

"Our Friend Alan Bush": Alan Bush and Soviet Musicology

Amrei Flechsig

Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media

Hanover, Germany

E-mail: AmreiFlechsig@web.de

Abstract—The article analyses the publications by and about Alan Bush in the main Soviet musicological journal *Sovetskaya muzyka*. His own articles deliver insight into the Western musical world, but also state his commitment to Communism and the Soviet Union. As he visited the Soviet Union several times, he maintained friendly contacts with a few Soviet musicologists who wrote about him, his music and his enthusiasm for workers' music in cordial terms. In particular, they appreciated his efforts toward friendly relations. In this sense, Alan Bush played an important role in the Russian-British cultural relationship by promoting British music in the Soviet Union and Soviet music in Britain.

Keywords—Alan Bush; Grigory Shneerson; Boris Kotlyarov; Evan Senior; *Sovetskaya muzyka*; Soviet musicology; workers' music; Anglo-Soviet exchange

I. INTRODUCTION

Who was this British composer, called a "friend"¹ by Soviet musicologists? In the last years, several new research studies have brought Alan Bush back to mind, mostly due to Joanna Bullivant's merit [3], [4]. In addition, Louise Wiggins worked out the details of Bush's friendship with the Soviet musicologist Grigory Shneerson and their cultural exchange [5], [6]. Alan Bush joined the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1935, but even prior to this, he had been involved with workers' choirs by composing music and conducting working-class music. As one of its founders in 1936, Bush became elected chairman and later president of the Workers' Musical Association (WMA). Being a member of the Communist party and a supporter of music for the working class, Bush's active interest in Soviet music and Socialist realism was logical. His fascination for musical life in the Soviet Union generated, amongst others, a publication dated in 1944 by the Workers' Association in London: *Music in the Soviet Union* [7]. But even more than in written form, he promoted Soviet music in Britain as a conductor². He was so impressed by the Soviet 1948 decree³ that he himself tried to

¹ The quotation refers to the title of two different articles by Grigory Shneerson [1] and Boris Kotlyarov [2].

² For example, Pauline Fairclough mentions Shostakovich-performances conducted by Alan Bush [8].

³ For instance, he expressed his approval of this decree in an article: "The 'Decision' is, indeed, a remarkable document. It is the first occasion for about four hundred years on which a committee, imbued with a theory of human society, in this case that of Marxism, has expressed an opinion

change his style according to the required specifications⁴. His enthusiasm for communist ideas and the cultural changes in the Soviet Union influenced his career: Bullivant claims that he was "seen as possessing different and potentially threatening values because of his 'fanatical support of the Soviet Union' and his ability to influence people" [11].

Throughout his lifetime, Alan Bush visited the Soviet Union several times. After his first visit in the year 1938⁵, he exchanged letters and music with Grigory Shneerson, who was the secretary of the foreign office of the Union of Soviet Composers and later became the music consultant of VOKS, the "Vsesoiuznoe Obschestvo Kul'turnoi Sviazi s zagranitsei"⁶, and in 1948 head of the foreign department of the *Sovetskaya muzyka*. Therefore, he naturally was the first person to contact regarding musical exchange and,

upon the development of music. The 'Decision' sums up, as far as the practice of music in the Soviet Union at its present stage in the development of socialism towards communism, the theories of Marxism in relation to the development of music, and proposes practical steps which should be taken to put them into effect" [9].

⁴ This is even more astonishing, considering that Bush's friend Grigory Shneerson had to suffer in 1948 as well. As Pauline Fairclough mentions, "Cultural figures and arts unions were attacked and punished for excessive 'cosmopolitanism' and decadence in a vicious purge known today as the 'Zhdanovshchina' after the minister who fronted it, Andrey Zhdanov. Its effects on the musical community have been widely disseminated, but what is less well known is that VOKS and Khrapchenko's Committee for Arts Affairs were also attacked in the summer of 1948. The VOKS chairman, Vladimir Kemenov, was personally disgraced and sacked for alleged financial misconduct. Grigory Shneerson, head of its Music Section, was also reprimanded and blamed for overpayment to composers" [10].

