



SCIENTIFIC FINAL REPORT

Two- and three-year projects and postdoctoral projects

Regnr Östersjöstiftelsen: 2015-0029

Project manager: Petra Garberding

Project title: Between East and West: Ideology, Aesthetics and Politics in the Musical Relations between Sweden and the GDR 1949–1989

1. The three most important results of the project and what conclusions can be drawn from them

Among other research results, the project shed light on the lively musical exchange which occurred between the GDR and Sweden throughout the former's existence. While especially true for classical music, such exchange also took place within other musical genres, such as folk music and popular music. Towards the end of the 1960s, this was formalized through treaties between the two states, organized mainly through cooperation between the artist agency of the GDR (*Künstleragentur der DDR*) and the Swedish National Concerts (*Svenska Rikskonserter*). This exchange was not seen as a problem in Sweden, although the GDR's policy was criticized in some Swedish (mostly conservative) media. In the 1960s and 70s, left-wing politics dominated in Sweden, with many left-leaning politicians and cultural leaders admiring the cultural policy promoted by the GDR. The GDR was often regarded as a model in these groups at the time, in no small part due to the fact that the regime invested large sums of money into cultural work and international cultural exchange, which were seen as extraordinarily important for the regime, not least as avenues for the dissemination of political propaganda.

Despite being a politically neutral country, the project has shown how Sweden was nonetheless an important target for the GDR's political propaganda. As the results of the project highlight, all musicians and orchestras who were sent to Sweden were sent with both artistic and political missions. As part of this, the project has shown how the Stasi's methods of power functioned in musical life while at the same time shedding light on how musicians and composers were able to create artistic freedom despite surveillance. For example, GDR travel cadres and unofficial employees of the Stasi were advised, among other things, to avoid direct political conversations with Swedish musical leaders. Instead, they should try to arouse interest in socialism by presenting a positive image of the GDR in Sweden.

A third outcome of the project were the multiple examples of how the GDR music scene, although politicized, offered alternative career opportunities for Swedish musicians in cooperation with leading German orchestras. For example, the Swedish conductor Carl von Garaguly achieved particular success in the GDR conducting canonized and classical composers such as Beethoven, Carl Maria von Weber and Mozart, but also Jean Sibelius. In Sweden, von Garaguly was known for promoting modern and more avant-garde music, but in the GDR, he almost exclusively played composers that were part of the state's political efforts to create



a national image of the GDR as the true heir of German cultural heritage. Although the music scene in the GDR was politicized, expected to function in accordance with party guidelines, there were nonetheless occasions where music was played that didn't fit official guidelines, such as Lars-Erik Larsson's avant-garde piece *Musik för orkester* (1949), played by Garaguly in 1960 and receiving a positive review from GDR musicologist Richard Petzoldt. Conversely, Swedish artists could be denied performances because of their critical attitude towards the GDR, such as the Swedish composer and organist Karl-Erik Welin. The singer Gisela May is an example of a GDR artist who was well received in Sweden, especially with her Brecht songs, and she received many positive reviews. Her relatively secure position in the GDR artistic elite allowed her not only enormous freedom to travel and perform all over the world, but also to express herself relatively freely about her political, GDR-positive, attitude in Sweden.

There are more examples how leading East German musical institutions and individuals had political functions when touring or staying in Sweden, like the St. Thomas Choir in Leipzig and Gerd Schönfelder, professor in Musicology and leader of the Semperoper in Dresden during the 1980s. The members of the St. Thomas Choir were instructed to communicate a positive picture of the GDR to Swedish families they stayed with during their tours. Gerd Schönfelder had close ties to Swedish musicologists and was elected as a foreign member of the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm in 1984. At the same time, he also became an unofficial collaborator of the GDR's Ministry of State Security and regularly reported to the Stasi on his Swedish colleagues and on political and musical events in Sweden. Although there was already suspicion in the Academy about Schönfelder's Stasi connections, he was nevertheless accepted into the Academy and the collaboration with Schönfelder continued into the 1990s.

