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The First Symphony in F minor, opus 10 (1925) became the diploma composition of the 19 year old graduate of Leningrad Conservatory. This first "swallow" in the complex artistic world of Shostakovich's orchestral compositions, which has not revealed all of its mysteries even up to the present day, has made the composer famous in an instant: after only two years of its premiere, the tenth opus was included by the world's leading conductors in their programs. It became apparent that in Russia there appeared a continuer of the great Russian and European symphonic traditions. Through the seeming "academicism" of the proportionate conception of the four-movement cycle there was already the "modernist" Shostakovich seeping through in his bold and provoking harmonic progressions and in the principles of orchestration (manifested in the unforgettable woodwind solos and the terrifying thunder claps of percussion). What kind of discovery of the world of the symphony was it for Shostakovich and what a discovery was it for the world of a new master, who will one more time after his great forerunners (Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Mahler) will make the genre immortal? The First Symphony already, notwithstanding its youthful openness and directness, forestalls the philosophy and dialectics of the late opuses. The entire symphony seems to pour out from one source – from the introduction in the first movement, which becomes a sort of contracted epigraph: the intensive outcry of the trumpet is answered by the perturbed sounding retorts of the woodwind instruments. The material of the introduction permeates the entire first movement, appearing in the crucial points of the Sonata-Allegro form: it meets an impetuous, forceful primary theme (a march with the leading fanfares of trumpets and horns) and heralds the appearance of an intricate waltz-like

subsidiary theme (played by a solo flute against the background of a gentle string pizzicato), after which it opens up the development section, where in a violent strain the two main themes are played against each other, both of them altered beyond recognition; finally the woodwind outbursts from the introduction closes up the entire movement. The Scherzo, in which the colossal role of the percussion instruments (including the piano) should be especially noted, follows the principle of contrast, established in the first movement. The mischievous gallop, full of ardor and energy, is interrupted by a melodious subsidiary theme, in which one can hear the conciliation and peace of a lullaby in a folk spirit. However, this in its essence genre scene is suddenly penetrated into by the dynamism of the development section from the first movement: in the Scherzo's recapitulation Shostakovich connects themes, quite contrasting to each other, in a contrapuntal junction; moreover, the "lullaby" theme is forcefully proclaimed by the brass against the background of the gallop theme, which takes up the entire orchestral space. In the Lento the contrast reaches extreme points. Similar to a short respite from the energetic "skirmishes" of the first two movements, the third movement could very well have become an island of lyricism, however the warm, sincere cantilena of the primary theme (in the oboe, then in the solo cello) encounters here the deathly coldness of the subsidiary theme, written in the genre of a funeral march. However, it must be noticed that its melody in its inversion becomes the basis of the subsidiary theme of the Finale, which determines the outcome of the symphony – more optimistic, rather than fatal.

The pattern of Shostakovich's symphonies continues by so-called "Festive

Diptych": the Second Symphony "Dedication to October" with chorus set on the text of Alexander Bezymensky, opus 14 (1927); the Third Symphony "The First of May" (with chorus set to the text of S. Kirsanov), opus 20 (1929) forms it. In the summer of 1927, upon the suggestion of the musical sector of Gosizdat to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution, Shostakovich wrote a one-movement composition for chorus and orchestra, which he titled "To October" (a symphonic dedication). The result of the "political" commission was marked by a special prize, dedicated to the same anniversary date, its premiere (the composition was performed by the Leningrad Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra and the Academic Cappella under the direction of Nikolai Malko) was met with enthusiasm by both the general public and musicians, but soon the Symphony disappeared from the repertoire and did not sound up until 1965. There were certain reasons for this: the young composer "under cover" of the program had carried out his search for a new, contemporary musical language and in reality had created an avant-garde score, plentiful with difficulties of performance (for instance, in the middle of the concluding chorus there is hidden an instrumental triple fugue) which, of course, caused the undoubted criticism of being formalist.

The instrumental and choral sections of the symphony develop two polar opposites of imagery: the gloomy, heavy mood in the introduction on one hand and the triumphant choral apotheosis on the other hand. The heroic exclamations, categorical "monologues" by separate instruments (for instance, the solo trumpet after the first culmination) and the rhythmic declamation (without music) in the final culmination drew Shostakovich's composition closer to the agitational

compositions, characteristic for that time. Two years after the "Dedication to October" another vocal-symphonic work appeared, which together with the Second Symphony has formed a sort of "festive diptych". The new opus of Shostakovich was dedicated to another holiday, which had become a trait of the new socialist society. The Third Symphony ("The First of May") was performed for the first time on January 21, 1930 in Leningrad. The Leningrad Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra and the Academic Cappella Chorus was conducted by Alexander Gauk. In a newspaper review of the premiere the author emphasized that "the element of struggle, which is present in each May 1st holiday..., ran through the entire symphony in a most conspicuous manner", whereas Boris Asafiev later called it "virtually the only attempt to create a symphonic work out of the dynamism of revolutionary declamation, an oratorical atmosphere and oratorical intonations". The Second and Third Symphonies have many things in common. The "First of May", similarly to the "October" symphony, does not have a comprehensive literary program; both present themselves as one-movement compositions, in which a rather lengthy symphonic unfolding is crowned with a choral episode, which proclaims the ideological foundations of the new society. However, unlike the preceding symphony, the "First of May" possesses a more distinct intonational and emotional characteristics. Shostakovich, who by that time had acquired a substantial amount of experience from working in theater and cinema, created a brilliant, colorful score, vividly conveying the mood and the images of the festive day. The light, pastoral introduction gradually passes into a joyous and vigorous movement of the street, from time to time permeated by the call of the trumpet. Two

intermezzo episodes – a scene of the pioneers and the lyrical “respite” – are a sort of scherzo and slow movement, which were placed by the composer in the middle of the large-scale composition, which are followed by the final “demonstration” – the climactic episode, which forestalls the composer’s powerful choral episode at the end.

