*, observing that the 'ensemble playing was of the highest order,' and that 'this grand orchestra is rapidly regaining the individuality of sound, color, and manner which it once possessed and which is characteristic of the truly great orchestras.'²⁰ The reception of the New York Philharmonic in New York and Washington demonstrates how enthusiastically the tour was received by the American press and how the orchestra's musical and political successes were promulgated to the American public.

After the conclusion of the New York Philharmonic's tour, a group of Soviet composers toured the United States as part of the international cultural exchange program. Dmitri

¹³ 'Bernstein's New York Philharmonic—Highlights from an Invasion of Russia and Points West,' *HiFi Review*, Jan. 1960.

¹⁴ See Howard Taubman, 'The Philharmonic—What's Wrong with It and Why,' *New York Times*, 29 Apr. 1956, 139.

¹⁵ Paul Hume, 'Philharmonic Return of Epic Stature,' *Washington Post, Times Herald*, 13 Oct. 1959, B12.

¹⁶ Hume, 'Philharmonic Return of Epic Stature.'

¹⁷ Taubman, 'Music: Envoys Return.'

¹⁸ Taubman, 'Music: Envoys Return.'

¹⁹ Miles Kastendieck, 'Philharmonic Back—Bravo,' *New York Journal American*, 16 Oct. 1959.

²⁰ Paul Henry Lang, 'New York Philharmonic,' *New York Herald Tribune*, 17 Oct. 1959.

Shostakovich was accompanied by composers Tikhon Khrennikov, Dmitri Kabalevsky, Konstantin Dankevich and Fikret Amirov on a four-week visit to the United States, along with Soviet music critic Boris Yarustovsky. The Soviet composers' visit followed the 1958 tour by Americans Roger Sessions, Roy Harris, Peter Mennin and Ulysses Kay to the Soviet Union, and preceded the April 1960 tour by Aaron Copland and Lukas Foss. The Soviet composers travelled to New York, Washington, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Louisville and Boston, and attended concerts of Russian and American music, met with composers, visited music schools and attended official receptions.

A conflict between the composers' personal views on modern music and official Soviet attitudes arose many times during their visit, and this was noted in the American press. After reporters questioned Shostakovich on modern music, the *New York Times* proclaimed that 'Mr. Shostakovich could not say whether the Soviet Union had a hostile attitude toward American jazz. He declared he was not familiar with what he called the "official position."' ²¹ Similarly, in Los Angeles, the Russians' views on contemporary music were described by Walter Arlen in *Musical America* as 'cautious and noncommittal ... [A]ll six musicians exhibited a significant conformity of thought in discussions.' ²² Questions regarding the music of Schoenberg, Webern and Berg were treated 'gingerly and evasively,' and in answer to a question regarding the purported rise in twelve-tone music in Russia, Shostakovich answered, 'There is none.' ²³ For Arlen, the Russian tour was evidently disappointing, as the visit was 'quickly forgotten' and 'nothing of real musical significance was done for them, nor did circumstances enable them to do anything memorable for us.' ²⁴

Scheduling conflicts and translation difficulties were often impediments throughout the tour, which made meaningful interaction with the Soviets difficult. After the visit to Philadelphia, Samuel L. Singer of the *Musical Courier* observed the difficulty of getting any comment from the Soviets: 'Only Kabalevsky talked English, and interpreters were both scarce and apparently loathe to function. Questioning was taboo at two receptions, and the press conference at which questioning was supposedly welcome was drastically shortened.' ²⁵ In Los Angeles, Arthur W. Wolf from the *Musical Courier* described similar difficulties at a scheduled composer forum: Fikret Amirov's interpreter 'was ignorant of musical terms and advised [reporters] that he was just a "political" interpreter!' ²⁶ Despite these difficulties, Howard Taubman reported that some American composers, who felt an opportunity for open communication had been lost, arranged for a session with the Soviet visitors at Norman Dello Joio's home. This was attended by Aaron Copland, William Schuman, Samuel Barber, Peter Mennin and Ulysses Kay, with Nicolas Slonimsky acting as interpreter, and there the talk was reportedly 'lively and candid.' ²⁷

The members of the Soviet delegation heard both their own music and American works performed during their visit. On 6 November 1959 in Philadelphia, they were present for the

²¹ 'Amity Is Voiced by Shostakovich,' *New York Times*, 25 Oct. 1959, 13.

