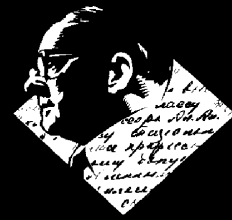


WRITING ABOUT SHOSTAKOVICH

Correspondence between Shostakovich and Vera Dulova



from *Our Heritage* by Ye. V. Dulova

translated Anthony Phillips

In 2006, *Our Heritage* (*Nashe nasledie*, nos. 79–80) published Shostakovich's letters to Vera Georgievna Dulova for the first time, together with her reminiscences of the composer, as well as the photo-journalist Viktor Akhlov's account of his experiences photographing Shostakovich (the latter article will appear in the next edition of the *DSCH Journal*). Here we present the first translation of these letters.

'Every note I have written has in it a drop of my living blood.'

Dmitri Shostakovich's correspondence with Vera Dulova



Vera G. Dulova

Issue no. 74 of our journal recently acquainted readers with the remarkable Dulov family. That publication devoted several pages to Vera Georgievna Dulova (1909–2000), a great harpist and founder of an internationally celebrated school of performance on the instrument.

Fate brought Vera Georgievna from an early age into a close and long-lasting friendship with Shostakovich. Her niece Ye. V. Dulova had unique opportunities for personal contact and was able not only to hear her aunt's spoken reminiscences but was able also to preserve the brief notes Vera Georgievna jotted down on paper, including some actual memorabilia comprising letters and postcards the composer addressed to her.

The present account emerged in a somewhat paradoxical manner and reflects the fact that Vera Dulova[1] never produced any written memoirs. Her memories, she used to say, were 'engraved in the heart.' On tragic subjects (with which the 20th century was liberally endowed) Vera Georgievna was reticent. Neither was she given to emotional outbursts, more to sympathetic understanding and a profound sadness. Nevertheless, invariably uppermost in her stories about the ups and downs of daily life, in which the artistic world particularly abounds, was her innate sense of humour. As time went by some of these oral accounts took on flesh in the form of miniature 'novellas' jotted down in notebooks.

But Vera Georgievna never committed anything about Dmitri Shostakovich to paper. 'Well, what is there to write?' was her customary half-joking response to my impulsive protestations. 'There is only one word that fits the bill, and that word is: 'genius'. But everyone knows that without my telling them.' All the same, one day she told me: 'I do have some letters from him; they are tragic documents and do not represent him as he was, not at all . . .' She welcomed the publication of Dmitri Dmitrievich's letters to his friend Isaak Glikman, professor at the Saint Petersburg Conservatoire[2], with the greatest warmth and pleasure. It is much to be regretted that Vera Georgievna did not live to see the publication of several recent memoirs of the composer, in particular the reminiscences of his children Galina and Maxim[3].

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Nevertheless, towards the very end of her life, Vera Georgievna did begin to commit to paper a few short ‘memories’ and even consented to speak into the detested microphone. And then one day she placed in front of me a large grey envelope, saying: ‘Here is something of the real Mitya . . .’ The envelope contained postcards, letters and some yellowing scraps of paper written in pencil.

18th November 1934, Leningrad

To Vera Georgievna Dulova, Moscow 21, Zubovsky Boulevard 16-20, Apt 82

My dear Vera,

Thank you very much for the photograph. I was delighted to see how young and handsome Lyova[4] and I were in those days. As for you, you are even younger and prettier now than you were then. Stravinsky’s *Oedipe*[5] and Hindemith’s Concerto[6] interest me very much. I am keeping your promise in mind and would ask you to be so kind as to keep them for me until I come, which I expect will be soon. As soon as I arrive I shall visit you to offer my congratulations on your new abode. I should like very much to write some pieces for you, but so far nothing acceptable has emerged. Please pass on my good wishes to Shura[7].



Anatoly Knorre, Vera Dulova, Lev Oborin, Dmitri Shostakovich. Berlin 1927.

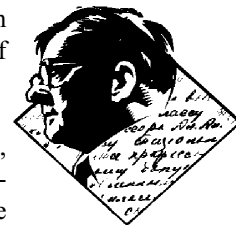
This postcard was not the first that Vera Georgievna received from Dmitri Dmitrievich, but its predecessors have been lost. The photograph for which Shostakovich thanks ‘his dear Vera’ was taken in 1927 in Berlin, when Vera Georgievna was there as a postgraduate student at the same time as her friends Lyova Oborin and Mitya Shostakovich arrived in the city to play concerts[8]. The youthful threesome, up to all kinds of mischief, spent a whole day roaming round the town and sampling its entertainments including the attractions of the Luna Park and a dance in a restaurant. The day concluded with the resolve to commit it to memory with some photographs. Two were taken, the first silly and childish, holding toys, and the second a more serious one. Apparently Shostakovich did not possess a copy of either.

From Vera Georgievna’s reminiscences:

The first mention I heard of Shostakovich was in a letter from Lyova Oborin, in which he said that he had been staying in Leningrad with a talented young man – Mitya Shostakovich . . . In Moscow, on Prechistenka Street, there existed at the time an organisation called The Association for Contemporary Music[9]. Its premises saw such young composers as Mosolov[10], Shebalin[11], Polovinkin[12] and Knipper[13] launch their careers. And although we were the youngest of the young Conservatoire students, junior as we were we also were allowed to attend the Association’s musical evenings and hear the works being performed. Another usually present would be Misha Kvadri[14], a great friend of both Shostakovich and Oborin. He and Lyova asked me if I would help distribute some tickets, because on the 25th of March 1925 Mitya Shostakovich was going to be giving a concert.

I went to see my aunt Lydia[15], in former times the proprietress of a *gymnasium*[16] on Volkhonka Street. Some time later the building would house the Institute of Marxism-Leninism but at that time my aunt was still in position as head of a Soviet school. ‘Aunt’, I said to her, ‘perhaps you could help me, you might know people who would be interested . . .’ and there and then she simply took all the tickets and paid for them . . . true, there were not that many of them, but still, that was it, they were all got rid of. So that was how I got to know Mitya Shostakovich,

and what began as an acquaintance soon ripened into friendship. We saw one another often in Moscow, and in Leningrad. He and Alexander Baturin loved swapping their memories of Glazunov[17].



The first Shostakovich Composer's Concert to be held in Moscow took place on 25th March 1925, in the Small Hall of the Conservatoire. The evening was in fact shared between two young composers, the first half being devoted to the Muscovite Vissarion Shebalin and the second to the Leningrader Dmitri Shostakovich.

