

Programming Politics: The 1989 ‘Year of Shostakovich’ in France

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In 1988, French record company Le Chant du Monde announced an unprecedented theme for the following year’s activities. Every CD and concert program the label organised throughout 1989 would be dedicated to the music of Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975). Coined ‘Année Chostakovitch’ by the French press, the year 1989 saw the premiere in France of major Shostakovich works including the provocative opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1932). The festival also revived numerous symphonies, such as the Fifth (1937), which had scarcely been performed in France since its premiere in 1938.

Historical studies on Shostakovich reception have thus far focussed primarily on England, Germany, and the United States of America.¹ As a result, this yearlong festival in France remains largely undocumented.² The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the Shostakovich Year and to discuss the possible motivations for celebrating Soviet music in France during 1989. To explore the effects of the *Année Chostakovitch*, I will examine the French reception of *Lady Macbeth* and the Fifth Symphony: two well-known Shostakovich

1 Pauline Fairclough, ‘The “Old Shostakovich”’: Reception in the British Press,’ *Music and Letters* 88, no. 2 (2007): 266–96; Erik Levi, ‘A Political Football: Shostakovich Reception in Germany,’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Shostakovich*, ed. Pauline Fairclough and David Fanning, 285–97 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Terry Klefstad, ‘The Reception in America of Dmitri Shostakovich, 1928–1945’ (PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2003).

2 At the time of writing this article, Alan Mercer, editor of the *DSCH Journal*, is the only person to have dedicated significant attention to Shostakovich reception in France. See Alan Mercer, ‘Shostakovich and France,’ *DSCH Journal* 13 (July 2000): 73–6.

works that featured prominently in the festival program. Although the performance histories of these works in France are very different, they are representative of a broader trend in Shostakovich reception. The state of Franco-Soviet relations could shape not only the amount of Shostakovich's music performed in France but also the kinds of responses these performances incited from French critics.

This article begins with an outline of the main events of the *Année Chostakovitch*, before exploring some of the potential social and political motivations behind the festival. An examination of the Fifth Symphony in France will then demonstrate how the events of 1989 brought Shostakovich's music out of obscurity and into the mainstream, helping to shape the present-day reputation of his music in France. Finally, it will consider Shostakovich's opera, *Lady Macbeth*. Following the 1989 premiere, five more productions of *Lady Macbeth* were staged in France throughout the final decade of the twentieth century: a surge in programming that, I argue, would not have occurred without the events of the *Année Chostakovitch*.

Throughout 1989, *Le Chant du Monde* released twenty Shostakovich recordings. The discs comprised the fifteen symphonies,³ various piano works, chamber music, and two operas: *Le Nez* (1928), and *Katerina Ismailova*, Shostakovich's 1963 revision of *Lady Macbeth*. More than fifty concert performances of Shostakovich's music were scheduled across France, and the French press published over 150 articles on the composer and his music.⁴

The *Année Chostakovitch* festivities were not, however, restricted to the concert-going public nor those willing to purchase CD recordings of art music. The Louvre hosted a public screening of Tony Palmer's 1988 film *Testimony*, which dramatises the composer's life story, and the historic French cinema Le Cosmos scheduled a cycle of seven Soviet films featuring music by Shostakovich.⁵ Three Parisian libraries curated small-scale exhibitions on Shostakovich, and the Centre for Shostakovich Studies in Paris organised a conference at the Hotel Bedford, titled 'Shostakovich: A Witness of His Time.' Pierre Vidal, a prominent French musicologist, gave the keynote address.⁶

When we consider that the so-called 'Year of Shostakovich' represented no significant milestone in the composer's life, this elaborate sequence of events becomes somewhat puzzling. The year 1989 marked eighty-three years since the composer's birth; fourteen years after his death; thirty-six years since the death of Stalin; fifty-five years since Shostakovich's breakthrough production of *Lady Macbeth* in Leningrad; and either fifty-three or forty-one years since his music was subjected to public denunciation in the Soviet Union. In an article for *Le Monde*, Gérard Condé aptly described the peculiarity with a humorous remark: 'there are more useless anniversaries.'⁷

³ Previously released on the Soviet label Melodiya, these recordings were made by Kiril Kondrashin and the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra between 1962 and 1973.

