

# DOCUMENTARY I

## Glikman on Shostakovich, Beyond *Pisma*



Isaac Glikman's invaluable contribution to our understanding of Shostakovich's life and work is embodied in the volume of letters, spanning almost 35 years, which the composer sent to Glikman – *Pisma k drugu* ('Letters to a Friend').

Before becoming a close friend in later years, Alexander Izbitser was one of Glikman's students at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He was also one of the first in whom Glikman confided, discussing with Izbitser the then embryonic *Pisma* project.

In the *Preface* to the unpublished American edition to *Story of a Friendship*, Isaac Glikman wrote:

"Alexander Izbitser, my former student and an excellent musician ... helped me in my research regarding the materials that became the footnotes to Shostakovich's letters, and I express to him my gratitude". (July 31, 1995).

Glikman dedicated the Russian edition of the book – "To dear Sasha Izbitser, who provided invaluable assistance in publishing this book – from warmly loving I. Glikman." (December 3, 1993)

A concert pianist, opera director and essayist, Alexander Izbitser is based in the USA and has recently made available to the *DSCH Journal* hitherto untranslated Russian documents that focus on the special relationship that was Glikman and Shostakovich's. Further contributions are planned for upcoming editions.

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*All articles translated by Lyudmila German*

***Cheryomushki*, Artistic Talent, and Shared Experience of Waiting in Queues in the Morning; D.D. Shostakovich's Unknown Letter [In the quoted letters and other materials the original spelling and punctuation have been preserved – A.I.]**

### I

In *Letters to a Friend* [I. D. Glikman, *Pis'ma k drugu* (Kompozitor, St. Petersburg, 1993) – A.I.] under No. 146 (p.166) we read the following brief letter of D.D. Shostakovich to I. D. Glikman:

6.V.1961. Moscow

Dear Isaac Davidovich!

I admit that you have convinced me. Although I resent the idea very much, I will write the songs[1]. For this purpose I plan a creative meeting with the co-authors of the libretto[2].

I shake your hand firmly.

D. Shostakovich.

Glikman's comments:

[1]. When I was *Lenfilm*'s artistic consultant I proposed making a film out of Shostakovich's operetta *Moscow-Cheryomushki* (consequently the film was named *Cheryomushki*). My proposal was accepted. The film's director Gerbert Moritsevich Rappoport asked Dmitri Dmitrievich (through me) to write an additional vocal number.

[2]. Librettists and scriptwriters for *Cheryomushki* were V. Mass and M. Chervinsky.

### II

#### **Shostakovich's unknown letter**

In the Introduction to *Story of a Friendship* I. D. Glikman writes: 'It is a pity that all of the letters that Dmitri Dmitrievich sent to me in the 30s have perished during the blockade...' (p.5)

And further about the letters: '... I can't be absolutely certain that none of them were lost after the war.' (p.6)

Isaac Davidovich and his wife Vera Vasilievna Antonovna-Glikman told me that their cleaning lady once dropped a stack of Shostakovich's letters into the waste bin, mistakenly considering them material to be recycled.

However, one letter sneaked into an *entresol* and remained there for years. It was discovered by Luisa Dmitrievna [Glikman's widow] soon after Isaac Davidovich's death. He had undoubtedly considered the letter as lost. *Story of a Friendship* has thus been added to, but only after Glikman's death, meaning that the readers of future editions of the collection will no longer be reading this letter through the eyes of the one to whom it was addressed.





Luisa Dmitrievna gave the original to I.A. Shostakovich, and sent a photocopy to me.

This is the first publication of the letter.

4 VI 1961 Tskhaltubo

Dear Isaac Davidovich!

It has been nine days since I arrived in Tskhaltubo, nourished by the thought that the local waters will heal my hand. I will remain here until July 13th. Then I will go to Tbilisi for 2 days, and then to Moscow. Around July 20th I will come to Leningrad to meet with the voters.

I received the lyrics for the song from Mass and Chervinsky. So far I did not succeed in setting them to music. Perhaps I have lost the ability to get inspired by such verses. At least, I hope that by the time I get to Leningrad I will bring the music with me. One more circumstance unnerves me: perhaps five versions of the song will be required of me: 1) for voice solo, 2) for voice with choral refrain, 3) for choir *a capella*, 4) for choir and orchestra, 5) for orchestra. It will take a lot of scribbling, and this fact considerably retards my creative impetus.

I saw the film *Clear Skies*. I really liked how they portrayed a thaw. The rest I didn't like.

Here, in the sanatorium, they show films every day. The film *The Airplane Takes Off at 9* shocked me by its utter mediocrity.

