

OBITUARY

ARAM ILYICH KHACHATURIAN

The veteran Armenian composer has died at the age of 75. Together with Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Kabalevsky, he was one of the few Soviet composers to have become known to the wider international public. Born in Georgia, the son of an Armenian bookbinder, his music evokes the cultures of Eastern Russia and contains vivid melodies, exotic instrumentation and virtuoso fervour. Indeed it might be suggested that in his hands Soviet realism came to resemble the exotic orientalism of the pre-Revolution Russian composers. His ballet *Gayaneh*, though set on a collective farm, could as well be a folk ballet by one of the Big Five. Nevertheless the music has the thrust of a jet plane and is full of attractive and colourful invention. His other ballet score *Spartacus* (from which the theme to *The Onedin Line* is taken) has been toured with great popular success by the Bolshoi on its many visits abroad, and the part of the dictator has been made very much his own by Marius Liepa. Khachaturian's concertos for violin and for piano have also achieved something approaching pop status. He was a recipient of the Stalin Prize, the Lenin Prize and he was a People's Artist of the USSR.

NICOLAS NABOKOV

Nicolas Nabokov died on 6 April, two days after celebrating his 75th birthday. As a composer, he was perhaps best known for his ballet *Don Quixote* choreographed by Balanchine for the New York City Ballet, and his opera *Love's Labour's Lost* to a libretto by Auden and Kallman. However he was more widely known for his efforts on behalf of other creative artists: organizing spectacular music festivals (Masterpieces of the 20th Century, Paris, 1952; Music in our Time, Rome, 1954; East-West Music Encounter, Tokyo, 1961) and writing numerous introductions and articles as well as two books of memoirs (*Old Friends and New Music*, 1951; *Bagazh*, 1975). At his death he was on the point of completing a third volume and was also planning a Stravinsky Festival for Venice in 1980. His organizational activities were largely centred around the Congress for Cultural Freedom of which he was secretary-general from 1951-1963. After leaving Russia, Nabokov lived in Berlin from 1920-23, Paris from 1924-1933 and the USA until his death.

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