

PENTATONE

TRACK INFORMATION

ENGLISH

ARTISTS

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MORE

TROIKA

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Matt Haimovitz  
& Christopher O'Riley

PENTATONE  
OXINGALE SERIES



## TROIKA

## CD 1

## Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

- 1 Waltz No. 2 \* 3. 53

Sonata for Cello and Piano in D minor, Op. 40

- 2 Allegro non troppo 12. 52  
3 Allegro 3. 19  
4 Largo 8. 40  
5 Allegro 4. 07

## Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

- 6 Troika (from the film score of Lieutenant Kijé) \* 3. 03

Sonata for Cello and Piano in C major, Op. 119

- 7 Andante grave 10. 46  
8 Moderato 4. 48  
9 Allegro ma non troppo 7. 43

Total playing time CD 1: 59. 17

## CD 2

## Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)

Sonata for Cello and Piano in G minor, Op. 19

- 1 Lento - Allegro moderato 13. 31  
2 Allegro scherzando 6. 46  
3 Andante 5. 41  
4 Allegro mosso 10. 17  
5 Vocalise 6. 12

## Viktor Tsoi (1962–1990)

- 6 Kukushka \* 4. 42

## Pussy Riot

- 7 Punk Prayer - Virgin Mary, Put Putin Away \* 2. 51

## John Lennon (1940–1980) &amp; Paul McCartney (1942–)

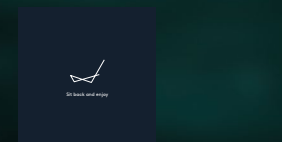
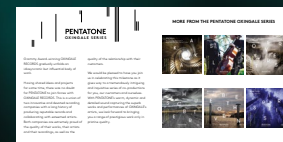
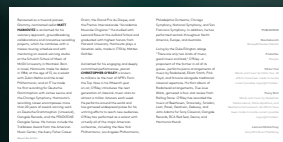
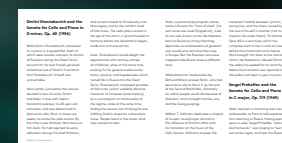
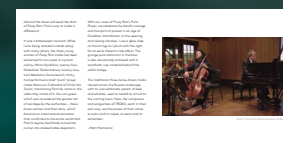
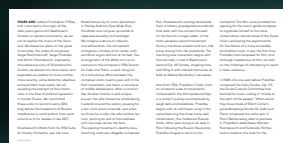
- 8 Back in the U.S.S.R. \* 3. 08

Total playing time CD 2: 53. 12

Matt Haimovitz, cello

Christopher O'Riley, piano

\*Arrangements by Christopher O'Riley & Matt Haimovitz





Make Everything Great Again  
by Dominykas Čečkauskas and Mindaugas Bonanu,  
commissioned by Keulė Rūkė, Vilnius, Lithuania.



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**YEARS AGO**, before Christopher O’Riley and I returned to the origin of the cello-piano genre with Beethoven’s Sonatas on period instruments, we set out to explore the music of the Slavic soul. We based our plans on the great triumvirate, the *troika* of composers Sergei Rachmaninoff, Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich. Inspired by the subversive irony of Shostakovich’s Sonata, we delved into more works, and expanded our palette to music written more recently, some blatantly rebellious, some pitched more subtly, but all revealing the strength of the artistic voice in the face of political repression in mother Russia. We committed these works to record in early 2016, long before the maelstrom of Russian interference in world politics that swirls around us at its release in late 2017.

Shostakovich’s *Waltz* from his 1956 *Suite for Variety Orchestra*, sets the tone.