⁴ "'Année Chostakovitch" dossier de presse,' 1989. Association Internationale "Dimitri Chostakovitch." I extend my sincere thanks to Emmanuel Utwiller, Françoise Hainard and Tatiana Maximov for their assistance and hospitality during my visits to the Centre Chostakovitch in Paris.

⁵ *Testimony: The Story of Shostakovich*, directed by Tony Palmer (UK: Enterprise Pictures Ltd, 1988). Although it premiered at the London Film Festival on 11 November 1987, the film was not officially released until 1988.

⁶ "'Année Chostakovitch" dossier de presse.'

⁷ Gérard Condé, 'Une année d'hommage à Dimitri Chostakovitch : Le musicien de la terreur et de la pitié,' *Le Monde*, 26 Jan. 1989, 24. 'Il y a des anniversaires plus inutiles.' All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

In fact, the French press exhibited a sense of general confusion after the announcement of the *Année Chostakovitch*. Articles that announced the planned festivities consistently included comments along the lines of: ‘without any forewarning, and in the absence of any anniversary, 1989 in France will be the Year of Shostakovich.’⁸ Other journalists overlooked the unusual timing and focused on the cultural benefit of such a festival ‘with no calendric reason—he was born in 1906 and died in 1975—other than the sole pleasure of discovering an abundance of unknown, even brilliant work, from a secretive and controversial man.’⁹

If we shift our focus away from the composer and into the domain of politics, it is much easier to locate the potential significance of 1989. The *Année Chostakovitch* coincided with both the bicentennial of the French Revolution and the restructuring of the Soviet Union. The French Ministry of Culture and Foreign Affairs gave the festival a public endorsement, and Yakov Ryabov, the Ambassador to the Soviet Union in France, attended the opening ceremony.¹⁰ Although not officially attributed as a motivating factor, several journalists made the link between the timing of the *Année Chostakovitch* and the strengthening of Franco-Soviet relations. The most explicit of these observations appeared in *Le Monde*, which described the festival as ‘a response to the effects of perestroika, in order to stimulate exchange between the two countries.’¹¹

In 1988, relations between France and the Soviet Union were as cordial as they had been since the end of Charles de Gaulle’s presidency.¹² Seduced by the idea of the ‘common European home’, President Mitterand made his first visit to Moscow in November 1988, and Secretary General Gorbachev reciprocated the favour in July 1989. Indicative of the positive state of Franco-Soviet ties in this period was a 1988 survey conducted by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs that revealed that only 17% of the French people surveyed considered the Soviet Union to be ‘the most aggressive country in the world,’ and the French population had more sympathy for Gorbachev than Margaret Thatcher.¹³

Given the prevailing state of affairs, the purpose of the *Année Chostakovitch* may have been to boost the French perception of Soviet music, which, by this stage, had lost much of the popularity it had held throughout the 1930s and in the years immediately following World War II.¹⁴ The figure responsible for initiating these plans was Philippe Gavardin, a member of the *Parti communiste française* (PCF) and the director of the French recording house *Le Chant du Monde*. Drawing inspiration from West Germany’s Duisberg Shostakovich Festival of

⁸ Condé, ‘Une année d’hommage à Dimitri Chostakovitch,’ 24. ‘Sans qu’aucun signe avant-coureur ait pu le laisser prévoir, en l’absence de tout anniversaire, 1989 sera, en France, l’Année Chostakovitch.’

⁹ Franck Erikson, *L’Express*, 3 Feb. 1989, 95. ‘Sans aucune raison de calendrier – il est né en 1906, mort en 1975. Mais pour le seul plaisir de découvrir l’œuvre abondante, méconnue, parfois géniale, d’un homme secret et controversé.’

¹⁰ Condé, ‘Une année d’hommage à Dimitri Chostakovitch,’ 24. ‘Outre le patronage de l’État (ministère de la culture et des affaires étrangères.’

¹¹ Condé, ‘Une année d’hommage à Dimitri Chostakovitch,’ 24. ‘Une réponse aux effets de perestroïka, pour stimuler l’échange entre les deux pays.’