It is very boring here and the heat is unbearable. At least, it is nice that mornings and evenings are cool. My handicapped leg prevents me from taking walks and enjoying the surroundings. For this reason I am terribly bored.

The sanatorium itself makes a pleasant impression. There are columns, balustrades, halls, music-halls, dance floors. There are no lifts. If you consider the fact that the majority of people here came to have treatment on their arms and legs, the place makes a corresponding impression. A talented architect, who built this sanatorium perhaps, reasoned thus: 'It's all right, they will manage just as well without a lift.' And it works, indeed: people with arm and leg dis-

abilities and with crutches and canes, moan and groan, but do make it to the second and third floors. Whenever time allows, nurses and nurse assistants carry those on wheelchairs up and down. There are two bathrooms on each floor (men's and women's). There are queues in the morning. People make acquaintances, conversations, share their experiences. That's my life here. I take my baths diligently and with hope, but to no effect so far.

Warm regards to Vera Vasilievna and the whole family.

With love, D. Shostakovich.

P.S. I will be glad if you would write to me. My address: Georgian SSR. Tskhaltubo. Sanatorium of the fourth department of Health Ministry *Tskhaltubo*[1]. But remember that I depart from here on the 13th, so if letters are slow to arrive, send them to Moscow. D. Sh.

[1] The fourth department of the Health Ministry dealt with high-level Party functionaries. The sanatorium, so vividly described by Shostakovich, was designated for highly placed individuals. Readers might try to imagine what the sanatoriums for ordinary mortals resembled [L.G.]

### III

Five months later D.D. Shostakovich sent the completed music fragments for the film version of the operetta to I. D. Glikman with the following note:

No. 151

20. XI.1961 Moscow

Dear Isaac Davidovich!

I'm sending you my opus[1].

Please, send proof of receipt.

It would be great if I didn't have to write any additional music: I spoke to G. M. Rappoport by telephone today and he is full of creative ideas[2].

Yours, D. Shostakovich.

Glikman's comments:

[1] Meaning a new music fragment that he wrote, by request from the film director G.M. Rappoport, for the upcoming film-operetta *Cheryomushki* (I was the film's editor). Dmitri Dmitrievich made any additions very reluctantly, but made

them excellently. They have enriched the original theatrical version of the operetta.

[2] Shostakovich gently humoured the film director's assertive energy. He actually valued his mastery and musical sensibility.

(*Story of a Friendship*, p. 169).

#### IV

In 1994, Glikman dictated to his wife Luisa Dmitrievna six 'novelettes' (as he called them) about Dmitri Shostakovich. Glikman did not include these stories in *Story of a Friendship* since their subject matter was beyond the scope of Shostakovich's letters the composer had written to him. Here is one of the novelettes.

#### *Cheryomushki*

In December of 1958 Shostakovich attended, with punctuality, Moscow Operetta Theatre's rehearsals of his recently completed operetta *Moscow-Cheryomushki*, based on the libretto by Vladimir Mass and Mikhail Chervinsky. Dmitri Dmitrievich began writing this piece upon the insistence of the theatre's principal conductor, Grigori Arnoldovich Stolyarov, with whom he had collaborated on the production of *Katerina Izmailova* at the V.I. Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre in 1934-35. Memories of those years prompted Shostakovich to agree to Stolyarov's request. The latter was appointed to conduct the operetta. The subject matter of the plot is based on a burning issue – housing shortage, the perniciousness of which has remained a problem up until this day. Dmitri Dmitrievich was a member of the Supreme Council and he recalled how his electors addressed him with numerous demands to improve housing conditions. This very relevant matter was addressed to some degree in the libretto of *Moscow-Cheryomushki*, in that it deals with the issue of housing distribution. This theme attracted the composer to the libretto, to a certain extent.

An influential bureaucrat attempts through his employee (a cynical and scheming *upravkhoz* (superintendent)) to expropriate a flat that is intended for a young academic Lidochka and her naïve, eccentric and impractical father. During rehearsals, the talented singer Tatyana Shmyga shone in the title role of Lidochka. Although her acting, singing, and dancing really pleased Shostakovich, the rehearsals in general proved to be an unbearable burden for the composer. He regarded his opus with harsh criticism. In a letter to me he called the piece 'boring and inferior'.

There have been numerous instances in the history of literature and music when authors regarded their creative offspring with an outmost contempt.

