

# Introduction

Masha Salazkina

KIRA MURATOVA, ONE of the most celebrated and original contemporary Russian film auteurs, was asked in a 1995 interview what she had learned from her film-school mentor Sergei Gerasimov, whose filmmaking was so distinct from hers. She answered that he taught her “to listen and to hear, awakening [in her] an interest in and an elation from listening.”<sup>1</sup> In the same interview Muratova identified endless manipulations of accents, modes of delivery, and systems of repetition as distinguishing markers of her personal authorial style. There is little doubt that Muratova is the contemporary Russian director with the most developed sense of hearing; that she is a product of an institutional apparatus with its own complex relationship to the aural dimensions of cinema—which her comment about Gerasimov seems to imply—might well serve as a vector for reconsidering the aural in the larger tradition of the Soviet cinema.

The contributions that make up *Sound, Speech, Music in Soviet and Post-Soviet Cinema* take their cue from this elation of listening and the gift of hearing that Muratova exemplifies by bringing together essays addressing different aspects of sound in the context of Soviet and post-Soviet film culture. The collection sees itself as an invitation to “deep listening”: to attuning our ears to the complexity of meanings that emerge if we not only take sound as an equal partner in audiovisual representation but also engage in what Steven Feld has referred to as “acoustemology,” that is, an investigation of the primacy of sound as a modality of knowing and being in the world.<sup>2</sup>

## The Sonic Turn

In the course of the past thirty years, a number of scholars in cinema and media studies, the humanities, and the social sciences have been challenging the centrality given to “the visual” in our social and cultural lives by uncovering the often-dominant function of sound in our experience and understanding of the world. In the process, they have raised questions not only about the material culture of sound but also about the curiously muted interest traditionally shown in it, which for so long kept the audible systematically subordinate to the visual in theorizing audiovisual media. The challenge of sound studies, reproducing the dialectic that brought forth visual studies as a reaction to the previous hegemony

of the text in the study of culture and history in modernity, has arisen in the face of what Jonathan Crary has labeled the “expanding visuality industry.”<sup>3</sup> In particular, media studies have grown increasingly sensitive to the force of arguments for the sonic by producing more and more sophisticated accounts of its role in media expression and production.

The genealogy of contemporary sound studies must accord a large place to the publication of the groundbreaking 1980 issue of *Yale French Studies* (edited by Rick Altman) titled “Cinema/Sound,” which brought together contemporary essays on film history, theory, and analysis. This pioneering work was followed in 1985 by the publication of a large volume, *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*, edited by Elisabeth Weis and John Belton, which included certain classic texts on sound (including those by Eisenstein and Pudovkin) as well as more contemporary scholarship. In the introduction to *Sound Theory, Sound Practice* (1992), Rick Altman, the editor of the collection, provided a canonical survey of the new field and pointed to an ongoing methodological shift from the formalist and structuralist approaches of the early 1980s to a broader understanding of the function of sound as a cultural and social practice. At around the same time, seminal texts by the French composer, writer, and director Michel Chion began to appear in English translation, affecting the whole Anglophone field.<sup>4</sup>

This pioneering work did not go unnoticed; by the first decade of the twenty-first century, sound studies had gained widespread recognition not only as an autonomous field but also as an integral part of the study of film and media. In the past fifteen years, there has been a flood of monographs and edited essay collections on sound, producing a counterweight to the accounts of film and media that have tended to overemphasize the visual. In a 1999 essay, Rick Altman was surely right to triumphantly proclaim that sound studies “was an idea whose time has come!”<sup>5</sup> and the Society for Cinema and Media Studies has recently recognized the importance of the intervention of sound scholarship in the field by forming a scholarly interest group on sound. Their “In Focus” rubric of the fall 2008 issue of *Cinema Journal* was dedicated to sound studies, reflecting an institutional and public-opinion change, a “sonic turn” much like the visual turn of the late 1970s.

### The Sound of Cinema(s)

The recent flurry of sound studies, however, has tended to focus primarily on American and, to a lesser degree, certain European cinematic traditions, by and large neglecting other “world” cinemas. Correspondingly, the historical and thematic objects of sound studies have been framed by this context. This narrow focus can lead to false claims about the universality of the theoretical and historical paradigms these studies present. It is therefore crucial to shift scholarly attention toward a broader range of culturally specific sites in sound studies.

Despite the seminal importance of theoretical and artistic experimentations with sound in the Soviet Union, their accounts in the English-language literature have been limited for the most part to rehearsals of the arguments put forth by the film theorists of the 1920s. This omission may in part be because of the difficulty of locating the former Soviet Union in relation to the existing geopolitical categories (should Russia or the Soviet Union be included in collections on sound in European cinema? In “world” cinema?) and in part because of the legacy of the Cold War perception of Soviet autarky in all aesthetic spheres. But it is also symptomatic of the fact that the field of Russian studies has been slow to respond to the “sonic turn,” confining the explorations of the acoustic in Russian and Soviet culture to musicology and failing to enter into the current interdisciplinary dialogue.<sup>6</sup> This pattern is repeated within the field of Soviet and post-Soviet cinema and media, where “sound” as a formal and thematic category still gets short shrift.