¹² Angela Stent, *Franco-Soviet Relations from de Gaulle to Mitterand: Report to the National Council for Soviet and East European Research* (Washington, D.C.: National Council for Soviet and East European Research, 1989).

¹³ Marie-Pierre Rey, ‘“Europe is Our Common Home”: A Study of Gorbachev’s Diplomatic Concept,’ in *Cold War History* 4, no. 2 (2004): 54–5.

¹⁴ This idea is expanded in my forthcoming PhD thesis: Madeline Roycroft, ‘The Reception of Dmitri Shostakovich in Twentieth-century France’ (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne).

1984–1985,¹⁵ Gavardin wanted his label to release a catalogue of Shostakovich recordings throughout 1990 and organise a season of complementary concerts to take place throughout the same year.¹⁶ However, without any correspondence with Le Chant du Monde, Radio France programmed numerous concerts of Soviet music for 1989, prompting Gavardin to combine his company's efforts with Radio France and bring the project forward to 1989. As a result, France in 1989 had a significantly higher amount of Shostakovich's music programmed than preceding years. Tables 1 and 2 show a comparison of the symphonies and operas programmed between 1987 and 1989.

Table 1. Details of Performances of Shostakovich Symphonies in France, 1987–1988

Date	Work	Performers	Location
24 Apr. 1987	Symphony No. 15, op. 141	Nouvel Orchestre Philharmonique (presently OPRF)/Marek Janowski	Auditorium de Radio-France
11 Feb. 1988	Symphony No. 5, op. 48	Orchestre Nationale de France / Rudolf Barshai	Auditorium de Radio-France
1 July–24 Aug. 1988	Symphony No. 5, op. 48	National Symphony Orchestra (U.S.)/Mstislav Rostropovich	Perpignan, Montpellier, Marseille, Nice (Festival méditerranéen)

Despite the political significance of 1989, Gavardin rejected the idea that recent improvements in Franco-Soviet relations had anything to do with the festival. When questioned by curious journalists as to why he was dedicating 1989 to a Soviet composer, he dismissed the timing as 'un hasard objectif,' or 'an unbiased coincidence.'¹⁷ Gavardin's response hardly seems forthcoming considering Le Chant du Monde's internationalist title, the music it promoted in France throughout the twentieth century, and the fact that it received funding from the PCF.¹⁸

At its inception in 1938, Le Chant du Monde was almost entirely sponsored by musicians and composers with ties to the PCF, including Charles Koechlin, Darius Milhaud, Albert Roussel, and the conductor Roger Désormière. The label's founder Léon Moussinac was also a PCF member, and contributed a weekly cinema column to its official organ *L'Humanité*. In addition to releasing printed and recorded music, Le Chant du Monde organised live music performances, the second of which was the French premiere of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony in July 1938.¹⁹

After World War II, Le Chant du Monde purchased the PCF's publishing house Éditions sociales internationales, putting the label in charge of distributing music by Prokofiev, Khachaturian, and Shostakovich in France. The Soviet Union's Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS)²⁰ began to show serious interest in the French firm in 1947,

¹⁵ Michèle Worms, *La Lettre du Musicien*, in "'Année Chostakovitch" dossier de presse.' Erik Levi also mentions the Duisberg festival in 'A Political Football,' 297.

¹⁶ *L'Humanité*, 22 Feb. 1989.

¹⁷ Worms, *La Lettre du Musicien*. 'Pas de commémoration, pas d'anniversaire ! Si 1989 est une année Chostakovitch, c'est tout simplement, selon le mot du directeur de *Chant du Monde*, Philippe Gavardin, par un *hasard objectif*.'

¹⁸ Leslie A. Sprout, *The Musical Legacy of Wartime France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 181; Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Intellectuals and the French Communist Party* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 11.

¹⁹ Y.B., 'Voir, Lire, Entendre,' *Regards* 230 (9 June 1938): 14.