Liner notes

Made famous by its iconic placement in Stanley Kubrick’s *Eyes Wide Shut*, the *Waltz* now conjures up worlds of repressed sexuality and nostalgia. We imagine a dance of collusion and obfuscation, the omnipotent strongman, shirtless at its center, with sacrificial virgins laid out at his feet. Our arrangement of the *Waltz* acts as an overture to the composer’s 1934 *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, a work rising out of a tumultuous affair between the composer and a twenty-year-old. In the final movement, one hears a caricature of midlife adolescence. After a cartoon-like, drunken theme, a wild rumpus ensues: the wife chases her philandering husband around the saloon, pausing for a bar-room piano interlude. Just when he thinks he is safe, the wife catches her man, putting an end to the madness with two slaps across the face. The opening movement’s deathly slow, marching coda was allegedly composed

first, Shostakovich working backwards from a military propaganda soundtrack that ends with the camera focused on the face of a single soldier. In the moto-perpetuo second movement factory machines screech and turn, folk tunes arising from the proletariat. The haunting slow movement begins with the solo cello, a nod to Beethoven’s seminal Op. 69 Sonata, stopping time and filling it with colored harmonies as bold as Wassily Kandinsky’s canvasses.

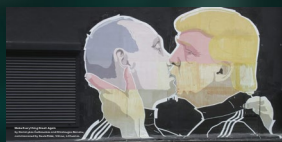
Also from 1934, Prokofiev’s *Troika*, from an orchestral suite of movements composed for the film *Lieutenant Kijé*, is a winter’s journey accompanied by sleigh bells and balalaikas. Prokofiev begins with an old Hussar song in this scene featuring the three-horse sled combination, the traditional Russian *troika*. After years living as an exile in Paris following the Russian Revolution, Prokofiev longed to return to his

homeland. This film score provided the opening for the avant-garde composer to ingratiate himself to the more conservative cultural tastes of the Soviet Union, eschewing the experimental for the illusion of a more accessible and folkloric style. It was the first time Prokofiev had composed for film, and although trepidatious at first, he took on the challenge of attempting to reach a mass audience.

In 1948, only one year before Prokofiev composed the *Cello Sonata, Op. 119*, the Soviet Cultural Committee had banned his music, calling it “hostile to the spirit of the people.” What would they have made of Elliott Carter’s groundbreaking *Sonata for Cello and Piano* composed the same year in Paris? Before being able to premiere it, Prokofiev’s dedicatees, Mstislav Rostropovich and Sviatoslav Richter, had to audition the work for the



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Composer's Union, and again three months later for the composers who sat on the Radio Committee. Only after their approval, were the pair allowed to perform the three-movement Sonata at the Moscow Conservatory on March 1, 1950. The melodic writing in this Sonata is beyond inspired, the cello and piano often completing each other's phrases. The larger-than-life ending of the piece affirms the composer's tenet – that there are still many great works to be composed in C Major.

Completing the album's *troika* is Rachmaninoff's *Sonata for Cello and Piano in G minor*, composed in Russia in 1901 and dedicated to cellist Anatoliy Brandukov who joined the composer for the premiere. The Sonata was overshadowed by Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto which was an instant hit months earlier, yet the four-movement Sonata is no less

daunting for the pianist. As with the beloved "Vocalise" of 1915 – published as the last of his *14 Songs, Op. 34* – and throughout the Sonata, Rachmaninoff treats the cello as wordless singer, a lyrical storyteller and companion to his own pianistic virtuosity. After the Russian Revolution, Rachmaninoff was forced to leave Russia for the United States, residing first in New York City and, in the final months of his life in Beverly Hills, California, never returning to his motherland.

One night, with my six-year-old in tow, I listened to a dozen or more Russian popular songs Chris had sent me, looking for the right fit for our program. When Viktor Tsoi's *Kukushka*, came on, my daughter would not let me go on to the next track. "Encore, encore!" she insisted, over and over again, and I knew our choice was clear. One of Russia's most influential and revered

singer-songwriters, Victor Tsoi, suffered a tragic death in a 1990 car accident, at the age of 28. *Kukushka* is an anthem of sorts. He asks, "Where are you now, freedom of will?" With clenched fist he sings, "And if there is gun powder, give me the fire."