Thus, even the fundamental and well-studied historical topic of the transition to sound, which generated a wealth of theoretical and artistic experimentations by such canonical figures as Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Vertov, Shub, and Dovzhenko, has been generally treated parenthetically in studies of the Soviet film industry. Between detailed accounts of the avant-garde cinema of the 1920s and the socialist realism of the 1930s, well-respected Soviet film scholars such as Peter Kenez, Richard Taylor, Denise Youngblood, and Neya Zorkaya mention the Soviet industry’s backwardness with regard to sound film and its difficult assimilation of the new technology, but they never look at the deeper implications and consequences of the transition.<sup>7</sup>

The effect of the sonic studies of the past two decades can be traced in several outstanding recent explorations of acoustic aesthetics and ideologies in the Soviet cinema, but these monographs tend to treat the works of isolated “sound auteurs.”<sup>8</sup> The only genre and period to receive significant scholarly attention in relation to sound has been the Stalinist-era musical.<sup>9</sup> However, even here scholars have not gone far beyond the films directed by Grigory Alexandrov and, to a lesser degree, Ivan Pyriev.<sup>10</sup> Since Katerina Clark, in the pathbreaking 1995 essay “Aural Hieroglyphics? Some Reflections on the Role of Sound in Recent Russian Films and Its Historical Context,” proposed readdressing the crucial role of “songs, music, and sound in general,” Tatiana Egorova’s survey *Soviet Film Music* still remains the only English language book devoted exclusively to this broad subject.<sup>11</sup>

One of the problems facing the field, even as it may expand to study certain national cinemas, is to put these culturally and historically specific areas of investigation into dialogue with the scholarship on sound studies in other national or global cinemas. At its inception, sound studies put a predominant emphasis on popular music and scoring practices, and on genres and auteurs,

but as the field matures, issues concerning material culture have come to the fore, bringing larger questions concerning audio technologies, acoustic ecology, and wider media practices and reception into the discussion. This shift has yet to be reflected in the published scholarship on Soviet and post-Soviet media.<sup>12</sup> As a result, sound studies in Soviet and post-Soviet cinema suffer from a systematic neglect of both the theoretical and the historical dimensions of sound studies in audiovisual media.

### “Cinema without Cinema”

This volume arises from a common frustration that we, as scholars and teachers of Russian and Soviet audiovisual culture, have experienced as we compare the paucity of English-language scholarship on the topic of Soviet sound to the richness of the primary sources: aesthetic, historical, and theoretical. It is our hope that this collection will both connect previously disjunct lines of research and suggest new directions for the exploration of sound in Soviet and post-Soviet audiovisual media. The editorial principle governing this collection is to articulate a diversity of sonic topics. The overall approach of the volume, then, is one that covers not only audiovisual texts but also discourses, technologies, institutions, and practices of “audio-vision” in the Soviet Union and Russia. The goal of this introduction is to foreground some of the shared themes and preoccupations that emerge from the chapters that follow, and in so doing to point to new directions and venues for further research.

The problematic status of sound in Soviet film scholarship is well illustrated by a comment made by Mikhail Iampolski in the 1990s (discussed in detail in Peter Schmelz’s contribution to this volume). Iampolski singles out the logocentricity of Russian cinema, or as he conceptualizes it, the excessive and single-minded reliance on language and other script-based elements that have gone into making a “cinema without cinema.”<sup>13</sup> His examples come largely from contemporary (perestroika-era) popular films, yet he certainly extends his critique to Soviet cinema at large, pointing to both the lack of state-of-the-art technology in the film industry and the continuing primacy of the literary in Russian culture. While the technological base for film production has changed drastically over the past twenty years in Russia, as elsewhere, Iampolski’s critique in many ways mirrors the concerns of our contemporary Hollywood critics about the mono-aural and overly saturated sound in blockbuster cinema and betrays a decisive preference for a rather Bazinian conception of cinematic realism, which is shared by many cinephiles and art film connoisseurs. Nevertheless, there is something culturally specific about the logocentricity of Russian cinema, whether in comparison to Hollywood, Bollywood, or other national and regional cinemas. In film scholarship, the lack of interest in the specifically cinematic qualities of Soviet

or post-Soviet film sound production is symptomatic of larger forces that have structured the trajectory of Soviet and Russian cinematic institutions since the silent period. The inadequacy of the treatment of sound in cinematic education, combined with both the technological lag in developing audio equipment and the lack of any fresh conceptualizing of the sonic as a film element, was explicitly raised in the Soviet Union as early as 1962 in an open letter to the ministers of culture and education by “a group of distinguished film and music professionals.” The letter drew attention to the paucity of intellectual, artistic, and institutional dialogue between music and film, and the absence of any developed conceptual framework or didactic program that could be used to prepare film directors, composers, sound editors, and film theorists alike to address the complexities of sound in cinema.<sup>14</sup> While the Thaw allowed renewed discussions of the Soviet avant-garde, the textbooks of the 1960s and 1970s indicate that the discourse on sound remained frozen in the terms set by the debates of the 1920s and 1930s.

It wasn't until the 1980s and 1990s that Soviet scholarship and criticism began to catch up with sonic theory and technology in other world cinemas. The revitalization was inaugurated by E. Averbakh's collection *The Emergence of the Sound Image: The Artistic Problems of Sound Recording in Screen Arts and the Radio*, and received a further impulse from Yuri Lotman and Yuri Tsivian's *Dialogue with the Screen*, which introduced a semiotic analysis of film language that included sound as one of its structural components.<sup>15</sup> All the same, the legacy of the early Soviet experimentations with sound in both theory and in practice continued to be the shared point of reference that shaped the debate in these volumes.