⁵ Emer Bailey alludes to an initial contact with the Soviet Union as early as 1935: "Bush's first overt association with the Soviet Union was his Prologue to a workers' meeting for brass orchestra (op. 16), specifically written for the International Music Bureau, Moscow, in 1935. This marked the beginning of a long relationship with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, both of which held Bush in high regard as a composer, and fellow socialist" [12].

⁶ Thom Loyd describes VOKS and the Russian-British relationship: "Established in 1925, VOKS was designed as a 'propaganda arm' of Soviet power, working in particular with the growing network of national 'friendship societies'. In Britain, these took the form of the Society for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union (SCR) and the British-Soviet Friendship Society (BSFS). The former, founded in 1924 by a who's who of the London literary and scientific elite including Virginia Woolf, George Bernard Shaw and Beatrice Webb, was designed, prior to the 20th Party Congress in 1956, to recruit British intellectuals to the Soviet cause" [13].

furthermore, the ideal mediator to enable Alan Bush to publish his own articles in the main Soviet music journal.

Louise Wiggins' substantiated analysis of their correspondence shows how much they trusted and respected each other and how they tried to expand the Anglo-Soviet relationship in quite a personal way, sometimes even in non-official ways of communication. For example, shortly after they got to know each other in 1938, Shneerson, according to Louise Wiggins, asked for some information about the United States, where Bush went on a journey. While in the United States, Bush communicated his impressions of the USSR. They also helped each other with information for publication projects: For instance, Bush asked for help for *Music in the Soviet Union* [7]. In return, Shneerson sought Bush's advice on British composers for a collection of English music, which was under progress in the Soviet Union. As Wiggins sums up, "Shneerson evidently saw Bush as a true ally of the USSR and a promising conduit for information that the USSR would like communicated to musical communities in Britain and perhaps the West more widely" [14]. In addition, of great importance was their exchange of musical works⁷.

As a result of this prolific, active and ambitious relationship, one might expect quite a substantial output in the Soviet press. In my paper, I will analyse the "official side", that is, the printed output of this cultural exchange, primarily concentrated in the *Sovetskaya muzyka*, as it was the main Soviet musicological journal. In doing so, I will address the following questions: a) What did Alan Bush publish in the *Sovetskaya muzyka*? b) What was published about him in the Soviet press? And c) which conclusions might be drawn out of these publications?

II. ALAN BUSH'S ARTICLES IN THE SOVETSKAYA MUZYKA

The first article written by Alan Bush in the *Sovetskaya muzyka* is to be found in the December issue from 1938: "Modern Trends in Western Music" [16]. This article comprises nearly nine pages, so it is quite a substantial "entry" in the main Soviet music journal. Interestingly, Bush at first comments on Arnold Schönberg's dodecaphonic way of composing in a quite extensive and positive way. In contrast to Alois Haba's composing ("obscurantism" in the words of Bush [17]), he describes dodecaphony as an attempt to bring order into chaos and explains not only how Schönberg came to use dodecaphony, but also how the

system works. Nevertheless, he admits in more communist diction that the Schönberg school had to be viewed very critically, because Bush ascribes to the composers a sort of psychological illness within the bourgeois society. Further, he states a cultural crisis in the West because of tendencies to more subjectivity and individuality: "Only a few — the most advanced — artists realized that there was only one way out of this stupidity: composers must firmly and confidently join the class forces that contribute to the progress of mankind. They must acknowledge their duty to serve the great work of the people with their art" [18]. In this context, Bush praises Soviet music and cultural life as a role model. After referring to Hanns Eisler as a positive example of contemporary Western composers, Bush gives an autobiographical overview of his life and work with focus on his way to Marxism and his enthusiasm in contributing to workers' music.

