

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:      FAILURE, DEATH, AND LEGACY IN THE LATE WORKS OF  
SHOSTAKOVICH

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The years 1967-1975 were turbulent for Dmitri Shostakovich, who faced severe health problems and recurring doubts about his life's work. This led to the development of a preoccupation with mortality during the final years of his life, a subject that was frequently represented in communications with friends, colleagues, and the public. It also became a recurring theme in his compositions written at this time, affecting his choice of texts for vocal works and elements of his musical style. The majority of the compositions from this period are unique in Shostakovich's oeuvre, featuring formal structures that often diverge radically from standard models, a harmonic language less tied to traditional tonality, and a frequent use of dodecaphony. The works of his final four years, though, largely dispense with these elements, pointing to a shift of focus from the tyranny of death to the redeeming quality of artistic legacy.

FAILURE, DEATH, AND LEGACY IN THE LATE WORKS OF SHOSTAKOVICH

by

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## Note on Transliterations

In this thesis the transliteration of Russian names and titles from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet has been necessary in many instances. On most occasions, the spelling given by the source in which the name or title appears has been retained. In cases where a name or title appears in multiple sources, the most common spelling was preferred. In the transliteration of all other Russian words, Richard Taruskin's modification to the LOC system was utilized.

## Introduction Reflections on a Life

I am thinking much about life,  
death, and careers.<sup>1</sup>  
- Dmitri Shostakovich

This morose statement is from a letter written by Dmitri Shostakovich to his good friend and confidant, Isaak Glikman. Penned in February 1967 at a time when Shostakovich had just begun to battle a series of illnesses that would plague him until his death, the composer expressed to Glikman his morbid thought that “not all [great artists] died at the time they ought to have.”<sup>2</sup> Some composers, he declared, lived longer than they should. Placing himself in this category, he re-evaluated the merits of his own career: “I am also disappointed in myself. . . . I don’t envy anyone in my shoes.”<sup>3</sup> This letter is but one example of the many times that Shostakovich’s thoughts turned to death during his final years. For a mature composer whose work had, by this time, long garnered international acclaim, his self-doubt in the face of death may seem strange, but it is an important element of Shostakovich’s life and music between the years 1967-1975.

Due to his obsession with the approach of death, Shostakovich’s compositions of this period took on a remarkable new tone. Many of these works—e.g., the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Symphonies, Twelfth and Thirteenth Quartets, and Violin and Viola Sonatas—are examples of this new direction in Shostakovich’s compositional output, employing experimental structures and disruptions of traditional forms, abstract tonal

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<sup>1</sup> Dmitri Shostakovich and Isaak Glikman, *Story of a Friendship*, trans. Anthony Phillips (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 140.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

language, and frequent dodecaphony.<sup>4</sup> The difficulties, for audiences and performers alike, of these compositions have resulted in an unfortunate lack of attention to this unique body of work. This thesis is a study of the complex nature of Shostakovich's thinking on the subject of mortality, an inquiry that reveals a great deal about the character of one of the most important composers of the twentieth century and points the way to a deeper understanding of some of his most enigmatic compositions.

### **Literature Review**

The life and works of Dmitri Shostakovich have been a rich source for scholarship; however very little of this research has focused on the works from his late period.<sup>5</sup> After the publication of Solomon Volkov's *Testimony* in 1979,<sup>6</sup> most English-language Shostakovich scholarship emphasized either confirming or discrediting Volkov's claims, putting the major focus of study on the composer's biography and the works of the middle period, the time of the highest tension between Shostakovich and the Soviet government.<sup>7</sup> In addition to continued interest in the middle period, a recent trend in Shostakovich scholarship has been the research of his early works.<sup>8</sup> However, the

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<sup>4</sup> The term dodecaphony is used in this thesis to refer to the presence of the full 12-tone aggregate, and is not a reference to the serialism of the Second Viennese School. For more on this, see pp. 28-30.

<sup>5</sup> This thesis will refer to 1967-1975 as Shostakovich's "late period" based on a three-part division of his career, citing stylistic changes rather than biographical factors, a division unique to this thesis (Early: 1915-1936; Middle: 1937-1966; Late: 1967-1975). Other scholars have divided Shostakovich's career based on biographical information, generally resulting in an earlier date to separate the middle and late periods.

<sup>6</sup> Solomon Volkov, *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Limelight Editions, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Michael Mishra, "The *Testimony* Debate," in *A Shostakovich Companion*, ed. Michael Mishra (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 33-6; Malcolm Brown, ed., *A Shostakovich Casebook* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004). Allan B. Ho and Dmitry Feofanov, "Shostakovich's *Testimony*: Reply to an Unjust Criticism," in *Shostakovich Reconsidered*, ed. Allan B. Ho and Dmitry Feofanov (London: Toccata Press, 1998), 33-311. Ian MacDonald, *The New Shostakovich* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Morgan, James, "Shostakovich the Dramatist: *The Nose* and *The Lady of Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*," in *A Shostakovich Companion*, ed. Michael Mishra (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 313-340; David Haas, "Shostakovich and *Wozzeck*'s Secret: Toward the Formation of a 'Shostakovich Mode,'" in *A Shostakovich Companion*, 341-354; Simon Morrison, "Shostakovich as Industrial Saboteur: Observations

fascinating music from his final years has been the subject of only a handful of books, dissertations, and articles during the last forty years.

\* \* \* \* \*

The small number of studies devoted to Shostakovich's late works can be divided into two major groups, those devoted to examining individual works and those that look at a group of similar works, often focusing on a single thematic, musical, or biographical element. Two articles focusing on single works have been useful in the research for this thesis. Eric Roseberry's essay on the personal and artistic relationship between Shostakovich and Benjamin Britten notes the importance of the Fourteenth Symphony to their connection and draws parallels between the two composers' styles.<sup>9</sup> Caryl Emerson has provided an article about the cultural context of the song cycle, *Six Poems of Marina Tsvetayeva*, elucidating the parallel influence of Pushkin and Musorgsky on Tsvetayeva and Shostakovich.<sup>10</sup> Particularly important to this study were two major studies of Shostakovich's string quartets, the earliest of which is Laurel E. Fay's overview of the final four quartets.<sup>11</sup> Written only four years after the Fifteenth Quartet was completed, Fay's work is limited in scope but thorough in application, reviewing the major elements of each movement before commenting on the style characteristics of the group as a

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on *The Bolt*," in *Shostakovich and His World*, ed. Laurel E. Fay (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 117-161; Laurel E. Fay, "Shostakovich, LASM, and Asafiev," in *Shostakovich in Context*, ed. Rosamund Bartlett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 51-66; Ol'ga Digonskaya, "Mitya Shostakovich's First Opus (Dating the Scherzo, Op. 1)," in *Shostakovich Studies 2*, ed. Pauline Fairclough (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 53-73; Joan M. Titus, *The Early Film Music of Dmitri Shostakovich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> Eric Roseberry, "A Debt Repaid? Some Observations on Shostakovich and His Late-Period Recognition of Britten," in *Shostakovich Studies*, ed. David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 229-53.

<sup>10</sup> Caryl Emerson, "Shostakovich, Tsvetaeva, Pushkin, Musorgsky: Songs and Dances of Death and Survival," in *Shostakovich in Context*, 191-8.

