

BULLETIN
of the
CENTER FOR SOVIET & EAST-EUROPEAN STUDIES
East Germany Poland
IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS
CARBONDALE, ILLINOIS 62901, U.S.A.

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
TEL.: 453-5174, Area Code 618

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No. 5

**THEATER AND DANCE TOUR TO
THE USSR
Summer 1971**

Spend nine weeks attending theatrical and dance productions, rehearsals, and dance and theater schools in various centers in the USSR. The tour will cover the following cities: Leningrad; Tallin, Esthonia; Kiev, Ukraine; Baku, Azerbaijan; Yerevan, Armenia; Tblisi, Georgia; and Moscow. The aim will be to see the lesser known national minority theaters and dance groups in the Soviet Union. Returning back through Europe, there will be brief stays in Bucharest and Belgrade. The tour is from June 21 to August 28 and the cost is approximately \$1,300. Details of the itinerary and applications are available at the Center. Tour Director—Herbert Marshall.

**THE POETS OF THE NATIONAL
MINORITIES OF USSR**

Through the years many friends and colleagues have complained that in the English-speaking world the overwhelming bulk of translations of Soviet writers is from the Russian. They point out that today 50% of the population of the Soviet Union are National Minorities! Each with its own language and culture.

Our Center will try, in a modest way, to redress the balance. We shall be interested in hearing from anyone who can translate or has translations from any of the languages of the National Minorities of the USSR. Particularly poetry and plays.

In response to the promptings of Mikola Bazhan, one of the leading poets of the Ukraine, I translated from the Ukrainian a large number of poems from KOBZAR by Taras Shevchenko for the UNESCO centenary of that bard. It was published in the centenary volume "TARAS SHEVCHENKO—SELECTED WORKS" by Progress Publishing House, Moscow in 1964. At the same time my wife made a 1½ life-size statue of Shevchenko for his Museum in Kiev.

Then Irakli Abashidze and Joseph Noneshvili, leading poets of Georgia, asked me to tackle Georgian! Well, I did, and have completed 'PALESTINA, PALESTINA' by Abashidze, a modern epic on the 12th century Bard of Georgia, Shota Rustaveli, as well as poems by Noneshvili and Tabidze.

Tabidze was known as the Mayakovsky of Georgia, he and his close friend and poet Paolo Yashvili were both innocent victims of The Stalinist Period, the first was executed and the second afterwards committed suicide.

Ehrenburg writes: "Many Russian poets loved Titian and Paola: Yessenin, Pasternak, Tikhonov, Zabolotsky, Antolkolsky." ("First Years of Revolution," p. 117, McGibbon & Kee, 1962.) And that love still persists, as the

following poem by the young Soviet poetess, Yunna Morrits shows and the poem by Bulat Okudjava "Guard and Protect Us Poets."

Here, as far as I know, is the first translation into English of Tabidze's now classic poem "The Poem Avalanche" which was also translated beautifully and faithfully into Russian by Pasternak.

I am firstly indebted to Joseph Noneshvili, who painstakingly went over the poem in its original and explained it to me in Russian.

I am also indebted to my friend Professor David Lang, Reader in Caucasian Studies at the London School of Oriental Languages, for introducing me to two pupils of his, Mr. George Sasoon and Miss Eliz Fuller who have helped me to check the accuracy of my translation and its transliteration.

I give it here in its original language, in its transliterated form, with a literal translation and my final translation.

ლექსი მეწყერი

მე არ ვწერ ლექსებს... ლექსი თვითონ მწერს,
ჩემი სიცოცხლე ამ ლექსს თან ახლავს.
ლექსს მე ვუწოდებ მოვარდნილ მეწყერს,
რომ გაგიტანს და ცოცხლად დაგმარხავს.

მე დავიბადე აპრილის თვეში,
ვაშლების გაშლილ ყვავილებიდან,
მაწვიმს სითეთრე და წვიმის თქეში
მოდის ცრემლებად ჩემს თვალებიდან.