Performing the Shostakovich pieces were the composer himself, Lyova Oborin, and two other musicians, close friends of both Vera and Lyova: the cellist Tolya [Anatoly] Yegorov and the violinist Kolya [Nikolai] Fyodorov. The programme concluded with Shostakovich and Oborin playing together the former's *Suite for two pianos*. The composer and his friends were all very young: Mitya and Lyovushka were eighteen, while Verochka had only a short while before celebrated her sixteenth birthday.

Vera Dulova and Shostakovich met frequently during the 1930s. On the 18th January 1930 the composer invited her and her husband to attend the premiere in the Maly Opera Theatre in Leningrad (the 'Malegot') [18] of his opera *The Nose*. Later Vera Georgievna would write:

The introductory address was brilliantly delivered by Sollertinsky[19]. The opera enjoyed a huge success, the younger generation in particular greeting it ecstatically. Opinions were sharply divided, but as for me, needless to say I was firmly to be counted among its adherents.

During the autumn of that same year Shostakovich was working feverishly on the opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, creating from Leskov's story a drama of Shakespearean proportions. And there must have been a sympathetic resonance in the composer's own soul, for this was a time when he was prey to the strongest of emotions. As he finished the first act, Shostakovich wrote the date on the score: 5th November 1931; the dedication on the title page is to Nina Varzar[20]. By the time the whole opera was completed, in December 1932, Nina Vasilievna and Dmitri Dmitrievich were already married.

During the 1930s Shostakovich and his wife spent several vacations in Gaspra[21], where Dulova's family also holidayed. Vera Georgievna and Alexander Baturin also invited Shostakovich to their dacha just outside Moscow, still under construction but just about habitable (!), and further suggested that the Shostakoviches join them on vacation in Kislovodsk:

To: The Post Office, Kislovodsk Railway Station

To be called for by Alexander Iosifovich Baturin

Leningrad, 13th June 1935

My dear Vera and Shura,

I am feeling better now, and was very glad to get your letter. Many thanks for your invitation, which at some point I shall certainly make use of. However, just at the moment I am rather out of sorts as a result of a whole series of personal difficulties. I have got myself into a bit of a mess.

I do hope you have a good holiday. It worries me that you might have to go a lot of trouble getting tickets, and therefore I have decided not to travel beyond Moscow, and only as far as that in case of absolute necessity.

Yours, Shostakovich

From Vera Georgievna's reminiscences:

(Odessa) An expedition with Shostakovich and Oborin. At the circus, Oborin to Vera: 'Mitya and I have definitely decided that no better friend than you could be found . . .'





(Moscow) Mitya S came to see us yesterday and we spent the whole day listening together to recordings by Leshchenko[22] and Vertinsky[23]. Mitya was in ecstasy especially over Leshchenko, and when I suggested putting on a well-known pianist, his response was 'to hell with him'. I persisted, however, and played a Chopin Polonaise recorded by Hofmann[24], whose emasculated detachment amazed us both.

. . . We drove out of the city into the country, as we had bought a car, a little Ford. S asked Shura if he would let him drive it. The delight on Mitya's face was something to behold when he succeeded in getting it to move! He hooted, gave hand signals incessantly and eventually bumped into a tree, but he was a happy man. What a passionate, adventurous person he is . . .

. . . Our theatre will present both Mitya's opera and his ballet. He likes the way Fayer[25] handles the orchestra . . .

This note relates to the end of 1935, when the country's leading theatre was preparing to mount two Shostakovich premieres. On the 30th November Yuri Fyodorovich Fayer conducted the premiere of the ballet *The Limpid Stream*. On the 26th December the opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* was seen for the first time on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre, conducted by Alexander Shamilievich Melik-Pashayev[26].

At this time the opera was already beginning to generate world-wide renown. It had been produced in the first instance by two theatres: the Malegot in Leningrad and the Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre in Moscow. The Leningrad premiere took place on the 22nd January 1934; Nemirovich-Danchenko's followed two days later on 24th. The interpretative differences between the two productions gave rise to heated polemical arguments, but overall the success was as robust as it was assured, with an abundance of laudatory, indeed rave, reviews in the press. On the official, 'government' level, this latest fruit of Shostakovich's creativity was welcomed unreservedly, as witness newspaper articles with headlines such as: 'Triumph of musical theatre' and 'Today the premiere of *Lady Macbeth* signals the dawn of Soviet opera'[27].

By the end of 1935 *Lady Macbeth* was at the zenith of its prestige. The golden opinion of the 'authorities' had not dimmed at all: two days after the first night at the Bolshoi Theatre, which took place on the 28th December 1935, *Working Moscow* newspaper published a panegyric in praise of the composer and the new production.

From Vera Georgievna's reminiscences:

While they were working on the new production of *Katerina Izmailova* (as the opera was renamed), Shostakovich came to Moscow for an extended stay. The general rehearsal took place in an atmosphere of tremendous acclaim. After the first night there was a supper attended by friends and those involved in the production . . . and then out of the blue came this terrible article 'Muddle instead of music'[28]. D. D. suffered greatly from this, as did his friends and admirers.

On a visit from Leningrad, Meyerhold[29] told me he had heard reports that 'Shostakovich now carried with him a cyanide capsule', such was his state of mind. At white heat I dashed off a letter to him, saying it was inconceivable that anyone could ever take his genius away from him, with one or two other observations . . . and in reply received the following letter:

Leningrad, 23rd March 1936

My dear Vera,

As you see, I have not rushed to reply to your letter. There are many reasons for this, which it is not possible to write in a letter. But in any case the reasons are valid ones.

First of all, thank you for your letter. I was terribly happy to receive your kind words. I shall never forget it and will always remember your kindness with love and devotion.

The rumours about cyanide are 100% exaggerated. All such statements are nothing but stupid rubbish. Until the day I die I shall continue to live rejoicing in my joys and enduring my woes. But never will I in any way resort to vio-



lence against myself. To tell the truth, life at the present time is not very good. I try with all my strength to make sense of what on earth is happening, but much of it I simply cannot fathom, my brain is unable to bear such a heavy burden. What I do know is that nobody personally wishes me any harm. This much was clear to me from the very beginning, and remains so. Perhaps this is enough; it is certainly the most important thing. Even so, it is still hard to bear, because almost all the work I have done over the past years has been utterly destroyed. It may be that this was indeed necessary. And fifteen years hence I shall be perfectly easy in my mind about it, just as I am today when I contemplate what I did fifteen years ago. Yet at this precise moment the destruction of my entire work is hard to bear, because I have never been frivolous or slipshod in my work. Every note I have written has in it a drop of my living blood.