<sup>11</sup> Laurel E. Fay, "The Last Quartets of Dmitri Shostakovich: A Stylistic Investigation," (PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1978).



whole. A more specific approach was taken by Eric Roseberry in his book, which compares the stylistic progression of Shostakovich's symphonies with that of the quartets.<sup>12</sup> His most in-depth analysis of the quartets focuses on Shostakovich's use of cyclicity in Nos. 11-15, and he goes as far as proposing that these quartets should be viewed as a single, unified entity.<sup>13</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

In addition to scholarship about Shostakovich's late works, there are a few articles examining general aspects of Shostakovich's musical style that are relevant to this thesis. Yuriy Kholopov's "Form in Shostakovich's Instrumental Works" is an initial study of Shostakovich's use of several traditional formal structures.<sup>14</sup> Because of the broad scope of his topic, he is forced to make generalizations and only uses works from the middle of Shostakovich's career as examples for his conclusions. Michael Mishra has written an article that defines Shostakovich's use of sonata forms with reversed recapitulations as the Sonata-Arch form.<sup>15</sup> He then proposes that the first movement of Symphony No. 5 uses this form. David Fanning has also written on Shostakovich's use of form in the middle symphonies, using "neo-Schenkerian analysis" to illuminate the tonal progressions of these works.<sup>16</sup> Although Shostakovich wrote passacaglias throughout his

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<sup>12</sup> Eric Roseberry, *Ideology, Style, Content, and Thematic Process in the Symphonies, Cello Concertos, and String Quartets of Shostakovich* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989).

<sup>13</sup> The most recent major piece of scholarship on Shostakovich's quartets is Judith Kuhn's *Shostakovich in Dialogue*, which does not include any research about the late quartets. In this monograph, Kuhn's approach is to apply the sonata theory proposed by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy for use in the study of eighteenth-century music to the first seven of Shostakovich's quartets.<sup>13</sup> Kuhn then compares biographical information with Shostakovich's use of sonata and other forms to develop a narrative for each quartet. Judith Kuhn, *Shostakovich in Dialogue: Form, Imagery and Ideas in Quartet 1-7* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Yuriy Kholopov, "Form in Shostakovich's Instrumental Works," in *Shostakovich Studies*, ed. David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 57-75.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Mishra, "Shostakovich's 'Trademark' Form: The Arch-Sonata in the First Movement of the Fifth Symphony," in *A Shostakovich Companion*, 355-76.

<sup>16</sup> David Fanning, "Shostakovich and Structural Hearing," in *Shostakovich Studies* 2, 77-99.

career, the works of the late years use the form more often, making Lyn Henderson's study of the connection between Shostakovich's use of passacaglias and serialism especially helpful.<sup>17</sup> Peter Schmelz has also written on the topic of serialism, shedding light on the relatively wide use of the technique by Soviet composers in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>18</sup>

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Because of the dearth of research on the music of Shostakovich's final years, some of the most invaluable secondary sources for this thesis have been the two major English-language biographies of Shostakovich. Laurel E. Fay's *Shostakovich: A Life* gives a broad overview of Shostakovich's life that carefully avoids creating the kinds of politically charged narratives found in some of the primary sources (see below).<sup>19</sup> The second portion of Michael Mishra's compilation volume, *A Shostakovich Companion*, also generally avoids developing a highly subjective narrative by focusing on Shostakovich's compositional history.<sup>20</sup> Although it retains much of the basic biographical material contained in Fay's biography, Mishra's work also examines each of Shostakovich's major works closely, describing the structure and contents of each as well as the circumstances in which they were composed.

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The primary sources available for this thesis include the published scores and a handful of anecdotal sources. The Sikorski editions of Shostakovich's scores have been

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<sup>17</sup> Lyn Henderson, "Shostakovich, the Passacaglia, and Serialism," in *A Shostakovich Companion*, 409-34.

<sup>18</sup> Peter J. Schmelz, "Shostakovich's 'Twelve-Tone' Compositions and the Politics and Practice of Soviet Serialism," in *Shostakovich and His World*, 303-354.

<sup>19</sup> Laurel E. Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>20</sup> Michael Mishra, "Part II: The Life and Stylistic Evolution of Shostakovich," in *A Shostakovich Companion*, 37-312.

used most often in the course of this study because the DSCH New Edition has yet to publish scholarly editions of many of the late works, particularly the chamber music. Because of the nature of the research, some of the most important sources for information about Shostakovich's private thoughts are collections of first-person accounts. However, because of the subjective nature of such material, care has been taken to identify the narrative bias of each source and to use them accordingly.

The most valuable source of anecdotal evidence is *Story of a Friendship*, a collection of the letters sent by Shostakovich to his close friend Isaak Glikman from 1941-1974.<sup>21</sup> These letters give a broad overview of Shostakovich's thoughts, opinions, and feelings on a variety of topics. In addition, because they have been translated directly from Shostakovich's original writings, there has been little opportunity for the narrative to be shaped by anyone else. Although Glikman did provide footnotes to many of the letters, Shostakovich's words are inherently separated from Glikman's editorializing. The major limitation in using this book is that Glikman did not include any of his own letters, so in certain cases the substance of a conversation must be inferred from Shostakovich's replies.

Elizabeth Wilson's *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* is a collection of first-person reminiscences, painstakingly amassed from an impressive number of Shostakovich's family, friends, and colleagues.<sup>22</sup> The wealth of details that this format provides makes the book the most important source for information on the daily life of the composer and his interactions with friends and colleagues. Unlike the first-person

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<sup>21</sup> Shostakovich and Glikman, *Story of a Friendship*.

<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

perspective and temporal proximity of Shostakovich's letters to Glikman, the anecdotes in Wilson's book, many transmitted years after the events they describe, come from a wide variety of sources, each with its own narrative bias, and this subjectivity must be taken into account when using quotes from Wilson's collection.

Two books by artists who worked closely with Shostakovich have also provided useful anecdotal evidence. Because she was one of Shostakovich's closest friends and most frequent collaborators, Galina Vishnevskaya's autobiography presents a unique perspective on the composer and his private commentary on relevant subjects.<sup>23</sup> However, due to her inherent bias against the Soviet government and tendency toward self-aggrandizement, I have had to limit my use of this resource. Similarly, *Fatal Half Measures*, an anthology of non-fiction writings by Yevgeny Yevtushenko displays some bias, though less than the previous book.<sup>24</sup> Unlike Vishnevskaya, Yevtushenko, the poet with whom Shostakovich worked on his Thirteenth Symphony, remained in Russia throughout the Soviet era, giving his narrative a more nuanced tone on political issues.

### **Methodology, Issues, and Limitations**

In order to better understand Shostakovich's thinking on the subject of mortality, this thesis examines Shostakovich's statements on the subject, evaluates the texts of his late vocal compositions related to death and mortality, and analyzes the instrumental late works. First, biographical and anecdotal evidence is used to suggest a mental portrait of Shostakovich and the development of his understanding of and attitude towards mortality.

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<sup>23</sup> Galina Vishnevskaya, *Galina: A Russian Story*, trans. Guy Daniels (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984).

<sup>24</sup> Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *Fatal Half Measures: The Culture of Democracy in the Soviet Union*, ed. and trans. Antonina W. Bouis (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991).