²² Walter Arlen, 'Russians in Los Angeles,' *Musical America* 79 (Dec. 1959): 6.

²³ Arlen, 'Russians in Los Angeles.'

²⁴ Arlen, 'Russians in Los Angeles.'

²⁵ Samuel L. Singer, 'Philadelphia Greeted Russians,' *Musical Courier* 160 (Dec. 1959): 4.

²⁶ Arthur W. Wolf, 'Los Angeles,' *Musical Courier* 161 (Jan. 1960): 23.

²⁷ Howard Taubman, 'Exchange in Depth,' *New York Times*, 22 Nov. 1959, X9.

American premiere of Shostakovich's cello concerto, performed by Mstislav Rostropovich and the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy, which was favourably received. The audience comprised a number of American composers, including Samuel Barber, Roger Sessions, Henry Cowell, Norman Dello Joio, Paul Creston and Gian Carlo Menotti, who mingled with their fellow Soviet composers—the *New York Times* reported that 'friendship glowed everywhere.'²⁸ In New York, Kabalevsky's *Colas Breugnon* Overture replaced William Schuman's *Symphony for Strings* in the New York Philharmonic's Sunday afternoon concert program as the composer was in attendance, a move that was applauded as 'a pleasant gesture of goodwill.'²⁹ The Boston Symphony Orchestra presented a special concert in Boston on 13 October 1959 which featured Kabalevsky conducting his cello concerto, Amirov's *Kyurdi-Ovshari Mugami*, Khrennikov's First Symphony and Aaron Copland conducting the suite from his opera *The Tender Land*.³⁰ While Cyrus Durgin of the *Boston Globe* reported that the concert was an 'historic' and 'unique' event, when the same concert was repeated in New York on 21 November 1959 the response was less enthusiastic.³¹ *Musical America* reported the concert was 'not very exciting,' and that the Russian works 'make sense, but in a metaphorical way.'³² The same critic found Amirov's work 'totally undistinguished,' while Khrennikov's symphony 'remains a work of promise but still of standard, student stock.'³³ Kabalevsky's cello concerto was received best of all of the Russian works, yet the American composition was favoured overall. Despite *The Tender Land* being one of Copland's minor works, 'in comparison to the Russian works it stood above them all.'³⁴

While the Soviet composers received a friendly welcome from the Americans, it was apparent that there was some disappointment after their visit. In contrast to Americans' imagined portrait of the most famous living Russian composer, in person Shostakovich was 'highly nervous, a chain-smoker with darting eyes and fidgeting hands, ill at ease and seemingly anxious most of the time.'³⁵ The difficulties in communication with the composers persisted throughout the visit, with the problems of translation and scheduling impacting on the ability of reporters and audiences to acquaint themselves with the foreigners. The Russians' views on contemporary music and jazz were sometimes conflicting and often exhibited the difficulty for the group of complying with official Soviet policy. The visitors also attended performances of their own works, but with the exception of works by Shostakovich, the music of the Soviet composers was not received overly enthusiastically. Despite these problems, American and Soviet composers had opportunities to interact and discuss music, fulfilling cultural exchange's aim of establishing contact between people of each country.

Soon after the visit of the Russian composers and music critic to the United States, the Moscow State Symphony toured in January and February 1960. The orchestra gave thirty-eight

²⁸ Howard Taubman, 'US and Soviet Composers Reach Summit,' *New York Times*, 7 Nov. 1959, 28.

²⁹ Eric Salzman, 'Soviet Composers at the Philharmonic,' *New York Times*, 9 Nov. 1959, 35.

³⁰ Cyrus Durgin, 'Audience and Orchestra Cheers Soviet Musicians at Symphony,' *Daily Boston Globe*, 14 Nov. 1959, 1.