The destiny of the performing career of the Fourth Symphony, opus 43 (1936) is tragic, just as its content is. No other of Shostakovich’s symphonies had been consigned to oblivion, prior to even being performed. “I have earnestly approached the creation of my Fourth Symphony, which will be a sort of CREDO of my artistic work”, Shostakovich wrote in the Spring of 1935. meticulously working at the material of the composition, Shostakovich completed the symphony within a year – on May 20, 1936. The premiere, which was planned for November of that year, was being prepared by the Leningrad Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra under the direction of F. Shtidri. Undercover intrigues, carried out by Communist Party officials, compelled Shostakovich to cancel the premiere “from his own wishes”, the effects from the unfounded condemnations of the opera “Katerina Izmailova” and the ballet “Light Creek” in the notorious newspaper “Pravda” articles “Confusion instead of Music” and “A Deception of a Ballet” being still fresh in his memory. Unjustly neglected for 25 years, the composition finally found its audience at its performance by the Moscow Philharmonic Academic Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Kirill Kondrashin at the Grand Hall of Moscow Conservatory on December 30, 1961. the concert had a tremendous success. After the sensational premiere Shostakovich said to his friend I. Glickman: “It seems to me that the

Fourth is in many respects more substantial than my later symphonies” (at that time the composer had already written ten scores). The first Movement (Allegretto poco moderato) presents itself as an extremely dense tangle of polar events, a perpetuum mobile of a struggle of contradictory beginnings, the disharmony of human life in the world of fear and evil. Full of musical irony, sarcasm, heroic aspirations and tragic images, illogical contrasts and expressive polyphony, it is similar to a tracing, made by Shostakovich of the surrounding world and transferred to the music staff. The fragmented quality of the dramaturgy and form in the first movement further intensifies the extremely tense, emotional acuity of the collision, which began with the shriek of the epigraph.

The second movement (Moderato) presents a type of a lyrical intermezzo, which provides for a relaxation, a break from the intense conflicts of the first movements. Two thematic entities alternate with each other – a lively dance theme is followed by that of a melancholy waltz. The coda of the second movement is one of the most expressive episodes in all of Shostakovich’s musical legacy, presenting an infinity, to which the exhausted human soul aspires. Subsequently the composer will utilize the material of the coda in his Fifteenth Symphony. The grandiose Finale once again returns us to new contrasts and to the conflicting images of the first movement. It should be noted that the missing slow movement in the symphonic cycle of the work is substituted by the introduction to the Finale, a funeral march marked Largo. Particularly in the Fourth Symphony the funeral march receives such a grandiose development and becomes “the beginning of the end”: the last section of the Finale, a dynamic recapitulation, will develop from the material of

the Largo. The second section (Allegro), resembling a toccata, presents a sketch of genres. The polka, waltz, march and song are presented and Shostakovich draws all these themes into a fiery carnival atmosphere, as usual, not lacking a sad irony. The resplendent Coda of the Finale presents an apotheosis of "all the beginnings" of the Fourth Symphony. That tragic loftiness, which was barely perceivable in the Fourth Symphony through the intensive contrasts, will become a powerful resolution in regards to the question of the conflict between good and evil. The concluding lengthy and sad chord is merely the conclusion but not the answer.

The Fifth Symphony in D minor, opus 47 appeared to be much luckier than the previous fourth one. It was first performed a year after it was written – on 21 of November 1937 in the Leningrad Philarmonic Great Hall – and immediately brought a triumphal success both to Shostakovich and conductor Mravinsky, who prepared the brilliant performance. The Fifth Symphony is a kind of reflection of the inner life of a man, put into irons of the epoch. M. Sabinina, one of the keen critics and commentators of composer's creative activities, once wrote that "the whole generation recognised their fate in the music of this genial symphony, they heard here an echo of their meditations upon the world, which surrounded them". The first movement (Moderato) is a musical philosophic narration. The epigraph theme, which has some similar intonation to that of the music of other movements, became the clue of the main subject. This Moderato opens a series of sonata-form allegros of the moderate and slow tempos, which then often appeared in the symphonic and chamber-instrumental compositions by Shostakovich. This constant inclination of the composer towards restrained and calm development

in the Sonata allegros of the first movements (which is absolutely not typical for classic symphonism of XVIII and XIX centuries and appears only in the music by Mahler) is determined by their specific content and dramatic conflict. As in a philosophic novel, the plot here develops slowly and sometimes gives place to author's meditations. The thought moves quietly, showing its different aspects. The second movement (Scherzo) is different because of its emotional coloring and shows us a bright genre sketching. It sounds as if there were no deep meditations in the first movement. The humor of Shostakovich brings to the listener a chance to throw down the hard burden, which is shouldered to him in the first movement. The ironic merriment, narrative lyricism and playful melody seem to be quite careless, but it is only a pause before the tragic confession of the third movement. This Largo of the Fifth symphony is a reverse of this pseudo merriment. We can remember here what Shostakovich himself used to say of his grandiose (both in its significance and pathos) composition: "I wanted to show in my symphony how through many tragic conflicts and painful inner struggle one can come to an optimistic outlook". The Third movement is a dramaturgic center of the symphony. It is here that dark thoughts are transforming into light feelings and the inner doubts give place to resistance, which literally splashes out in the Finale, becoming a confident protest against the circumstances and, as a result, a triumph of the spirit over all-powerful force, which has destroyed souls of many people. The Finale of the Fifth Symphony is sort of Shostakovich's response to the terrible events, as the composer deep in his heart did not obey the "Moloch" of Soviet reality of the late 1930-s.