### Soviet Modernity and the “Statement on Sound”

This collection, in continuity with those earlier works, contains a number of essays that reflect upon the wide interest in sound in the early years of the Soviet “talkies.” The relationship among image, sound, and text become central to the discussion of film as a revolutionary medium between 1928 and 1935, leading some filmmakers to experiment with alternative modes of sound practice, while others saw the establishment of many of the patterns that would shape Soviet cinema long into the post-Stalinist period. Institutionally and technologically, cinema's transition to sound was explicitly linked to the Soviet modernization project. Thus, many of the discourses on sound were framed by the debates on the role of cinema and its aesthetic, technological, and ideological potential. In this vein, we might find models in cognate work by Jonathan Sterne, Emily Thompson, and James Lastra, who have examined listening practices, applied acoustics, and sound technology in American cultural history under the aegis of describing the parameters of a new acoustic modernity.<sup>16</sup> Similar work has

been done on German audiovisual cultures and the modernizing project.<sup>17</sup> For the most part, these studies view the aural manifestations of modernity as driven primarily by capitalist commodity culture. Locating this phenomenon within a distinctly different discursive field—that of Soviet modernity—could significantly broaden the general theoretical parameters of such work. At the same time, however, we should keep in mind that dialogues with American sound cultures in particular did form an important part of the Soviet experience (as Valérie Pozner and Lilya Kaganovsky explore in different contexts in this volume). New approaches to sound in Soviet cinema pose questions concerning the limits of the framework of national cinemas as we begin to understand the transnational nature of cinematic modernity and the cultural and historical specificities of its manifestation.

The transition to sound coincided and no doubt contributed to the shift from the avant-garde to the realist aesthetic and discourse in Europe and the United States. Nowhere was this shift as dramatic as in the Soviet Union, where it corresponded to the move toward socialist realism and the integration of the revolutionary energies of cinema into the Stalinist culture at large, with its cult of personality, attacks on formalism and cosmopolitanism, and state endorsement of the aesthetic ideologies formerly eschewed by the 1920s avant-garde as extensions of the bourgeois consciousness. The late silent and early sound period in Soviet cinema witnessed complex and diverse artistic negotiations between what we traditionally call avant-garde and realist models. The inclusion of sound on the screen introduced a range of possible affective regimes and modalities, contributing to what Emma Widdis has termed the “sensory reeducation” of the Soviet citizen, which began as a larger project of revolutionizing the relationship between the human subjects and the material world around them by creating a new sensory regime for the spectator.<sup>18</sup> By the 1930s, sound and music in particular became battlegrounds for quickly changing ideologies, on and off the screen (see Joan Titus’s and Kevin Bartig’s contributions in this volume). Many of the essays in this collection present detailed examinations of this terrain, contributing to a much more nuanced understanding of the conditions and terms of this watershed cultural and historical moment.

When dealing with the early years of Soviet sound cinema, one must address the symbolic weight and the overwhelming legacy of Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov’s famous 1928 treatise “Statement on Sound,” which was for a long time the only significant piece of writing explicitly theorizing sound in cinema.<sup>19</sup> It was appropriate for the “Theory” section of Weis and Belton’s seminal collection *Film Sound: Theory and Practice* to open with this classic essay by the Soviet directors, as it remains widely read and debated by film scholars and film students to this day.<sup>20</sup> “Statement on Sound” laid the foundation for the ideological and didactic use of media for political subject formation by, first, placing the invention

of sound films in its political context (i.e., of the capitalist film industry in the United States and Germany), and then drawing the consequences for another political context (the Soviet Union) in which sound could be either an instrument that “destroys the formal achievements” of cinema as an art—by allowing sound to be used as an audio correlate to naturalism, perfectly lining up sound to image—or an instrument that can deepen the dialectical and organic unity of cinema by means of counterpoint (i.e., the intentional non-synchronization of sound to visual image). This theoretical approach is certainly culturally specific, as much of Soviet film theory and practice was formed in dialogue with the Russian formalist ideas of engaged spectatorship, leading to the prioritization of conflict and dissonance between the image and the soundtrack as a structuring compositional principle (see Joan Neuberger’s essay for another elaboration on this in Eisenstein’s work). Yet for all this theoretically foregrounding, the technical advance from the silents in Soviet cinema did not play out in terms of the formal dynamic that these early theorists advocated for. The actual sound practices, as well as their artistic inspirations, varied a great deal from the Eisenstein-Pudovkin-Alexandrov position. Many experimental strands of artistic practices at the time placed sound at their conceptual center rather than merely testing and marking its limitations; however, they could not easily fit under the explanatory category of “montage” or “counterpoint.”<sup>21</sup> Indeed, it may be useful to consider Arseny Avraamov’s experiments in noise and sound visualizations, Dziga Vertov’s interest in bodily rhythm perception, or the use of silence to heighten the sensory engagement of the audience in films by Abram Room as distinct conceptual reference points, even though all of these figures shared the rejection of “easy listening” and purely illustrative functions of film sound with the authors of the “Statement.” Different aspects of this dynamic are explored in the essays by Nikolai Izvolov and Emma Widdis in this collection. The “Statement on Sound” was symptomatic of early Soviet film theory’s rejection of synchronized sound, and it has implicitly invited generations of scholars to undervalue the conceptual, artistic, and ideological complexities of the more “common” varieties of aural expression in cinema. Thus, the iconic status of the “Statement” may stand as an obstacle to a more historically grounded critical evaluation of a spectrum of actual sonic practices and their ideologies. While it would be irresponsible to downplay the enormous importance of the early Soviet avant-garde ethos (of which the “Statement” forms an important part, being perhaps its last collective breath), or of the formal and phenomenological complexities and ambitions of the modernist and/or art cinema, it may be that, in the words of Michel Chion, “it is time to take stock of what really happened rather than what was dreamed of. No more grumbling about sound film’s outcome on the basis that people had wanted it to turn out differently, no more endless quoting of Adorno and Eisler, and the Three Russians and Vertov—all still recruited to condemn, eighty years later,