Thus, Pushkin labelled his *Fountain of Bakhchisarai* – 'trash'. Chekhov hated *The Wood Demon* and



Tchaikovsky, disgusted with his opera *Voyevoda*, burned the score. Dmitri Dmitrievich did not recommend my coming to the premiere, but I was worried about his authorial self-punishment and could not believe that he could have written an inferior work, for, in the words of one notable musician, Shostakovich could not possibly write badly, as his colossal talent would not allow it. I thought of the moral torment that Dmitri Dmitrievich was suffering, and I came to Moscow for the final few rehearsals and the premiere. It seemed to me that dialogues were full of jargon and slang, which, at times, offended the ear. The lyrics for vocal numbers, however, were vivid and persuasive, the music was sparkling with humour and lyricism, and the large vocal and dance suite was charming and witty. Lidochka's main aria, built on the delightful melody of Shostakovich's song *The morning coolness greets us*, was also to my liking.

My opinion of the rehearsal encouraged Dmitri Dmitrievich. His face lit up with a smile when he heard the biting verses of the *upravkhoz*, or during the exuberant polka in the scene of the housewarming with its long note on the word 'Go-o-or'ko! [1]' When I noticed the improved mood of Dmitri Dmitrievich, I was glad that I came. The premiere received high praise in the Moscow newspapers, but the public's response was more lukewarm: i.e., it was a success, but not a triumph. Nonetheless, Dmitri Dmitrievich gave a reception in the restaurant 'Prague' for all of the performers. Shostakovich was showered with praise, which left him indifferent.

Two years after the premiere of *Moscow-Cheryomushki* an idea came to me about turning the operetta into a film at the *Lenfilm* studio.

This was, if I remember correctly, in 1961. My idea was approved and the search for the director began. We wanted the director to be a musician. As well as Mikhail Grigorievich Shapiro, Gerbert Moritsevich Rappoport, a professional musician, was contacted, and he immediately agreed to be the film's director. It is curious that Rappoport, a fervent fan of Mahler, was enraptured by the music of *Cheryomushki* (as we called it).



This love affair with the music of Shostakovich was encouraged by Nikolai Semenovich Rabinovich, who consequently conducted on the recording. I was the consultant and the editor of the film. We achieved a complete mutual understanding

with Rappoport, who was a master filmmaker.

Rappoport's mastery was fully demonstrated in a very powerful anti-fascist film *Professor Mamlok*, which he directed together with Minkin, as well as in a very contrasted film-musical *A Musical Story*, which he directed together with Aleksandr Viktorovich Ivanovsky and in which the famous tenor Sergei Yakovlevich Lemeshev sang. Rappoport had gained his experience directing film-musicals and was an assistant director of *Don Quixote*, where Fedor Ivanovich Chaliapin acted and sang the title role. This was before the war, in Paris. Rappoport also refined his directing skills during several years spent in Hollywood. He was a master of the highest order. Gerbert Moritsevich was very thorough in his choice of actors, considering them to be the anchors of the film. For the title role of Lidochka, Olga Zabolotkina, a dancer from the Mariinsky Theatre, was invited. Her charm and beauty had previously been remarked on in her depiction of Marianne in the *Lenfilm* production of *Don César de Bazan*, for which I was also the editor and consultant. Rappoport realised that the role of Lidochka would be very demanding for the performer, particularly in the vocal and dance suite. A good singer Zoya Rogozikova sang the vocal part.

Yevgeniy Leonov created the vivid comic character of *upravkhoz* Barabashkin. He danced hilariously, and sang his verses so convincingly that Dmitri Dmitrievich requested to leave Leonov's unprofessional singing in the film and not have it doubled by a professional singer. Vasiliy Merkur'ev revealed significant artistic talent in the role of the head of construction company. He, like Leonov, sang his verses himself.

Beyond-the-plot, buffoon-like duets were another directing achievement. These duets, which served as comic interludes, were performed with much humour by Sergei Filipov (as Mylkin) and Konstantin Sorokin (as Kurochkin). According to the scriptwriters' idea, the housing complex being built in *Cheryomushki* became some kind of an island, the dwellers of which, all colourful personages, fight for the flats.

Here the young couple dreaming of their own place come to the foreground. Shostakovich portrayed the couple through a lyrical, gentle waltz. Here, Lidochka's eccentric father was played by a well-known actor, Fedor Nikitin.

The semantic climax of the plot, as it seems to me, was the scene of the housewarming. In the flat, recently acquired by the newlyweds, the new residents of the new housing complex gather to celebrate. They are united by a spirit of joy, manifested in the exuberant polka, which everyone dances with great passion, including Filipov, Rina Zelyonaya, Sorokin and, of course, the newlyweds.