²⁰ Vsesoiuznoe Obshchestvo Kul'turnoi Sviasi s zagranitse

Table 2. Details of Performances of Shostakovich Symphonies and *Lady Macbeth* in France, 1989*

Date(s)	Works	Performers	Location
14 Jan. 1989	Symphony No. 14, op. 135	Nouvel Orchestre Philharmonique / Marek Janowski. Soprano: Teresa Zylis-Gara. Bass: Nikita Storojev	Théâtre des Champs-Élysées
2 Feb. 1989	Symphony No. 1, op. 10	Orchestre Nationale de France / Rudolf Barshai	Théâtre des Champs-Élysées
2 Mar. 1989	Symphony No. 9, op. 70	O.N.F. / Rudolf Barshai	Théâtre des Champs-Élysées
12–13 Apr. 1989	Symphony No. 11, 'The Year 1905,' op. 103	Orchestre de Paris / Semyon Bychkov	Salle Pleyel
14 Apr. 1989	Symphony No. 14	Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France / Marek Janowski	Théâtre des Champs-Élysées
19–20 Apr. 1989	Symphony No. 11	Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg / Semyon Bychkov	Palais de la musique et des congrès
6 May 1989	Symphony No. 14	Orchestre de chambre Mouvement 12 / Hubert Borgel. Soprano: Elena Vassilieva. Bass: Olim Saoulaïev	Blagnac
25 May 1989	Symphony No. 9	Orchestre National de Lyon / Hiroyoshi Wakasugi	Lyon
26, 28, 30 May & 2 June 1989	<i>Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District</i> , op. 29 (French premiere)	Orchestre Symphonique et Lyrique de Nancy / Jerome Kaltenbach Directed by Antoine Bourseiller	Opéra de Nancy et de Lorraine
2 June 1989	Symphony No. 8, op. 65	O.N.F. / Rudolf Barshai	Radio France
6–31 July 1989	Symphony No. 5, op. 47 / <i>Katerina Ismailova</i> , op. 29 / 114 (concert vn)	Kirov Theatre Symphony Orchestra (presently Marinsky Orchestra) / Valery Gergiev	Semaines Musicales de Tours (15th Festival)
19–20 Oct. 1989	Symphony No. 6, op. 54	Orchestre National de Bordeaux-Aquitaine / Jerzy Semkow	Bordeaux
29 Oct. 1989	Symphony No. 7, 'Leningrad,' op. 60	Orchestre national de L'Opéra de Monte-Carlo	Monte-Carlo
24 Nov. 1989	Symphony No. 4, op. 43	N.O.P. / Marek Janowski	Radio France
Autumn 1989	Symphony No. 9	Orchestre philharmonique de Montpellier-Languedoc-Roussillon / Cyril Diederich	Montpellier
Autumn 1989	Symphony No. 5	Orchestre Philharmonique de Nice / Michael Schonwandt	Nice
Unknown	Symphony No. 3, '1st May,' op. 20	Orchestre National de Capitole de Toulouse / Michael Plasson	Toulouse
Unknown	Symphony No. 2, 'To October,' op. 14 (French premiere)	Unknown	Unknown

* Collated from the Année Chostakovitch *guide des concerts* and cross-referenced with concert reviews from 1989. Some performances were listed with specifics TBA; 'unknown' designates missing information. I am therefore unable to provide concrete evidence that these last four performances went ahead.

and by 1948, Le Chant du Monde held the rights to Soviet music in the Francophone world.²¹ Furthermore, when Le Chant du Monde affiliated with the Russian label Melodiya in the early 1950s, it became the worldwide distributor of prominent Soviet recording artists including David Oistrakh, Mstislav Rostropovich and Kirill Kondrashin. This is not to suggest that Le Chant du Monde dealt exclusively in Russian music; throughout the century, the company was also highly regarded for its politically engaged song and ethnographic recordings.²² Still, it is likely that by promoting Shostakovich's music in France throughout 1989, Le Chant du Monde's director wanted to encourage the French public to see value in Soviet music: a tradition that had played a significant role in the label's history.

Despite the ambiguous motivations behind the 1989 festival, the critical reception of the performances of Shostakovich's music in France was undoubtedly positive. To demonstrate the festival's impact, I now turn to a case study of the Fifth Symphony's reception in France, contrasting its premiere in 1938 with its revival in 1989. This discussion will be preceded by a summary of the work's inception and premiere in the Soviet Union to highlight how this differed from the work's initial French reception.