the direction the cinema has taken.”<sup>22</sup> And this direction has extended much more widely than the original montage problematic—or an emphasis on the new cinematic language—would account for. Nor, for example, was the theory of counterpoint the only current in the 1930s for thinking about sound among the theoreticians and practitioners of film music, many of whom were invested in a classical music heritage, its representation, and its affective didactic power (see Anna Nisnevich’s essay in this volume). Moreover, the actual practices of early sound in Soviet film were often completely removed from any of the theoretical discussions, whether artistically progressive or conservative. Instead, they were often governed by direct political pressures, the dynamics of which are best revealed through an analysis of institutional discourses and industrial practices (as Valérie Pozner, Kevin Bartig, and Natalya Ryabchikova all show in this volume).

### Logocentrism versus Polyglossia

The emphasis on the institutional discourses of music brings us back to the problem of logocentrism pointed out by Iampolski in “Cinema without Cinema.” Perhaps this overemphasis on linguistic expression in Soviet cinema is at least in part linked to the anxiety of cinema in a multi-nation—and multilingual—state, and to the challenges of and political resistances to translating this polyglossia on the screen. As Nataša Durovicová has noted, film language policies created cinema’s varied acoustic representational space and a “national acoustic projection” reflecting the particularities of governing ideological configurations.<sup>23</sup> The introduction of sound in the 1930s made audible a voice of ideology—one issuing directly from the screen—that altered expectations about the relationship between viewer and film, between citizenship and Soviet power. The language of that ideology was, undeniably, Russian. The conventions of dubbing other languages were established in the Soviet Union under conditions not unlike those of fascist Italy, where post-synchronized dubbing created a false representation of cultural and linguistic unity through a generic Tuscan dialect as standard Italian (the fascist state even implemented laws prohibiting the exhibition of foreign films in the original language, as well as the use of dialects in Italian films).<sup>24</sup> However, as Evgeny Margolit’s essay in this volume discusses, the dominance of monolingualism in Soviet cinema was a gradual phenomenon, and many of the early Soviet sound films were in fact multilingual, challenging assumptions about the function of language(s) in cinema. Moreover, the uneven levels of ideological control in the different film studios of the Soviet Union and their varying production norms and different markets created a patchwork of policies and practices of recorded sound.<sup>25</sup> More historically grounded work remains to be done on the language of Soviet films as a site of negotiations of national and ethnic identities in a multi-nation state.



Moreover, if we extend our understanding of the audiovisual beyond textual analysis to the context of cinematic exhibition and circulation practices, another range of uses of language and speech emerges. This includes the practice of commenting on the silent films, which was prevalent in prerevolutionary Russia, as elsewhere in the world,<sup>26</sup> and continued after the revolution.<sup>27</sup> While this form of oral commentary died out (except in the form of the lecture accompanying film exhibitions in certain local contexts, such as screenings at the local cultural centers, or *doma kul'tury*), oral translation of the cinematic text continued throughout the Soviet period in other forms. Because subtitling was not practiced and professional dubbing both was costly and required a significant investment of time, many foreign films and the majority of the television shows released in the Soviet Union were dubbed by a single person reading over a script. This practice extended to the illegal circulation of foreign films, from the videotapes with voice-over by a nasal monotone in the 1980s and 1990s (the translators pinched their noses to disguise their voices, as the legend has it) to the contemporary pirated DVD market. It has even evolved as a subgenre through, for example, the famous parodic and irreverent commentary dubbing by Dmitri Puchkov, a.k.a. "Goblin," of such blockbusters as Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–3).<sup>28</sup> What makes this format particularly culturally compelling is that it stands in ironic relation not only to the films but also to the practice of dubbing itself, bringing the role of the interpreter-commentator to the fore. In his groundbreaking *Cinema Babel: Translating Global Cinema*, Abe Mark Nornes laid the foundation for the study of the role of dubbing and subtitling of foreign-language films as an oblique form of interpretation and cultural translation.<sup>29</sup> Following Nornes, Elena Razlogova's contribution to this volume explores the work of the simultaneous film translators in Moscow and the conflicting political pressures and cultural expectations that shaped such practices. These extra-cinematic uses of language are intrinsic to a certain experience of film spectatorship, especially as films cross borders (either licitly or as smuggled goods), producing layers of meaning added to the "original." Given the obvious threat to power relations (from controls on speech to controls on intellectual property) involved in such practices, this aural flow—both on and off the screen—has been subject to strict hierarchies and control. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that this power was ever total; actual sound practices demonstrate the degree to which such control is inscribed in a complex network of historically and geographically specific and often conflicting and shifting priorities. Moreover, a closer analysis of these practices points to a certain inherent indeterminacy of and/or in sound. In shifting the emphasis from the textual basis to its cinematic performance, speech inevitably acquires corporeality, positioning the body not only in diegetic space but also in historical time, where it necessarily emerges as a vocal embodiment of a particular

sociocultural dynamic (as Oksana Bulgakowa demonstrates in her comparison of vocal deliveries on the screen between the 1930s and the 1960s in her contribution to this volume). As speech is vocalized and synchronized with the images on the screen, it aligns itself with other elements of the soundtrack, such as music, ambient noise, and sound effects.