After the stunning success of the Fifth Symphony many people expected some

extraordinary experiences from the Sixth Symphony opus 53 (1939). On November 5 1939 in the Grand Hall of the Leningrad Philharmonic Society in performance of the Leningrad Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Evgeni Mravinsky Shostakovich's new orchestral composition was heard. The work turned out to be totally unexpected for the listeners. The most discouraging thing about the symphony was the fact that it was in three movements; the absence of a fast Sonata Allegro in the symphonic cycle subsequently caused a sarcastic remark from some of the critics, who called the Sixth Symphony a "symphony without a head". Nevertheless, the Finale, which was encores at the premiere particularly emphasized the significance of the original composition, which had become an invaluable example of Shostakovich's symphonic legacy for future generations. In the Sixth Symphony Shostakovich abandons any sense of connection between the movements. He presents the difference between each one of them in such a vivid manner, not even allowing them to merge together into a unified sphere. The poetic beauty of the first movement (Largo) presents a majestic thoughtful mood, an unchangeable in its melodic beauty predominance of two motives, which subsequently merge into one unified whole, which becomes the source of all the musical discourse of the first movement. In the subsidiary theme group echoes of the funeral march become distinctly audible, the constrained gait in the middle section seems to cause all living things to freeze and stand still. The introductory theme pours out in lament in the heartfelt recapitulation. The fantastic Scherzo in the second movement (Allegro) is a most virtuosic piece in terms of its color, timbral, tempo and emotion content as well as in its performance requirements.

This is a rapid dance, presented in the woodwinds, xylophone and side drum, which causes the musical color to lead away from the sad thoughts of the first movement, as if striking from the swiftly fleeting musical material the sparks of a future bold, loud and fiery Finale. The symphony's stunning, entrancing Finale (Presto) recalls the listener to the unclouded, lightweight finales of the Classical symphonies of Haydn and Mozart as well as the Soviet period song and dance genres of the 1930s. The acuity of perception of the surrounding life merged tightly with the symphonic composer's classic mastery in the unified entity of the bustling Finale. The motley characteristic motives of songs and dances, harmonizing in their contrast to the harmonious proportions of the traces of the Viennese Classics, presents in the best possible way in the music of the Finale the typical close proximity of the "lofty and the mundane".

The Seventh Symphony("Leningrad"), opus 60 (1941) is the most bright and authentic musical document of the Second World War. The chronicle of the blockade Leningrad of 1941 is so expressive, that we could hardly find a composition, which would equal in its authenticity the famous Shostakovich's work. He wrote the Seventh for less than half a year. It incarnated the whole epoch: horror of the invasion, recollection of the peaceful days and hope for the future life. "The Seventh Symphony is a poem of our struggle and future victory..Working on it, I was thinking of the greatness of our people, its heroism, best ideals of the human kind, our Nature, humanism and beauty. For the sake of all this we are having a terrible struggle" – Shostakovich wrote. In the draft copies one can see letters "a.w." - air-raid warning. It was the way he marked the compulsed intervals

in his work. Shostakovich dedicated the Seventh Symphony to his native city – Leningrad. It was first presented on 5 March 1942 in Kuibyshev (now Samara) under the baton of Samuil Samosud. The triumphal performances of the Seventh Symphony started already during the war period and continue even now, because human courage and patriotism will always touch listeners of all continents, independently of their nationality. Originally Shostakovich worked out a program to each movement. The first one is “War”, the 2nd – “Recollection”, the 3rd – “Native land”, and the 4th – “Victory”. Later however he rejected the idea of “deciphering” titles of the movements. He appreciated the listeners deeply and wrote after the first performance of the symphony: “In spite of the absence of the titles most listeners interpreted the music quite adequately...” (“About the true and false program music”). Let’s now listen to how Shostakovich himself interpreted the “plot” of the Leningrad Symphony.

“The first movement shows how the cruel war interrupted our beautiful, peaceful life. I did not try to present naturalistically military actions (planes’ din, crash of tanks or cannonade sounds), I did not compose so-called battle music. I wanted to show the severe events. The exposition of the first movement narrates on the happy life of the people, who are confident of their future. It is a simple peaceful life, many of our Leningrad and the whole country people were leading. The whole middle episode presents the theme of the war, a funeral march or even a requiem, dedicated to the victims of the war. The soviet people render honour to their heroes. After the Requiem follows a more tragic episode. I do not know how to characterize this music. Tears of a mother or even a feeling, which is so full of sufferings, that

there is no room for tears. After a long bassoon solo, dedicated to sufferings of dear people, comes a light and lyric conclusion of the first movement. And only in the very end the war theme reappears, reminding of itself and the following struggle. The second movement (Moderato/ Poco Allegretto) is a very lyric Scherzo. One can hear in its melodies some recollections of good events and merry episodes. All this is covered with a veil of sadness and dreaminess. The ecstasy of joy and worship of Nature are main feelings of the third movement, which goes into the fourth one without any pause. Like the first movement, the fourth one (Allegro Non Troppo) is one of the key parts for this composition. If the first movement is a struggle, the fourth one is a future victory. It begins with a short introduction, which is followed with the first theme, full of bravura and excitement. The second theme is solemn in its character. It is the apotheosis of the whole composition. It develops calmly and powerfully, growing in the end into a great and solemn music”.