Despite this I continue to hope that sooner or later I will understand everything that is happening now. But of course it will come at a heavy price. Until a short while ago my life consisted of eating, drinking, sleeping, engaging in various activities, and composing music. To this list must now be added the burning torments of my reflections.

In any event I am as sure as can be that the future is splendid[30].

Give my greetings to Shura and to Kozlovsky[31]. Their concern has touched me incredibly deeply.

Your loving

Shostakovich

Melnichy Ruchei,[32] 18th August 1936

My dear Vera,

Your letter arrived at our dacha today and gave me great joy, especially as yesterday I was thinking of you and had intended to write to you. I am staying at a dacha in Melnichy Ruchei, 25 kilometres from Leningrad.

Our daughter Galina was born on 30th May. This was excellent news, but has given rise to an awful lot of work, with no end of things to cause alarm one and to worry about. But so far, thank God, she is thriving. Thank you very much for the invitation to come and stay with you in your dacha. Sadly, at the moment it would be difficult to do so, but in the future, if it does not inconvenience you, I should most definitely like to take you up on it.

I am not the least bit offended that you offer me money. On the contrary, I consider it an expression of your most generous concern. For the present I am all right, financially speaking, but if things should change and the need should arise, I will unhesitatingly turn to you. So you see I am not the slightest put out, just the opposite, touched to the depths of my soul. Recently I have been troubled by swollen glands and was not well for twenty days as there were complications. But I am better now, and doing very little. About four months ago I completed a symphony[33]. I am not composing the *Chapaev* opera at the moment, as I am planning yet another symphony, but when that is finished I shall get down to the opera, [34] the libretto for which is being written by Vsevolod Ivanov[35].

In general life is good at the moment, despite worries now and then about my daughter. But this is quite normal, so they tell me: until 6 months it is all work and worry, but after that joy unconfined. I pity you stuck in the city.

Well, that is all for now. Don't forget me, keep the letters coming. Thank you for your letter, for your concern, and for your hospitable invitation.

Greetings to Shura.

Your

Shostakovich





Leningrad, 20th December 1936

My dear Vera,

Thank you for your letter and for thinking of me. I was delighted to receive your telegram and much appreciate your not forgetting my request about Nivea crème. I shall soon be coming to Moscow, so if it is no trouble, please keep the Nivea until I arrive and I will collect it when I see you. I envy you your interesting life – like your visit to Turkmenia for instance. All is well with me. My daughter is doing very well, growing fast and already beginning to utter sounds resembling ‘Pa-pa’ and ‘Ma-ma’ and thereby gladdening the hearts of her parents. Nina has a bad leg; it has developed an abscess and prevents her from walking. No medicine seems to help, but the abscess appears to be going away on its own.

That’s all my news.

Greet Shura for me.

Until we meet again, which I hope will be soon.

D. Shostakovich

Leningrad, 15th January 1937

My dear Vera,

Many thanks for the music and for the crème. I very much appreciate all your trouble in fulfilling my requests.

How are you? It is so long since I saw you, and I miss you. I hope to be coming to Moscow on the 8th January. All is well with me; the only depressing thing is my total inactivity. It is hard to work with my hands shaking like this[36]. Although my head is full of plans I seem to be unable to get around to realising them.

I hope you will be in residence when I get to Moscow and we shall see one another.

Please pass on my greetings to Shura.

Yours,

D. Shostakovich

From Vera Georgievna’s reminiscences:

... *Izvestiya* published an article by Alexey Tolstoy[37] about the Fifth Symphony. Mitya told me how Yuri Shaporin[38], that uncommonly pure-hearted man, had literally dragged Tolstoy to the concert in the Leningrad Philharmonia, and Tolstoy had been overwhelmed.

Once again Shostakovich’s works began to be played, although not the opera or the ballet . . .

The premiere of the Fifth Symphony took place in the Philharmonia on 21st November 1937 conducted by Yevgeny Mravinsky[39]. Dmitri Dmitrievich agreed it would be right to describe the symphony as an ‘autobiographical composition’[40].

After the colossal success of the symphony A N. Tolstoy hosted a banquet in the Writers’ House on the Neva Embankment. Several reverberant phrases from his article were testimony to the fact that Shostakovich had been readmitted to the ranks of ‘permitted’ composers: ‘Glory to our epoch, that it seizes with both hands such magnificence of sounds and thoughts and hurls them into the world at large. Glory to our country, that it has given birth to artists such as this.’



Phototelegram[41] from Leningrad, 28th April 1939

Dear Vera,

I am leaving for Moscow tomorrow and will bring *Oedipe-roi* with me. In connection with my arrival I have a huge favour to ask of you. It is this: I have asked Comrade Reznikov from the Philharmonia's Touring Department to arrange for me two tickets to Sevastopol on the 30th, as we are going to Crimea. Please telephone Reznikov as from me and inform him that I shall be arriving on the morning of the 29th at 10 o'clock. He should arrange for someone to meet me with a car and give the tickets to me. If he (Reznikov) is unable to do this, would you please send your car at 10 o'clock (the train will arrive at 10.10 or 10.20). I will then give your chauffeur[42] the piano score to give to you. Please cable me the number of your car. I shall be extremely grateful if you can do this for me.



Greetings to Shura.

D. Shostakovich

Gaspra, 23rd May 1939

Dear Vera,

'Everything passes and there is no way back.' And our stay in Gaspra has almost passed; on 3rd June we shall be returning to Moscow, and then on the 5th continuing on to Leningrad. We have had a good time here, if you don't count a certain amount of boredom and four days when I was suffering from a stomach upset of gigantic proportions.

I would be extremely grateful if you could send your Nikolai Pavlovich to the Kursk station to meet train No. 9. But if this is not possible, don't ask him – send me a telegram addressed to the Koreiz Sanatorium, Gaspra that it can't be done, in which case I will ask someone else. Greetings to Shura.

I do hope to see you on our return journey.

D. Shostakovich

Gaspra, 29th May 1939

Dear Vera,

Thank you for your telegram and for telling me that you will be able to meet us. But I repeat that if it presents a problem for you, please don't worry. Recently Lann[43], the writer, who has been staying here, left to return to Moscow saying he would be glad to meet us if necessary. I gave him your telephone number and asked him to meet us if you are unable to.