In January 1936, Stalin attended a Moscow production of Shostakovich's provocative second opera, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. Two days later, an infamous article titled 'Muddle Instead of Music' appeared in *Pravda*, the official Communist Party newspaper. An anonymous author denounced the opera, labelling it 'bourgeois,' 'formalist,' and 'vulgar.'²³ Shostakovich was halfway through the composition of his Fourth Symphony when the article appeared, and although he had intended the new symphony to premiere at the end of 1936, it was withdrawn from rehearsal in December.²⁴

Shostakovich began working on his Fifth Symphony in April 1937. Subtitled 'A Soviet Composer's Response to Just Criticism,' the symphony satisfied the artistic principles of Socialist Realism that were more forcefully imposed upon the arts after the 1936 denunciation of *Lady Macbeth*.²⁵ As Soviet symphonies were expected to contain either a program or some form of 'identifiable human content,'²⁶ Shostakovich alluded to a victorious narrative in his Fifth by situating it in the minor-to-major tradition seen in the fifth symphonies of Beethoven, Mahler, and Tchaikovsky.²⁷ He wrote:

The theme of my Fifth Symphony is the making of a man. I saw man with all his experiences in the centre of the composition ... In the finale the tragically tense impulses of the earlier movements are resolved in optimism and joy of living.²⁸

²¹ For these negotiations, see Kiril Tomoff, 'Shostakovich and the Iron Curtain,' in *Virtuosi Abroad: Soviet Music and Imperial Competition during the Early Cold War, 1945–1958* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 30–7.

²² Jon Pareles, 'Around the World in 92 Discs,' *New York Times*, 15 Sep. 2002, 26.

²³ 'Sumbur vmeste muzyki,' *Pravda*, 28 Jan. 1936, translated in Victor Seroff, *Dimitri Shostakovich: The Life and Background of a Soviet Composer* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943), 204–7.

²⁴ For an in-depth explanation of the complexities surrounding this withdrawal, see Pauline Fairclough, *A Soviet Credo: Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

²⁵ Socialist Realism demanded that Soviet music be harmonically unambiguous, with an optimistic and triumphant narrative. See Christopher Norris, 'Socialist Realism,' *Grove Music Online* (accessed 14 July 2018). For an analysis of the contradictions that arise when applying these doctrines to music, see Fairclough, *A Soviet Credo*, xv–xxii.

²⁶ Hugh Ottaway, *Shostakovich Symphonies* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1978), 9.

²⁷ Ottaway, *Shostakovich Symphonies*, 25.

²⁸ Shostakovich quoted in Michael Steinberg, *The Symphony: A Listener's Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 547–8.

At its Leningrad premiere on 21 November 1937, the Fifth Symphony received a standing ovation that lasted over half an hour. It is, however, worth mentioning that prominent scholars have since questioned the authenticity of Shostakovich's musical apology; Richard Taruskin, for instance, demonstrated that the multitude of potential readings is precisely what made the symphony so appealing.²⁹ Still, this should not detract from the magnitude of the work's success. As Shostakovich's last Soviet biographer wrote, 'the people of the thirties recognised themselves, grasping not only the music's explicit content, but also its general feeling.'³⁰

When it premiered in France eight months later, Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony met with an entirely different response. Critical reactions were largely negative, with the French Communist press being the only sector willing to offer praise.³¹ A critic in *L'Humanité* described Shostakovich's symphony as 'sincere,' 'fresh,' and 'moving': an undeniable 'spark of genius.'³² But this was not enough to cement the work into the French concert repertoire, and from this point forward, all performances of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony in France involved either a touring orchestra or conductor from North America, Eastern Europe, or the Soviet Union.³³

It was not until the *Année Chostakovitch* that critical commentary on the Fifth Symphony became generally positive. In early 1989, the prominent French critic Benoît Duteurtre asked the readership of the conservative weekly publication *La Vie*, 'if you frequent the concert halls, perhaps you have heard the Fifth Symphony?' He responded on behalf of his readers: 'hermeticism? Boredom? Nothing of the sort! Shostakovich's music is grand classical art, reinvented.'³⁴