After the Eighth Symphony in C minor, opus 65 was over Shostakovich wrote: “This new work of mine is an attempt to glance at the future, after-war epoch. The Eighth Symphony has a lot of inner conflicts, which are sometimes tragic and sometimes dramatic. But in general this work is optimistic and life-asserting... The philosophic idea of my new work can be expressed briefly as following: Life is beautiful. All, what is dark in it, will disappear, while its beauty will triumph”. Written in the summer of 1943 and dedicated to E. Mravinsky, it was first presented by him and The State Symphonic orchestra of USSR on November, 4 of the same year in Moscow. It seemed that after the Fifth and Sixth symphonies Shostakovich would hardly find more authentic colours in his music language to express the

tragic confession. However it is this Symphony, which became the peak and tragic culmination of Shostakovich's works. The symphony consists of five movements. The first four of them sound like a single organism, a unity of contraries, coexisting in symbiosis, while the fifth movement (Finale) is a kind of separately settled epilogue. The Eighth Symphony, like it was also in the Fifth one, has a theme-epigraph, but contrariwise to the Fifth Symphony, this time it affects the intonation and becomes a dramatic ingredient of the following movements. It is closely connected with a theme of the slow movement (Passacaglia) and the music of the Finale, which is the dramatic highlight of the whole composition. The second movement is not simply a humoristic sketch, as it used to be in the previous symphonies, but a powerful representation of the evil forces. The third movement of the Symphony (Toccata) continues the atmosphere, introduced in the Scherzo, it seems to resemble the second movement in its genre character; both these movements are imbued with military images and march music. The fourth movement (Passacaglia) corresponds to the semantics of the genre, Shostakovich had chosen for the slow movement. There is some emotional recession in the fourth movement and it gradually transforms into concentrated stiffness. Passacaglia passes into the Finale without any interruption. The Eighth Symphony embodied the whole spectrum of human feelings, which are expressed with a great emotional power. Shostakovich uses a great deal of music effects and staggering dynamic contrasts (from pianissimo to fortissimo). Due to all these qualities the Eighth Symphony can rightly be called the world tragedy, incarnated in sounds.

The audience, which gathered on November, 3, 1945 in the Grand Hall of the

Leningrad Philharmonic Society, was overwhelmed. On that day the premiere of Shostakovich's Ninth Symphony in E-flat major, opus 70 took place – a symphony, which was supposed to proclaim and crown the glory of the “great days of victory”. After the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies – two symphonic canvases of a superhuman, universal scope, the world was supposed to be thrilled by the Victory Symphony, especially since the composer himself had stated numerous times that he had been working at a monumental opus. (Incidentally, the same way, Shostakovich had attested that he was working on a symphony in homage to Lenin, however not a single sketch of the latter has been found up to the present day). The composition which sounded that day under the direction of Evgeny Mravinsky had really surprised the listeners: the Victory Symphony had turned out to be a composition, in which the pathos of the victors was completely absent; it was rather a chamber, miniature composition, similar to Prokofiev's “mischievous piece” – his “Classical Symphony”. This almost self-willed “escapade” was remembered to Shostakovich in the ill-fated year 1948, when the government inflicted harsh reprisals against the artists whom it did not approve of. The lightweight virtuosic first movement (Allegro) presents an ideal example of the boisterous Scherzo traits of Shostakovich the Classicist. Being a real master, he strictly adheres to the rules of writing a merry, inspired Sonata Allegro. It is proportionate in its formal buildup and simple in its disposition, – there is no equal to Shostakovich in the laconic qualities and intricacy of his melodic design in the resilient motor scalar asserting major. In the subsidiary theme group the playful intonations of the piccolo are layered on the accompaniment of the trombone with the timpani and side drum.

And in this combination the "speaking" rhythm of the wartime is easily guessed. During the course of the entire movement through the exultant, triumphant tonality of E-flat major now and then one could hear the seeping through of the pain felt from perceiving the cost of such a great victory. In the coda, which is based on the climax music material of the development section, the side drum reminds clearly and unswervingly with its pulsation of the tragedy brought by the columns of marching armies. The second movement (Moderato) presents a sad monologue (played by a solo clarinet). This is not merely a musical discourse – it is a cry of lamentation, which ends in resignation. The third movement (Presto) is a gripping Scherzo, which is opened by a virtuosic ensemble of woodwind instruments. In the middle of it comes a heroically sounding trumpet solo against the background of an enticing Spanish accompaniment. The fourth movement (Largo) presents one of the most brilliant examples of the tragic lyricism of Shostakovich the symphonist. This is a moment of profound concentration. It is invaluable not only in itself but also as a certain lyrical-philosophical commentary to the entire composition (according to D. Zhitomirsky). The fifth movement (Allegretto) switches the listener from the sheer tragic mood in the Largo to the seemingly carefree and unpretentious melody performed by the bassoon. The pseudo-insouciance returns once again, so cleverly transformed by Shostakovich into a suggestive grotesque triumph, bordering on a tragic-farce.

After the Ninth Symphony Shostakovich had not approached any one of his favorite genres for eight whole years. It seemed that the persecution, which was already officially permitted in 1948, bereft the composer of his strength and of

the possibility itself to resist. A tendentious resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist party (of Bolsheviks), entitled "Of the opera "Great Friendship" by Vano Muradeli", dated by 10 February 1948 and accusing several Soviet composers (first of all Shostakovich and Prokofiev) of 'antipatriotism and formalism' painfully hurt Shostakovich's professional feelings. Having a bitter experience of political persecution of 1936, Shostakovich decided to write some official, patriotic compositions, ordered by the power authorities. The music to the film "Defeat of Berlin" and cantata "Sun is shining over our Land" were among these works. The latter of them together with oratorio "Song of Forests" were immediately awarded with a Stalin Prize. "Sun is shining over our Land", opus 90 (1952) was written on the words by Dolmatovsky and was first performed in November 1952, when the Soviet people marked the 35th anniversary of Great October. The intentional, simple Cantata language resembles the intonation of the Soviet mass songs, while the battle call "Communists, go ahead!" gets through the whole composition. The first and last movements of the composition are majestic, lyrical and epical at the same time. They contrast with manly and resolute male choir, in which one can hear the motives of revolutionary songs. According to the genre rules of a composition, glorifying "builders of communism", who believe in their "bright future", the final movement of the composition – culmination of the cycle – sounds mighty and powerfully, like an anthem.