After his first visit to the Soviet Union, Bush published a travel report in *Sovetskaya muzyka* March 1939, titled "Source of Inspiration" [19]. He visited several rehearsals of amateur music ensembles and appeared to be excited about the potential, the level, and the output of amateur music in the Soviet Union. He ends with a hymn to his host country: "It hardly needs to be added that such enormous opportunities for the development of musical art are possible only in the country of socialism. In capitalist countries, the conditions for the development of musical life are extremely unfavourable. And for us, Western musicians working on the cultural front, the very existence of the USSR is a genuine source of inspiration, giving us energy and creative power. Long live the USSR!" [20] Such a glorification of Soviet society and Communism seems to have affected nearly all his written output in the Soviet press, but, as we know about Bush, this was his real conviction, not just an attempt to be polite and kind to his new friends.

One more elaborated article about the history of British music followed several years later, in the July issue, 1953. In "The Past and Present of English Music" [21] Bush undertakes a brief history of English music from the middle ages to the present, with special interest in connection with folk music and songs, first revolutionary songs and social content in music. The dualism between national and cosmopolitical music he finds rather united in the music of Benjamin Britten. Bush focuses more on Britten than on other composers and gives an overview of his operas, with the hope that Britten would turn to the way of realism. In the end, he discusses the new generation and reports on the founding of the London Worker's Music Association, with leanings on Soviet theories and propaganda.

In addition, there are some short reports on festivals and events by Alan Bush published in the *Sovetskaya muzyka*, such as a report on two music festivals in London and Warsaw in June 1939 [22], on the World Congress for Universal Disarmament and Peace in September 1962 [23], and on British Soviet music days in August 1973 [24]. Even short greetings on behalf of the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution in November 1967 [25] or Tikhon Khrennikov's 60th birthday in July 1973 [26], or a thank-you

⁷ To get an impression of its comprehensiveness, let us have a look at the list compiled by Wiggins: "Shneerson sent Bush the following works over several decades: Shostakovich's Two Pieces for String Quartet; Myaskovsky's Violin Concerto; a collection of Anti-Fascist Songs, wartime songs compiled by Shneerson and Muradeli's 'Lenin in Shushenskoe'; Aram Khachaturian's Song to Stalin; two works by Ferenc Szabo; a cello work by Igor Boelza, Georgy Sviridov's 'Burns Song' and 'Poems in memory of Sergey Esenin'. In return, Bush sent Shneerson a considerable amount of his own music (though very little by other composers), including his 'Nottingham' symphony, numerous songs and marches, Alan Rawsthorne's 'Pastoral' symphony and Concerto for String Orchestra, John Ireland's London Overture and 'These Things Shall Be', Britten's 'Ballad for Heroes' and Maconchy's 'Voice of the City' of course" [15].

note to the Composers' Union for hospitality in January 1972 [27] are part of his publications in the *Sovetskaya muzyka*.

Worth mentioning above all is an exceptional article in the January issue of 1965 about music as a mode of expression [28]. This is exceptional not only because it is a more general topic in music theory and not focused on current events or tendencies in Western music, but also because it is the main article on the first pages, not in the "Za rubezhom / Foreign music" column as usual. It is the translation of his article "What Does Music Express?" [29], which was published in the British journal *Marxism Today* in July 1963. This original English publication was followed by an extensive discussion that lasted over nine months, with a reply in each monthly issue. The article starts with a brief history of music theory concerning human feelings as the content of music (containing the provocative remark that "musical theory in bourgeois society is in a state of chaos" [30]). Bush discusses several theories of music as language and form of communication, leading to his own assumption that "[Music is] nothing other than a reflection of greater or lesser degrees of tension in the human organism, a reflection in very truth of human feeling" [31]. Touching on the Marxist view and the importance of work songs, he points out the significance of national characteristics in music, arguing, "thus for a composer truthfully to express himself in music, his feelings will be associated and moulded by the particular social consciousness which has been developed in him in childhood and by his education and traditional cultural influences" [32]. Some of the first replies in *Marxism today* argue against this theory of a national character in music, claiming that Bush's arguments and axioms are too limited, while later critics tend to support Bush's theories. The great interest that this topic aroused in the UK may be the reason for the subsequent publication of a Russian translation in *Sovetskaya muzyka* in January 1965. Unfortunately, I was not able to find any replies in the Soviet journal, so the interest on the Soviet side might have been only moderate. But, of course, it was a great honour and a sign of confidence that Alan Bush as a foreign author was selected for the main article in this issue⁸.