³¹ Durgin, 'Audience and Orchestra Cheers Soviet Musicians at Symphony.'

³² A.C., 'Carnegie Hall: Boston Symphony,' *Musical America* 80 (Feb. 1960): 25.

³³ A.C., 'Carnegie Hall: Boston Symphony.'

³⁴ A.C., 'Carnegie Hall: Boston Symphony.'

³⁵ Arlen, 'Russians in Los Angeles.'

concerts during a six-week tour of the United States and Canada as the first visit of a Russian orchestra to the country. The conductors were Kirill Kondrashin and Konstantin Ivanov, and the orchestra was accompanied by four soloists—Emil Gilels (piano), Daniel Shafran (cello), Galina Vishnevskaya (soprano) and Valerii Klimov (violin)—some of whom also presented solo recitals.

American critics did not consider the quality of playing by the Moscow State Symphony to be at the standard of the United States' top orchestras. After the orchestra's first concert in New York on 3 January 1960, Howard Taubman of the *New York Times* described the Moscow State Symphony as 'a good orchestra, well-disciplined, responsive to its leader [and] particularly strong in the string and brass sections.'³⁶ However, Taubman argued that the United States was 'the land of outstanding symphony orchestras' and that it was ahead of the Soviet Union in this area; along with the Leningrad Symphony Orchestra, the Moscow State Symphony was the only orchestra of major caliber in the Soviet Union as far as Taubman could determine.³⁷ After the Washington concert on 14 January 1960, Paul Hume described the orchestra's ensemble playing as having a 'fine and well balanced sound,' but he also compared the Moscow State Symphony to other American orchestras, arguing that its sound 'is totally unrelated to the homogenized tone quality of the Philadelphia Orchestra and equally distant from the beautifully stratified sound of the Chicago Symphony.'³⁸ Hume noted the string section had 'unusual sweetness' and the trumpets had a 'fine, shining projection,' but it was in 'the woodwind section that this orchestra is weak.'³⁹ Yet, while the orchestral discipline was 'not in the same category as that of [American] major orchestras,' it played with 'a heart and soul that is sometimes absent from [the United States'] biggest machines.'⁴⁰ The Moscow State Symphony presented two concerts in Philadelphia, and there the orchestra 'impressed as a responsive group,' although it was observed that it did not have 'the glossy, lush tone or technical finesse of [the] best American orchestras.'⁴¹ The same sentiment was repeated in Boston: Robert W. Dumm of the *Musical Courier* described the Moscow State Symphony as 'a very good orchestra, the peer of Detroit or even Cleveland, but not of Philadelphia.'⁴² In addition, Dumm declared that Americans 'should permit themselves a moment of justifiable self-congratulation' that so many orchestras of a high standard were thriving throughout the nation.⁴³

The Moscow State Symphony structured its programs around the four soloists that had journeyed with it from the Soviet Union, and chose works that showcased these individuals. Pianist Emil Gilels, well known to American audiences from his two previous solo tours, was the focus of many programs that demonstrated his technical finesse and prodigious skill. Gilels received the greatest praise of the orchestra's first New York concert on 3 January 1960; the *Musical Courier* raved about his 'technically dazzling performance,' declaring that 'this

³⁶ Howard Taubman, 'First Soviet Orchestra in US Hailed Here at Opening of Tour,' *New York Times*, 4 Jan. 1960, 1.

³⁷ Taubman, 'First Soviet Orchestra in US Hailed Here at Opening of Tour.'

³⁸ Paul Hume, 'Moscow State Symphony Scores Big Hit at Constitution Hall,' *Washington Post, Times Herald*, 15 Jan. 1960, C18.

³⁹ Hume, 'Moscow State Symphony Scores Big Hit.'

⁴⁰ Hume, 'Moscow State Symphony Scores Big Hit.'

⁴¹ Samuel L. Singer, 'Philadelphia,' *Musical Courier* 161 (Feb. 1960): 40.

⁴² Robert W. Dumm, 'Boston,' *Musical Courier* 161 (Mar. 1960): 32.