It is not surprising that already in April 1953 Shostakovich was actively working on a new symphony, the premiere of which took place in the winter of that same year. Although it was still far from the official statement of Khrushchev at the Twentieth

Congress of the CPSU, but the fact itself of the tyrant's demise (Joseph Stalin died on March 5, 1953) could very well be inwardly perceived as the beginning of the "thaw". In the Tenth Symphony in E minor, opus 93 (1953), possibly, for the first time Shostakovich was able to speak from the depth of his soul, to speak for himself, not concealing the pain of his bleeding heart. In the Spring of 1954, when during the course of the discussion of the Tenth Symphony there arose disputes and evil tongues accused the composer of pessimism, gloominess, historicalness and (once again) of formalism, Shostakovich had already found defenders, among whom was Aram Khachaturian and a number of other famous composers (in 1936 and 1948 few people were willing to take the side of the persecuted artist). Nonetheless, the Musical Section of the Committee for Stalin Prizes, according to Shostakovich himself, went out of its way to postpone the Tenth Symphony to the following year, in exchange for the cantata "Over our Motherland the Sun is Shining" and the 24 Preludes and Fugues. The Tenth Symphony – from its first notes in the double-bass, appearing as if from the darkness, through the detached lyricism of the first and third movements, the sparkling, menacing, infernal Scherzo and up to the final gust of the gushing current in the coda – is a symphony-confession. It is particularly here with a concise clarity the composer draws out his monogram. The encoded initials D. Sh. – present in the harshly chromatic motive DSCH – permeates through the entire score. As a flourish of a pen signature it appears at the boundary between the exposition and the development of the first movement, it screams out violently in the Allegretto (the third movement), appears in the Finale and dissolves in the latter's coda. The Final is also a lyrical confession: twenty times a horn motive

(e-mi(e)-la) could be heard, in which the name of Shostakovich's pupil Emilia Nazirova is concealed.

The 1950s also brought so-called "Revolutionary Diptych": the Eleventh Symphony, "The Year 1905", opus 103 (1967); the Twelfth Symphony "The Year 1917", opus 112 (1961). Similarly to the Second and Third Symphonies, which made up the so-called "festive diptych", in the second group of ten of symphonic scores we notice another pair – the Eleventh and Twelfth Symphonies, written one after the other and dedicated, respectively, to two gory dates on the historic map of the twentieth century – the "Bloody Sunday" of the year 1905 and the day in October, 1917, which brought the beginning of the 'path towards the bright future' of the Soviet people. The first of these Shostakovich began to write in the winter of 1957, the premiere having taken place already in the fall of that same year (conducted by Nathan Rakhlin). During the height of composing the work, the composer wrote to Isaac Glikman: "To all those who loved me, I owe my love. To all those who did evil to me, I send my curse". Possibly in April 1957 Shostakovich sent out his curse not only to the violent aggressors of the distant year 1905, but also to those of the rather recent past. Moreover, he did it by using their own language! Almost all the themes of the Eleventh Symphony are based on the melodies of revolutionary songs, alternated with songs of prisoners of hard labor and banishment – all of them excluding merely the thematic complex of the Palace Square in the first movement and the fugal section of the second movement. The broad melodies of the songs "Prisoner" and "Listen" in the first movement are supplanted by the motor-like motives of the latter: these include the famous song "Girl from Warsaw" and

the sprightly "Boldly, Comrades, March in Step!" and "Rage, Tyrants!". However, Shostakovich reevaluates these symbols, painting in his Eleventh Symphony the frightening pictures of the revolutionary revolt: its measured tread and relentless, persistent rhythms inspire terror. In the first movement ("The Palace Square") – the "introduction to the new symphony" (Shostakovich) gives the function of a prologue, merely outlining the future conflict. The functions of the hearth and field of the unfolding of the conflict is taken by the second movement (January 9), in which, similarly to two monolithic clods, two contrasting sections stand in close proximity to each other, which could conditionally be identified as the scene of the procession and the scene of the shooting. The third movement ("Eternal Memory") is a funeral march, which continues the tradition of the slow movement from Beethoven's Third Symphony. The Finale ("The Alarm Bell") is a wrathful, violent reaction to the bloody tragedy.

The first movement of the Twelfth Symphony "Revolutionary Petrograd" (St. Petersburg between 1916 & 1924) appeared to be the first sonata allegro, written in a traditional way with all classic attributes of the form, which satisfied the composer, like he recognised himself. The remarkable structure of the Symphony, its precise culminations and contrasts and ably arranged theme material make it especially attractive and comfortable for listeners. It is what we can define as "the form oriented to the perception", proving high professionalism of Shostakovich. However, unlike the program Seventh and Eleventh symphonies, this one does not contain any picture sketches and the subjective feeling dissolves into the general idea of revolution, victory happiness and deliverance from "heavy irons". Themes

of the first movement are concordantly matching each other. They do not include any dramatic intrigues, so that the music sounds powerfully and monumentally without bright images and contrasts. The second movement is entitled "Razliv" ("Overflow"), the name of the place in Petrograd suburb, where Lenin spent many hours, musing on the plans of Bolsheviks armed rebel. The themes of the second movement logically result from the intonation material of the first movement, while they have a more subjective and individual development. The third movement "Aurora" (the name of legendary cruiser who shot for a sign to attack the Winter Palace), in its turn, "totally depends on the previous ones in its themes" (M. Sabinina). The theme from "Overflow" unites with the additional theme of the first movement and both of them integrate into the coda of the Finale "Dawn of humanity" of the whole symphony. By the definition of V. Bobrovsky "all main themes of the symphony alloy here into a unified multi-voiced choir".