This information is then applied to poetic analyses of the texts of his vocal works to interpret relevant imagery in these texts and provide a link between the language of death and the musical elements Shostakovich used to represent it. This has allowed me to trace the existence of various trends in the texts and music of these late works, trends that are crucial to understanding the purely instrumental compositions. By employing both traditional music theory and narrative analyses, I am able to point to possible meanings for some of these pieces. All of these methods combine to produce an understanding of Shostakovich's thoughts on death as both man and artist.

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A significant limitation on the scope of this thesis is the fact that Shostakovich was particularly loathe to comment on the meaning of his works, often making the search for anecdotal evidence a frustrating one. This is made more challenging because of the subjectivity inherent in anecdotal evidence, which, in turn, is compounded by the particular kind of subjectivity that accompanies any first-person narratives connected to Soviet history. My work has also been constrained by the lack of working material from Shostakovich's compositional process. He typically composed in his head and only wrote down the finalized score, limiting the amount of sketch material, and those sketches that do exist were unfortunately unavailable for my examination.<sup>25</sup> This has, in most cases, prevented me from making arguments based on analyses of Shostakovich's compositional process for the individual works in question.

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<sup>25</sup> Dmitri Shostakovich, "Responses of Shostakovich to a Questionnaire on the Psychology of the Creative Process," trans. Malcolm Hamrick Brown, in *Shostakovich and His World*, 35-8; Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, 147, 306-7, 328, 446; Kristian Hibberd, "Shostakovich and 'Polyphonic' Creativity: The Fourteenth Symphony Revisited," in *Shostakovich Studies* 2, 190.

The most difficult aspect of studying Shostakovich for someone unfamiliar with the Russian language is the limited number of primary sources that have been translated into English. Because of this limitation, I have chosen to base this study primarily on the musical scores as well as song texts and anecdotal evidence that are available in English translations. When necessary, I have sought the assistance of Dr. Olga Haldey for confirmation of the accuracy of the translations selected. Because of the absence of Russian-language sources and archival material from this thesis, it must represent merely a preliminary foray into the study of this aspect of Shostakovich's late period.

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In this thesis, I frequently use the term "late works" to conveniently refer to the group of pieces in question, but I do not intend for its use to suggest an application of Late Style Theory to this period of Shostakovich's career. Those who study the works of an artist's final years often choose to connect this artistic output to the notion of Late Style, a concept that was first articulated by literary and art scholars in the eighteenth century.<sup>26</sup> However, in the case of Shostakovich, I have found that this is not a helpful pursuit.

The most notable application of Late Style Theory in musicology is Theodor Adorno's unfinished work on the music of late Beethoven. Citing previous assumptions about the subjective nature of Beethoven's late works, Adorno finds the explanation that these works break with traditional forms because of their unbounded expressivity to be insufficient. He maintains that death "is imposed on creatures alone, and not on their

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<sup>26</sup> Dwayne Steven Milburn, "The Use of Quotation in *Sonata for Viola and Piano* and *Symphony No. 15* as Examples of Late Style in Shostakovich" (PhD diss. Vol. 1, University of California, Los Angeles, 2009), 21-2.

constructions, and thus has always appeared in art in a refracted form: as allegory.”<sup>27</sup>

Although this observation applies equally well to Shostakovich, Adorno’s reasons for this statement do not. He rejects the prevailing opinion on Beethoven’s late works precisely because of the appearance of restrictive forms in these compositions, particularly the recurring use of fugues. This is not the case with Shostakovich’s late works, which (as will be demonstrated in this thesis) most often deliberately fail to fit within traditional forms.

The most thorough attempt to apply Late Style Theory to the works of Shostakovich’s final years is a dissertation by Dwayne Milburn. After a history of the major contributors to the field of Late Style Theory, he concludes that only a single strand of Late Style Theory can be effectively applied to Shostakovich.<sup>28</sup> This exception is “disability style” as defined by Joseph N. Straus, which Milburn believes may be useful in explaining Shostakovich’s apparent preference for chamber groups in his late works; he asserts that due to the illnesses in his later years Shostakovich focused on works that he could complete more quickly. However, even this limited use of a single model of Late Style Theory does not stand up to close scrutiny. Because of the well-documented ease with which Shostakovich penned his works (see above), it seems unlikely that he would have found writing works with larger instrumentations substantially more challenging than chamber pieces. More importantly, Shostakovich did write music for large ensembles during his final years. Between 1967-1975, he composed two symphonies, a violin concerto, an orchestral prelude, a symphonic poem, two

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<sup>27</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, ed. Rolf Tiedermann and trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 125.

<sup>28</sup> Milburn, 53-5.

orchestral film scores (one with chorus), a march for military band, and orchestrated two song cycles. This hardly seems to be the work of a man who is purposefully choosing smaller genres because of his pain.

Due to these considerations, I have chosen not to relate this study to any specific Late Style Theory. Nor do I mean for this study to establish a pattern of Late Style applicable to any composer other than Shostakovich.

### **Outline of Chapters**

The first chapter of this thesis explores the reasons for Shostakovich's increasing obsession with mortality, and highlights several specific ways it is reflected in his compositions. The first half of this chapter demonstrates that his obsession stemmed from the number of health problems he faced, which culminated in the lung cancer that killed him. These ailments kept death at the forefront of Shostakovich's mind, a mental state that had a tangible effect on his compositions. The second half of the chapter explores a set of musical tropes that Shostakovich used to represent death and mortality in his late works, a direct result of his mental focus on this subject. This section showcases Shostakovich's use of these tropes in his textured and titled works, particularly Symphony No. 14, and then locates the same tropes in the more abstract instrumental works from the same period. By defining the meaning of these tropes, this chapter lays the groundwork for the musical analyses that follow in later chapters.

The second chapter contends that Shostakovich's preoccupation with death led him to evaluate the events of his own life and compare them to an artistic ideal. Evidence for this moral code of expectations that I have labeled the True Artist appears in many of Shostakovich's song texts and points to the existence of three pillars: the True Artist



speaks truth to power, speaks truth to the people, and receives no reward. Songs from five major vocal works are featured, including *Seven Poems by Alexander Blok* and *Six Poems of Marina Tsvetayeva*. The second half of the chapter focuses on biographical and anecdotal evidence that suggests that as Shostakovich compared his own life to this ideal, he determined that he had failed at achieving the objectives of the True Artist.

The conclusions of Chapter 2 are supported by the appearance of the images associated with failure in the texts of certain vocal works, as well as what I call the narrative of failure in the instrumental works written between 1967 and 1970. Chapter 3 examines these compositions in detail, using both theoretical and narratological analysis to interpret the tonal and structural failures that characterize the Violin Sonata and String Quartets Nos. 12 and 13.

In the works of Shostakovich's final four years, there is a demonstrable shift in the use of structure and tonal language. The first portion of Chapter 4 shows how the failure narrative present in the pieces analyzed in the previous chapter dissipates in the works written between 1971 and Shostakovich's death in 1975. This chapter's second section attributes this change to the composer's increasing focus on the idea of legacy, specifically on the notion that his musical legacy might atone for the failures in his life and give him a kind of artistic immortality. The final portion of the chapter is devoted to examining Shostakovich's use of musical quotations in his last works as a means of reflecting on his place in music history and on the musical legacy he had built.