Layers of irony abound in the Beatles' *Back in the U.S.S.R.*. The memory of an imagined "dreadful" plane ride back to the U.S.S.R. from Miami Beach frames the song which was intended as a parody of Chuck Berry's "Back in the U.S.A." with the tongue-in-cheek chorus and background vocals straight out of the Beach Boys' "California Girls." And, of course, there is the "Georgia on My Mind" reference. Composed at a Transcendental Retreat in Rishikesh, India, Paul McCartney says of *Back in the U.S.S.R.*, "I just liked the idea of Georgia girls and talking about places like the Ukraine as if they were

California, you know? It was also hands across the water, which I'm still conscious of. 'Cause they like us out there, even though the bosses in the Kremlin may not. The kids from there do. And that to me is very important for the future of the [human] race."

In his book *Winter is Coming*, the Russian chess master Garry Kasparov writes of being acquitted of charges stemming from the "draconian new anti-protest laws when I was jailed in 2007" in Putin's Russia:

*This result demonstrates the power of solidarity. This means more than donating money and your voice. It is a shared sentiment that freedom matters everywhere, for every person, not only in your own country. It is essential to stay involved. The more people pay attention and bring pressure from the grassroots, the more cases will end the way mine*



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did and the fewer will result like that of Pussy Riot. Find a way to make a difference!

It was a bittersweet moment. While I was being arrested outside along with many others, the three young women of Pussy Riot inside had been sentenced to two years in a prison colony. Maria Alyokhina, twenty-four, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, twenty-two, and Yekaterina Samutsevich, thirty, had performed a brief "punk" prayer inside Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior, mentioning Putin by name in the video they made of it. You can guess which was considered the greater act of sacrilege by the authorities....these brave women and their story, which became an international sensation that confirmed to the entire world that Putin's regime had finally turned the corner into irredeemable despotism.

With our cover of Pussy Riot's *Punk Prayer*, we celebrate the band's courage and the spirit of protest in an age of Orwellian intimidation. In the opening and closing chorales, I use a glass slide on the strings as I pluck with the right for an eerie theremin-like effect. The grunge punk distortion in the bass is also acoustically achieved with a styrofoam cup smashed behind the cello's bridge.

The traditional three-horse-drawn troika moved across the Russian landscape with its own elaborate system of bells and whistles, used to herald its arrival to the coming town. Here, the composers and songwriters of TROIKA, each in their own way, use the power of their voices to warn and to cajole, to resist and to remember.

– Matt Haimovitz



Matt Haimovitz & Christopher O'Riley



| TROIKA       |                                     | TROIKA       |   |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Artist       | Various Artists                     | Composer     | Various Artists                             |
| Label        | Pentatone                           | Release Date | 2014  |
| Format       | CD, Digital                         | Tracks       | 12  |
| Duration     | 58:00                               | Genre        | Classical, Contemporary                     |
| Producers    | Christopher O'Riley, Matt Haimovitz | Artists      | Christopher O'Riley, Matt Haimovitz, TROIKA |
| Distributors | Pentatone                           | Available At | Amazon, iTunes, Spotify, etc.               |



| TROIKA       |                                     | TROIKA       |   |
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| Artist       | Various Artists                     | Composer     | Various Artists                             |
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| Format       | CD, Digital                         | Tracks       | 12  |
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| TROIKA       |                                     | TROIKA       |   |
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## Dmitri Shostakovich and the Sonata for Cello and Piano in D minor, Op. 40 (1934)

While Dmitri Shostakovich composed on a piano in a squalid flat, both of which were luxuries unknown to almost all Russians during the Great Terror, around him his best friends perished, sometimes out of Stalin's frustration that Shostakovich himself was untouchable.

Years earlier, just before the censors decided to ban his work, Dmitri had fallen in love with Yelena Konstantinovskaya, his 20-year-old translator, and was determined to divorce his wife, Nina. In those two weeks, he wrote the cello sonata. By the time it was finished, Nina had won him back. He had rejected his early radicalism during this brief flirtation,

Notes on the Sonatas

and turned instead to Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky, and to the comfort food of folk music. The cello-piano sonata is the eye of the storm, a lyrical farewell to harmony before the devastation began, inside him and around him.

