

Yves Montand in the USSR

“Yves Montand, Cultural Diplomacy, and the USSR is a highly original project, bringing together, for the first time, work on East-West relations during the Cold War and the political and cultural role of the singer Yves Montand. A case study focuses on Montand’s tour of the USSR in 1956–57, together with his wife Simone Signoret. The book adopts a rewarding interdisciplinary approach, bringing together political history, star and film studies and work on popular music, and is enriched by an exciting range of archival documentation that shows in great detail the reception of Montand in the USSR, as well as interviews conducted specially for the book. Anyone interested in Cold War culture and politics, as well as French popular culture, will welcome this book.”

—Ginette Vincendeau, *Professor in Film Studies, King’s College London, UK*

Mila Oiva • Hannu Salmi • Bruce Johnson

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Cultural Diplomacy and Mixed Messages

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This book is dedicated to all the Russian fans of Montand, to the 'amis lointains'.

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Our journey with Yves Montand already began in 2014, with an observation that he was amazingly popular in the Soviet Union in the late 1950s. Our journey has been long, and we would like to thank everyone who helped us on our ‘long and winding road’. We first tested our ideas in the conference ‘East-West Cultural Relations: Interplay of Arts and Cultural Diplomacy, 1945–2017’ at the University of Jyväskylä on 24–25 February 2017. We would particularly like to thank its main organizer Simo Mikkonen for his kind help and support. Our preliminary findings were published in the volume, *Entangled East and West: Cultural Diplomacy and Artistic Interaction During the Cold War* (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2018), edited by Simo Mikkonen, Jari Parkkinen, and Giles Scott-Smith.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

This volume is the first book-length account of Yves Montand's controversial tour of the Soviet Union at the turn of the years 1956/57. It traces the mixed messages of this internationally visible act of cultural diplomacy in the middle of the turbulent Cold War. It also provides an account of the celebrated French singer-actor's controversial career, his dedication to music and to peace activism, as well as his widespread fandom in the USSR. The book describes the political background for the events of the year 1956, including the changing Soviet atmosphere after Stalin's death, portrays the rising transnational stardom of Montand in the 1940s and 1950s, and explores the controversies aroused by his plan to visit Moscow after the Hungarian Uprising. The book pays particular attention to Montand's reception in the USSR and his concert performances, drawing on unique archival material and oral history interviews, and analyses the documentary *Yves Montand Sings* (1957) released immediately after his visit.

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