## Chapter 1 Facing the End

Death is terrifying, there is nothing beyond it.  
I don't believe in life beyond the grave.<sup>1</sup>  
– Dmitri Shostakovich

The above quote is taken from a public statement addressed to the audience of the premiere of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 14. In his pre-concert speech, Shostakovich expressed his views that death is an inevitable ill and that composers have a duty to represent it without any naïve suggestions of hope.<sup>2</sup> Shostakovich's comments accompanied a symphony in which he set a precedent for how to properly treat the subject of death: with fear and contempt.<sup>3</sup> In the decade surrounding the composition of the Fourteenth Symphony, a series of increasingly severe health problems forced the composer to confront his own mortality, and this symphony was hardly the only reflection of this. The subject of death constantly reappeared in the music that Shostakovich wrote during the last several years of his life, reflecting the worries he faced about his health during this time. This chapter will briefly trace Shostakovich's health problems and their effect on his attitude during this period. It will then present three of the musical tropes employed by Shostakovich to represent death in his late works. This examination is intended to demonstrate the importance of death on

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<sup>1</sup> Shostakovich quoted by Mark Lubotsky in Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 471.

<sup>2</sup> He specifically criticized Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Verdi's *Othello* and *Aida*, and Britten's *War Requiem* for their "bright" endings. Laurel E. Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 261.

<sup>3</sup> Shostakovich's presentation of death as an ultimate end reflected his personal beliefs. Although he professed a "great admiration for Jesus Christ," particularly the morals he espoused, he never gave any indication that this led to a belief in any sort of afterlife. Dmitri Shostakovich and Isaak Glikman, *The Story of a Friendship*, trans. Anthony Phillips (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 78.

Shostakovich's mental state and compositional output of this period, and it will introduce some of the musical elements that will be important to the analyses of later chapters.

### **Waning Health**

During the last fifteen years of Shostakovich's life, the composer faced three major health problems that took an immense toll on him: a muscular disease that robbed him of his mobility and inflicted constant pain, heart disease that complicated efforts to treat this pain, and lung cancer that eventually killed him after months of treatment. These illnesses resulted in frequent, lengthy hospital stays and combined to ensure that death was never far from the composer's thoughts.

Shostakovich first noticed the most enduring of these health issues while on a concert tour during the 1957-8 season. After his return, he complained to his friend and frequent confidant, Isaak Glikman, that he had noticed his right hand becoming increasingly sluggish during performances.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the summer of 1958 his symptoms continued to worsen, and in September Shostakovich admitted himself to the hospital for the first in a series of frequent treatments. These, however, provided only temporary alleviation from his symptoms. The disease, which was finally diagnosed as poliomyelitis in 1969, eventually led to a near complete debilitation of his motor functions. Not only did his right hand become so dysfunctional that he was forced to stop performing piano even after years of treatments, but he also broke both of his legs, the first in 1960 and the second in 1967. After this second incident Shostakovich complained, "[I am at] seventy-five percent (right leg broken, left leg broken, right hand defective. All I need now is [to] wreck the left hand and then one-hundred per cent of my extremities

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<sup>4</sup> Shostakovich and Glikman, 76-7; Wilson, 440.

will be out of order.)”<sup>5</sup> By the end of his life, the polio had affected his mobility to the point that he could only walk with assistance and was no longer able to climb stairs.<sup>6</sup>

The treatments for Shostakovich’s polio were eventually interrupted by the emergence of a second major health problem, heart disease. On the night of March 2, 1966, the composer suffered his first heart attack after performing what would prove to be his last public concert.<sup>7</sup> The attack was followed by a two month stay in the hospital and a mandate from his doctors that Shostakovich could no longer drink alcohol or smoke tobacco, a restriction which his wife, Irina, strictly enforced.<sup>8</sup> These constraints did not prevent a recurrence, however, and he suffered a second heart attack in 1971, only days before his sixty-fifth birthday. As a consequence, Shostakovich was directed by his physicians that he could no longer receive treatment for his polio from Dr. Gavril Ilizarov, who had provided him with the only consistent relief from his symptoms.<sup>9</sup>

Neither of these ailments was the direct cause of Shostakovich’s eventual death, however. In late 1972, Shostakovich was admitted to the hospital, after complaining of kidney stones. During a complete checkup, doctors discovered that he was also suffering from cancer in his left lung and was kept in the hospital to receive two months of radiation therapy.<sup>10</sup> Continued treatment resulted in additional hospital stays over the next three years, including a visit to the National Institute of Health during a trip to the United States in 1973. Upon arrival in the country, Irina specifically solicited the U. S. State

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<sup>5</sup> Shostakovich and Glikman, 234.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Ardov, *Memories of Shostakovich: Interviews with the Composer’s Children*, trans. Rosanna Kelly and Michael Meylac (London: Short Books, 2004), 172-3.

<sup>7</sup> Galina Vishnevskaya, *Galina: A Russian Story*, trans. Guy Daniels (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 363

<sup>8</sup> Wilson, 442, 448.

<sup>9</sup> Wilson, 478-9.

<sup>10</sup> Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, 273-4.

Department that her husband be examined, but after two days of testing, the Shostakovichs were told that Dmitri's condition was incurable.<sup>11</sup>

After this, Shostakovich's desperation to find a cure led him to some unusual attempts at treatment. Glikman reported that in February 1975 Shostakovich told him that he had met with a woman who claimed that his ailments could be treated through breathing exercises. "You'd think she was giving me breathing lessons. . . . She says it is all in the breath."<sup>12</sup> The next month he tried a another course of therapy that Glikman reported only intensified the pain.

He [was] treated by some kind of quack – a female psychic who by the simple laying-on of hands, so it was said, induced healing burns on the skin. Dmitry Dmitryevich called her a witch. After a few days, rolling up the sleeves of his shirt and smiling vaguely, he showed me the burns. His suffering was such that he was ready to believe in miracles.<sup>13</sup>

In the end, none of these alternative treatments were effective, and after months of hospitalization Shostakovich died on August 9, 1975.

\* \* \* \* \*

At least as early as 1968, Shostakovich believed that his death was imminent, a fear that profoundly affected his work. He told Glikman that he was in a state of constant worry. "It's funny, but I always feel that whatever opus I am working on, I shall never finish it. I may die suddenly, and then the piece will never be finished."<sup>14</sup> Fyodor Druzhinin, for some years the violist of the Beethoven Quartet and dedicatee of the Viola Sonata, reported that Shostakovich detested being reminded of his death by the innocuous

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<sup>11</sup> Wilson, 496.

<sup>12</sup> Shostakovich and Glikman, 201.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 201-2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

question, “What was the last work you wrote?” When asked, he would sarcastically reply, “What d’you mean, last work? Why, you know, maybe I’ll still manage to write something else. . .”<sup>15</sup> This perpetual concern affected Shostakovich’s scheduling decisions as well; he insisted on premiering each new work as quickly as possible. For example, when preparing the Fourteenth Symphony for its premiere, Shostakovich decided to begin rehearsals even though Galina Vishnevskaya, his intended soprano soloist, was unavailable. The conductor of the performance, Rudolf Barshai, remembered the incident.

One day Dmitri Dmitriyevich informed me that Vishnevskaya was having to delay learning her part as she had a busy schedule and was touring abroad. Therefore she could not make any promises as to when she would be ready.

I said, “Never mind, we’ll wait for her.”