Similarly, Bush's importance is shown by including an article by him in Shneerson's 1970 collection of articles *Music and Time: Thoughts about Contemporary Music* [33], in the company of international renowned composers like Benjamin Britten, Aaron Copland, Bła Bartók, Paul Hindemith and others. There he writes about his ideology and artistic values, so to say, his "credo" in composing music. Again, he underlines that the Soviet 1948 declaration helped him to find his way, which involved distancing himself from dodecaphony and favouring the embedding of a national character in music. He stresses his efforts to support human progress in the Marxist sense.

III. COMPARISON: EVAN SENIOR'S REPORTS FROM LONDON

Alan Bush was not the only one to deliver some impressions from the British musical life to the Soviet reader. As the name of Evan Senior is to be found several times in the *Sovetskaya muzyka*, I would like to have a look at his articles and compare them with Alan Bush's writings. The Australian music critic and radio editor Evan Senior went to Britain in 1947 and is known as the founder and editor of the British classical music magazines *Music and Musicians* and *Records and Recordings*. He visited the Soviet Union in 1954 and presented a series on Soviet music in the journal *Music and Musicians*: From August 1954 to February 1955, he published a monthly chapter in this series — about the Moscow Union of Composers, the Soviet opera and all that he got to know in his four-week visit. This series is documented in the *Sovetskaya muzyka*, as well: Two articles in the 1954/11 [34] and 1955/2 [35] issues provide a detailed overview with numerous quotes by Evan Senior.

After his visit, Evan Senior started a regular column in the *Sovetskaya muzyka*, "Letter from London," in which he reported on musical life in London, some special premieres or events, mostly in the opera genre. For example, as early as the December issue of 1954, he reports on the London Proms and some premieres in Covent Garden Theatre and Sadler's Wells [36], while his first so-entitled "Letter from London" was published in February 1955 [37]. There he reviews some guest performances of Soviet artists (admitting that there were a few organisational problems) and delivers some news from the winter season in London. Whenever he can he focuses in his "Letters" on events featuring Soviet music or musicians, premieres of Russian operas or some guest performances of Soviet musicians.

His intentions seem to be quite different from Alan Bush's, as he in fact writes as a foreign correspondent about actual events and incidents in musical London which might interest the Soviet reader. His style is neutral, following journalistic standards, thematically concentrating on facts and events in London's contemporary cultural life. In contrast, Alan Bush adopted a more personal, subjective attitude, always steeped in his ideas of friendship and communist class struggle. Of course, most important might be the fact that Alan Bush reported much earlier about Western music, at a time when there was less exchange and the Soviet cultural life was quite closed off to foreign influence, as described by Simo Mikkonen: "Prior to Stalin's death, the Soviet leadership itself had been downright xenophobic towards foreign influences and cut connections abroad to a minimum — it had turned down practically all Western initiatives aiming at artistic exchange. As a consequence, from the mid-1930s on the Soviet musical world had turned increasingly in on itself, and connections abroad were mostly through individual foreign visitors, or in the form of sheet music acquired from abroad" [38].

So Bush's role is to be seen much more as that of a mediator between two borders with the main intention to establish ties of friendship — and, as manifest behind the scenes in the exchange with Grigory Shneerson, it was quite

⁸ It might be interesting for further research to evaluate statistically how many foreign authors were asked to write main articles in the *Sovetskaya muzyka* at all.

a personal way of friendship mirrored in the official output in *Sovetskaya muzyka*. There are barely any communist ideas added in Evan Senior's articles as there are in Alan Bush's. Senior seems to be just interested in information and exchange about musical life; he does not seek connection and brotherhood in the promotion of Communism across the border, although he is an enthusiastic advocate of Soviet music and musicians. Even though he published less often than Senior, Bush took on a more active part, participating in the cultural life in the Soviet Union by various sorts of articles from short greetings and reports about events up to a main article about music theory.