Thus, soundscapes of Soviet cinema opened a rich but shifting terrain of articulations and negotiations of cultural and political categories, of what is perceived as “national,” “local,” “foreign,” “authentic,” and so on. Because the greatest level of centralized censorship in Soviet cinema was exercised upon the written word in the form of the official approval of the script, the nonverbal aspects of the oral delivery and the overall soundscape could bring out the nuances and carry the burden of coloring the “official word” with individual expression, operating on the affective level in relationship to the spectator or listener, creating—or dividing— affective communities through sound. This was particularly true of the radio with the iconic voices of Yuri Levitan or Olga Vysotskaya, but it also shaped the aural aesthetic of Soviet cinema. These practices affected the conventions of both documentary and fiction voice-overs (as Jeremy Hicks discusses in his essay),<sup>30</sup> as well as the styles of individual actors’ vocal delivery (as Bulgakowa points out). Moreover, given the enormous power of the affective and sensory regimes of sound in the formation of given historical subjectivities, acoustic aspects of audiovisual culture register within historical traumas, such as those undergone by the Soviet Union under Stalin’s purges and labor camps and the devastating Nazi invasion. Peter Schmelz theorizes the sonic dimension of this in his essay on Tengiz Abuladze’s *Monanieba* (Repentance, 1984), and Jeremy Hicks employs this approach to explore the soundscapes as testimonies of the lived experiences of the Second World War and their traumatic reverberations through documentary.

### Listening between the Lines

The logocentrism of Soviet cinema and its impact on the total soundtrack extend beyond the theatrical film. Indeed, two of the biggest Soviet TV film blockbusters of the Stagnation period—*Semnadsat’ mgnovenii vesny* (Seventeen Moments of Spring, dir. Lioznova, 1973) and *Mesto vstrechi izmenit’ nel’zia* (The Meeting Place Cannot Be Changed, dir. Govorukhin, 1979)—owe much of their iconic status to the particularity of speech performances and the specific use of sound effects. More so than any visuals from the film, it was the colorful colloquial quality of the vocal performances of *Meeting Place*’s characters (further enhanced by Vladimir Vysotsky’s iconic voice, which evoked associations with his career as a singer-songwriter) that made the series such a success. Similarly, Yefim Kopelyan’s voice-over narration in *Seventeen Moments of Spring* and the official

“Nazi” language of the personal files have given the series a legendary status (not least through the oral tradition of *anekdoty*). Combined with the many other memorable uses of sound in the series (including the theme song, recognizable by its very first chords, and the extended use of silence), it was the aural quality of the voice-over that was responsible for creating a highly complex web of identification in the film. Its narration is immediately reminiscent of the legendary radio announcers of the wartime period and thus partakes in a nostalgia for an officially heroic period while also allowing for an implicit critique of the ossified language of official Soviet ideology and bureaucracy in the Stagnation era.

It would be incorrect, however, to emphasize the role of language in Soviet cinema to the exclusion of popular songs in it. Unlike Hollywood—which was largely dominated by original scores and where the inclusion of songs in a film tended to be limited to the musical genre, especially in the postwar period (although of course there are notable exceptions to this)—in Soviet sound cinema the inclusion of songs written specifically for the film—and often in conversation with the director—was a widespread practice throughout its history, regardless of whether or not the film was considered a “musical.”<sup>31</sup> The comparably privileged status given to songs could be seen as further evidence of the enduring logocentrism of Soviet cinema, as lyrics greatly contributed to the popularity of film music.

However, this also prompts us to discuss the status of popular music in the Soviet Union, as it embodied the tensions among national, cross-cultural, and international transfers, in particular through its defining role in youth culture. Starting with jazz in the 1920s, the battle against “Western” influences in the Soviet Union (made more difficult by the West’s desire to continue to exert precisely that influence) took place within the international mass culture of popular music and fashion, which gradually intensified in the postwar culture. This Cold War rhetoric is still with us on both sides of the former Iron Curtain: as a recent PBS documentary claims, it was the Beatles who brought down the wall,<sup>32</sup> or, as Mosfil’m director Karen Shakhnazarov recently put it in an interview with *Izvestiia*: “I am convinced that empires crumble at the level of the personal. . . . It wasn’t the deployment of soldiers to Afghanistan in December [1978] that was responsible for the Soviet empire falling apart, but Beatles and Rolling Stones records.”<sup>33</sup>

Popular songs brought out these cultural connotations, adding another level of cultural meaning to the text and texture of the films.<sup>34</sup> Beyond the shifts in the ideology of the musicals of the 1930s and 1940s, the “guitar poetry” (*avtorskaia pesnia*) that emerged during the Thaw featured prominently in films as different as Marlen Khutsiev’s *Iul’skii dozhd’* (July Rain, 1966) and the Oscar-winning *Moskva slezam ne verit* (Moscow Doesn’t Believe in Tears, dir. Menshov, 1980), contributing to the generational appeal of both films. And in the 1980s, Soviet cinema witnessed a veritable sonic explosion through the introduction of rock

and post-punk music and its stars. The cultural importance of such landmark films of perestroika as *ASSA* (dir. Soloviev, 1987), *Igla* (The Needle, dir. Nugmanov, 1988), *Vzlomschik* (The Burglar, dir. Ogorodnikov, 1988), and Sergei Uchitel's documentary *Rok* (Rock, 1989) cannot be underestimated. These films' cult status and longevity (of *ASSA* and *The Needle* in particular) are largely because they were the first films to feature the stars of the "informal"—or unofficial—rock movement, producing a hollowed-out yet instantly recognizable and politically resonant version of the bohemian underground aesthetics from which this music emerged. These films came to define the era, and the song "We Are Waiting for Changes" ("Peremen"), performed by Tsoi in the final sequence of *ASSA*, became a youth-cultural anthem of perestroika.