At the end, as in all good old comedies, the unscrupulous are punished and removed: thus, for example, the head of the construction company is demoted to the position of *upravkhoz*, and *upravkhoz* becomes a janitor, which makes perfect sense! Here once again Leonov's acting comes to mind. He is charmingly nonchalant when he puts on the janitor's apron and picks up the broom. The former head of the company and his mistress bitterly complain about their broken lives.

Only the innocent residents cheer and party heartily. This antithesis, rooted in real life, is the main constituent of the plot. The subject matter of *Cheryomushki* is still very relevant. Neither has the music lost its appeal.

In 1963, before *Cheryomushki* was released, Dmitri Dmitrievich came to view the film with me in the studios of *Lenfilm*. Several times during the film he leaned over to me, saying: "Good job! Interesting!" He liked what he heard and saw. He publicly praised the film.

Shostakovich, thus, re-evaluated this work. He was, of course, far from heaping exaggerated praise on the operetta, but the bitterness of his experience with the theatrical production gave way to satisfaction, since the cinematographic version turned out to be more convincing and artistically sound than the theatrical. As if a higher form of expression had come to the work's rescue.

In general, I think that the operetta *Cheryomushki* is an interesting work in Shostakovich's creative development. He never again returned to this genre.

I. D. Glikman.

St. Petersburg, September 8, 1994.

[1] The word ‘gor’ko’ is part of a Russian wedding custom: when the banquet guests shout ‘gor’ko’ (which, ironically, means ‘bitter’), the newlyweds are expected to engage in an extended kiss. The long note on this word is obviously a humorous word-painting [L.G.]

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### The Watch-Talisman

Here, the first publication of another novelette by I. D. Glikman.

In December of 1959 Dmitri Dmitrievich Shostakovich came back from his second trip to the United States. He actually liked New York, especially the quiet, congenial streets. When he came to Leningrad to see me, he gave me two gifts: a wristwatch and a leather-bound diary with golden clasps that looked like a prayer book. Dmitri Dmitrievich, laughing, told me about a so-called ‘passion’ of his. He opened the diary in which all of the pages had been marked, in his hand, with the days of the week for five years ahead. He said: ‘I love such work.’ When he gave me the watch he said: ‘Look at this watch and don’t be late. This is one of your shortcomings!’

I was touched by the diary with the days and weeks marked, but didn’t think much of the watch – I knew that such watches were mass-produced in America and I thought this was another example. I was greatly mistaken. The watch had a history. Watch collectors started to hunt me. The first collector was *Lenfilm* director Victor Shredel, who said: ‘Where did you get this treasure from? This is a Schaffhausen watch. They are hand made. Sell it to me!’ But I cooled him down, saying that the watch was a gift. I immediately thought about Shostakovich’s character. He didn’t think it proper to commend the watch or elevate it, but gave it to me without any comment, thinking, perhaps, that if he mentioned the watch’s value it would somehow emphasise his generosity.

The second collector was a film operator from Moscow, who saw me wearing the watch at Repino Artists Community and exclaimed: ‘You have a Schaffhausen? Name your price and I’ll pay it!’ I thought about Dmitri Dmitrievich again.

After Dmitri Dmitrievich’s death, stories connected with the watch continued. One day I went into a watch repair shop to have the crown tightened. The elderly watchmaker with highbrow manners opened the watch cover (and, by the way, the watch turned out to be made out of solid gold, a fact that Dmitri Dmitrievich had also concealed) and cried out, addressing the other watchmaker behind the curtain: ‘Lev Moiseevich, come see the watch. It’s a Schaffhausen!!’ This watchmaker’s reaction stunned me and I asked him: ‘What is so particular about this watch that you disturbed your colleague?’ ‘Disturbed my colleague? Listen. Suppose you are a violinist and someone gives you a Stradivarius. Wouldn’t you show it to your colleagues? The watch on your hand is like a Stradivarius. I cannot leave it in my shop overnight. Come back tomorrow and I will tighten the crown in your presence.’ I came out of the shop in tears, thinking of Dmitri Dmitrievich, who gave me a ‘Stradivarius watch’ and I, poor wretch, thought it was a trinket. Dmitri Dmitrievich, who was no longer alive, had again brought me to tears.

