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## Letter to the Editor

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From Guy Rickards

In the light of the growing interest in the music of Nikolai Roslavets, seen most recently in his inclusion in the South Bank's 'Russian Spring' festival (reviewed by David Wright in *Tempo* 177) and the CD issue of the Piano Trio No. 3, what is still less than clear is what precisely caused his total eclipse from Soviet musical life – at least in Western Russia (far worse than anything Shostakovich was later to endure). While works such as *Aux heures de la nouvelle lune* and the string quartets (both included in 'Russian Spring'; why did the *Tempo* review omit the fine single-movement Third Quartet?) were undoubtedly radical for the period, especially in Russia, it is the later, mellower Violin Concerto that is usually cited as the reason for his exile. Yet the Stalinist terror was at that time years away and more advanced music was both composed in Russia without censure and welcomed from Western Europe during the later 1920s. Though censure did indeed arrive, Roslavets had by then been safely mewed up in Soviet Central Asia for the best part of a decade, so it seems to me that there is a large chunk missing from the equation. I cannot imagine many in the audience at the première finding the work so offensive – even the boorish *Man of Steel* – as to merit internal

banishment for the composer. Indeed, its gentle style is winning and close to the classic Russian concertos of Tchaikovsky, Glazunov, even Konius, for all the intricate chromaticism of some parts of the work which would have passed most listeners by (and would do today, I am sure, if so much were not made of it).

Roslavets's attempts at chromatic systemization bring obvious parallels to mind with Schoenberg, Hauer, Valen, et al, but to my ears relate back to Scriabin as much as anything and certainly retain a distinctly Russian character. Schoenberg was not yet the Great Formalist Bugbear so the language of the Concerto in itself hardly seems a legitimate cause. Perhaps *glasnost* will extend further to reveal this particular skeleton: in the meantime one can but listen to the music in wonderment, and try to forget the apparent catastrophic consequences of its composition.

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*Tempo intends to return to the subject of Roslavets and his forms of serial working during 1992, when at least a partial answer to Mr Rickards's question regarding his political fate may be forthcoming. - Ed.*

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## News Section

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### Composers

RUPERT BAWDEN. *The Devil's Workshop* (première)—30 July/King's Lynn Festival/Ernst Kovacic (vln), Susan Tomes (pno).

JOHN BULLER is completing an opera on *The Bacchae* for performance next year at the London Coliseum.

DIANA BURRELL. *Lucifer* (première)—2 July/Almeida Festival/Madeleine Mitchell (vln), Peter Lawrence (tpt).

ELLIOTT CARTER. *Scrivo in Vento* for solo flute (première)—20 July/Avignon Festival/Robert Aitken (fl).

JOHN CASKEN. Cello Concerto (première)—7 July/Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival/Heinrich Schiff (vlc),

Northern Sinfonia. (UK première)—11 July/Lichfield Festival/same artists.

ROBERTO GERHARD (d.1970) *Cancionero de Pedrell* (US première)—26 September/Merkin Hall, New York/Angelina Reaux (sop), Music Today Ens. c. John McGlenn.

GARETH GLYN. Symphony (première)—16 October/Swansea Festival/BBC Welsh SO c. Tadaaki Otaka.

HENRYK MIKOLAJ GORECKI. *Three Lullabies* (première)—2 August/Lerchenborg Festival, Denmark/Ars Nova c. Bo Holten. String Quartet No.2 (première)—18 August/Schleswig-Holstein Festival/Kronos Quartet. (US première)—9 November/New York, Alice Tully Hall/Kronos Quartet.

SOFIA GUBAIDULINA. Cello Concerto (première)—27 August/Helsinki/Vladimir Tonkha (vc), Helsinki PO c. Eri Klas.

HANS WERNER HENZE. *2 Concert Arias* (première)—28 July/Montepulciano Festival/Roberto Sacco (ten), Youth Orchestra of the United Berlin c. Markus Stenz.

YORK HÖLLER. *Der Meister und Margarita* (German première)—1 November/Cologne/Cologne Opera c. Lothar Zagrosek. Piano Concerto (Polish première)—28 September/Warsaw Autumn Festival/Volker Banfield (pno), Pomeranian PO c. Michael Zülm; (US première)—27 November/Chicago/Daniel Barenboim (pno), Chicago SO c. Pierre Boulez.

SIMON HOLT is completing a Viola Concerto, and is composing a Rilke setting for soprano and ensemble, *Tanagra*, for the Viennese Ensemble of the 20th Century.

TOSHI ICHIYANAGI. *Luminous Space* (UK première)—9 October/Swansea Festival/Tokyo SO c. Kazuyoshi Akiyama.

JONATHAN LLOYD. *Missa Brevis* (Polish première)—24 September/Warsaw Autumn Festival/BBC Singers c. Simon Joly.