Many 1989 descriptions of the Fifth Symphony included adjectives such as 'monumental,' 'grand,' or 'magnificent,' and Shostakovich's style in this piece was consistently likened to Beethoven and Mahler.³⁵ These comparisons suggest that more French critics were appreciating the aesthetic value of the work than ever before. This reception contrasts significantly with the first French performance, where only the Communist press reviewed the work favourably. The shift in the perception of the Fifth Symphony in France suggests that the reinvigoration of Shostakovich's music throughout 1989 was able to override the work's unfavourable performance history.

Another work that received significant attention throughout the *Année Chostakovitch* was the 1932 opera, *Lady Macbeth of the Mzensk District*. Before it was prohibited by the Soviet government, *Lady Macbeth* had appeared in numerous cities throughout the Soviet Union, Europe, North America, and Scandinavia.³⁶ In France, however, *L'Humanité* merely

²⁹ See Richard Taruskin, 'Interpreting Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony,' in *Shostakovich Studies*, ed. David Fanning, 17–56 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

³⁰ Sof'ya Khentova quoted in Taruskin, 'Interpreting Shostakovich's Fifth,' 36.

³¹ For two notable examples, see Claude Chamfray, 'V^e Symphonie : Chostakovitch,' *La Revue Musicale* 185 (1938): 53; Florent Schmitt, 'Les Concerts,' *Le Temps*, 25 June 1938, 3.

³² E.B., 'Chostakovitch, Auric, Koechlin, au concert de "Chant du Monde",' *L'Humanité*, 18 June 1938, 8. 'Nous avons surtout reçu l'impression d'une musique très sincère et très fraîche ... Il vous tient, il vous émeut. Il vous bouleverse ... On ne peut plus alors dénier à Chostakovitch l'étincelle du génie.'

³³ See Jacques Lonchamp, 'Triomphe de Léonard Bernstein,' *Le Monde*, 2 Dec. 1966; Anne Rey, 'Hans Wallat et Joseph Kalichstein,' *Le Monde*, 27 Feb. 1971.

³⁴ Benoît Duteurtre, *La Vie*, 23 Feb. 1989. 'Si vous fréquentez les salles des concert, peut-être avez-vous entendu sa Cinquième symphonie ... Hermétisme ? Ennuï ? Ici, rien de tout cela ! Chostakovitch, c'est le grand art classique réinventé.'

³⁵ For advertisements in *Le Monde*, *L'Express*, *La Vie*, etc., see "'Année Chostakovitch" dossier de presse.'

³⁶ 'Dimitri Chostakovitch : Lady Macbeth de Mzensk,' *L'Avant-Scène Opéra*, no. 141 (1991): 104.

reported the success of the opera around the world throughout the mid-1930s, and no French opera company staged *Lady Macbeth* during this period.³⁷ Nevertheless, the season produced by L'Opéra de Nancy et de Lorraine in 1989 was a downright sensation. It attracted some of the biggest musical names from Paris, and journalists from Nancy, Paris, and other cities nearby described the work as a 'masterpiece,' with 'modern,' 'original,' and 'grandiose' content.³⁸ Shostakovich himself also received an extraordinary amount of praise during the run of four performances. The local newspaper of Nancy described the late composer as a 'revolutionary and humanist musician, a defender of the oppressed and persecuted, whose place in 1989 should create no conflict throughout the bicentennial year of the French Revolution.'³⁹

Given that only French Communist journalists reported on the opera in the 1930s, and it was absent from French opera houses until 1989,⁴⁰ the case of *Lady Macbeth* further testifies to the effects of the Année Chostakovitch. When the opera entered the French mainstream repertoire in 1989, it was finally regarded as a masterpiece with inherent aesthetic value, rather than an expression of Soviet art that was only of interest to the Communist sector of the French public.