Once I was travelling on a packed bus from Sestroretsk to Leningrad. It was summer time and I had a habit of cutting my hair very short this time of year. The bus stopped at Lev Tolstoy Square. I had to go to *Lenfilm*. I got out of the bus and stood looking at it absentmindedly – I even remember the bus number – it was No. 411, when I discovered, with horror, that the watch was no longer on my wrist. I thought that it must have fallen onto the floor of the bus and had been trampled on by the passengers. Suddenly the conductor’s voice from a window addressed me: ‘Hey you, with the haircut, is this your watch?’ I thought it was not the conductor’s voice, but that of an angel from heaven, who had safeguarded my talisman. She gave me the watch. It was working properly, despite everything.

During a celebration of his sixtieth birthday, Shostakovich referred to his unusual gift. We were sitting next to one another at the birthday table in his flat on Nezhdanova street when, as if accidentally, he glanced at my wrist and, not seeing the watch (which I had left in Leningrad), he asked in a somewhat disturbed manner: ‘And where is the watch?’

I still treasure the watch; it has served me unfailingly for almost 35 years.

Village of Repino  
July 30, 1994.





### Postscript (A.I.)

The diary with its weeks and months annotated by Shostakovich had always been on Isaac Davidovich's desk in the 'portrait' room of his flat on Pushkarsaya, 44. The watch's black bracelet had also to be found in its designated place,

Glikman's wrist, with the same predictability for many years. I heard the novelette about the watch from Isaac Davidovich twice (the second time upon my request). Each time he punctuated the story with the Pushkinian 'Watch over me, my talisman!' as though it were a refrain. 'Watch over me...' I would say, as a sort of password, each time Glikman looked at the watch, with a flourish of the hand. '...My talisman!!!' he would reply at the speed of light.

In the summer of 2003 Luisa Dmitrievna mentioned to me in a telephone conversation that not long before his death Isaac Davidovich had asked her to give the 'watch-talisman' to me. When my friend Olga Rachkovskaya, an excellent photographer from St. Petersburg, was due to come to New York, she visited Luisa Dmitrievna who gave her the treasured gift. Thus, the watch that Shostakovich acquired in New York returned to its city of origin. Together with the watch, Luisa Dmitrievna sent over many of her late husband's writings, including the above novelette. 'Watch over me, my talisman!'



*The Shostakovich-Glikman watch*

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### **I. D. Glikman on Yu. V. Sviridov[1]**

The news of the publication of Sviridov's memoirs (*Muzika kak sud'ba*, Moskva, 2002)[2], which contain humiliating remarks about Shostakovich, undoubtedly added bitterness to the final months of Glikman's life. A saint, a man with a crystal-clear soul, Isaac Davidovich could not tolerate the betrayal of Shostakovich's favourite student; nor could he believe the extent of Sviridov's disloyalty.

During his final months, Glikman often shared his pain with me in many of our telephone conversations. He spoke about it without the usual incredulous excitement in his voice, but in a subdued, muted manner. The following article, published for the first time, is the final work to have been written by Isaac Davidovich. He considered it, in his words, 'particularly important'.

[Our gratitude to *Storony Sveta* for their permission in allowing these materials to be published.]

I was shocked and overcome by the news that Yu. V. Sviridov, a favourite student of Shostakovich, had betrayed his teacher, portraying him in negative terms in his memoirs, published posthumously.

Unfortunately, Sviridov's nephew Sasha Belokonenko did not present me with a copy of the book. In our conversations Sasha consistently mentioned that his uncle had always considered me with the utmost respect and admiration. Ultimately it is perhaps better that I did not get to read the memoirs – according to those who read the book, people close to me, I was spared some painful opinions.

When I was first introduced to Yuri Vasilievich Sviridov, I recalled Shostakovich's high regard for his *Romances on Texts by Pushkin*. This very fact brought for me immediate distinction to my new acquaintance. I thought that from the very first day we met, Sviridov felt a deep affinity for me. Our acquaintance soon matured into deep friendship. For many years Sviridov exhibited a continuing need for my company. He often came to the conservatory and waited for my classes to end, so that we could go together for a walk, or, quite often, to the restaurant at the Artists Association (Nevsky Prospect, 84).

At first glance Sviridov seemed a carefree man. In reality, when he first arrived in Leningrad in the thirties, he was pre-occupied by many serious concerns, as we will learn. He had wanted to absorb the colossal spiritual culture of the city, where first-rate writers, artists, actors, and musicians – Shostakovich being a young bright star among the latter – lived and worked. Interacting with Sviridov, I discovered his sharp wit, superb memory, and fine artistic taste.

Both of us were horrified by the Stalinist regime. We spoke about it during our walks, so that we wouldn't be overheard.