JOHN McCABE. *Canyons* (première)—9 July/Barbican, London/Guildhall Symphonic Wind Band c. Peter Gane. *Red Leaves* (première)—11 July/Istanbul Festival/European Community Chamber Orchestra c. Eivind Aadland.

EDWARD MCGUIRE. Trombone Concerto (première)—26 August/Aix-en-Provence Festival/John Kenny (tbn), Glasgow Festival Strings.

JOHN McLEOD. *The Passage of the Divine Bird* (première)—24 June/Orkney, St. Magnus Festival/Owne Murray (free-bass Accordion). *Fêtes Galantes* for 2 violins, cello and harpsichord (première)—11 June/Edinburgh, Canongate Church/The Kist of Music.

JAMES MACMILLAN. *Tuireadh* for clarinet quintet (première)—25 June/Orkney, St. Magnus Festival/James Campbell (cl), Allegri String Quartet.

SIR PETER MAXWELL DAVIES. *Strathclyde Concerto No.5* for violin and viola (première)—11 December/Glasgow/James Clark (vn), Catherine Marwood (va), Scottish Chamber Orchestra c. the composer.

DETLEV MÜLLER-SIEMENS. String Quartet No.1 (première)—31 July/Hitzacker, Germany/Nomos Quartet.

ANDRZEJ PANUFNIK. *Katyn Epitaph* (German première)—13 September/Bonn/Orchester der Beethovenalle c. Dennis Russell Davies.

KRYSZTOF PENDERECKI. *Ubu Rex* (première)—6 July/Munich/Bavarian State Opera with Robert Tear, c. Michael Boder. String Trio (première)—29 September/Warsaw Autumn/Deutsches Streichtrio.

ROBERT HP PLATZ. *Dunkles Haus*, Music-theatre (première)—6 June/Munich Opera Festival.

ANTHONY POWERS is writing his Second String Quartet for the Lindsay Quartet.

STEVE REICH. *The Four Sections* (Dutch première)—14 June/Rotterdam/Rotterdam PO c. Reinbert de Leeuw.

NED ROEM. String Quartet No.3 (première)—9 June/Albuquerque, New Mexico/Guarneri Quartet. Concerto for Piano (left hand) and Orchestra (première)—2 November/Philadelphia/Gary Graffman, Curtis Institute Symphony.

PAUL RUDERS. *13 Postludes* (UK première)—11 July/London, Arts Theatre/Rolf Hind (pno).

AULIS SALLINEN. *Echoes from a Play* (première)—30 July/Ravinia Festival, Illinois, USA/Thomas Gallant (ob), Kronos String Quartet.

DMITRI SMIRNOV. Symphony No.1, *The Seasons* (UK première)—23 October/London, Royal Festival Hall/BBC SO c. Oliver Knussen.

MAREK STACHOWSKI. Cello Concerto (première)—20 September/Warsaw Autumn/Boris Pergamenchikov (vlc), Sinfonia Varsovia c. Krzysztof Penderecki.

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN. *Invasion* (première)—29 September/Frankfurt, Alte Oper.

PAVEL SZYMANSKI. *Sixty-Odd Pages* (première)—22 September/Warsaw Autumn/Sudwestfunk Orchestra Baden Baden c. Matthias Bamert.

MICHAEL TORKE is writing a new chamber work commissioned by the Milwaukee Art Museum.

ANDREW TOOVEY. *Ja ja ja ja ja, nee, nee, nee, nee, nee* (première)—12 June/London, British Music Information Centre/Ixion Ensemble. *Fallen* (UK première)—19 August/Dartington Summer School/Ixion.

MARK-ANTHONY TURNAGE. *Momentum* (première)—16 June/Birmingham (opening concert of new Symphony Hall)/CBSO c. Simon Rattle.

### Books received

(A listing in this column does not preclude a review in a future issue of Tempo)

*Pierre Boulez: A World of Harmony* by Lev Koblyakov. Harwood Academic Publishers Contemporary Music Studies Volume 2, £27.00.

*Bliss on Music: Selected Writings of Arthur Bliss 1920-1975* edited by Gregory Roscow. Oxford University Press, £20.00.

*A History of Music Aesthetics* by Enrico Fubini. Macmillan, £49.50.

*Grip Musikken* by Jorunn B. Lie. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo. No price quoted.

*Through Music to the Self* by Peter Michael Hømel. Element Books, £7.99 (Seventh Impression).

*Pet Shop Boys, Literally* by Chris Heath. Penguin, £4.99.

*Sinead: her Life and Music* by Jimmy Guterman. Penguin, £6.99.

*Shoots from the Hip* by Charles Shaar Murray. Penguin, £6.99.

*The Penguin Dictionary of Musical Performers* by Arthur Jacobs. Penguin, £5.99.