Greetings to Shura.

Your

D. Shostakovich

Two more years passed . . . in the autumn of 1941 many Government departments, defence organisations and senior diplomatic personnel were evacuated from besieged Moscow to Kuibyshev[44]. Along with them went the official 'State' theatre, the Bolshoi. The provincial city became, in essence, a 'shadow capital'.





From Vera Georgievna's reminiscences:

War – evacuation – English lessons – the Children's Theatre – treacle tarts, garlic. Children in the washtub. The Seventh Symphony[45].

During the period of our evacuation we saw Shostakovich every day, sometimes several times a day. At first we were found accommodation in a school because our arrival – practically the entire Bolshoi Theatre troupe – had not been expected[46]. We all (there were 18 to 20 people crammed into each of the classrooms) did whatever we could to contrive some privacy for ourselves, using whatever curtains, blankets or suitcases we could get hold of. And then, just as I was emerging from the space we had fixed up for ourselves, I caught sight of Mitya Shostakovich sitting on a window-sill (he and his family had arrived in the second wave). He was sitting there like a sort of terrified sparrow. 'Mitya, my dear!' – we embraced, of course. 'And where is Nina?' 'Nina has gone off somewhere, perhaps to try to find something to buy.' 'Well, do come to us for now, we've got a nice big space all curtained off. Just until they sort out somewhere for you . . .' 'But where's Shura?' 'Shura's gone to see whether he can find anything in the shops.'

At this point Shura turned up and announced that they were promising to provide the leading soloists with rooms in shared apartments, 'so I've already gone and hired a piano.' He was carrying a heavy, substantial-looking bag with him, and when I asked 'What's in the bag?' the answer was green coffee[47]. How on earth such a thing could have turned up here, and why, I have no idea. But there it was and there was heaps of it. The moment word went round that Baturin had hired a piano and had managed to buy coffee, everyone rushed to try to do the same. Now there was no way we were going to leave Kuibyshev, as we had feared we might have to do, to go on somewhere else.

We got our room, and the piano duly appeared. Mitya was also allocated living space, at first a room and then later a small flat. But on that first day when we met, he was sitting there completely defeated. 'You know,' he said, 'a terrible thing has happened. I've lost the suitcase with the score of my symphony. Three of the movements are already finished, and the fourth is in my head. It means I shall have to write the whole thing out again, and I have nothing with which to do this, neither the work I have already done, nor any manuscript paper . . .'

We searched every single corner for the score, turning the place upside down in the process! After all, there had been no pattern to the way people had arrived in Kuibyshev, some had all their belongings with them while others had nothing at all. Nowhere could we find a trace of it . . . and then, all of a sudden, on the third day, it turned up on the very same platform where their train had arrived. Someone had picked it up and put it underneath a bench[48]. Thank God for that! But that was after three days of total agony, with Mitya rushing about like a mad thing nervously spluttering 'You see, Vera, all I had in that case was the score, a toothbrush and a towel. Nothing else at all!' And then he would repeat: 'Vera, it's all there in my head, I've got to do something . . .' Then, suddenly: 'Well, at least find me something I can copy for you, anything at all . . .' 'Mitya my dear,' I said, 'first of all I haven't anything I need copying, and even if I had I wouldn't give it to you. With that terrible writing of yours, no one would be able to make head or tail of it!' And we both burst out laughing, which was at least one way of relieving the tension. Actually I did have some music lying about – a polka by Balakirev[49] – which I had bought in the town, an attractive little piece. 'What's that?' he asked. 'A polka by Balakirev. Here it is.' 'Well, would you like me to make a harp version for you?' 'Well, why don't you do it for two harps?' – since two of us harpists had been evacuated. We unearthed some terrible old yellowing pieces of manuscript paper, and the following morning Shostakovich brought the finished transcription over to me. Not only that, but he had done it all so masterfully, all the pedals meticulously indicated, just as if it had been produced by a harp player. Of course, Mitya knew everything there was to know about the orchestra, no doubt about that. And in any case he always wrote everything straight into full score, and only in ink; this was why he would say: 'everything is in my head,' and why he suffered so much when he could not write. Harpists often play his version of the polka, and at the 120th jubilee of the Conservatoire's harp class we performed it as a harp ensemble.

One day he said: 'I'd like to come this evening with Lyova Oborin. Would you allow us to play something for you?' Good Lord! Yes of course, what a question . . . When they arrived, Melik-Pashayev was with them, and what did they play but the just-completed score . . . While it was going on we heard the telephone ring. Scarcely daring to breathe, I was obliged to sidle out into the corridor because I was told I was urgently needed to take a telephone call. It was Samosud[50], who lived downstairs in the room just below ours. Samosud said: 'Vera, I can hear music

– is it the symphony?’ ‘Yes,’ I said. ‘May I come up to you?’ What could I say? ‘Yes, of course. Please do.’ Up he came and stood quietly by the door, so that no one could see him.



Well, when the symphony came to an end we all sat there completely stunned. Then, of course, came the tears and embraces. Samosud went calmly up to the piano, took the score under his arm and said: ‘Tomorrow we make a start on the orchestral parts[51]. The day after tomorrow we start rehearsals.’ And then he went out saying ‘thank you’, taking the score with him. That’s what it means to be Artistic Director and Chief Conductor: your word is law . . .

Later Mitya said to me, in an apologetic tone of voice: ‘You know, Vera, of course I’m very sorry for Shura (that is Alexander Melik-Pashayev). He wanted so badly to conduct the symphony, it was something we talked about all the time . . . But you understand, Samosud is the chief. And that means I can have as many rehearsals as the symphony needs. I don’t know how many rehearsals they would allow Melik.’ It was clear he understood everything, but because of the way matters stood . . .

So that is the story of the first time the symphony was heard, in our room, the Dulova-Baturin room[52].

Daily life in wartime, even away from the front, had its own special flavour. Not only that, what the artistic fraternity made of it was something else again, full of fantasy, invention, playfulness. . . People would get together to devise all sorts of shows, concocting literally out of nothing dolls, costumes, scenery, and we dreamed up music to go with them. The children, needless to say, were in seventh heaven. And not only the children, the grown-ups too felt the need to step out of the accustomed rut, to forget for a while their jobs and their uniforms. The modest dining-table at home would be enlivened by impromptu poetry sessions, comic toasts and other kinds of witty improvisations. Birthday and New Year parties brought relief from fatigue and fear, eased for a while the constant strain. Here, on some torn old crumpled scraps of paper written out in Vera Georgievna’s small, neat hand on the back of a list of business and domestic tasks, is a sample, a collective effort parodying the typical Hollywood movie complete with the elements of a wildly improbable story-line, musical interludes and a happy ending.