I remember that at some point we decided to work together on a ballet for the Mariinsky Theatre. For a plot I suggested adapting Carlo Gozzi's play *The Raven*. Sviridov liked the idea and expressed the desire to write the music for the Dove's song. The text was beautifully translated by Mikhail Lozinskiy. Sviridov, without further ado, quickly wrote very charming music for the Dove's song. I, in turn, wrote the future ballet's scenario. Full of optimism, Yuri Vasilievich and I went to the Mariinsky Theatre and proposed this new production of *The Raven* to the principal choreographer P. A. Gusev. Petr Andreevich read the scenario, listened to Sviridov's music, and ordered an advance to be given to us. We received a substantial sum of money and went to a shish-kebab house to celebrate the occasion. Unfortunately, our optimism was premature. The production was cancelled because Count Gozzi's name was discredited. The works of the dramatist did not fit into Soviet Reality. We were afraid that we would have to return the advance, but fortunately.

About one more musical event. This happened in 1950, after Yuri Vasilievich had completed his beautiful song cycle *The Country of Fathers* based on the poetry of Avetik Isaakian. Shostakovich commended this work highly. However, the cycle was not allowed to be performed publicly in Leningrad for a long time. Sviridov invited me to the Composers' Union, where he performed the cycle in front of a committee, headed by V. P. Solovyov-Sedoy. Solovyov-Sedoy and his colleagues were positive about the music, but had a decidedly negative opinion of the poetry: 'This poet is a negative individual. He has an emigrant past, his poetry cannot circulate!' Thus, *The Country of Fathers* was vetoed. We came out of the Composers' Union crushed by the cruel unfairness of Sviridov's colleagues. After some time had passed, however, we discovered that the manuscript was not lost, 'was not burned'[3]. A talented singer, Efrem Flaks, learned the songs and performed them at the Small Hall of the Philharmonic to critical acclaim. Sviridov considered Flaks to be the ultimate interpreter of his vocal works[4]. Shostakovich was present at this concert and was staying at the Europa Hotel. Shostakovich wanted to celebrate Sviridov's artistic achievement and, without waiting for the applause to subside, he ran out to *Elisee*[5] and bought refreshments to celebrate the outstanding (in his opinion) premiere in his hotel room. We did indeed celebrate the deserved success of Yuri Vasilievich; Sviridov recalled the event on numerous occasions and was very grateful to Dmitri Dmitrievich.

I also remember a wonderful evening in the house of Sofia Vasilievna[6] where Shostakovich, Sviridov and I were present. Yuri Vasilievich asked Shostakovich and I to listen to his new opus – romances based on poems by Robert Burns, in a wonderful translation by Samuil Yakovlevich Marshak. Dmitri Dmitrievich gladly agreed to listen to Sviridov, who played his music at the piano extremely well. The work turned out to be excellent – superb, and Shostakovich praised it and anticipated its future success.



Yuri Vasilievich often invited me to theatrical premieres, for which he wrote the incidental music. I really enjoyed an excellently staged production of *Don César de Bazan* with the talented Sviridov's music. Thanks to this production, Maritana's song became a hit. Several years later, *Lenfilm* decided to make *Don César de Bazan* into a film. As the film's editor, I recommended using Sviridov's music. The music was included and it enhanced the film, which was a success. The beautiful Olga Zobotkina, a ballerina from the Mariinsky Theatre, was brilliant in the film's leading role.

I was concerned about the fate of Sviridov's operetta *Little Fires*, which was staged at the Muzkomedia Theatre. Famous film director L.Z. Trauberg had been denounced as 'a bastard cosmopolitan' and was in dire straits. He wrote a libretto and offered it to the theatre under the pseudonym *Zakharov*. It was rejected. Trauberg was saddened by the rejection, but did not despair or lose hope: instead, he asked Shostakovich to write the music for the operetta. Shostakovich, wanting to support the ousted writer, agreed. When the Muzkomedia Theatre learned that Shostakovich was to be the co-author, they immediately accepted the proposal. Subsequently, Shostakovich asked Sviridov to write the music in his place.

When I hear from people familiar with Sviridov's book that he portrayed Shostakovich negatively, I can hardly believe it, remembering, in complete contrast, Sviridov's admiring words for his teacher, as well as his deeds attesting to this attitude. When Shostakovich's wife Nina Vasilievna, in the prime of life, suddenly passed away in Yerevan, I was deeply shaken and went to Moscow for the funeral. Sviridov went with me. Both of us attended the funeral at Novodevichye Cemetery, where Nina Vasilievna was laid to rest. It was very hard and very tragic. Sviridov and I





were invited to the reception afterwards. We wanted to support Dmitri Dmitrievich, but we barely succeeded. Around midnight we were returning home to Leningrad on the *Red Arrow* express train. We shared a two-person sleeping compartment,

talking the entire night about Dmitri Dmitrievich and his destiny. Sviridov compared Shostakovich to a steel spring, which the evildoers of Stalinism wanted to snap, but in fact failed ignominiously. Sviridov considered that even though the spring was strained, it very soon regained its force. I liked Sviridov's metaphor, which I remember up to this day.