⁴³ Dumm, 'Boston.'

phenomenal technician can command thundering and effortless octave passages and the most delicately and poetically played cantabile.⁴⁴ Like the critics in New York, Paul Hume spoke very highly of Gilels after his Washington concert, characterising him as ‘one of the greatest masters now playing,’ with ‘phenomenal technical resource.’⁴⁵ Gilels dazzled audiences in New York, Washington, Boston and Philadelphia, and consistently received greater praise than the orchestra at performances. Alongside his concerts with the Moscow State Symphony, Gilels presented a number of solo recitals, and a review of his concert on 22 January 1960 reveals the envy of American critics regarding the Soviet musical talent in the Cold War climate: ‘It seems a little unfair that the Russians, who have their Sputniks and Luniks, should also have Emil Gilels, whose playing on this occasion aroused his audience almost to fever pitch.’⁴⁶

Gilels was consistently highly praised throughout the Moscow State Symphony’s tour, and while the other Soviet soloists did not perform as frequently, they were also well received in the United States. Soprano Galina Vishnevskaya was referred to as ‘the most devastating propaganda the Soviet Union can export,’ and described as ‘a lyric soprano of extensive size and range, splendidly schooled and evenly produced throughout the scale.’⁴⁷ Cellist Daniel Shafran was described by Harold Schonberg in the *New York Times* as ‘quite elegant—elegant in appearance and elegant in musicianship,’ but also a ‘superb workman.’⁴⁸ Violinist Valerii Klimov was perhaps the least well established of the Soviet soloists, but his performance in Boston on 31 January 1960 exhibited ‘good training, a slender singing tone, and the promise of good things to come.’⁴⁹ The majority of the orchestra’s concerts across the United States featured a performance by a soloist, and the orchestra’s final concert in New York on 14 February 1960 culminated in a showcase featuring both Klimov and American pianist Van Cliburn at Madison Square Garden.

The repertoire presented by the Moscow State Symphony was focused heavily on Tchaikovsky, and made little attempt to present a broad range of Soviet compositions. Tchaikovsky was the Russian composer most frequently performed on tour, supplemented by music of Prokofiev and Rachmaninov. Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 11 (1957) was the most recently composed work on the Russian programs, yet the preference for Tchaikovsky meant that the Moscow State Symphony was more focused on featuring nineteenth-century compositions. Seven of the nine New York concerts presented all-Tchaikovsky programs, and the Russian composer was also overwhelmingly featured in the Boston and Chicago concerts.

Howard Taubman speculated as to the thinking behind making Tchaikovsky ‘the overwhelming burden’ of the nine New York concerts: ‘Was it a conviction that this was what the orchestra played the best or a belief that this was the way to insure instant and overwhelming success?’⁵⁰ The belief that performing Tchaikovsky was playing to the orchestra’s strengths is valid, with some of the performances of Tchaikovsky’s symphonies receiving

⁴⁴ R.K., ‘Moscow State Symphony,’ *Musical Courier* 161 (Feb. 1960): 26.

⁴⁵ Hume, ‘Moscow State Symphony Scores Big Hit.’

⁴⁶ M.R. [Michael Rostock], ‘Carnegie Hall,’ *Musical Courier* 161 (March 1960): 15.

⁴⁷ Howard Taubman, ‘Music: 2 Changes in Moscow Cast,’ *New York Times*, 7 Jan. 1960, 24.

⁴⁸ Harold C. Schonberg, ‘Music: A Cellist’s Debut,’ *New York Times*, 9 Jan. 1960, 14.

⁴⁹ Claudia Cassidy, ‘On the Aisle: Gilels the Master, Vishnevskaya and Klimov Soloists with the Moscow Orchestra,’ *Chicago Tribune*, 1 Feb. 1960, B1.