The first drafts of the Thirteenth Symphony in B flat minor for a bass-soloist, choir of bass-singers and orchestra on the words of E. Yevtushenko, opus 113 (1962) were made in 1961, when Shostakovich first read the poem by Yevtushenko "Babi Yar". First the composer was planning to write a kind of vocal-symphonic poem on these words; later, however, this initial idea transformed into a significant Symphony, a composition with a non-simple fate, as many other works by Shostakovich. So, not long before the premiere Khrushchev, who enjoyed then an absolute power, expressed discontent that the Symphony stresses the "Jewish question", though it was not only Jews, whom the fascists killed. However the authorities could not prohibit the performance of the Symphony, which was

already much being spoken about, as they were afraid of the reaction of the West, and the premiere was allowed (it was still interdicted to write about it in press). "In the thirteenth Symphony I set a problem of the national morality" – Shostakovich wrote. The composer was captivated with poems by Yevtushenko, imbued with social pathos: along with "Babi Yar", Shostakovich used poems "Humour", "At the store", "Fears" and "Career". The thirteenth Symphony is a kind of monologue, or even sermon. The bass-soloist, the voice of this monologue, touches the listener, making him think of horrors of racism and its victims – millions of people, who were smothered, buried or burnt alive... The choir of basses strengthens and stresses this story, personifying the voice of the people and "fiction characters" at the same time. The first movement – "Babi Yar" – is written as a funeral march. Its dialogue is penetrated with dramatic episodes. The whole music narration here is a requiem to millions of victims. The grandiose historic panorama includes bright and terrible historic events, like Dreyfuss case, helpless boy from Belostok, Anna Frank and her beloved, Jewish pogroms and fascist barbarism. The second movement – "Humor" – occupies in the cycle the place of Scherzo. Shostakovich presents it as a kind of music pamphlet, full of bitter and wicked mockery, ironic grimace and striking satire, aimed at the enemies of laughter and pursuers of humor. The listener is stunned with cascades of rhythms, abrupt image changes, unexpected music textures, grotesque, dancing and humoristic song melodies. All of this creates an atmosphere of a buffoonery show. The third movement – "In the shop" – is written as a monologue of the author. Gradually the image of a Russian woman emerges – the central part of the movement – who is "an angel of the family". The music of

this movement is written in a character of lullaby, which is full of mother's love. The fourth movement – "Fears" – is another slow center of the symphonic cycle. The choir repeats monotonously the same sound ("Fears are dying in Russia"), making a kind of refrain, while two Fear themes develop in the episodes. The theme, presented by tuba, personifies Fate. It fills the music of the fourth movement. This theme is the first image of Fear; the second one is hoarse, disquieting fanfares of the muted trumpets. Gradually this ominous atmosphere seems to vanish, penetrating the silence and the psalm melody sounds as a reply. The first movement – "Career" – is the last means of revealing the human fortunes. All the main elements of the music complex of "Babi Yar" revive here totally transformed – they do not have any more tragic bitterness of the first movements. This movement, with its soft, serene light, playful humor and lyricism, belongs to the best works of the late Shostakovich.

After the Thirteenth Symphony Shostakovich turned to Yevtushenko poems once again and in 1964 he completed a poem for bass, choir and orchestra "Execution of Stepan Razin", op. 119. As Shostakovich himself admitted, unlike in the case with texts of the thirteenth Symphony, when he shared the feelings of Yevtushenko totally, in the "Execution..." the texts sometimes provoked a protest inside the composer and the music seems to oppose to the text. As I. Glickman recalls Shostakovich disapproved much of the aggressive lines "People, I am sinful not because I hung the boyars in the trees, but because I did not hang more of them". «I have written the poem in the "a la russe" style. There is room for comments both for my friends and strict critics. Sometimes, for example, I am

too naturalistic. When I show itching of the whores or fleas, jumping from one cloth to another etc. Let's leave alone the viciousness of the general conception", the composer was writing ironically. Actually, Shostakovich was very careful about the composition and the destiny of the main hero. Glickman says that Shostakovich was once playing the poem in their private meeting and tears were rolling down his face. In the same sympathetic way Tchaikovsky was feeling towards his Herman. The music of the poem strikes listeners with power, vividness and clarity of the material. The theme of Razin opposes in the poem to the themes of crowd and power. One of the brightest images of the poem is that of the old and motley Moscow, which surrounds Razin when he is being taken to the place of execution. The people are wild, as if they were feeling the smell of blood. They are rushing to the execution place just for entertainment, but then a kind of irradiation and spiritual revival happens to dawn upon the people. Hence the whole psychological idea of the poem – from the wild and blind passion to realizing of the common tragedy. The premiere of the "Execution of Stepan Razin" took place in December of 1964 under the baton of Kondrashin. As it often happened with Shostakovich's works, unexpected things occurred. Apprehending a disapproval of the authorities, the soloist, bass of the Bolshoy theatre Ivan Petrov, who was rehearsing the main part, did not come to the general rehearsal. Still the concert was held (Petrov was changed for Vitaly Gromadsky, who participated in the premiere of the thirteenth Symphony), and "Execution of Stepan Razin" was a success. The press did not publish a word about performance.