Dmitri Dmitriyevich answered, “No, no, I don’t want to wait, I’m afraid I’ll die soon, and I want to hear my work. I was afraid that I wouldn’t live to finish the Symphony, but I managed in time, I managed in time.”<sup>16</sup>

The pressure Shostakovich felt from his approaching death affected not only the practical consideration of having his works performed, but was also reflected in his compositional choices. Many of Shostakovich’s works written between 1967-1975 show the influence of the subject of death, a number of which will be examined in the following section of this chapter.

### **Representing Death**

In the last eight years of his life, Shostakovich wrote no less than ten works that have an explicit relationship to the subject of death (see Table 1). Additionally, within the

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<sup>15</sup> Fyodor Druzhinin in Wilson, 530.

<sup>16</sup> Rudolf Barshai in Wilson, 468.

three major song cycles of this period there are nine songs that deal with death either literally or metaphorically. Symphony No. 14, an orchestral song cycle, is wholly devoted to the subject of death, and four of the period's instrumental works are also linked to it: Symphony No. 15 and String Quartet No. 15 each contain a funeral march (more on these below), the Thirteenth Quartet uses music from a death scene in *King Lear* (see Chapter 3), and the Viola Sonata's finale was composed in memory of Beethoven (see Chapter 4).

Table 1 – Late Works with Explicit References to Death

1967	<i>Seven Songs on Poems by Alexander Blok</i> , Op. 127
	I. "Ophelia's Song"
	II. "Gamayun, the Soothsaying Bird"
	VI. "Secret Signs"
	Score for <i>Sofiya Perovskaya</i> , Op. 132
1969	Symphony No. 14, Op. 135
1970	Score for <i>King Lear</i> , Op. 137
	String Quartet No. 13 in Bb minor, Op. 138
1971	Symphony No. 15 in A major, Op. 141
	II. Adagio
1973	<i>Six Poems by Marina Tsvetayeva</i> , Op. 143
	III. "Dialogue between Hamlet and His Conscience"
	IV. "The Poet and the Czar"
	V. "No, the Drum did Beat. . ."
1974	String Quartet No. 15 in Eb minor, Op. 144
	IV. Funeral March
	<i>Suite on Verses by Michelangelo Buonarrotti</i> , Op. 145
	IX. "Night"
	X. "Death"
	XI. "Eternity"
1975	Viola Sonata, Op. 147
	III. Adagio

The following sections will each present a musical trope used by Shostakovich to represent death, giving examples from both vocal and instrumental works. However, as with any examination of music relating to a topic as broad as death, this chapter will not be able to give an exhaustive list of elements. Instead it highlights those tropes that occur

most frequently in the late works and gives a brief history of Shostakovich's influences for each.

### **Funeral Marches**

The most overt representation of death in Shostakovich's late works is the traditional funeral march trope, which he used mainly in the purely instrumental works but also employed in the finale of the Fourteenth Symphony. Shostakovich's use of this trope was most notably influenced by the frequent appearances of funeral marches in the symphonies of Gustav Mahler. In the early 1930s, Shostakovich was introduced to the Austrian's compositions by Ivan Sollertinsky, who encouraged his young friend to study Mahler's symphonies. Beginning with his expansive Symphony No. 4, Shostakovich's works began to demonstrate the influence of this education, including the use and stylization of the funeral marches in the late works.<sup>17</sup> In Mahler's symphonies, the funeral march appears frequently and is almost always delineated by a strongly dotted rhythm in a slow tempo. These characteristics follow the precedent set by Beethoven in the *Marcia funebre* from Symphony No. 3, and it is these slow tempi and dotted march rhythms that also dominate Shostakovich's funeral marches. In his late works, Shostakovich combined these elements with the light scoring of his favorite movement by Mahler, "Der Abschied" from *Das Lied von der Erde*.<sup>18</sup> A setting of a text about eternal parting, "Der Abschied" features a returning, slow funeral march that features minimal, at least by Mahlerian standards, scoring and a recitative-like melody in the winds, particularly in its first appearance in the movement.

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<sup>17</sup> Michael Mishra, "Rise and Fall, Fall and Rise (1932-1937)," in *A Shostakovich Companion*, ed. Michael Mishra (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 86-8.

<sup>18</sup> Krzysztof Meyer in Wilson, 524.



It is these exact elements, slow tempo, dotted rhythms, and light scoring, that appear in the fifth movement, “Funeral March,” from Shostakovich’s String Quartet No. 15, which provides a helpful model of his use of the trope. The movement opens with an E-flat minor chord repeated in a dotted rhythm and followed by a viola solo that continues the rhythm (Fig. 1), and this juxtaposition of chorale- and recitative-like textures with an ever-present dotted rhythm continues throughout the movement.<sup>19</sup>



Fig. 1

A similar, lightly-scored texture permeates the central section of the second movement of Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 15. Called a funeral march by both Eric Roseberry and Michael Mishra, this section features the appearance of the dotted rhythms in a trombone melody with a minimal, march-like accompaniment by the tuba and double basses.<sup>20</sup> It is also worth noting that the passages share a similar slow tempo, with an identical metronome marking (quarter note = 69) assigned to both by Shostakovich. (Fig. 2 on following page)

<sup>19</sup> In this thesis I use the term “chorale” in its broader definition: A chordal, homorhythmic texture in either a vocal or instrumental work. This is a standard term in Russian music education and would have been familiar to Shostakovich, who would also have recognized the evocative nature of this texture, which, because of its association with Bach, calls to mind the spiritual. Olga Haldey, e-mail message to author, September 25, 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Eric Roseberry, *Ideology, Style, Content, and Thematic Process in the Symphonies, Cello Concertos, and String Quartets of Shostakovich* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), 223; Michael Mishra, “‘I Lived On . . . in the Hearts of My True Friends’ (1966-1975),” in *A Shostakovich Companion*, ed. Michael Mishra (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 292.

**Largo**  $\text{♩} = 69$   
*tenuto*  
*p espress.*  
*pizz.*

The musical score is for three instruments: Trombone, Tuba, and Double Bass. It is in 4/4 time and marked 'Largo' with a tempo of 69 quarter notes per minute. The Trombone part is marked 'tenuto' and 'p espress.'. The Tuba part is marked 'pizz.'. The Double Bass part is marked 'pizz.'. The score consists of two systems of staves. The first system has three staves (Trombone, Tuba, Double Bass) and the second system has three staves (Tbn., Tuba, D.B.).

Fig. 2

\* \* \* \* \*

Throughout his vocal works Shostakovich set only one text that overtly portrays a funeral march, “No, the Drum Did Beat” from *Six Poems by Marina Tsvetayeva*. In this setting, Shostakovich treats the topic in a more cavalier manner than in the somber funeral marches of the works just discussed due to the sarcastic tone of the poem. Tsvetayeva’s verse describes the funeral of Alexander Pushkin, indicating the hypocrisy of a state-sponsored funeral procession for an artist persecuted by the Tsar during his lifetime (see also Chapter 2). Although he gave this setting a faster tempo (*Allegretto*; quarter note = 120), Shostakovich still used the dotted, funeral march rhythm in both the voice and piano and scored the accompaniment so sparsely that it is written on a single line (Fig. 3 on following page).



Fig. 3

\* \* \* \* \*

“No, the Drum Did Beat” may be the only example of a text about a funeral procession in Shostakovich’s late works, but it is not the only vocal setting in which he used a funeral march. The trope also appears in the final movement of Symphony No. 14, accompanying an aphorism by Rainer Maria Rilke.