აქედან ვიცი, მე რომ მოგვედები,
ამ ლექსს რომ ვამბობ, ესეც დარჩება,
ერთ პოეტს მაინც გულზე მოხვდება
და ეს ეყოფა გამოსარჩლებად.

იტყვიან ასე: იყო საწყალი,
ორპირის ფშანზე გაზრდილი ბიჭი.
ლექსები იყო მისი საგზალი,
არ მოუცვლია ერთი ნაბიჯი.

და აწვალდება მას სიკვდილამდე
ქართული მზე და ქართული მიწა,

ბედნიერებას მას უჩაღვდენ.
ბედნიერება მან ლექსებს მისცა.

მე არ ვწერ ლექსებს, ლექსი თვითონ მწერს,
ჩემი სიცოცხლე ამ ლექსს თან ახლავს.
ლექსს მე ვუწოდებ მოვარდნილ მეწყერს,
რომ გაგიტანს და ცოცხლად დაგმარხავს.

**Transliteration of Georgian Text
with Literal Translation**

Me ar vtser leksebs . . . leksi tviton mtsers,
I not write poems . . . (a) poem itself writes—me,

Chemi sitsotskhle am lekss tan akhlavs,
My life with poetry is linked,

Lekss me vutsodeb movardnil metsqers
Poetry I call gushing ice-breaking

Rom gagitans da tsotskhlad dagmarkhavs.
That carries-away and alive buries.

Me davibade aprilis tvesh
I born April month

Vashlebis gashlil qvavilebidan
Apple blossoming from-flowers

Matsvims sitrete da tsvimis tkeshi
Rains whiteness and pours shower

Modis tsremlebad chems tvalebidan.
Flows like-tears from my-eyes.

Akedan vitsi me, rom movkvdebi
From-this know I, that I-shall-die

am lekss rom vambob, esets darcheba
this poem that I-pronounce, this remains

ert poets maints gulze mokhvdeba
one poet at-least in-heart will-fall

da es eqopa gamosarchlebad.
and its existence (for him to) defend-me.

Itqvian ase: iqo satsqali
Will-say this: lived poor-fellow

orpiris p'shanze gazrdili bichi
Orphir sapling grown-up boy

leksebi iqo misi sagzali
poems were his rations

ar moutsvlia ert'i nabiji.
not diverting from-path one-step.

Da atsvalebda mas sikvilamde
And tortured him till-death

kart'uli mze da kart'uli mitsa
Georgian sun and Georgian earth

bednierebas mas umalavdnen
happiness to-him was-hidden

bednierebas man leksebs mistsa.
happiness he to-poetry gave.

[FIRST QUATRAIN REPEATED]

THE POEM AVALANCHE

by Titian Tabidze

*Translated from the Georgian by Herbert Marshall
(With the help of Joseph Noneshvili, Tbilisi, Georgia)*

I don't write poems. Poems write me.
My life with poetry inextricably merges.
Poetry is an avalanche surging, submerging
and burying alive in snowy whiteness.

The month of April I was born in
'neath apple blossom, flowerest of flowers,
petals snowy whiteness falling
like my own tears, they shower, shower.

Thus I know I shall die and depart
leaving behind this poem in evidence
and if it touches but one poet's heart
without me he'll say a good word in my defence.

Yes, he'll say, there lived one poor chap,
a grafted sapling from Orphir's* fertile earth,
Poems he carried like rations in his knapsack,
along his chosen path, from which he never swerved.

The sun and earth of Georgia's loveliness
tortured to death that poor Georgian lad,
yet he never enjoyed any happiness
for he gave to poetry all the happiness he had.

I don't write poems. Poems write me.
My life with poetry inextricably merges
Poetry is an avalanche surging, submerging,
and burying alive in snowy whiteness.