IV. ARTICLES ABOUT ALAN BUSH IN THE SOVIET PRESS

Along with his own articles, the first references to Alan Bush emerge in the second half of the 1930s. While there is no mention of Bush in an article on English music by Michel Dimitri Calvocoressi in *Sovetskaya muzyka* January, 1935, he is first touched on in the December issue of 1935: I. Urban reports on the music festival in Prague and mentions Alan Bush's string quartet "Dialectic" as one of the best compositions played on the third evening, "very lively and deep" [39]. In July 1937, in a report on a folk music congress in Paris, the guests from England are praised: "Of greatest interest was the performance — the first in Paris — of the London Workers' Association Choir conducted by Alan Bush, a professor of composition and harmony at the Royal Academy of Music in London on May 15" [40].

With Bush's first visit to the Soviet Union, interest in him as a person and composer peaked: For example, Grigory Shneerson comments on Bush's piano concerto in June 1938 [41], and in September 1938 there is a brief introduction to Alan Bush and his merits in worker's music on the occasion of his arrival⁹, expressing the conviction "that the visit of Alan Bush to the USSR will serve to further strengthen the friendly ties between the Soviet musical community and the advanced circles of the English musical intelligentsia and working musical initiative" [44]. And, in December 1938, there appeared not only the previously mentioned article on "Modern Trends in Western Music" by Alan Bush, but also a review on his concerts in Moscow by Konstantin Kuznetsov. Kuznetsov claims that "Alan Bush came to the Soviet Union not only to show the music of his native country, not only to strengthen the connection between Soviet and English musicians. Bush also came in order to get creative exercise, to write new songs calling for struggle and victory, songs about joy, about light, about life!" [45]. In the same issue, Shneerson, also mentions in his article "Musical Life in the West" Bush's visit in the USSR, his love for the Soviet Union and admiration of the Soviet musical life along with the characterisation of the growing workers' music life in

⁹ There was a short note about his arrival in Pravda, as well: "The Arrival of the English Composer Alan Bush" [42]. A note in the *Izvestiya* mentions several names of people Bush met in Moscow: "Alan Bush's Meeting with Soviet Art Workers" [43]. In general, Alan Bush is mentioned in Pravda, *Izvestija* and *Literaturnaja gazeta* a few times: for example, as a participant in international congresses, as a composer of works played in concert (1943), as a conductor on a festival with Russian music in England.

England with the London Labour Choral Union and the Workers' Music Association [46].

Later, Bush's music was brought more into focus: There are articles about his opera "Wat Tyler" (by Ralf Parker, July, 1952 [47]), his cantata "Dedicated to Paul Robeson" (by Vladimir Blok, August, 1959 [48]) and his Byron symphony (by Vladimir Blok, as well, October, 1960 [49]). All are in a very positive manner, stressing the commendable socialist aims and trying to summarize the content. Especially the premiere of his opera "The Sugar Reapers" (under the title "Johnny from Guyana") in Tartu in 1969 aroused a lot of interest: In *Muzykal'naya zhizn* there was a very detailed review by T. Leontovskaya in the 5/1970 issue [50], and a similarly elaborated review by Pyotr Pecherskij was printed in *Sovetskaya muzyka* in July, 1970 [51]. Both are enthusiastic about the plot, the use of folkloristic elements, the musical characterisation, and the staging. But just as much importance is attached to his more or less politically motivated activities which are discussed in other articles: namely, his activities in London with the London Workers' Musical Association, or his further visits in the Soviet Union¹⁰. Comparing the different topics of the articles devoted to Alan Bush, it is evident that he was perceived not only as a composer, but as an energetic combatant committed to the ideals of Marxism, and his work in London was watched with great interest.