The echoes of this cultural moment resonate in Valery Todorovsky's post-modern musical *Stiliagi* (Hipsters, 2008), which figures at the center of Lilya Kaganovsky's essay concluding this volume. On the one hand, it is a musical, in which the songs are integrated into the narrative and performed by the characters; on the other hand, it relies on new versions of previously recorded songs, producing a series of uncanny cultural and historical displacements, akin to the kind of pastiche attempted in Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge!* (2001) or, more pointedly, in Julien Temple's *Absolute Beginners* (1996). However, it is precisely the prima facie cultural differences between *Stiliagi* and these films that point to the extraordinary weight and high ideological stakes underlying the use of popular music in Soviet and post-Soviet cinematic contexts. Through their musical pastiche, these films reflect a historical consciousness of three periods in the Soviet Union in particular—the struggle between liberalization and retrenchment in the 1960s, the Stagnation era of the 1980s, and the triumph of consumerism combined with commodified and multilayered Soviet nostalgia of the present day—in which the existential stakes of the survival of the Soviet model are played out as a generational drama. The compulsive return of these musical referents in the post-Soviet context indicates the persistent lack of closure concerning just what went wrong in the Soviet Union, encoded in the conversation about music as the space of geopolitical definitions of Soviet national cultural identity vis-à-vis "the West." From the logocentric view, there is something incomprehensible, even frivolous, in the idea that music played and continues to play this role. But as we widen our understanding of the aural as a cultural product, we may find that it is not incomprehensible at all but simply underconceptualized and distorted by our tendency to revert to tropes from a rhetoric centrally oriented to textual devices.

However, it would be wrong to think that music traveled only in one direction: from the West to the East. After all, the dominant hegemony in Europe and North America was having its own difficulties understanding the music coming from subaltern groups suddenly revolting against things "Western."<sup>35</sup> Moreover, it was not only "the West" that entered Soviet and post-Soviet homes via cinema

and television screens: Indian cinema's popularity from the 1960s through the 1980s was due at least in part to the appeal of its musical numbers; the popularity of Latin American dance music in the 1980s also coincided with the arrival and temporary dominance of Latin American soap operas on Soviet television. In other words, if this collection is limited to a marked European (and Western) focus, it is intended to serve as an invitation to further research that would extend far beyond the areas represented here and toward a broader, transnational cultural analysis.

Nor should these histories be limited to popular music: much research remains to be done, for example, on both modernist and avant-garde or experimental (including electronic) musicians working in Soviet and post-Soviet cinema. Film work was the bread and butter of many experimental composers. The history of their collaborations is very rich, and Peter Schmelz's contribution to this volume points to the importance of this topic to the discussion of Soviet audiovisual culture. From Andrei Tarkovsky's famous collaboration with Eduard Arsenyev to the use of the ANS synthesizer in such popular films as *Siberiada* (dir. Konchalovsky, 1979) and *Zharkoe leto v Kabule* (Hot Summer in Kabul, dir. Khamrayev, 1983), not to mention Schnittke's work on Elem Klimov's and Alexander Mitta's films, these audiovisual compositions raise further questions about the relationship between high and low culture and the status of cinema therein, but they have yet to be fully explored from a cinematic perspective.<sup>36</sup> One other relatively unexploited avenue of analysis is exploration of the relationship between technology and the aesthetics of production, reception, and consumption of film. Furthermore, the filmic use of popular songs and the effect of the commercial success of compilation soundtracks on contemporary cinema bring the contours of convergence culture into sharp relief. From this moment, we can reconsider a full array of audiovisual phenomena in Soviet and post-Soviet cinema and media: such theoretical notions as Vertov's "cine-eye" versus "radio-eye," mass culture phenomena as the Soviet pop song and movie stardom,<sup>37</sup> and technological developments from the introduction of the reel-to-reel player in the 1970s to Internet fandom and video piracy. These issues bring out the larger implications of how audiovisual media is produced, distributed, and received, articulating the conditions of possibility that create and shape its emergence. While a wide area remains to be fully explored by scholars and cultural critics, the analysis of sound in Soviet and post-Soviet audiovisual media ultimately questions our involvement—sensory and affective, cultural, and social—in it. Muratova's "elation of listening" (which could be a number of things—for instance, an aesthetic appreciation of the everyday life of sound, or, in contrast, the eavesdropper's enjoyment of the "secret" revealed by sound) helps us gain a better understanding of cinema and media as both an aesthetic and a social experience, as well as a cultural product. Through this volume, we hope to suggest directions for an agenda of sound studies that

turns us toward the historically and culturally grounded nature of spectatorship, whether understood as ideological subject formation or interpellation or as social and cultural reception. The contributions here are meant to provoke a conversation that may change the way we look at the history of our modernity.