**A district in Abkhazia, West Georgia, where Tabidze was born,
renowned for its fertility and vineyards.*

YUNNA MORRITS

In Memory of Titian Tabidze

Authorized Translation by Herbert Marshall

Over Mtskhet* falls a star,
flaming hairs disintegrate,
inhumanly my cry reverberates.
Over Mtskhet falls a star.

Who decreed its execution?
Who gave that right to a cretin?
To thrust a star beneath the guillotine.
Who decreed its execution?

**CENTER FOR SOVIET AND EAST-EUROPEAN
STUDIES IN THE PERFORMING ARTS**

Herbert Marshall, FRSA, Director

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Who decided its death in August?
Who rubber-stamped its death-warrant?
To execute a star—how abhorrent.
Who decided its death in August?

War—on you! Plague—on you
earth, where they dragged to the block
a star, to hack down like a dog!
War—on you! Plague—on you!

Over Mtskheth falls a star.
There's no pain now in its dying,
But Titian Tabidze is crying.
Over Mtskheth falls a star.

**Mtskheth—Ancient Capital of Georgia.*

(Original published in the Soviet magazine "Yunost," 1963.)

GUARD AND PROTECT US POETS

by *Bulat Okudjava*
this poem is dedicated to *Titian Tabidze*
Authorized Translation by *Herbert Marshall*

Guard and protect us poets, guard and protect us, we cry,
A century's left, a half, a year, now a week, an hour goes by,
three minutes, two, the seconds tick, four, three, two, one, zero falls!

Guard and protect us poets—so that one should be for all.

Guard and protect us, with our sins, our joys, without,
early, late,
for our d'Anthes,* young and handsome, always lies in wait.
Curses he's not forgotten for the deed he long has done,
but alas his destined calling demands he load his gun.

For our Martynov's** crying, remembering blood he shed before.
Once already he has killed—nor wants to kill once more.
But his destiny is such, the bullet's die is cast,
thus the twentieth century will summon him at last.

Guard and protect us poets from the hands of fools and knaves,
from far too hasty judgments, from friends so blind, oh, save.
Guard and protect us poets, while to preserve there's time.
Only do not preserve us, so we lay our bones in lime.

Only do not protect us, as wolfhounds hunters guard.
Only do not protect us, as hunters guard the Tsar.
Then for you poems will be written, songs sung unendingly.
Only protect and guard us poets—let us protected be.

**d'Anthes was the provocateur who shot the poet Pushkin in a duel.*
***Martynov shot the poet Lermontov, also in a duel.*

LIONEL BRITTON (1885-1970)

As this Bulletin goes to print I heard that Lionel Britton died in Margate, England, on 9th January. He was a world genius and my lifelong friend. I am his literary executor and have already arranged the acquisition of his archives by S.I.U., and the bulk of them are already in the Rare Books Room, available for research and study. Though in the thirties considered a successor to Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells, in later years he sank into obscurity, almost by his own choice, but the unpublished work, both prose and drama, he leaves behind will prove a mine of riches to posterity. His philosophy parallels that of Professor Buckminster Fuller and indeed he was the first man to postulate a world brain, a world computer of man's mind, in his play 'BRAIN.'

I will write more of this wonderful man and his work in the next bulletin and meanwhile mourn his passing, virtually unhonoured and unsung, for he was a rebel to the very end against all that hinders mankind's search for truth and understanding.

—Herbert Marshall

FROM COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

In a recent letter from Professor Harold B. Segel of the Department of Slavic Languages, Columbia University in the City of New York, Professor Segel wrote

"This is a long overdue note simply to thank you for the Bulletin, which comes to me regularly and which I find interesting and helpful, and to tell you how impressed I am with the activities of the Center under your direction. The arts, and drama and theater especially, were too long neglected within the community of American Slavists; the Center is doing a fine job in correcting that situation."