All-powerful is death.  
It keeps watch  
Even in the hour of happiness.  
At moments of higher life it suffers within us,  
Awaits us and thirsts for us –  
And weeps within us.<sup>21</sup>

In the symphony this setting follows directly after a movement titled “The Poet’s Death,” implying that this slow march, sparsely orchestrated with pizzicato strings and percussion, at once represents the Poet’s funeral and the inevitability of death described by its text. A short-score transcription of the opening measures of this movement is given in Fig. 4a (see following page) to make Shostakovich’s use of the rhythm clearer; x’s are used to delineate the percussion (woodblock and castanets) from the strings. Also, because the movement is set in a compound meter, the dotted rhythms are less apparent,

<sup>21</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke and Tamara Silman, “Death,” trans. Joan Pemberton Smith, in *Shostakovich; Symphony No. 14; Mussorgsky: Songs and Dances of Death*, Deutsche Grammophon D 110264, 1993, CD liner notes.

so a rhythmic reduction is also provided in Fig. 4b that re-writes the excerpt in triple meter to better delineate the dotted rhythms.

Moderato  $\text{♩} = 69$

The figure shows a musical score for three parts: Soprano, Bass, and Reduction. The Soprano and Bass parts are in 3/8 time, while the Reduction is in 3/4 time. The Reduction part shows the rhythmic structure of the vocal lines with 'x' marks for notes and stems for rests.

Fig. 4a

The figure shows a rhythmic reduction of the excerpt in triple meter (3/4). The notes are represented by stems and flags, and the rests are represented by stems and flags.

Fig. 4b

### Nocturnal Arpeggios

There is a long history of artistically connecting the subject of death with sleep. A conceit propagated in literature by Goethe and in song by Schubert, for Shostakovich it was best represented musically by arpeggios often featured in the piano nocturne. When the nocturne trope was first developed it was associated with nocturnal serenades, not sleep or death. However, by the time Shostakovich employed the trope, both Mahler and Musorgsky—two of Shostakovich's most important influences—had set the precedent of associating the arpeggios of the nocturne with the eternal sleep of death.

Invented by John Field and popularized by Chopin, the piano nocturne's most recognizable aspect is the easily distinguished broken-chord arpeggios that permeate Romantic compositions in the genre. As a pianist, Shostakovich was intimately familiar with Chopin's nocturnes. In particular, we know that, for the 1927 Chopin Piano

Competition, he performed the Nocturne in F# major, Op. 15, No. 2, which features these arpeggios in Shostakovich's preferred note value, eighth notes (Fig. 5).<sup>22</sup>



Fig. 5

The use of arpeggios in piano nocturnes was also exemplified in earlier Russian models of the nocturne by Glinka and Scriabin. Most significant, though, was the influence of Musorgsky who used these same arpeggiated figures in the accompaniment to the third song from his cycle *Songs and Dances of Death*, a cycle that Shostakovich orchestrated in 1962. In this song, titled “Trepak,” Musorgsky does not use the nocturne figures throughout the song, instead reserving them for when Death begins enticing his victim, a drunkard trapped in a snowstorm, with thoughts of sleep (Fig. 6).

Sleep, my friend, my peasant so happy,  
Summer has come, and all is in bloom!<sup>23</sup>

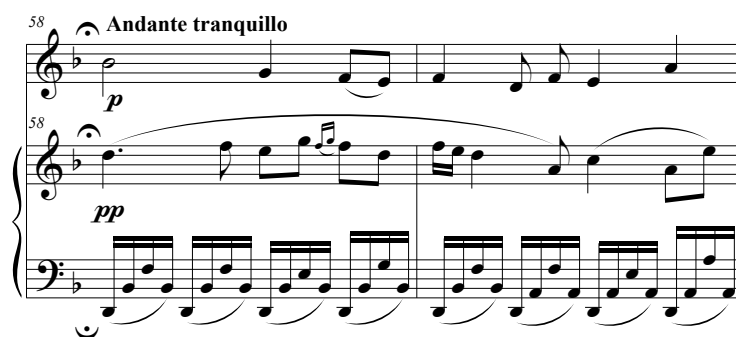


Fig. 6

<sup>22</sup> Sofia Mosheovich, “Shostakovich the Pianist,” in *A Shostakovich Companion*, ed. Michael Mishra (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 471.

<sup>23</sup> Arseni Golenishchev-Kutuzov, “Trepak,” trans. Joan Pemberton Smith, in *Shostakovich; Symphony No. 14; Mussorgsky: Songs and Dances of Death*, Deutsche Grammophon D 110264, 1993, CD liner notes.

Finally, the first of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* provided Shostakovich with another example of nocturne figures used to represent death as sleep. In the first two lines of the final quatrain of this lyric by Friedrich Rückert the narrator beseeches his child, "You must not enfold the night within you. . ." It is at this moment (R7) that Mahler provides nocturne-like arpeggios in the harp that are eventually taken up by the cellos as well.

\* \* \* \* \*

Like the funeral march trope, the arpeggios from the piano nocturne were used by Shostakovich in both vocal and instrumental works. His use of the nocturne trope is most clearly connected to death by its use in the sonnet, "Night," from the *Suite to Words by Michelangelo Buonarroti*, where the arpeggios are used to introduced the song and as an accompaniment figure throughout (Fig. 7).

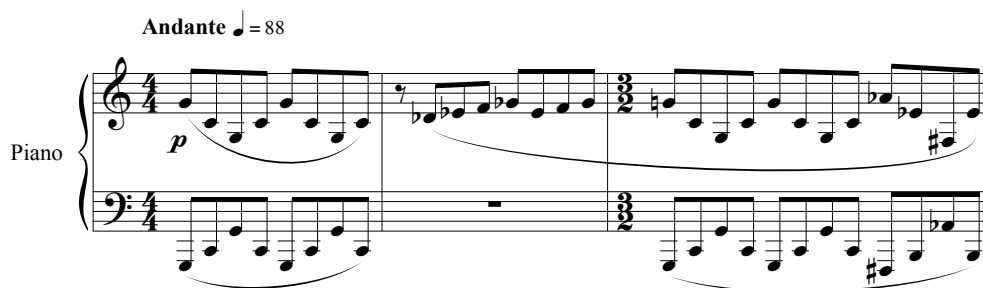


Fig. 7

The text of "Night," given its title by Shostakovich himself, presents a dialogue between Michelangelo and the young Giovanni di Carlo Strozzi. The child of a Florentine senator, Strozzi wrote a quatrain after viewing Michelangelo's statue *Night*, to which Michelangelo replied with a quatrain of his own written from the perspective of the

statue. Shostakovich set these two verses together as the ninth song of his *Michelangelo Suite*.<sup>24</sup>

This night here, that is sleeping so peacefully  
Before you, is a creation of an angel.  
And though she's made of stone, she can breathe  
And will speak as soon as she's awakened.

'Tis sweet to sleep, e'en sweeter to be a stone,  
When round me there is shame and crime alone.  
There's some relief in it when you can't feel, nor see,  
So pray be silent, friend, yea, why awaken me?<sup>25</sup>

By placing this setting immediately before the song "Death" in the *Michelangelo Suite*, Shostakovich implies a connection between the poet's description of Night and Shostakovich's own conception of death. For Shostakovich the poem does not merely represent death as sleep; it goes one step further, depicting death-sleep as a conscious denial of the ills of the world and a place to escape "shame and crime."