## Notes

1. Kira Muratova, "Iskusstvo roditel' iz zapretov, styda i strakha," *Iskusstvo Kino* 2 (1995), reprinted in *Iskusstvo kino* (2001): 140.
2. Michael Bull and Les Back, eds., *The Auditory Culture Reader* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 2003), 3.
3. Jonathan Crary, "Response to Visual Culture Questionnaire," *October* 77 (Summer 1996): 33.
4. "Cinema/Sound," ed. Rick Altman, special issue, *Yale French Studies*, no. 60 (1980); John Belton and Elisabeth Weis, eds., *Film Sound: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Rick Altman, *Sound Theory, Sound Practice* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), and *The Voice in Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
5. Rick Altman, "Sound Studies: A Field Whose Time Has Come," *Iris* 27 (Spring 1999): 3-4.
6. The rare exceptions to this in the field of Russian and Soviet cultural history are Amy Nelson's excellent book *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), Michael Urban (with Andrei Evdokimov), *Russia Gets the Blues: Music, Culture and Community in Unsettled Times* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), and Michael S. Gorham, *Speaking in Soviet Tongues: Language Culture and the Politics of Voice in Revolutionary Russia* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003).
7. Ian Christie's essay "Soviet Cinema: Making Sense of Sound," *Screen* 23, no. 2 (July-August 1982) later revised as "Making Sense of Early Soviet Sound," in *Inside the Film Factory*, ed. Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (London: Routledge, 1991), for a long time remained the only piece of scholarship in English on this topic. More recently, see Lilya Kaganovsky, "The Voice of Technology and the End of Soviet Silent Film: Grigorii Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg's *Alone*," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 1, no. 3 (2007): 265-81.
8. Robert Robertson, *Eisenstein on the Audiovisual: The Montage of Music, Image, and Sound in Cinema* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009); Nancy Condee, *Imperial Trace: Recent Russian Cinema* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); John MacKay, "Disorganized Noise: Enthusiasm and the Ear of the Collective," *Kinokultura* 7 (2005), <http://www.kinokultura.com/articles/jan05-mackay.html>; Irina Sandomirskaja, "A Glossolalic Glasnost and the Re-tuning of the Soviet Subject: Sound Performance in Kira Muratova's *Asthenic Syndrome*," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 2, no.1 (2008): 63-83, and Mikhail Yampolsky, "Chekhov/Sokurov: Repetition and Recollection," *New Formations* (May 1994): 48-58. Two out of the three essays on Soviet-related material included in *Composing for the Screen in Germany and the USSR: Cultural Politics and Propaganda*, edited by Robynn Stilwell and Phil Powrie (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), deal with the canonical subjects of Eisenstein and Prokofiev.
9. Trudy Anderson, "Why Stalinist Musicals?" *Discourse* 17, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 38-48; Richard Taylor, "But Eastward, Look, the Land Is Brighter: Towards a Topography of Utopia in the Stalinist Musical," in *100 Years of European Cinema: Entertainment or Ideology?*, ed. Diana Holmes and Alison Smith (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2000), 11-26;

Thomas Lahusen, "From Laughter 'Out of Sync' to Post-Synchronized Comedy: How the Stalinist Film Musical Caught Up with Hollywood and Overtook It," in *Socialist Cultures East and West: A Post-Cold War Reassessment*, ed. Dubravka Juraga and M. Keith Booker (New York: Praeger, 2002), 31–42; John Haynes, *New Soviet Man: Gender and Masculinity in Stalinist Soviet Cinema* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003); Rimgaila Salys, *The Musical Comedy Films of Grigorii Aleksandrov: Laughing Matters* (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2009).

10. Eldar Riazanov's musical comedies are an exception to this tendency. See David MacFadyen, *The Sad Comedy of El'dar Riazanov: An Introduction to Russia's Most Popular Filmmaker* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), and Alexander Prohkorov, "Cinema of Attractions versus Narrative Cinema: Leonid Gaidai's Comedies and El'dar Riazanov's Satires of the 1960s," *Slavic Review* 62, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 455–72. David Gillespie's "The Sounds of Music: Soundtrack and Song in Soviet Film," *Slavic Review* 62, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 473–90, and his contribution to *The Directory of World Cinema: Russia*, ed. Birgit Beumers (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2011), address this gap by discussing the use of songs in popular films from the 1970s; however, his analysis focuses primarily on the lyrics.

11. Katerina Clark, "Aural Hieroglyphics? Some Reflections on the Role of Sound in Recent Russian Films and Its Historical Context," in *Soviet Hieroglyphics: Visual Culture in Late Twentieth-century Russia*, ed. Nancy Condee (Bloomington: BFI/Indiana University Press, 1995), 3; Tatiana Egorova, *Soviet Film Music: An Historical Survey* (London: Routledge, 1997).

12. There are some exceptions, of course. For example, two recent publications reflecting such approaches are James Krukones, "Peacefully Coexisting on a Wide Screen: Kinopanorama vs. Cinerama, 1952–66," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 4, no. 3 (2010): 283–305, and David MacFadyen, "Cinematic Abuse as Self-Affirmation: Russian Video Mash-Ups, Illegal Social Networking, and the Rise of Bekmambetov's 'Office Plankton,'" *Kinokultura* 27 (2010), <http://www.kinokultura.com/2010/27-macfadyen.shtml>.

13. Mikhail Yampolsky, "Cinema without Cinema," in *Russian Critics on the Cinema of Glasnost*, ed. Michael Brashinsky and Andrew Horton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 12.