Meditations on the life and death, which have always – and especially in the

late years occupied Shostakovich's mind, contributed to the conception of the Fourteenth Symphony, opus 135. According to the author himself, the plan of this composition was in many ways connected with "Songs and Dances of Death" by Mussorgsky – "great music, I have always admired" – Shostakovich said (the orchestra arrangement of the cycle he made still in 1962). First Shostakovich was going to write an oratorio on the words by Lorca, Apollinaire, Rilke and Kuechelbecker (the cycle consists of eleven movements). Later, however, the composer realized the whole idea of Life and Death, which makes the base of the cycle, and ranked it as one of the best among his symphonies and other works. The conflict of the symphony comes from the combination of meditative lyric and philosophic slow movement (*De profundis*) and tough and violent dance Scherzo ("Malaguena"). Lashes in the beginning of the third movement («Lorelei») apprehend the tragic death of the heroine. An intimate, lofty and tragical lyrics of the "Suicide" passes into a frolic song of sprightly Death, waiting for a young soldier ("On the alert"). A tiny psychological scene "Look, madam" crowns the group of movements, devoted to love and death. The seventh movement "In prison Sainte" introduces an idea of repressed freedom, which alarmed Shostakovich yet in the years of Stalin's terror. This is one of the most dramatic parts of the cycle, which shows horror and darkness of the sole imprisonment, dreadful silence of the prison cell. The unbridled development of the eighth movement with its constant measure changes "Response of Zaporogue Cossacks to Constantinople Sultan" contrasts with the ninth movement ("O Delvig, Delvig"), which resembles in its manner and character Russian romance-elegy. The theme of creator's destiny gives place to the

mourning over death of a great person ("Death of the Poet"): the sorrowful choral changes for a dread fatalistic march ("Conclusion"). The score of this stunning, genius music (using a small group of musicians – only strings and percussions – the composer created striking orchestra effects) was written by Shostakovich for a very short time in a hospital room. The premiere of the fourteenth Symphony took place on 29 September in Leningrad. It was performed by a chamber orchestra under Rudolf Barshai, with Galina Vishnevskaya and Eugene Vladimirov as soloists. As the contemporaries recall the day, it was a tremendous excitement, hundreds of people were trying to get to the premiere. I. Glickman wrote: "The music together with poetry made a great, staggering impact on the public. I was literally captivated and then I was raving about it. It seemed to me that I really saw the characters of the symphony, heard their voices and peered into their faces, distorted with sufferings".

Shostakovich set out composing his final, Fifteenth Symphony in A major, opus 141 in April 1971, and in the beginning of August he already showed it at a listening session at the Composers' Union (the four-hand piano arrangement was performed by Boris Tchaikovsky and Moisei Weinberg). "I worked on it a lot", the composer recounted, "and, strange as it may seem, I wrote it in a hospital, then after leaving the hospital, I wrote it in my dacha, ... but I could not tear myself away from this at all. This is one of those compositions, which had simply carried me away, and ... maybe, one of the few of my compositions, which seemed to me to be clear and concise from the first to the last note, the only thing being necessary was the time to write it down". In the Fifteenth Symphony the composer returns to a purely

instrumental, non-programmatic type of symphonic writing. The overall formal and stylistic conception of the work is unusual, and leads from a grotesquely optimistic beginning through a mournful Adagio and a dry, astringent Scherzo to a Finale, which is first lyrical and then pathetic, which ends with a pianissimo. Unusual in the symphony is the heterogeneity of the sound material, in which twelve-tone themes stand in close proximity with pure tonality, an intricacy of tone color and rhythm with a caricature of banality, and the objective tone of the chorale from the second movement with a purely "Shostakovichian" style of some fragments of the Finale. At the same time, the composition conceals in itself a lot of mysteries. The quotations in the music are also puzzling, since the technique of collage had never before been applied by Shostakovich. The unexpectedly appeared quotation from the Overture to "William Tell" brings a humorous impression, however the theme of fate from Wagner's "Die Walkure", appearing in the introduction to the Finale, already sounds in a fatal manner; the theme from the introduction to Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde" sounds as a fleeting hint, numerous times the B-A-C-H theme is repeated. It seems that Shostakovich glances at his life from the position of that which in art has already become eternity. Without the least bit of tragic sounds, against the background of the bells and the soft sound of percussion in the coda it seems that Shostakovich bids farewell to the symphony and, probably, to his life.

"I am writing a violin Concerto with difficulty, it is getting on slowly, one note at a time" – Shostakovich was writing to his friend Isaak Glickman in April 1967. Five weeks later, however the composition - Concerto for violin and

orchestra No. 2, in C-sharp minor, opus 129, dedicated to David Oistrakh, was accomplished. Shostakovich was then living mostly in his dacha at Zhukovka near Moscow, where he was recovering after a heart attack. At around the same time he completed a vocal cycle for soprano, violin, cello and piano on the verses by Block. He was not only carried away with Block's poetry, but a possibility to work together with Mstislav Rostropovich, Galina Vishnevskaya and David Oistrakh: Shostakovich wanted this group of musicians perform the romances. He wrote the piano part with the expectation "to his modest abilities", but because of a heavy disease he could not participate in the premiere (23 of October 1967, Big Hall of Conservatory), so he was listening to his own music on the radio, while staying in Zhukovka. Some days later David Oistrakh played for the first time the second violin Concerto by Dmitry Shostakovich. A well-composed three movement structure of the concerto is close to classic samples. Its first movement, Moderato, is written in the form of Sonata and based on the contrast of two themes. The development of a melodious and meditative main theme and a playful, Scherzo-like subsidiary one form a dramatic conflict in the culmination, but this conflict soon dies away and the cadenza of the soloist, returning to the initial theme, sounds calmly and gently. The second movement, Adagio, is full of lofty, lyrical light, the elegiac mood of the movement is interrupted only for a short time with an agitated recitative of a violin, accompanied by kettle-drums and string tremolo. The development of a frolic and sprightly Finale, Allegro, is logically aimed at the long and technically difficult cadenza of the soloist. Familiar melodies of the Concerto and new

episodes change each other in this imaginative music. The ardent passion of the cadenza then gives place to the bright and sonorous theme of the Finale.