Kuibyshev, 1942

Shostakovich and Friends

Dramatis personae

D. Shostakovich Famous Sov. composer, wears velveteen Oxford bags, patent-leather shoes, lop-sided shoulders a sazhen[53] wide, Russian shirt, hair cut in a pudding-bowl.

Nina Tall, slim blonde, extravagantly dressed in the height of fashion by Worth, Paquin[54], etc.

Children

Boy White sailor suit and jacket with gold buttons. **Girl** Hair in ringlets, large straw hat, pink dress with lace flounces.

Otar[55] A Georgian in the Shostakovich entourage. Armed with a coffee-grinder.

Mother-in-law, father-in-law, Pasha[56] etc.

PROLOGUE

A room looking out on to the Volga river. Through the window can be seen barge-haulers, as in the Repin painting[57]. Burlaks, singing ‘Eh, ukhnyom’ [‘The ‘Song of the Volga Boatmen’]. A table; on it a samovar, a bucket of caviar, vodka. Shostakovich is sitting at the table playing on a balalaika the theme of the first movement of the Seventh Symphony. In the foreground: caviar, vodka, nervous fingers strumming the balalaika. The face of the composer gradually disappears into the mist.





SCENE 1: ACQUAINTANCE

Shostakovich visits a friend at his villa. He meets Nina who, dressed in a riding-habit, rides back and forth in front of the villa. The horse takes fright and bolts; Shostakovich hurls himself in front of the horse and grabs it by the bridle. Nina thanks him with a gracious smile and throws him a branch of lilac.

THE WEDDING

St. Isaac's Cathedral, priests singing music specially composed by Shostakovich: 'The wife must fear her husband'. (Deacon: Mikhailov) [58]

The honeymoon journey (by train, yacht, camels etc.): Moscow – Crimea – the Caucasus – Central Asia.

LENINGRAD

Shostakovich in a fireman's uniform. One hand holds a high-explosive bomb, the other writes the score of the Seventh Symphony. The evacuation from the city.

KUIBYSHEV

Hearing of the arrival of their beloved composer the people rush to the house occupied by the genius . . . [illegible] . . . rooms, corridors and staircase too small to accommodate all those who wish to see Shostakovich.

Reception at the home of a famous Russian bass singer. Ladies in ball gowns, gentlemen in evening dress. Predominantly Russian food (pelmeni[59], etc.). The composer is asked to play the Seventh Symphony. As the first sounds are heard the musicians of the Bolshoi Theatre orchestra rush down the stairs with their instruments, taking up the themes as they go, and emerge on to the square with the composer at their head. At the theatre, a duel with rapiers between Samosud and Melik-Pashayev, the former being the victor.

EPILOGUE

The same room as in the Prologue. A knock on the door; Ryabov[60] enters quietly, bearing a cornucopia from which spills out a sheaf of passes to dine at the National Hotel[61].

After the war Dmitri Shostakovich settled in Moscow with his family. But he did not lose contact with his old friends, and the 'triple alliance' lasted until the end of their days. First to depart this life was Lev Oberin, and next was Dmitri Shostakovich.

From Vera Georgievna's reminiscences:

. . . One day the telephone rang. It was Irina Antonovna[62]. She said: Dmitri Dmitrievich is still in the 'Kremlyovka'[63] and wants me to tell you that he would be very glad to see you and Alexander Iosifovich. Naturally we hastened there at once, but in our anxiety went first to the wrong hospital. Knowing Mitya's passion for punctuality we were terribly afraid of being late and thereby causing him anxiety. When we eventually arrived . . . we saw his hands, and his eyes, and realised at once that this was Farewell.

Compiled and annotated by Ye. V. Dulova

(The annotations in square brackets (but not those in the main text) are by the translator).

Endnotes

[1] Vera Georgievna Dulova (1909–2000), harpist, People's Artist of the USSR, State Prize laureate, Professor at the Moscow Conservatoire, principal harp of the Orchestra of the Bolshoi Theatre. Her appearances as a soloist began at the age of 13 as a 'Wunderkind with plaits'. When she was 16, through the support of the People's Commissar for Enlightenment A. V. Lunacharsky, she was awarded a three-year bursary to study as a post-graduate in Berlin. Thanks in large part to the brilliance of Vera Dulova's performances the harp began to assume its rightful place as a solo concert instrument. For more than

half a century, up to the last days of her life, Vera Dulova taught at the Moscow Conservatoire, establishing what became known internationally as the ‘Dulova School’. Today the Moscow International Harp Competition bears the name of this outstanding musician and teacher.



[2] [Isaak Davydovich Glikman (1911–2003), literary consultant, Professor of Theatre History at the Leningrad Conservatoire, correspondent and close friend of Dmitri Shostakovich from 1931 until the composer’s death in 1975. The book was simultaneously published in 1993 by DSCH in Moscow and Kompozitor in St. Petersburg.]

[3] Maksim and Galina Shostakovich, as told to the Rev. Mikhail Ardov *Our Father DSCH*, Zakharov, Moscow 2003.

[4] Lev Nikolayevich Oborin (1907–74), People’s Artist of the USSR, Professor at the Moscow Conservatoire, outstanding exponent of the Russian school of pianism.

[5] Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky (1882–1971), Russian composer and conductor, one of the pillars of contemporary music of the 20th Century. Lived abroad from 1910, after 1939 in the USA. His opera-oratorio *Oedipe-roi* (after Sophocles) was composed in 1927.

[6] Paul Hindemith (1895–1963), German composer, viola player, conductor and writer on music theory. Hindemith was one of the leading representatives of German neoclassicism. [The concerto referred to was probably one of the four *Kammermusik* concertos Op 36, respectively for piano, cello, violin and viola, all composed between 1924 and 1927.]

[7] Alexander Iosifovich Baturin (1904–83), bass-baritone, husband of Vera Dulova. People’s Artist of the RSFSR, State Prize laureate, Professor at the Moscow Conservatoire, principal artist of the Bolshoi Opera. [Shura is a common affectionate abbreviation for the name Alexander.]