Bush's growing friendship with Grigory Shneerson, one of the main authors writing about him, is mirrored in his articles on his English friend. Particularly noteworthy are two elaborated articles on Bush's 65th [1] and 70th birthdays [52]. In his overview of Bush's life and work in 1965, Shneerson begins with some personal references: He mentions Bush's long-time bond with the Soviet Composers' Union as well as his own regret that the English fellow composer is not valued and performed in his home country as would have been his due. After a deeper insight into his music, especially his operas and symphonies, he even attaches some sheet music — a song from the opera "Wat Tyler". There is an even more cordial, friendly diction in the later article. In 1970, he commemorates their first encounter in spring, 1938, which occurred during a meeting with foreign culture attachés in the VOKS Villa. After the official part, Alan Bush impressed him by making the whole group play and dance the "Lambeth Walk". Shneerson continues with some personal memories of their shared experiences, including several quotes of Bush's letters to Shneerson. Apparently it was important to him to stress that, even in wartime, Bush kept up on their exchange about music in his letters. In addition to well-known biographical information, these writings reveal some interesting facts about Bush, which might be worth further research. For example, in one of the radio programmes dedicated to Bush in Moscow after the war Bush himself took part [53], or during a joint visit in Berlin they both met Bush's friend Hanns Eisler [54].

Later, the musicologist Boris Kotlyarov became the one to deal with Alan Bush: There are two articles about Bush in 1971 in *Muzykal'naya zhizn*' [2] and 1975 in *Sovetskaya*

¹⁰ For further details see the list of articles in the end.

muzyka [55], before Kotlyarov published the only Soviet monograph about the English composer in 1981 [56]. The author (born in Yelisavetgrad and based in Kishinev) had spent several years in Britain (1940-1948), where he had met Bush. The article published in 1971 shows his full respect for Bush's merits as well as his compositions. He points out Bush's "thematic method of composition" and reads a particular world of thought into his individual way of composing: "The creative method of Alan Bush seems to us very significant and symptomatic at the current stage of development of musical art. It is a protest against the elimination of the harmonized tonal foundations of music and the complete disorganization of musical speech that modernism preaches. In contrast to the chaos of atonality, Bush steps forward and works out successfully his principle of organizing musical material based on the creative development of the best traditions of the past." [57] Worthy of note is the aspect that we learn in Kotlyarov's texts about some concerts featuring Bush's music: For example, in 1962 the "Festal Day Overture" and "Nottingham Symphony" were played in Moscow and recorded on disc as well; in 1967, the Suite for two pianos, written for the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution, was performed in Kishinev. His opera "The Sugar Reapers" was staged in Tartu and Odessa (1969 and 1973), with Bush visiting the rehearsals and premieres¹¹. In view of the minor performances of Bush's major works in his home country, the importance of his connection to socialist states becomes apparent, as Kotlyarov describes: "In his own words, his friends from the GDR and the Soviet Union helped to break through the wall of official non-recognition of Bush in his homeland" [59].

For Kotlyarov's book, Grigory Shneerson wrote an introduction, mainly based on parts of his 1970 article, with some memories and extracts from his letters. Kotlyarov starts his own introduction as well with a personal retrospection on his first encounters with the British composer. The monographic book was dedicated to Bush's 80th birthday. Both Shneerson and Kotlyarov were on cordial terms with Bush; nevertheless, their publication was not just a birthday hymn by friends, but a serious biography from a musicological perspective and with analytical insight into several of his compositions. The main part of the book is about his music, linked with his biography. Several compositions are introduced to the reader with short analyses and sheet music samples. Written by a contemporary witness and friend, the book proves to be a sign of admiration and esteem. Its unique position adds enormous weight to this publication and shows the importance of Soviet musicology in the reception history of the composer and his music: As far as I know, it is the only Soviet book publication about Alan Bush and the first book on Bush at all, apart from collections of articles published in the UK on his 50th [60] and 80th birthdays [61] and a collection of some essays by Bush himself [62].