2. The project's contribution to the international research frontline

The project has enriched the field of research concerned with the relation between politics and aesthetics in the GDR. Investigating musical exchange between the GDR and Sweden as a special case, we are able to develop a more thorough picture of how the GDR, as a political system, used music and culture to influence the state's image, not least how this was highlighted in Sweden. The goal for the GDR was political recognition, using its musical legacy as an important tool to achieve this end. Through several detailed case studies, the project has been able to show how official GDR cultural policy both promoted and limited musical life in the GDR, and the consequences this cultural policy had for the development of international cooperation with Sweden and for individual artists' careers.

The members of the project have created networks with leading musicologists in Germany, USA and Great Britain in the fields of GDR studies and cultural diplomacy. Among other things, project members organized an international workshop in Sweden in 2019 with colleagues from these countries, where music and politics in the GDR and musical connections between the GDR and Sweden were discussed. Results from this workshop will be published in an English-language anthology.



3. The contribution of the research to the knowledge of the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe

The project comes with new research findings on the significance of music and politics during the Cold War in the Baltic Sea region. The specific example of Sweden-GDR-FRG shows clearly how artistic freedom and political adaptation were constantly being renegotiated in the East-West tensions of the period. Among other things, it demonstrates how artistic freedom was established in a politically constrained environment, while also shedding light on how musicologists, musicians and music administrators had to operate within political frameworks. Important political events in the Eastern European region of the Cold War also influenced the possibilities of artistic freedom. The project gives examples of how political events, such as the uprisings in 1956 and 1968, the building and the fall of the Berlin Wall (in 1961 and 1989, respectively), and the denaturalization of the singer Wolf Biermann in 1976, influenced musical life and contacts between Sweden and the GDR.

4. New research questions that the project has led to

Future projects should examine in more detail the extent to which different musical genres, such as classical, folk, jazz, and popular music, differed in terms of political and artistic frameworks where contact between the GDR and Sweden were concerned. For example, was it easier to make a career as a Swedish folk musician in the GDR than as a jazz pianist? And what political logics did this rely upon?

Other new questions for future research include what significance material conditions, such as access to musical instruments, concert halls, and music recordings, had for musical contacts between Sweden and the GDR. There is also the question of the reappraisal of history. Sweden's close cultural and political contacts with the GDR have been reappraised only to a very limited extent; there is much research still needed in this area in order to develop a greater understanding of how this played out and what impacts it had in both countries and beyond.

5. Dissemination of the results of the project within and outside the research community

Project presentations and seminars

February 2016: Project presentation at CBEES, Södertörn University.

July 2016: Project presentation and panel discussion at the conference of the International Musicological Society, Stavanger, Norway.

October 2016: Project presentation at Institution for Historical and Contemporary Studies, Södertörn University.

April 2017: Project presentation at the for Art and Humanities, Linnaeus University, Växjö.

August 2017: Project presentation and panel discussion at Det 29. Nordiske



historikermøde, Aalborg, Denmark.

November 2017: Presentation of the project and of the first results at the Swedish song archives (*Visarkivet*), Stockholm.

February 2018: Presentation of the project and of preliminary results for the Baltic Sea Foundation, Södertörn University.

October 2018: “Musikaliska kontakter mellan Sverige och DDR: Fältarbete i Stasiarkivet i Berlin”. Presentation by Petra Garberding at Humanities Day, October 11, at Södertörn University.

August 2019: International workshop at Lund University (in collaboration with Malmö University,
“Strategic Narratives – How the GDR Shaped Cultural Contacts”).

June 2022: Presentation of project results at the Institution for Historical and Contemporary Studies’s “*Skördefest*”, Södertörn University.

The five most important conferences

Svenska Historikermötet, Sundsvall 2017. “Carl Garaguly in GDR 1949–1972”. Paper presentation by Henrik Rosengren.