[8] [In late January 1927 Shostakovich had accepted, with considerable reservations, an invitation to join the Soviet team of competitors in the Chopin Competition in Warsaw. Although ill with what was diagnosed at the time as appendicitis, he reached the finals, but failed to be awarded any of the prizes, coming away merely with a diploma. The first prize went to Oborin, who subsequently shared with Shostakovich a winner’s recital in Warsaw, the proceeds from which were enough to subsidise a further week in Berlin where they evidently performed as well.]

[9] [The Association for Contemporary Music had been founded in 1923 by Nikolay Roslavets and soon attracted a progressive membership of composers interested in the Western modernist avant-garde. Prominent members included Shostakovich, Myaskovsky, Shebalin, Mosolov, Popov and Shcherbachov. By the end of the decade the ACM had lost political ground to the rival Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians, whose leaders clamoured stridently for composers to write exclusively for what were perceived to be the needs of the people: popular, folk-derived massed choral works with politically approved texts. The destructive war between the two poles of musical aesthetics was eventually brought to an end in 1932 with the Party Central Committee’s Decree on the Reformation of Literary and Artistic Organisations, which duly gave birth to the Union of Soviet Writers and the Union of Soviet Composers.]

[10] Alexander Vasilievich Mosolov (1900–1973), composer. His Concerto for Harp and Orchestra was written for Vera Dulova and dedicated to her.

[11] Vissarion Yakovlevich Shebalin (1902–1963), composer, People’s Artist of the Russian Federation, recipient of several State Prizes. [Shebalin was Director of the Moscow Conservatoire from 1942 until he fell victim to the Zhdanov purge of 1948 and was dismissed from his post.]

[12] Leonid Alexeyevich Polovinkin (1894–1949), composer. [At around the time Dulova received this postcard, Polovinkin was in the process of radically changing his style from one of modernism to the simpler and more accessible idiom appropriate to the post he was about to take up: that of Music Director of Natalya Sats’s Moscow Children’s Theatre, the ensemble for which Prokofiev was to compose *Peter and the Wolf*.]

[13] Lev Konstantinovich Knipper (1889–1974), composer, People’s Artist of the Russian Federation, recipient of State Prizes. Knipper dedicated his Harp Sonata to Vera Dulova. [Knipper was the nephew of Anton Chekhov’s widow Olga Knipper-Chekhova and is said to have been an active under-cover OGPU, and subsequently NKVD, agent. His Fourth Symphony contains one of the most famous of all Soviet marching songs, which became virtually the theme song of the Red Army Choir, *Polyushke-Polye*, also known as *Song of the Plains*.]

[14] Mikhail Vladimirovich Kvadri (1897–1929), composer, friend and contemporary of Shostakovich and Oborin, a member of the group of young, innovative Moscow composers who half-jokingly referred to themselves as ‘the new Mighty Handful’. He was arrested and executed at the end of the 1920s. [Kvadri was the dedicatee of Shostakovich’s First Symphony.]

[15] Lydia Nikolayevna Gramoglasnaya, née Princess Dulova (1878–1947)

[16] [High School.]

[17] Alexander Konstantinovich Glazunov (1865–1936), outstanding Russian composer, conductor, named as People’s Artist of the Russian Republic in 1922. Professor (from 1899), Director (1905–1928) of the St. Petersburg, later Leningrad, Conservatoire. Died in Paris. In the 1920s Glazunov frequently went out of his way to help exceptionally gifted students, devoting particular care and esteem to the compositional talents of the young Shostakovich. His petition for aid to the





gifted youngster bore fruit in the following decision: 'to award academic subsistence rations to pianist and composer Dmitri Shostakovich, aged 14'. Glazunov was also enthused by the unquestionable natural gifts of Alexander Baturin, a young singer from a village in deepest Byelorussia, and took a personal interest in his achievements in the vocal class. In 1944, likewise as a result of a petition from Glazunov, the RSFSR Commissar for Education sent Baturin to Italy to perfect his art. In Italy he appeared in the theatres of Milan, Turin and Palermo, and was awarded the Gold Medal of the Rome Academy of Music.

- [18] [Acronym derived from 'Leningrad Academic Small Opera Theatre', the theatre's name from 1926 until it was changed in 1989 to 'St. Petersburg Musorgsky Opera and Ballet Theatre'.]
- [19] Ivan Ivanovich Sollertinsky (1902–1944), music, literary and theatre scholar, Professor at the Leningrad Conservatoire. [Shostakovich's closest friend, he was posthumously the dedicatee of the composer's Second Piano Trio.]
- [20] Nina Vasilievna Varzar (1906–1954), astrophysicist, Shostakovich's first wife. The cycle of *Six Romances on Texts by Japanese Poets*, Op 21, composed between 1928 and 1932, is also dedicated to her.
- [21] A Black Sea resort on the Crimean coast.
- [22] [Pyotr Leshchenko (1898–1954), the 'King of Russian Tango', was a Ukrainian-born cabaret singer and dancer whose immensely popular records, made in the West during the 1930s and 1940s mainly by Columbia and Electrola, circulated secretly because – although this was technically not the case – he was regarded as an émigré, a black mark later compounded by his appearing in Odessa during the wartime German/Romanian occupation of the city. Leshchenko died in a Romanian prison camp in 1954 after he and his wife were arrested as traitors by the post-war pro-Soviet Communist regime.]
- [23] [Alexander Nikolayevich Vertinsky (1889–1957), the 'Russian Pierrot', cabaret artist, singer, composer and actor whose trademark was to appear in Pierrot costume with powdered face, black-rimmed eyes and skull-cap. He lived abroad from 1920 until 1943, and while his art was more cosmopolitan and decadent than the popular Russian style of Leshchenko, his banned records were equally listened to and prized.]
- [24] Josef Hofmann (1876–1957), Polish pianist, a brilliant virtuoso who toured Russia frequently between 1895 and 1913. From 1913 onwards he lived in the USA, where he served as Director of the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia from 1924 until 1938.
- [25] Yuri Fyodorovich Fayer (1890–1971), conductor, People's Artist of the Russian Federation, violinist in the Bolshoi Theatre orchestra, and regular ballet conductor from 1923 until 1963.
- [26] Alexander Shamilievich Melik-Pashayev (1905–1964), conductor, People's Artist of the USSR, conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre from 1931 and from 1953 to 1962 its Principal Conductor.
- [27] [The new Bolshoi production of *Lady Macbeth* coincided in Moscow with the two original productions already mentioned: the Malegot production was on tour there and the Nemirovich-Danchenko production was still in repertoire.]
- [28] The unsigned editorial headed 'Muddle Instead of Music' appeared in *Pravda* on the 28th January 1936, two days after Stalin and members of the Politburo had attended a performance of the opera and had condemned it as 'pernicious'. The editorial served as the starting salvo of a propaganda campaign 'against Formalism in Soviet culture', with its concomitant barrage of institutional purgings, witch-hunts and repression.
- [29] Vsevolod Emilievich Meyerhold (1874–1940), theatrical director, People's Artist of the Soviet Union (1923). An actor with the Moscow Arts Theatre troupe from 1898, he formed his own theatre in Moscow in 1920 and led it until 1938. The following July he was arrested, and shot on 2nd February 1940.
- [30] Those who knew him well were quite aware that whenever Shostakovich resorted to current slogans or journalistic clichés like 'I am convinced the future will be splendid', the precise opposite was to be understood.
- [31] Ivan Semyonovich Kozlovsky (1900–1993), lyric tenor, People's Artist of the Soviet Union, from 1926 a soloist of the Bolshoi Opera, and a close friend of Vera Dulova and Alexander Baturin.
- [32] [A settlement to the north of St. Petersburg, in the 1930s predominantly working class due to its large railway junction, but after the war a fashionable resort for the dacha-owning class of the city.]
- [33] [The Fourth Symphony, completed in April 1936. Its premiere was scheduled for December with the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra under Fritz Stiedry, but at the last moment, during one of the final rehearsals, the composer withdrew it. Isaak Glikman, who was present, describes how the composer was summoned to the office of the orchestra's director, after which the rehearsal was abandoned and the performance cancelled. One can draw one's own conclusions but as they were never categorically explained the precise reasons must even now remain speculative. In any event the symphony was not heard for another quarter of a century, when on 30th December 1961 it was performed in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire conducted by Kirill Kondrashin]
- [34] [Vasily Ivanovich Chapaev (1887–1919) was a legendary Red Army hero of the Civil War. In 1934 a film of his exploits made by the Vasiliev brothers in the Lenfilm Studios, based on the novel written by his brigade commissar Dmitri Furmanov and with a score by Gavriil Popov, became Stalin's favourite film and so popular with the public it was seen by over 30 million people in the year of its release alone. So canonical did Chapaev become in the pantheon of Soviet revolutionary heroes that in time, along with Furmanov and Chapaev's loyal but intellectually challenged Baldrick-