14. *Iskusstvo kino* 3 (1962): 63. Quoted in Tomas Korganov and Ivan Frolov, *Kino i muzyka* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964).

15. E. Averbakh, ed., *Rozhdenie zvukovogo obraza: Khudozhestvennyye problem zvukoza-pisi v ekrannyy iskusstvax i na radio* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1985); Yuri Lotman and Yuri Tsivian, *Dialog s ekranom* (Tallin: Aleksandra, 1994).

16. James Lastra, *Sound Technology and the American Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900–1933* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002); Jonathan Stern, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

17. See Nora M. Alter and Lutz Koepnick, eds., *Sound Matters: Essays on the Acoustics of Modern German Culture* (New York: Berghan Books, 2004).

18. Emma Widdis, "Faktura: Depth and Surface in Early Soviet Set Design," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 3, no. 2 (2009): 5–32.

19. S. Eisenstein, V. Pudovkin, and G. Aleksandrov, "Budushchee zvukovoi fil'my: Zaivka" [The Statement on Sound], *Zhizn' iskusstva*, August 5, 1928. The "Statement on Sound" and other important documents chronicling the transition to sound are translated in Richard Taylor and Ian Christie, eds., *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents 1896–1939* (London: Routledge, 1988).

20. Belton and Weis, *Film Sound*, 83–86.

21. On the attempt to look at early Soviet sound cinema from the point of view of counterpoint, see Kristin Thompson, "Early Sound Counterpoint," *Yale French Studies* 60 (1980): 115–40.
22. Michel Chion, *Film: A Sound Art*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 203.
23. Nataša Āurovičová, "Vector, Flow, Zone: Towards a History of Cinematic Translation," in *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Nataša Āurovičová and Kathleen Newman (London: Routledge, 2006), 90–120.
24. See Jacqueline Reich, "Mussolini at the Movies: Fascism, Film, and Culture," in *Re-Viewing Fascism: Italian Cinema 1922–1943*, ed. Jacqueline Reich and Piero Garofalo (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 3–29, and Giorgio Bertellini, "Dubbing *L'arte muta*: Poetic Layerings around Italian Cinema's Transition to Sound," in *Re-Viewing Fascism: Italian Cinema 1922–1943*, ed. Jacqueline Reich and Piero Garofalo (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 30–82.
25. Oksana Sarkisova explores this in "Folk Songs in Soviet orchestration: Vostokfil'm's Song of Happiness and the Forging of the New Soviet Musician," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 4, no. 3 (2010): 261–81.
26. See, in particular, Rashit M. Yangirov, "Talking Movie or Silent Theater? Creative Experiments by Vasily Goncharov," in *The Sounds of Early Cinema*, ed. Richard Abel and Rick Altman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001) and Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
27. For an overall approach to *oralité*, see Germain Lacasse, *Le bonimenteur de vues animées: Le cinéma muet entre tradition et modernité* (Quebec City, QB: Nota Bene, 2000). For a Soviet instantiation of this, see Valérie Pozner, "Le bonimenteur 'rouge': Retour sur la question de l'oralité à propos du cas soviétique," *Cinémas* 14, nos. 2–3 (2004): 143–78.
28. Smeshnye perevody Goblina ot studii Bozh'ia Iskra (Funny translations by Goblin from the Bozh'ia Iskra studio), <http://oper.ru/trans/?bi>.
29. Abe Mark Nornes, *Cinema Babel: Translating Global Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).
30. Similar issues have recently been picked up in Wolfgang Beilenhoff and Sabine Hänsgen, "Speaking about Images: The Voice of the Author in *Ordinary Fascism*," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 2, no. 2 (2008): 141–53.
31. For a seminal account of Hollywood film music, Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press; London: BFI Publishing, 1987). For a discussion of the role of songs in scoring practices in Soviet cinema, see Andrei Petrov and Natalia Koles'nikova, *Dialog o kinomuzyke* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1982).
32. *How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin* (dir. Leslie Woodhead, TV 2009).
33. Vita Ramm, "Kinorezhisser Karen Shakhnazarov: 'V raspade sovetsoi imperii kliuchevuiu rol' sygrali 'bitly' i 'rollingi.'" *Izvestiia*, February 11, 2008.
34. For a discussion of the different varieties of Soviet and Russian pop and rock music, see Artemy Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), and *Tusovka: Who's Who in the New Soviet Rock Culture* (London: Omnibus, 1990); David MacFadyen's "trilogy": *Red Stars: Personality and the Soviet Popular Song after 1955* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), *Āstrada?! Grand Narratives and the Philosophy of the Russian Popular Song, 1982–2000* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), and *Songs for Fat People: Affect, Emotion and Celebrity in the Soviet Popular Song, 1900 to 1955* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); and Birgit Beumers, *Pop Culture Russia!* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005).
35. For different aspects of this issue, see Georgia Born and David Hesmondhalgh, eds., *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation and Appropriation in Music*



(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Paul Gilroy, "Sounds Authentic: Black Music, Ethnicity, and the Challenge of a Changing Same," *Black Music Research Journal* 11, no. 2 (Autumn 1991): 111–36; Kodwo Eshun, *More Brilliant Than The Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction* (London: Quartet Books, 1998); Veit Erlmann, *Music, Modernity and the Global Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

36. Peter Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

37. For recent scholarship on this topic, see Kay Dickinson, *Off Key: When Film and Music Won't Work Together* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).