I also remember Yuri Vasilievich's comportment at Shostakovich's funeral in 1975. I sat next to the coffin together with Yevgeni Aleksandrovich Mravinsky. Sviridov came into the funeral hall an hour and a half after the beginning of service, stood next to the coffin and read a passionate, plaintive speech that he wrote in advance. When he finished the speech, he came up to me, embraced me and said, crying: 'I always saw you and Dmitri Dmitrievich together. You were inseparable...' How can anyone reconcile this with a negative attitude to Shostakovich?? These things do not reconcile; it is a sad paradox.

Whenever I visited Moscow after Shostakovich's death, Irina Antonovna and I always went to Sviridov's dacha. He was very hospitable, and warmly recalled various episodes of his teacher's life. Irina Antonovna asked me to invite Sviridov to the dress rehearsal of the ballet *The Golden Age*. Yuri Vasilievich accepted with gratitude and came to Bolshoi Theatre and sat next to me. He liked the music very much. He only knew certain numbers from the ballet. Sviridov said to me: 'How wonderful it is that you wrote the scenario to *The Golden Age* and thus helped the music survive.' Shostakovich's enemies are still alive and well. They will attack the music, but you should rebuff them.' Later, Sviridov gave an interview to some Moscow newspaper about *The Golden Age*. He praised the work highly. He said, also, that the premiere of the ballet was for him the highlight of the theatrical year.

Where does the negative portrayal come from? I repeat: how do we reconcile these episodes with the negative remarks Sviridov made in his book? It seems that I, *volens volens*, need to familiarise myself with Sviridov's memoirs... Yuri Vasilievich did have a difficult character. He was often depressed. I remember how he lovingly described his wife, the young and charming Aglaya Leonidovna. When he married her,

they acquired a new flat, to which he, as it happened, often invited Shostakovich and me for dinner. I recall that Sviridov and his wife led a secluded life in Repino, in a cottage belonging to the Union of Composers. She was everything to him then. However, through his uneven temper, he would often experience fits of jealousy and even physically hurt his young wife for no apparent reason. Their marriage ended in divorce.

There were periods in his life when Sviridov did not adequately assess the reality of these situations and he was unexpectedly angry and cruel in his behaviour. I recall how after the premiere of the ballet *The Magic Veil* at the Maly Opera Theatre, Sviridov arrived at the reception, given by the ballet's composer at the Arts Palace, in the most irritable state. He did not even congratulate the author, a charming composer Stefania Zaranek. He did not reply to the questions addressed to him and, without saying goodbye to anyone, including me, took his leave before the reception was over. His strange behaviour made a distressing impression on me.

Because of his character, there was a short period during which our relationship cooled, even to the point when Yuri Vasilievich felt contempt towards me. I believe that his second wife, Elza Gustavovna, may she rest in peace, was at fault here. The misunderstanding was brought about by Aglaya Leonidovna, Sviridov's ex-wife, who demanded that he pay child support for their son – not according to the standard rate, but a percentage of his current earnings, which were considerable. Elza Gustavovna was emphatically against this. She convinced Sviridov that Isaac Davidovich Glikman, who took Aglaya Leonidovna under his patronage, was the mastermind behind this idea. This was completely unfounded. Yuri Vasilievich, however, believed Elza Gustavovna's story. When once I encountered him in the restaurant of the Europa Hotel and approached to greet him, to my dismay he met me with coldness and did not wish to speak to me. I was shaken. Fortunately, after some time the misunderstanding resolved itself and our relationship went back to normal. Whenever I came to Moscow, he invited Irina Antonovna and me to his dacha.

There are many examples of our friendship during the time when Sviridov lived in Leningrad. Here are some small, but unforgettable episodes:

Once I fell ill with pneumonia. Yuri Vasilievich learned that I was ill and wanted to visit me. He was allowed to come. He came to my flat, holding a bottle of champagne in his

hand. He explained that according to various beliefs champagne has healing qualities – the bubbles help relieve pneumonia. I listened to him with amazement: such things were news to me. He took up a solemn pose and uttered: ‘Isaac Davidovich, drink slowly and it will help you!’ I heeded his advice, and when the doctor from the polyclinic added his own medications to Sviridov’s ‘medicine’, I began to feel better rather quickly. We soon restored our regular meetings.