esque subordinates Petka and Anka, he became in time the subject of countless scurrilous black-humour jokes.]

[35] Vsevolod Vyacheslavovich Ivanov (1895–1963), writer best known for his novel *Armoured Train No. 14-69* [about a successful attack by partisans on a counter-revolutionary armoured train in Siberia during the Civil War]. In 1927 Ivanov turned his novel into a successful play for the Moscow Arts Theatre.



[36] Isaak Glikman remembers: ‘. . . One day Dmitri Dmitrievich said to me “if they were to cut off both my hands, I would still go on writing music holding a pen in my teeth.” This dreadful remark, uttered quite simply, without a trace of affectation in an extraordinarily matter-of-fact tone, completely stunned me. Shivers ran up and down my spine. For a moment I saw this hideous phantasmagoria in my mind’s eye as if it were an image from Dante. I lost the power of speech and could do nothing but lapse distractedly into silence. Dmitri Dmitrievich, who had had no intention of shocking or upsetting me with his pronouncement, looked me straight in the eye and seamlessly, with the utmost calmness, changed the subject and continued with our conversation . . .’ (I. D. Glikman *Letters to a Friend: Letters of D. D. Shostakovich to I. D. Glikman*, DSCH, Moscow 1993, Kompozitor, St. Petersburg 1993, English version tr. Anthony Phillips as *Story of a Friendship*, Faber & Faber, London 2001, pp 9, xix)

[37] Alexei Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1882–1945), celebrated writer, prominent in political affairs, member (1939) of the USSR Academy of Sciences, deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet, recipient of several State Prizes.

[38] Yury Alexandrovich Shaporin (1887–1966), composer, People’s Artist of the Soviet Union, Professor at the Moscow Conservatoire, recipient of several State Prizes.

[39] Yevgeny Alexandrovich Mravinsky (1903–1987), one of the 20th century’s master conductors, People’s Artist of the Soviet Union, recipient of Lenin and State Prizes, Professor at the Leningrad Conservatoire. From 1938 until his death Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, and one of the most perceptive interpreters of Shostakovich’s music.

[40] [The remark referred to appeared in an article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of 12th January 1938, in which Shostakovich is quoted as saying that the subject of the Fifth Symphony was ‘the suffering of man, and all-conquering optimism. I wanted to convey in the symphony how, through a series of tragic conflicts of great inner spiritual turmoil, optimism asserts itself as a world-view.’ The much better-known sub-title ‘An Artist’s Reply to Just Criticism’, which is to this day commonly – in the West at least, but seldom if ever in Russia – applied to the Fifth Symphony, stems from an article in *Vechernyaya Moskva* [*Evening Moscow*] allegedly, but not definitively authored by the composer himself. In it he endorses ‘with especial pleasure’ the opinion of an unnamed critic that ‘the Fifth Symphony is the practical creative answer of a Soviet artist to just criticism’. To quote Richard Taruskin (‘Shostakovich and Us’, article in *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* pp 468–497, Princeton University Press 1997) ‘the first of Shostakovich’s works to fit the canonical heroic-classical mould with which he is now so firmly identified was the Fifth Symphony, which was received by the powers as an act of contrition, and saddled by them with a quasi-autobiographical subtext, first enunciated in a review by the novelist Alexei Tolstoy that appeared in the newspaper *Izvestiya* (28th December 1937), and soon thereafter echoed in an article that appeared in the newspaper *Vechernyaya Moskva* (‘My Creative Reply’, 25th January 1938) over the composer’s name.]

[41] [A cable in which a handwritten (or typed) message was photographed and sent through the telegraph network.]

[42] Alexander Baturin, who had been a professional chauffeur in his youth, was an excellent driver. In due course Vera Georgievna also obtained a driving licence and occasionally took the wheel. But because of the exceptionally busy life led by both husband and wife they had a private driver, one Nikolai Pavlovich.

[43] Yevgeny Lvovich Lann (real name Losman) (1896–1958), writer and translator, author of historical novels.

[44] [The major population centre of Samara, on the banks of the Volga, was renamed Kuibyshev in the Soviet era, reverting to its original name only in 1991.]