In May 1989, the daily newspaper of Marseille reflected on Shostakovich's divisive reputation in twentieth-century France:

For a long time, on the issue of composer Dmitri Shostakovich, we took one of two sides. Either we were *sovietophile*, and trustingly declared his music brilliant, or we were *sovietophobe*, and on principle, found his music unacceptable.⁴¹

Undoubtedly, the Année Chostakovitch had a positive effect on the reputation in France of the Fifth Symphony and *Lady Macbeth*. After developing ties to the French Communist movement in the 1930s, both of these works remained neglected by French ensembles for much of the twentieth century. The intensive concert and festival programming of the Année Chostakovitch allowed the Fifth Symphony to re-enter the French orchestral repertoire and facilitated the highly anticipated French premiere of *Lady Macbeth*.

France felt the ongoing effects of its Année Chostakovitch throughout the final decade of the twentieth century, most strongly in the presence of *Lady Macbeth*. Two years after the Nancy premiere, the same sets, costumes, and singers toured to Toulouse to perform with the local company at the Théâtre du Capitole in 1991.⁴² Later that year, the Paris Opéra announced that the centrepiece of their 1992 season would be a brand new staging, which was so popular that

³⁷ See radio broadcast schedules in *L'Humanité* and *Paris-Soir* from 1934 to 1936.

³⁸ For coverage in Nancy, see *L'Est Républicain* from 18 May to 3 June 1989. For general French coverage, see "'Année Chostakovitch" dossier de presse.'

³⁹ *L'Est Républicain*, 23 May 1989, 9. 'Musicien révolutionnaire, humaniste, défenseur des opprimés et des humiliés, sa place en 1989 ne devrait pas créer de dissonance au cours de l'année du bicentenaire de la Révolution française.'

⁴⁰ This statement refers to the work in its original form; *L'Opéra de Nice* staged a season of the modified *Katerina Ismaïlova* in 1964.

⁴¹ 'Chostakovitch : mal entendu ou malentendu ?' *La Marseilles*, 7 May 1989, 14. 'Pendant longtemps, face au compositeur Dimitri Chostakovitch, deux positions étaient de mise. Ou bien on était *sovietophile* et, de confiance, on déclarait que sa musique était géniale. Ou bien, on était *sovietophobe* et, par principe, on trouvait sa musique inacceptable.'

⁴² *Lady Macbeth de Mzensk*, L'Opéra de Nancy, Théâtre du Capitole, Toulouse, 10–28 May 1991.

the company revived it for a second run of performances in 1994.⁴³ Four years later, L'Opéra de Nantes revealed that they too would offer their own production of *Lady Macbeth*, held at the Théâtre Graslin in 1998.⁴⁴

Following this geographically diverse string of productions, the city of Dijon hosted an enormous *Lady Macbeth* festival in the year 2000.⁴⁵ Three thousand people, including the composer's widow, Irina, flocked to Dijon to experience what the local press advertised as an unmissable cultural event.⁴⁶ Lastly, at the time of writing this article, the Paris Opéra has recently publicised that a new production of *Lady Macbeth* will feature in their 2019 season. Such programming affirms the popularity of *Lady Macbeth* in the post-Année Chostakovitch era and is representative of the lingering impact of the festival in France.

Briefly examining both the events of the 1989 festival and the French Communist history of *Le Chant du Monde* make a politically minded reading of the Année Chostakovitch difficult to resist. If the intention behind it was indeed to foster Franco-Soviet relations through music, it appears that the Année Chostakovitch accomplished an additional feat in introducing or re-introducing neglected Shostakovich works—such as *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* and the Fifth Symphony—into the performance repertoire of late twentieth and early twenty-first-century France.

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⁴³ Myung-Whun Chung, conductor, *Lady Macbeth de Mzensk*, Opéra de Paris, Bastille, 1–26 Feb. 1992, revived 24 May–7 June 1994.

⁴⁴ Ulf Söderblom, conductor, *Lady Macbeth de Mzensk*, Nantes Opéra, Angers, 5–9 June 1998.

⁴⁵ Mstislav Rostropovich, conductor, *Lady Macbeth du District du Mzensk*, Auditorium de Dijon, 21–22 Nov. 2000.

⁴⁶ 'À l'Auditorium : Rostropovitch avec Irina Chostakovitch,' *Le Bien Public*, 23 Nov. 2000.