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Fourteen years before the *Michelangelo Suite*, Shostakovich had associated nocturnal figures with death in an instrumental work, String Quartet No. 7 from 1960. Written after the death of Shostakovich's first wife and dedicated to her memory, the second movement of this quartet uses the figures as accompaniment to a mournful, elegiac melody (see Fig. 8a on following page). Michael Mishra has compared this use of nocturnal arpeggios to the arpeggios that open Alban Berg's Violin Concerto, another work associated with the death of a loved one (see Fig. 8b).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Letters of Michelangelo*, vol. 2, trans. E. H. Ramsden (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1963), 135-6; David Fanning, "Shostakovich and His Pupils," in *Shostakovich and His World*, ed. Laurel E. Fay (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 301.

<sup>25</sup> Giovanni di Carlo Strozzi and Michelangelo Buonarroti, trans. Sergey Suslov, in Dmitri Shostakovich, *Complete Songs: Famous Vocal Cycles*, Delos DE 3317, 2005, CD liner notes.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Mishra, "The State Composer: Compromise and Dissent (1954-1965)," in *A Shostakovich Companion*, ed. Michael Mishra (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 226-7.

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Lento ♩ = 68

con sord

p

con sord

p

Fig. 8a

Andante ♩ = 56

pp

p

1

5

7

10

Fig. 8b

\* \* \* \* \*

The nocturnal figures return in the fourth movement, “Nocturne,” of String Quartet No. 15, and again bear a striking similarity to Berg’s Violin Concerto (Fig. 9).<sup>27</sup>

Adagio ♩ = 80

pp

con sord.

p espress.

pp

p espress.

pp

p espress.

Fig. 9

Like the related song from the *Michelangelo Suite*, this movement is placed immediately before an explicit representation of death. In this case, Shostakovich placed his Nocturne immediately before the Funeral March mentioned earlier in this chapter (see Fig. 1). He even went so far as to connect the two movements musically; four measures from the end

<sup>27</sup> Richard Burke, “The Moving Image: Time and Narrative in the Fifteenth Quartet,” in *A Shostakovich Companion*, ed. Michael Mishra (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 435. See also, Laurel E. Fay, “The Last Quartets of Dmitrii Shostakovich: A Stylistic Investigation” (PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1978), 59.



of the movement the viola and cello play a dotted rhythm that presages the major rhythmic motive of the Funeral March which then follows *attaca*. This suggests that the Nocturne is no more a literal depiction of night than the song from the *Michelangelo Suite* written the same year. Instead both examples reflect the metaphorical representation of death as sleep.

### **Dodecaphony**

Dodecaphony, whether as a strict tone row or a completed aggregate, is the musical element most often used to depict death by Shostakovich in his late works. Although, as is often noted, Shostakovich did not use dodecaphony in the integral manner championed by the Second Viennese School, the use of tone rows as a source of melodic and motivic material became an important characteristic of several works, particularly those dealing with death.<sup>28</sup>

The frequency with which Shostakovich used tone rows after 1966 and the thematic significance that they carry may seem unusual due to some earlier, public comments he made about the technique. During a 1959 tour of the United States he condemned dodecaphony to the American press, calling it “still-born art” that “attests to an ideological impasse, the crisis of bourgeois culture.”<sup>29</sup> Later that year, commenting on the 1959 Warsaw Autumn Festival at which pieces by Schoenberg, Boulez, Berio, and others were programed, Shostakovich spoke at length about his distaste for dodecaphony.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Yuriy Kholopov, “Form in Shostakovich’s Instrumental Works,” in *Shostakovich Studies*, ed. David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 75.

<sup>29</sup> Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, 214.

<sup>30</sup> Lisa Jakelski, “Górecki’s *Scontri* and Avant-Garde Music in Cold War Poland,” *Journal of Musicology* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2009), 210.

I am firmly convinced that in music, as in every other human endeavor, it is always necessary to seek new paths. But it seems to me that those who see these new paths in dodecaphony are seriously deluding themselves. The narrow dogmatism of this artificially invented system rigidly fetters the creative imagination of composers and deprives them of their individuality. . . . Dodecaphony not only has no future, it doesn't even have a present. It is just a "fad" that is already passing.<sup>31</sup>

However, whether or not these statements truly reflected Shostakovich's personal conviction on the matter, they are contradicted by reports from Maxim Shostakovich that his father owned and admired several dodecaphonic scores, including Boulez's *Le marteau sans maître*, which he also gave to a friend as a gift.<sup>32</sup> Whatever Shostakovich's earlier feelings may have been on the matter, after his first use of tone rows in 1967 in *Seven Poems by Alexander Blok*, he rarely completed a major work without employing at least one tone row.

Shostakovich's turn to dodecaphony is less astonishing when the Soviet compositional trends of the 1960s and 1970s are taken into account. As recent research by Peter Schmelz has shown, twelve-tone writing was frequently employed by younger Soviet composers and was no longer considered a radical departure from the Union of Composers' standards by the time that Shostakovich began employing tone rows in his own works. The shift to Soviet acceptance of dodecaphony began with the generation of composers who first gained recognition in the early to mid 1950s: Andrei Volkonsky, Arvo Pärt, and Alfred Schnittke.<sup>33</sup> Because their works were not vetted by the

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<sup>31</sup> Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, 214; Peter J. Schmelz, "Shostakovich's 'Twelve-Tone' Compositions and the Politics and Practice of Soviet Serialism," in *Shostakovich and His World*, ed. Laurel E. Fay (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 303.

<sup>32</sup> "Prénom Maxime," *Le Monde de la musique* 118 (January 1989), xv; Edison Denisov, "Vstrechi s Shostakovichem," *Muzikal'naya akademiya* 3 (1994), 92.

<sup>33</sup> Schmelz, "Shostakovich's 'Twelve-Tone' Compositions," 305, 321-348.

Composer's Union, these composers worked "unofficially" through the 1960s, arranging for their music to be performed in small venues that operated without Union recognition.<sup>34</sup> By the early 1970s the efforts of these young composers seemed to precipitate a change: the acknowledgement of dodecaphony's compositional validity not only by Shostakovich but by other "official" composers as well. In 1972, even Tikhon Khrennikov, the head of the Composer's Union, prominently included a tone row in the opening of his Piano Concerto No. 2. This official recognition of the viability of dodecaphonic technique makes Shostakovich's shift to the frequent use of rows less surprising.

More than these other Soviet composers, it seems that it was Benjamin Britten that had the most significant influence on Shostakovich's evolution. Eric Roseberry has suggested that there is a parallel between Britten's use of twelve-tone rows in *The Turn of the Screw* and Shostakovich's similar use of the device in his own works.<sup>35</sup> In Britten's 1954 operatic version of Henry James' novel, he portrayed the story of a ghost haunting two children and their caretaker through a series of fifteen variations on a twelve-tone theme. Like Shostakovich's later use of dodecaphony, Britten never employs the tone row integrally, instead using it as the basis for neo-tonal harmonies that depict death as an increasingly uncanny, antagonistic force. Shostakovich saw Britten's opera in 1962 at the Edinburgh Festival, and was most likely inspired by the Englishman's individualistic use

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<sup>34</sup> Peter J. Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 180-1.