¹¹ A more detailed report you can find in Kotlyarov's book about Alan Bush [58].

V. CONCLUSION

As we have seen, Alan Bush himself was an active, though not regular, contributor of the *Sovetskaya muzyka*. He wrote about very diverse topics and brought in some foreign and personal perspectives. His articles deliver insight into the Western musical world (even into Schönberg's dodecaphony) and various events that were important for the socialist community, and, at the same time, they reveal Bush's admiration for the Soviet socialist life. Although mainly influenced on his path to Communism by German colleagues and friends like Hanns Eisler and Bertold Brecht, Alan Bush was a huge fan of the Soviet Union without any reservations — you may say, even with rose-coloured glasses (most obvious in the way he embraced the Soviet 1948 declaration as completely positive)¹².

On the Russian side, mainly two Soviet musicologists, Grigory Shneerson and Boris Kotlyarov, were advocates for Alan Bush. What did they focus on — Alan Bush as composer, his life and work and studies on his music, or Alan Bush as a political man and his activities as member of the Communist party? A quotation by Kotlyarov sums it up: "Politics and music merged for Alan Bush into a single whole: the first determined the content of his works, the second — the specific form that he chose to express his ideas" [64]. Accordingly, they considered both Alan Bush's music and merits as composer and his activities as a Communist by his own conviction. They write about him in a very cordial and respectful manner and especially appreciate his efforts for friendly relations: "We deeply honour Bush as a man who has been giving his energy, the heat of his soul to the struggle for social progress and friendship between nations for more than half a century" [64]. The phrase "our friend Alan Bush", a quotation by both Grigory Shneerson and Boris Kotlyarov which I used in the title of my paper, therefore reflects their relationship in only a few words.

But based on the exchange with Grigory Shneerson, as described by Louise Wiggins, one might assume that there were more articles by and about Alan Bush. He seemed quite important to at least some of the Soviet musicologists. It might be interesting to investigate in the Bush archive: There might be some more manuscripts intended for the Soviet press, which were filtered out by censorship, common interest or otherwise. And, of course, there were periods of silence for political reasons, for instance, when there was no exchange with the West. It is quite astonishing that in Lyudmila Kovnatskaya's book about English composers [65], Bush is rarely mentioned (only one and a half pages), while there are whole chapters on Benjamin Britten, William Walton and Michael Tippett. But, of course, there was not as

¹² Louise Wiggins delivers some thoughts about this phenomenon: "It is hard to say whether Bush, as a committed communist and Stalinist, was blind and deaf to the horrors being wrought in the Soviet Union in 1938, at the height of the Stalinist repressions. He was unable at that time to read Russian [...], so could not have understood the hysterical calls for death to the 'enemies of the people' that fronted the daily newspapers [...]. When in Moscow, he probably saw only what he had come to see: comradely delegations, receptions and gatherings of prominent artists who listened to him perform" [63].

much (international and Soviet) publicity about his music as about Britten's. Moreover, it could be that in the 1980s, the interest in the British friend had already diminished. There is not even much known about performances of his music in the Soviet Union, although Shneerson mentions that Bush performed his music visiting the Composer's Union [66], and Boris Kotlyarov and some review articles at least give some hints on a few concerts (on the contrary, several of his works were premiered in the GDR). Only his operas seemed to have gained broader interest, as the reviews of the Tartu staging show.

Nevertheless, he played an important role in the Russian-British cultural relationship by promoting British music in the Soviet Union and Soviet music in Britain — he might be seen as a "cultural diplomat" [67], as Louise Wiggins asserts, and built a bridge between the two cultures. To quote Kotlyarov again, "The composer did a lot to promote English music outside his homeland. Speaking abroad, especially in the USSR and countries of the socialist camp, as a rule, he acquaints students with the work of his compatriots" [68].

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