Later, Shostakovich would delight the apparatchiks with whimsy, echoes of childhood, while at the same time evoking for his general audience the horror, poverty, and hopelessness which turned life in Russia into the Great Terror. Shostakovich composed parodies of folk tunes (which suddenly became moments of immense lyrical beauty) as a counterpoint to the brutality of the regime, while at the same time fooling the censors into thinking he was fulfilling Stalin's recipe for nationalistic tunes. People heard in the music what they wanted to hear.

Stalin, a paranoid psychopath whose name is Russian for "man of steel" (his real name was Josef Djugashvili), tried to lure well-known artists like Nabokov back to Russia by hiring charming diplomats as ambassadors of goodwill who would wine and dine their prey in Europe. But the Russians who were trapped inside Russia knew a different story.

While American intellectuals like Edmund Wilson praised Stalin, who had become an ally to the U.S. by the end of the Second World War, ultimately six million people would die because of Stalinism, which brought famine, war, and the Gulag purgings.

William T. Vollmann dedicates a chapter of his epic novel *Europe Central* to the influence of Dmitri's affair with his translator on the music of the Cello Sonata. Vollmann stresses the

composer's battle between lyricism, young love, and the chaos caused by the loss of his self in another (not to mention life under Stalin). To Vollmann, Opus 40 is a sanctuary which the composer built to live in with his lover, before the charismatic and mature Nina brought him back to the marriage which, like Nabokov's, allowed Dmitri the safety he needed for his anarchy. Yelena the translator was reported to the police and spent a year in prison.

## Sergei Prokofiev and the Sonata for Cello and Piano in C major, Op. 119 (1949)

Stalin had sent a charming and cultured ambassador to Paris to talk expatriates into returning to Russia. Having spent 15 years in exile, Sergei Prokofiev, "patriotic and homesick," was longing to "see the real winter again and hear the Russian



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language in my ears." He was easily duped into moving back to the Soviet Union in 1936.

The next year the Great Purge began. Its goal was to eliminate Stalin's real and imaginary enemies and to terrorize the country into abject slavery. There was no logic to it, only the ravings of a paranoid psychopath of the kind who seem to be able to hijack the minds of the very people they intend to slaughter. Very much like McCarthyism, poets and politicians alike were forced to name the names of imaginary "traitors," who then provided yet more names for mock trials and summary executions. Once the NKVD, the Soviet secret police of the era, broke in the door, even if you were innocent, it was too late. Half a million people were put to death over three years, and some six million people were sent to labor camps in Siberia.

Prokofiev had been allowed to keep his passport initially, but it was confiscated permanently during a routine checkup. He spent the rest of his life in Moscow. The exuberance and charm of *Peter and the Wolf*, written the year he immigrated, turned into a black hole where he nearly wrote nothing at all.

In 1948 the Politburo issued the Zhdanov Decree, denouncing Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Khachaturian as formalists, people who renounced classical music for "muddled, nerve-racking" sounds that "turned music into cacophony." Eight of Prokofiev's works were banned from performance. This doctrine stunted artistic growth in the Soviet Union for the rest of Prokofiev's life. He didn't dare play even uncensored works; by August of 1948 he was in severe financial straits, his personal debt amounting to 180,000 rubles, more than five million dollars at today's rates. In

1948, Prokofiev's wife Lina was arrested for 'espionage,' as she had tried to send money to her mother in Spain. After nine months of interrogation, she was sentenced to twenty years of hard labor.

Having heard Rostropovich play his first cello concerto at the Moscow Conservatory in 1947, Prokofiev was inspired to write the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* for the young cellist. By that time Prokofiev's doctors were allowing him to compose for only an hour a day.

Rostropovich had to play the sonata for the Committee of Artistic Affairs so they could judge if it were "hostile." Apparently it was friendly, and Rostropovich was allowed to debut it with the pianist Sviatoslav Richter in 1950.