⁵⁰ Howard Taubman, ‘Experiment in Goodwill,’ *New York Times*, 24 Jan. 1960, X9.

the best reviews of the tour, while conductor Konstantin Ivanov was promoted as a noted interpreter of the composer.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the orchestra's programs in Chicago on 30 and 31 January 1960 caused disappointment as Tchaikovsky was the only composer featured, with the exception being a performance of Mozart's Piano Concerto in C Major, K. 467 by Gilels.⁵² The all-Tchaikovsky program was again criticised in the Symphony's Boston programs by Robert W. Dumm in the *Musical Courier* as 'hardly fair to an ensemble on display.'⁵³ In Los Angeles the orchestra presented two concerts, with the first being 'more or less a showcase for Soviet pianist Emil Gilels,' and although the second was another all-Tchaikovsky program, 'it was thrilling nonetheless.'⁵⁴

Despite the shared aims of goodwill and cultural diplomacy, the Moscow State Symphony and New York Philharmonic tours differed markedly in their intention and execution. Whereas the Philharmonic was intent on playing contemporary American music abroad and featuring lesser-known American composers such as David Diamond, the Moscow State Symphony limited its programs to well established Russian composers, most prominently Tchaikovsky. Whereas the Americans were eager to discuss contemporary music and the use of twelve-tone music and jazz, both on tour and at home, the Russian visitors to the United States avoided discussions of modern music and exhibited difficulty in discussing official Soviet attitudes to such music and their personal views. While the Moscow State Symphony emphasised its soloists and the talent of individual Soviet musicians, the Philharmonic did not take any special soloists abroad and instead featured Bernstein and members of the orchestra in works that required a soloist.

Yet these differences in objectives were not taken into consideration by the American press, as it sought to maintain United States cultural superiority with often biased coverage. In the eyes of the American press, the Soviet orchestra repeatedly failed to measure up to the standard of the United States orchestras. The Soviet orchestra was seen to lack some of the distinct qualities possessed by American orchestras, with the American press considering it perhaps to be at the level of the United States' second-tier orchestras, but not at the level of the most renowned American orchestras. While the Russian soloists, especially Gilels, astonished American audiences, they were viewed by the Americans as rarities who did not reflect the overall standards of Soviet musicians. Additionally, with the exception of the works by Shostakovich, the Soviet compositions by the visiting musicians were not considered noteworthy, and did not measure up to the work of Copland. The focus on Tchaikovsky by the Moscow State Symphony did little to excite Americans further regarding Soviet compositions, contrasting profoundly with the modern music featured by the Philharmonic. Furthermore, the American press did not make the same claims for these cultural tours as they made for their own orchestra. The New York Philharmonic had triumphed in Moscow, made cultural exchange history and returned as a celebrated American cultural ambassador. The Soviet tours were not reported as enthusiastically, with the American press instead limiting its coverage to the concerts presented and the social activities undertaken, rather than emphasising the

⁵¹ See Max Frankel, 'Tchaikovsky Maestro,' *New York Times*, 27 Dec. 1959, X11.

⁵² Dosh Devries, 'Chicago,' *Musical Courier* 161 (Mar.1960): 28.

⁵³ Dumm, 'Boston.'

⁵⁴ Arthur W. Wolf, 'Los Angeles,' *Musical Courier* 161 (Apr. 1960): 23.

political context of the tour. The unanimous success of the New York Philharmonic's tour, combined with Cold War prejudices, conceivably blinded the American press to the Soviet tour's success: even the extraordinary soloists could not make up for the orchestra's perceived lack of quality, which was used as the preferred measure of success by American critics and therefore gave their own orchestra an advantage.

A comparison of the American press reports from both the New York Philharmonic and Soviet artists in the United States shows how political tensions undermined a goodwill tour. While a certain level of bias was to be expected in the reporting of these visits within the political climate of the Cold War, that many of the Soviet musical achievements were overlooked or dismissed attests to a perceived sense of cultural superiority being portrayed by the American press. As much as the tours might have been an exercise in cultural exchange, the awareness that the two countries were vying to be seen as the leading cultural power was unavoidable. Orchestral visits under the banner of cultural exchange did not stop the press from reiterating the distinctions between the two musical—and by extension political—cultures, highlighting the difficulty in sidestepping existing prejudices. While cultural exchanges were a step toward diplomacy, Cold War anxieties pervaded reporting on the cultural exchange visits in United States, which consequently reinforced the ongoing musical and political tensions between the Americans and Soviets.