

УДК 94(47)"1941/1945"

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Influence of Evacuation on the Regional Musical Culture in the Days of the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945: A Case-Study of the Volga Region

Abstract

Drawing mostly on unpublished sources and materials of local periodicals, the article addresses some issues of the ambivalent influence of inter-regional and intra-regional evacuation during World War II on individual components of the seven models of musical and cultural system of the Volga region: the Kuibyshev, Ulyanovsk, Penza, Kazan, Saratov, Stalingrad, and Astrakhan regions. The article distinguishes between two kinds of evacuation: orchestrated and spontaneous. It traces its impact on administrative, educational, concert-organization, theater, creative, musicological components. The Bolshoi Theatre, the Moscow Conservatory and its Central Children's Music School, the Rostov-on-Don Theatre of Musical Comedy, the Zhytomyr Theatre of Musical Comedy, the Ukrainian Radio Committee are subjects of the study. The article concludes that negative effects on the culture of the region were limited to problems concerning living conditions and several episodes of ousting due to competition, while the extent of positive creative influence by the evacuated musicians was unprecedented. Quantity and quality of the musical art representatives in the region increased significantly, activities of the local branches of the Union of Soviet Composers intensified, concert and theatrical life, and also education, reduced with the beginning of the war, grew diverse with introduction of

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Thursday, 24 July 2025 00:00

evacuated institutions to the scene. The article underscores the facts of inversion of the region into an evacuation source (so-called the Stalingrad model). Contributions of evacuated musicians to the victory, such as military and patronage work and fund-raising for the Defense Fund, proved effectiveness of their activities. The article points out importance of the Volga region as a contributor to the preservation and development of musical institutions and individual musicians from the capital and other regions.



Keywords

Source, musical culture, regional culture, Volga region, evacuation, Great Patriotic War.

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Thursday, 24 July 2025 00:00

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