Three years later Prokofiev would be dead. He died the same day as Stalin,

making it impossible to carry the composer's body out to be buried for three days after his death. Lina was released from prison later that year. It remains an enigma that Prokofiev's sonata seems untouched by the tragedy of his own entrapment or the executions of most of his peers, which must have ruined his yearning for Mother Russia. Nostalgia exists only at a safe distance, but the nightmares never made their way into the music.

### Sergei Rachmaninoff and the Sonata for Cello and Piano in G minor, Op. 19 (1901)

Rachmaninoff himself said that he wrote music to play melodies of simple, single notes, but that the crowd wanted octaves, so he disguised those single notes with the scaffolding of entire concerti. It is, however, in the single



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notes of the cello that Rachmaninoff distills the essence of his meandering genius at the piano, as if to center the chaos of that ocean by focusing on the way light shines through a single wave. Rachmaninoff, the giant of the piano. He was born into the Russian aristocracy, descended through his father from the Hospodars Dragosh, rulers of the realm of Molday. Although his mother had five estates, his father reduced them by his gambling to a small apartment in St. Petersburg. Rachmaninoff used all his earnings to buy Ivanovka, his childhood home, from which he was forced to escape in 1917, during the Russian Revolution, his sleigh perhaps pulled by a troika.

Rachmaninoff wrote the Cello Sonata around the same time as his Second Piano Concerto, and you can tell. After a slow introduction from the cello with hints of the Second Piano Concerto

from the piano, the same gorgeous romantic atmosphere begins to amass. Rachmaninoff is at the peak of his powers. Virtuoso outbreaks from the piano don't faze the quiet cello, which takes over the role which the orchestra plays in the Second Concerto. A quieter piano still plays transcendent versions of the Concerto; Rachmaninoff has been able to rewrite his masterpiece and even improve it.

He had been told by Tolstoy that his music was meaningless: "Is such music needed by anyone? I must tell you how I dislike it all. Beethoven is nonsense, Pushkin and Lermontov also." But as Rachmaninoff was leaving, Tolstoy backtracked: "Forgive me if I've hurt you by my comments." Rachmaninoff replied, "How could I be hurt on my own account, if I was not hurt on Beethoven's?"

But in fact he was devastated; he didn't compose for a year. Freud said around that time that we make our identities out of how other people see us. Rachmaninoff entered into hypnosis, and was told to repeat to himself, "You will work with the greatest of ease. The concerto will be of excellent quality." And so, eventually, he climbed out of the whirlpool of how we see ourselves into the clearer plane of how we channel the waves, blind to the walls of currents, the wail of sirens that always say no to the surfer.

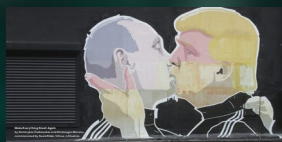
This would be his last chamber work. It was when he showed his hand. He would never again be so vulnerable; he retreated quickly inside the shell of virtuosity, of his massive piano technique, and never emerged. This is a chance to hear him singing in the shower. This is the piece closest to the soft hum of his identity, before he

added the mask against the howl of other people.

– Peter Halstead



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Renowned as a musical pioneer, Grammy-nominated cellist **MATT HAIMOVITZ** is acclaimed for his visionary approach, groundbreaking collaborations and innovative recording projects, which he combines with a tireless touring schedule and with mentoring an award-winning studio at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University in Montréal. Born in Israel, Haimovitz made his debut in 1984, at the age of 13, as a soloist with Zubin Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic, and at 17 he made his first recording for Deutsche Grammophon with James Levine and the Chicago Symphony. Haimovitz's recording career encompasses more than 20 years of award-winning work on Deutsche Grammophon (Universal), Oxingale Records, and the PENTATONE Oxingale Series. His honors include the Trailblazer Award from the American Music Center, the Avery Fisher Career

About the Artists

Grant, the Grand Prix du Disque, and the Premio Internazionale "Accademia Musicale Chigiana." He studied with Leonard Rose at the Juilliard School and graduated with highest honors from Harvard University. Haimovitz plays a Venetian cello, made in 1710 by Matteo Gofriller.