European Social Science History Conference, Belfast, Great Britain, April 2018. “Political transformation through music? Musical relations between Sweden and the GDR”. Paper presentation by Henrik Rosengren.

Symposium Krappertup’s castle, conference Music and Politics, Höganäs, June 2018. “The musical relations between Sweden and GDR. Propaganda, ‘Erbe’ and Carrier”. (Paper presentation by Henrik Rosengren, published in *Musik och Politik*, eds. Anders Palm and Johan Stenström, Makadam, Stockholm and Göteborg 2019)

“Ethnologie als Ethnographie. Interdisziplinarität, Transnationalität und Netzwerke der Disziplin in der DDR” (Ethnology as Ethnography. Interdisciplinarity, Transnationality and Disciplinary Networks in the GDR), Bonn, February 2019. “Zur Entstehung der Musikethnologie als internationale Disziplin – das Beispiel Erich Stockmanns und Doris Stockmanns” (On the Emergence of Ethnomusicology as an international Discipline – the Example of Erich Stockmann and Doris Stockmann). Bonn, 2019. Paper presentation by Petra Garberding (will be published in a conference anthology, eds. Ingrid Kreide-Damani, Anita Bagus, Sabine Imeri, Karoline Noack and Leonore Scholze-Irrlitz).

SIEF, Helsinki, June 2021. “Singing for and against the state. Ethnomusicology and folklore as a path to artistic and political freedom in the GDR”. Paper presentation by Petra Garberding.

Publications



Monographs

Garberding, Petra/Rosengren, Henrik (eds.): *The Cold War through the lens of music-making in the GDR. Political goals, aesthetic paradoxes and the case of neutral Sweden*. Malmö: Universus Academic Press 2022 (in print). Open access from Spring 2023.

Articles

Garberding, Petra: “‘We could smell that he’s Stasi...’ Power and justification strategies of the Stasi in Music Life in the GDR and in Swedish-German music contacts”. In: *Ethnologia Scandinavica*, vol. 50/2020, p. 43–66. Open access: <http://sh.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1499641/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Garberding, Petra/Rosengren, Henrik/Geisler, Ursula: “‘Jag ser till att bli uppfattad som en vanlig DDR-medborgare’: musikforskaren Gerd Schönfelder, Kungl. Musikaliska akademien och Stasi”. *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning/Swedish Journal for Musicology*, Online, Vol. 101, 2019, p. 103-135. Open access: <http://sh.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1366562/FULLTEXT02.pdf>

Chapters in edited volumes

Rosengren, Henrik: “Musik som politik. Musikrelationerna Sverige-DDR: propaganda, kulturarv, karriär”. *Vetenskaps societeten i Lund. Årsbok 2018*. Lund: Vetenskaps societeten i Lund, 2018. p. 75–87 (Yearbook).

Rosengren, Henrik: “Kulturarv och politisk propaganda : Östtyska gosskörer i Sverige”. *Musik och politik*, eds. Anders Palm; Johan Stenström. Göteborg and Stockholm: Makadam förlag, 2019. (Symposier på Krapperups borg 11).

Rosengren, Henrik: “Furtwängler, the Ninth Symphony and the German-Jewish exile Community in Sweden”. Beethoven Haus, Bonn, Germany March 2018 (forthcoming in *Beethovens Vermächtnis: Mit Beethoven ins Exil*, (Anna Langenbruch, Beate Angelika Krauss and Christine Siegert), Band 32, Verlag Beethoven-Haus, Bonn 2022).

Garberding, Petra: “Zur Entstehung der Musikethnologie als internationale Disziplin – das Beispiel Erich Stockmanns und Doris Stockmanns”. In: *Ethnologie als Ethnographie: Interdisziplinarität, Transnationalität und Netzwerke der Disziplin in der DDR*. Conference publication, eds. Ingrid Kreide- Damani, Anita Bagus, Sabine Imeri, Karoline Noack and Leonore Scholze-Irrlitz. Bonn/Berlin 2022 (forthcoming).