MUSIC

The Center is planning a future concert dedicated to Vladimir Mayakovsky. This will include:

1. the *Oratorio Pathétique* by Georgy Sviridov, a leading Soviet composer and pupil of Shostakovich, who has taken certain Mayakovsky poems and put them to music as part of a symphonic poem. This is an officially authorized translation in English by Herbert Marshall, and the text was published by the Soviet Composer's Publishing House, Moscow, in 1960.
2. A young modern Soviet composer, A. Tariverdeyev, has put certain of Mayakovsky's texts to music, and created what is, for Russia, quite modern songs. They will be sung in both Russian and in Marshall's translation.
3. A symphonic portrait entitled *Tragedy of a Poet* and dedicated to Mayakovsky by the late Leonard Rafter. Rafter was a very promising English composer who, unfortunately, died an untimely death at the height of his powers. He wrote music that was performed by symphony orchestras and the BBC and wrote for film and television, and wrote the music, incidentally, for Herbert Marshall's Edinburgh Prize-Winning Film *Tinker*. The strange thing is that he and Marshall first met because he had read, in the late thirties, some of Marshall's translations of Mayakovsky, and was so inspired that he wrote a symphonic poem *On the Tragedy of a Poet*, which has never been hitherto performed.

Professor Marshall has just received from the Union of Soviet Composers the text and vocal score of Dimitri Shostakovich's latest work, the 14th Symphony. This work is based on a series of poems by Lorca, Appollinaire, Rilke, and Kuchelbecker and Herbert Marshall will now prepare the English version for future performance. He was previously commissioned by Shostakovich personally to translate the text of the 13th Symphony and has completed *Opus 119*, Symphonic Poem "The Execution of Stepan Razin," for future performance.

Anyone interested please write.

Newsweek

A review of a new book on THE LIFE OF MAYAKOVSKY in NEWSWEEK Feb. 22, page 94, ends with the following paragraph:

The translation here of his poems and plays are abominable. . . . Fortunately Mayakovsky is available in several English versions. Two volumes I especially admire are Max Hayward & George Reavey's "The Bed Bug & Selected Poetry" (with a marvellous biographical introduction by Patricia Blake) and Herbert Marshall's version of the best poems.*

—Geoffrey Wolff

*(MAYAKOVSKY published by Hill & Wang, N.Y. and Dobson, U.K.)

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

1970-71

1. Tatjana Trifonow—Research assistant working with Professor Marshall on translating the 2nd volume of the Selected Works of Sergei Eisenstein, the Soviet film director of the 30's. Graduated in 1967—University of Montreal, Canada. Received Masters degree in Russian Language and Literature at Case Western

- Reserve University in 1970. Now pursuing a Ph.D. in dramatic literature at S.I.U.
2. Dasa Drndić—B.A., Belgrade University, 1968 (English Language and Literature); born in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, 1946; 1968/1969 worked as Assistant Editor in Publishing House "Vuk Karadžić," Belgrade; 1969/1970 taught English by audio-visual global and structural method at People's University "Djuro Salaj," Belgrade; autumn 1970 came to United States, S.I.U. as exchange student—through the Yugoslav-American Commission for the Fulbright Programme; engaged in translating contemporary Yugoslav playwrights and building up an archive on Yugoslav theatre for the Center for Soviet and Eastern European Studies in the Performing Arts; Doing research for M.A. programme in theatre under Professor Marshall.
3. Darlene Peitz—Research assistant working with Professor Herbert Marshall on gathering and ordering material for his autobiographical work relating to cinema and theatre. (The material covers his Russian period from 1930 to 1937). Received B.A. degree from Yankton College, Yankton, South Dakota in the liberal arts with a concentration in theatre. Spent one year in New York, working at Barnes & Noble Bookstore. Now pursuing an M.A. in Theatre from Southern Illinois University.

Graduate Assistants are required periodically by the Center. Candidates must have thorough knowledge of Russian and/or other East European languages and an interest in the Performing Arts. Details will be sent upon application.

CORRESPONDENTS are welcomed from any of the countries and spheres covered by the Center.

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Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois 62901
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