Acclaimed for his engaging and deeply committed performances, pianist **CHRISTOPHER O'RILEY** is known to millions as the host of NPR's From the Top. Now in his fifteenth year on air, O'Riley introduces the next generation of classical-music stars to almost a million listeners each week. He performs around the world and has garnered widespread praise for his untiring efforts to reach new audiences. O'Riley has performed as a soloist with virtually all of the major American orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic,

Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, National Symphony, and San Francisco Symphony. In addition, he has performed recitals throughout North America, Europe, and Australia.

Living by the Duke Ellington adage "There are only two kinds of music, good music and bad," O'Riley – a proponent of the former in all of its guises – performs piano arrangements of music by Radiohead, Elliott Smith, Pink Floyd, and Nirvana alongside traditional classical repertoire. His first album of Radiohead arrangements, *True Love Waits*, garnered a four-star review from Rolling Stone. O'Riley has recorded the music of Beethoven, Stravinsky, Scriabin, Liszt, Ravel, Gershwin, Debussy, and John Adams for Sony Classical, Oxingale Records, RCA Red Seal, Decca, and Harmonia Mundi.

## PUBLISHING

### Shostakovich

Boosey&Hawkes/Sikorski

### Prokofiev

Muzyka

### Viktor Tsoi

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### Pussy Riot

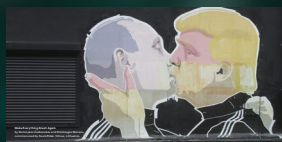
Words and music by Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, Maria Alyokhina, and Yekaterina Samutsevich. All efforts have been made to locate current possible copyright holders.

### Lennon/McCartney

Sony/ATV Music Publishing



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## Acknowledgments

### PRODUCTION TEAM

Executive Producer **Luna Pearl Woolf** | Producer **David Frost** | Co-producer **Tim Martyn** | Recording engineer **Richard King** | Assistant recording engineer **Dann Thompson** | Mixing **David Frost & Richard King** | Mastering **Richard King**  
Mastering (SA-CD) **Polyhymnia International B.V.**

Cover photo **Daniel Forniés Sòria** | Design **Joost de Boo** | Product management **Max Tiel**

*This album was recorded May 1 - 4, 2016 at Skywalker Sound, Lucas Valley, CA*

**Special thanks to** Peter and Cathy Halstead, Shira Gilbert, Max Horowitz, Marc Baylin, John Zion, Taylor Leigh Fraser, Mariya Zabara, Lisa Delan, Leslie Ann Jones, Schulich School of Music of McGill University Department of Sound Recording, and Jordan Gasparik.

## PENTATONE OXINGALE SERIES

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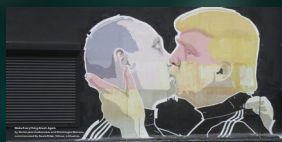
Upon listening to a renowned cellist of his day, Voltaire is said to have quipped, "Sir, you make me believe in miracles; you turn the ox into a nightingale". With the belief in miracles, OXINGALE RECORDS brings its blend of imagination, talent and acumen to the realisation of artistic projects revolving around music.

A trailblazing artist's label since the year 2000, OXINGALE RECORDS is as

committed to revelatory interpretations of the canonic repertoire as to riveting performances of works by recent and living composers. Breeding spontaneity in musical expression, OXINGALE RECORDS captures singular moments of collaboration in its stream of classical, contemporary, crossover, jazz and family releases. The offspring of two musical perspectives — those of world-renowned cellist Matt Haimovitz and acclaimed composer Luna Pearl Woolf — their projects take a refreshing approach to the classical tradition, illuminating and vitalising the listening experience.



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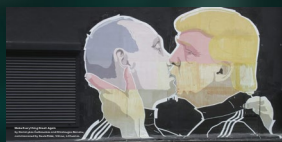
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