One cold winter day Yuri Vasilievich came to my flat and told me that the day was the beginning of Pancake Week[7], announcing: ‘Isaac Davidovich, I really love this holiday and you know I am a religious man. I invite you to eat holiday pancakes. Let’s hail a taxi and go to my mother’s flat – she lives on Liteiny prospect, across from Kirochnaya.’ I accepted his plan and we went together. He left me at the flat and went shopping to the nearby supermarket, I believe on Tchaikovsky Street. He bought vodka, cognac, red and black caviar, and sour cream. He was very happy that his financial standing allowed him to make such purchases. Yuri Vasilievich’s mother cooked delicious pancakes, very thin and flavourful.

We ate them with great delight, praising her culinary mastery. The ‘evening of spring solstice’ was excellent! We were really close to each other, especially while he lived in Leningrad.

When Sviridov became the head of the Union of Composers of Russian Federation (upon Shostakovich’s recommendation, I believe), he took his position very seriously. He felt he needed to come to Leningrad and familiarise himself with the current state of affairs in the Leningrad branch of the Union. He came and, among other things, decided to hold a reception for his friends at the Europa Hotel. Venya Basner and I were invited to this magnificent meal. At dinner Yura was in the most uplifted mood. He told us about his trip to Paris, which he found most exciting. I can recall his story of enjoying burgundy wine, which before the trip he knew solely from literature.

Many say that Sviridov was an extreme Russophile. Perhaps, but this did not prevent him from being friends with me or Venya Basner – in the same way that it did not prevent him from considering A.N. Sokhor[8] to be his best biographer. By the way, Sokhor wrote a nice little book about Yuri Vasilievich, whom he really adored, and, I must

say, the feelings were mutual.

Even though he was a famous and influential composer in Moscow, recipient of the highest awards, including the Lenin Prize, he nevertheless appeared lonely.



In 1967 he wrote:

‘I am often alone, and when I consider my life from the experience of my 60 years, I often think of you, and, of course, of Dmitri Dmitrievich. So many good things come to mind, things that I will never forget.’

And later, in 1983:

Dear Isaac Davidovich!

I regret that I was unable to see you in Leningrad. Despite all its difficulties, I am firmly convinced that you are to be trusted on all fundamental issues of life. And this is a most important thing! Unfortunately, there are very few people with whom I can talk in the hope of being understood, and my life is very lonely. I did not acquire friends in Moscow. Age must also be a factor in making it difficult to meet people, although there are many worthy individuals. I don’t feel very well, am very tired, and have immeasurable amount of work yet to be done, which I can hardly cope with, despite having help. Perhaps, I will come to Leningrad in the summer. Let me know where you are going to be. If you decide to come to Moscow, please, let me know in advance and I will be always glad to see you. Warm regards to Vera Vasilievna. I shake your hand firmly.

In a very short letter from 1984 he wrote: ‘I really want to see you. Imagine this, I really miss you, it’s true!’

February 20, 2003 St. Petersburg

### **Footnotes**

[1] The spelling and punctuation of the originals have been preserved [A.I.]

[2] *Music as Destiny* [L.G.]

[3] This is a reference to a famous line from M. Bulgakov’s novel *Master i Margarita*, which makes a statement about



the immortality of art. Master, hounded by the critics, in despair had burned his novel in the stove. Woland (i.e., Satan) preserved the novel and gave it back to the Master with the comment: "Manuscripts don't burn!" [L.G.]

[4] The collaboration between E.B. Flaks and Yu. V. Sviridov lasted for years. Sviridov entrusted the premieres of a number of his vocal works to Flaks. In particular, the vocal cycle based on poetry by Robert Burns was premiered by Flaks, and recorded by him (with Sviridov accompanying on the piano). [A.I.]

[5] Famous supermarket, one of the remnants of tsarist Russia (with much of its former glory diminished) [L.G.]

[6] Shostakovich's mother [A.I.]

[7] Maslyanaya nedelya, or Maslenitsa, in Russian, a holiday roughly corresponding to the catholic Mardi Gras [L.G.]

[8] Sokhor, A.N. *Georgi Sviridov*, 2nd ed., Moscow, 1972;

Sokhor, A.N. *Muzikalny Mir Georgiya Sviridova* [Musical world of Georgi Sviridov], Moscow, 1990 [L.G.]



*Isaac Glikman and Alexander Izbitser*

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