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FROM RUSSIA TO THE UK AND BACK ACROSS THE ENGLISH CHANNEL: MUSICAL DISCOVERIES FROM WWII AND THE THAW (recent archival findings and publications)

Russian music enjoyed its popularity and appreciation among British audiences throughout the twentieth century. Musical life in London during the period of World War II was infused with a good number of concert programmes. The finest works of national composers of the tsarist Russia were performed along with musical works of the Soviet period regardless of their stylistic peculiarities as well as of the approved or disapproved states of their authors with the Soviet authorities. They laid a fine foundation for an active musical interchange between musicians of both countries formed at the turn of the Khrushchev Thaw period, when the 'crème de la crème' of Soviet performers stepped on British soil and British performers toured Russia in the early 1950s. It was down to personal contacts of enthusiastic musicians, rather than only those signed on a governmental level known as the Soviet-British Cultural Agreement of 1959, for example, that did maintain the initiatives and musical collaborations. The concert activities and correspondence of Vadim Borisovsky with his British colleagues, which started much earlier, is the best example in this regard.

The discussion of these topics relies heavily on recent archival findings from Moscow and London.

Keywords: concert programmes, concert tours, the Proms, the LPO, the LSO, BBC, Vadim Borisovsky, Lionel Tertis

DOI: 10.34684/hon.202001010

Received: December 19, 2019
Accepted: January 31, 2020

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