Fifteen years later, in the summer of 1967 Shostakovich was having rest in Belovezskaya Pushcha, Byelorussia and writing a symphonic poem "October" for the 50th anniversary of the revolution. "I have worked a lot here and written a symphonic poem "October". I feel tired". This is one of the few times, when the composer felt exhausted after completing his work. The poem has much in common with the program symphonies of the previous years: sorrowful motives of the introduction to the Eleventh symphony, as well as battal episodes with some revolutionary melodies and coda-apotheosis of the twelfth one. In the first theme of the poem one can distinguish the famous monogram of Shostakovich (DSCH), while this time it obtains some other sounds – so that it reminds the introduction to the tenth Symphony. The central part of the poem is based on the melody "Partisan song" from the music, Shostakovich wrote for the movie "Volochayevski days" (1936-38). It sounds inspiring and romantic, resembling campaign songs of the 1930-s. In one of his interviews Shostakovich related the origin of the poem "October" with his visit to "Mosfilm" (Moscow motion pictures trust), where the film "Volochaeyvski days" was being prepared for the second demonstration: "Now I feel that my "Partisan song" appeared to be a good composition. The movie made me remember it and cleared up the whole future poem. I began writing it and composed the main theme for the second time...". This was the last work, Shostakovich wrote with care of the regime.

Marina Gaikovich

Translated by Tatiana Komarda and Anton Rovner

Kirill Kondrashin (1914–1981), an outstanding conductor of the 20th century, was born in a family of orchestra musicians. Having spent many hours at rehearsals, he made a firm decision to become a conductor at an early age of 14. In 1932–1936, he studied in Moscow Conservatoire where his teacher was Boris Khaikin. Since 1931, Kirill Kondrashin conducted first in Young People's Theatre and, from 1934, in Nemirovich-Danchenko Music Theatre. This was the beginning of Kondrashin's career when he conducted mostly operas, and occasionally did symphony programmes. In 1936, he became the conductor in Maliy Opera Theatre in Leningrad, and later in 1943, in Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.

Uncompromising as far as art was concerned, Kondrashin made an unorthodox step: displeased about how operas were staged, he left the top theatre of the USSR in 1956 and for several years had no permanent orchestra, working with various ensembles in the USSR and abroad. Kondrashin last performed in a theatre in 1958 in Chicago when he conducted Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* starring Renata Tebaldi and Giuseppe di Stefano.

During the late 1950s, Kondrashin became well known as a symphony conductor owing to many tours and performances with famous soloists – S. Richter, E. Gilels, D. Oistrakh, V. Cliburn. In 1960, he became director of Moscow State Philharmonic Orchestra, which he managed until 1975. This was a new team created in 1951 and initially named Moscow Youth Orchestra. Working with the orchestra fully re-vealed Kondrashin's talent as a teacher and developed his thorough rehearsing skills. It was with this particular orchestra that Kondrashin first performed Shostakovich's Fourth (1961) and Thirteenth (1962) Symphonies.

Kondrashin's progress towards achieving his objectives was strongly hindered by a factor that was the key reason for his leaving the orchestra: musicians trained by Kondrashin accepted invitations to other, better paid orchestras. In 1975, Kondrashin had to resign and in December 1978 he never came back from a tour and stayed in Amsterdam where he took the position of Principal Guest Conductor of the famous Concertgebouw Orchestra. Its artistic director at the time was Bernard Haitink who thought highly of his co-operation and personal contact with Kondrashin. New opportunities were available to the conductor: he agreed to become Director of Bavarian Radio Orchestra, intended to revert to the opera and conduct in La Scala. But these plans were never carried out. On 7 March, 1981, Kondrashin suddenly died after a concert where he conducted Mahler's First Symphony.

Daniil Petrov

Translated by Tatiana Komarda

- MEL CD 10 01066 D.Shostakovich. Symphonies Nos. 1, 2, 3
- MEL CD 10 01067 D.Shostakovich. Symphony No. 4; "October", symphonic poem
- MEL CD 10 01068 D.Shostakovich. Symphonies Nos. 5, 6
- MEL CD 10 01069 D.Shostakovich. Symphony No. 7
- MEL CD 10 01070 D.Shostakovich. Symphony No. 8; "Sun is shining over our Motherland", cantata
- MEL CD 10 01071 D.Shostakovich. Symphonies Nos. 9, 10
- MEL CD 10 01072 D.Shostakovich. Symphony No. 11 "1905"
- MEL CD 10 01073 D.Shostakovich. Symphony No. 12 "1917"; "The Execution of Stepan Razin", poem
- MEL CD 10 01074 D.Shostakovich. Symphony No. 13
- MEL CD 10 01075 D.Shostakovich. Symphony No. 14
- MEL CD 10 01076 D.Shostakovich. Symphony No. 15; Concerto No. 2 for violin and orchestra

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