[45] From Shostakovich’s letter to I. D. Glikman from Kuibyshev dated 4th January 1942: ‘. . . A few words about the symphony: the first movement lasts 25 minutes. It was completed on 3rd September 1941. The second movement lasts 8 minutes, and was finished on 17th September 1941. The third movement lasts 17 minutes and was finished on 27th December 1941 . . .’ (opp. cit pp 35, 6)

[46] [With the opera and ballet artists, orchestra, chorus, corps de ballet, technical and administrative staff the whole company would have numbered at least 400 and probably nearer 500.]

[47] Green coffee is raw, unroasted coffee beans. Ever since the years of famine and the disruptions of war real coffee had come to be regarded as something only found in fairy tales. Dmitri Dmitrievich sent some to friends and also took back to Moscow packets of the precious beans for Vera Georgievna’s mother.

[48] Different sources have differing accounts of this dramatic situation. The three-year-old Maxim Shostakovich remembers that the lost suitcase was found quite quickly in the next carriage. F. L. Petrov, the Administrative Director of the Bolshoi, recalled that total chaos had reigned at the departure of this particular group of evacuees. All the luggage, music



and instruments had been loaded separately into the luggage van of the train, after which the passengers waited all day for the train to depart, and then, suddenly, late in the evening, the entire troupe of the Moscow Operetta Theatre was brought along to join the train. The luggage van was ordered to be cleared for them. This was done in a feverish rush, and personal belongings, music, instruments were literally thrown out on to the platform because the train might pull out at any moment. Then the hastily collected luggage was somehow or other stuffed back onto the open platforms of the carriages. By the time Dmitri Dmitrievich realised what must have happened to the precious suitcase it was too late to go in search of it. However, during a long wait at Ruzaevka station he

and Petrov went hunting for it the full length of the train, squeezing up against the glass doors to the open carriage platforms to see what lay on them. Finally they spotted one corner of the suitcase, underneath a pile of other people's bundles and trunks . . . Arrival in Kuibyshev brought more chaos and confusion as everyone searched for their luggage, now scattered the full length of the train. Evidently it was in the midst of this commotion that two large bags belonging to the Shostakoviches disappeared with all their clothes and linen, as well as the unprepossessing case containing the score, which someone had carelessly pushed under a bench.

[49] Mily Alexeyevich Balakirev (1836–1910), Russian composer, leader of the 'Mighty Handful' group of composers.

[50] Samuil Abramovich Samosud (1884–1964), conductor, People's Artist of the Soviet Union, Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Bolshoi Theatre from 1936 to 1943.

[51] It turned out, however, that there was no manuscript paper to be had in Kuibyshev, so it was not possible to start copying the orchestral parts. A special aeroplane was despatched to Moscow to bring some.

[52] The first public performance of the Seventh Symphony took place in Kuibyshev on the 5th March 1942, performed by the Orchestra of the Bolshoi Theatre conducted by Samosud. The Moscow premieres followed on the 29th and 30th March.

[53] [Measure of length equivalent to 2.13 metres.]

[54] [Jeanne Paquin (1869–1936), the first woman to establish her own fashion house in Paris (Maison Paquin, which much later, in 1953, bought out Worth), famous in her day for her innovative designs, flair for publicity and association with theatrical designers such as Bakst and Louis Süe, but now scarcely remembered.]

[55] The origin of this character is the Georgian Soso Begiashvili, for a time a student at the Leningrad Conservatoire later switching to economics in which field he achieved considerable success. Somehow or other he turned up in Kuibyshev and attached himself to the Shostakovich household. Those around him, however, doubtful of his risky and shady commercial schemes, treated him with extreme circumspection. [see op. cit. pp 6, 228 for DDS's sardonic references to his 'friend' Soso Begiashvili.]

[56] Nina Varzar's mother, Shostakovich's mother-in-law, was Sofia Mikhailovna Varzar (1878–1957), an astronomer. Her father was Vasily Vasilievich Varzar (1871–1960), a lawyer. Pasha was Praskovya Ivanovna Demidova, a devoted and much loved member of the family who had been Nina's nanny and continued as nanny to Galina and Maxim Shostakovich.

[57] [The most famous example of the Russian realist 'Wanderers' school, Ilya Repin's 1870 painting *Barge Haulers (Burlaks) on the Volga* of 1870 combines a powerful condemnation of the inhumanity of a society that condones such back-breaking exploitation with a celebration of the innate dignity of the subjects. The inspiration of the *Song of the Volga Boatmen*, such is its fame (rather like that of Chapaev) that given the endemic streak of cynicism in the Russian psyche it has always been subject to satirical parody in a way that, for example, Jerome Kern's *Ol' Man River* never seems to have been.]

[58] Maxim Domidontovich Mikhailov (1893–1971), bass, People's Artist of the Soviet Union, soloist of the Bolshoi Opera from 1932 to 1956, recipient of State Prizes.

[59] [A kind of dumpling filled with meat or mushrooms.]

[60] [Vasily Fyodorovich Ryabov, Head of Business Affairs at the Bolshoi Theatre.]

[61] Members of the elite were issued with passes to dine modestly at the restaurant of the National Hotel in Kuibyshev.

[62] On the 24th June 1962 Dmitri Dmitrievich wrote to I. D. Glikman: ' . . . My wife's name is Irina Antonovna. I have known her for more than two years. Her only negative quality is that she is 27 years of age. In all other respects she is wonderful: clever, cheerful, simple and very nice . . . I think she and I will live happily together . . .' [opp. cit. pp 173-4; 102]

From Maxim Shostakovich's Memoirs: 'It is impossible to say enough about the role played in our father's life by his wife Irina Antonovna. She married Shostakovich in 1962, when his ill-health was in the early stages, before it had been properly diagnosed. . . . During the succeeding years Irina Antonovna was his principal succour and support. She accompanied him on all his travels, his stays in hospitals and sanatoria, she was his secretary, chauffeur and nurse . . . I am convinced that only due to the care in which he was enveloped by Irina Antonovna did our father, despite the gravity of his sufferings, live until his seventieth year. Nor must it be forgotten that Shostakovich remained a creative force until the very last days of his life . . .' (op. cit.)

[63] [The Kremlyovka, formally the Central Clinical Hospital, was opened in 1947 in a rural setting on the outskirts of Moscow. Intended to reflect the state of the art in the excellence of both its clinical services and the comfort of its patients, it was reserved for the highest echelons of political and professional society.]