<sup>35</sup> Eric Roseberry, "A Debt Repaid? Some Observations on Shostakovich and His Late-Period Recognition of Britten," in *Shostakovich Studies*, ed. David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 244-8.

of tone rows, a model of dodecaphony that did not “rigidly [fetter] the creative imagination.”<sup>36</sup>

Of the many works in which Shostakovich used dodecaphony, the Fourteenth Symphony—dedicated to Britten—is one of the late works most densely populated with tone rows. Not only is Shostakovich’s symphony about death filled with dodecaphony, but he specifically uses it any time the text calls for a depiction of death. As in *The Turn of the Screw*, the use of dodecaphony gives each of these representations of death an uncanny feeling, which is sometimes terrifying and at other times mysterious.

One of the clearest examples of the terrifying depiction of death comes in the second movement of the symphony, which takes its words from Federico Garcia Lorca’s “Malagueña,” a poem that features death as a literal personification.

Death  
Entered and left  
The tavern.

Black horses  
And dark souls  
In the ravines of the guitar  
Still wander.

They smell of salt  
And hot blood  
From the foaming  
Of the nervous ripples

Death  
Keeps leaving and entering,  
Keeps on entering and leaving!  
Death keeps on leaving  
And still will not leave the tavern.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Lyn Henderson, “Shostakovich, the Passacaglia, and Serialism,” in *A Shostakovich Companion*, ed. Michael Mishra (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 415.

<sup>37</sup> Federico García Lorca, “Malagueña,” trans. Joan Pemberton Smith, in *Shostakovich; Symphony No. 14; Mussorgsky: Songs and Dances of Death*, Deutsche Grammophon D 110264, 1993, CD liner notes.

In his musical setting, Shostakovich explicitly depicts the character of Death with a pair of tone rows in violas, cellos, and basses. Immediately after the soprano sings the words “Death entered” the first tone row ascends, and, as the Db is held, the singer completes the verse “and left the tavern,” leading to the second, descending row (Fig. 10, rhythms have been simplified).

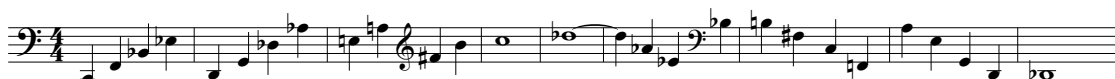


Fig. 10

This literal depiction of death sets a precedent that is followed throughout the symphony: representing the uncanny terror of death with tone rows.

A similar representation of death’s terror appears in the symphony’s fourth movement, “The Suicide.” Contrary to the implication of the title, this poem by Guillaume Apollinaire, does not depict the act of suicide, instead focusing on the three lilies growing atop the victim’s grave.

Three lilies, three lilies  
On my grave where no cross stands.

Three lilies, whose gilding  
The cold winds blow away,  
And the black sky, pouring forth rain,  
Washes them now and then,  
And like menacing scepters  
They have a solemn beauty.

One grows from my wound  
And when the sunset flames,  
It looks bloodstained,  
That mournful lily.

Another grows from my heart,  
Which suffers so intensely,  
On the worm-eaten couch.  
The third one’s roots lacerate my mouth.  
They grow lonely on my grave,

And barren is the earth around them,  
And, like my life, their beauty is accursed.

Three lilies, three lilies  
On my grave where no cross stands.<sup>38</sup>

Here Shostakovich sets the descriptions of the second and third lilies with tone rows. The lines describing the second lily are accompanied by a set of trills that represent a full twelve-tone aggregate, and as soon as the singer utters the words “worm-eaten couch” the violins respond with two descending rows (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11

The horror of the “worm-eaten couch” is eclipsed by the depiction of the third lily. As the singer proclaims, “The third one’s roots lacerate my mouth,” the strings build up a full twelve-tone cluster that steadily ascends until it is interrupted by a twice-struck bell on the pitch Bb (R61).

This passage recalls a similar moment in the symphony’s previous movement, a setting of “Lorelei,” another poem by Guillaume Apollinaire, based on the original version of the Lorelei myth by Clemens Brentano. First imagined in Brentano’s 1801 ballad *Zu Bacharach am Rheine*, Lorelei is a woman whose lover has left for a distant land and who is cursed to bewitch men with her beautiful eyes. When a bishop sentences her to a nunnery, Lorelei, hearing her lover calling her from the river, throws herself off a

<sup>38</sup> Guillaume Apollinaire, “The Suicide,” trans. Joan Pemberton Smith, in *Shostakovich; Symphony No. 14; Mussorgsky: Songs and Dances of Death*, Deutsche Grammophon D 110264, 1993, CD liner notes.

cliff into the Rhine.<sup>39</sup> The moment of terror in Shostakovich's music comes as Lorelei leaps from the cliff, a moment represented by a twelve-tone micro-canon that rises from the basses (Fig. 12) and culminates in an indeterminate cluster at the highest limits of the strings' ranges that is also interrupted by a Bb bell (R47).

Fig. 12

This terrifying climax is contrasted by another use of dodecaphony eighteen measures later when Lorelei speaks of her lover calling her. “Around a bend of the Rhine a boat comes sailing, in it sits my beloved, he calls me.”<sup>40</sup> Shostakovich presents her lover's call as a pair of tone rows in the celesta, mysteriously beckoning from the other side (Fig. 13).

Fig. 13

<sup>39</sup> Heinrich Heine was inspired by the story to write his more famous continuation of the Lorelei myth in 1824, which depicts the deceased Lorelei as a siren who lures boatmen to their death in the Rhine from atop her perch on the rock. This poem was set by Clara Schumann as a lied in 1843.

<sup>40</sup> Guillaume Apollinaire, “Lorelei,” trans. Joan Pemberton Smith, in *Shostakovich; Symphony No. 14; Mussorgsky: Songs and Dances of Death*, Deutsche Grammophon D 110264, 1993, CD liner notes.

The sense of death as an uncanny mystery evoked by these tone rows is an example of the other common depiction of death for which Shostakovich found dodecaphony particularly useful.

A further example of this use of dodecaphony to represent death as mysterious and uncanny appears in the opening of the symphony's first movement, a relatively peaceful setting of Lorca's mournful poem "De Profundis."

A hundred ardent lovers  
Fell into eternal sleep  
Deep beneath the dry earth.  
Red sand covers  
The roads of Andalusia.

Branches of green olives have spread over Cordoba  
Here crosses will be erected to them,  
So that people will not forget them.  
A hundred ardent lovers  
fell into eternal sleep.<sup>41</sup>

Shostakovich sets this poem's depiction of the mysterious sleep of death, not with nocturne arpeggios, but with a dodecaphonic melody given to the first violins in the introductory measures of the symphony (Fig. 14).



Fig. 14

## **Conclusion**

Throughout the last fifteen years of his life, Shostakovich was wracked with physical ailments that kept him conscious of his inevitable death, a concern that was

<sup>41</sup> Federico García Lorca, "De profundis," trans. Joan Pemberton Smith, in *Shostakovich; Symphony No. 14; Mussorgsky: Songs and Dances of Death*, Deutsche Grammophon D 110264, 1993, CD liner notes.



reflected in his works from this period. This chapter has provided examples of three musical tropes—funeral marches, nocturnal arpeggios, and dodecaphony—that Shostakovich used to explore his preoccupation with death. Funeral marches were used to show the inevitability of death, arpeggios showed death as eternal sleep, and dodecaphony depicted death as an uncanny force, both terrifying and mysterious. This list is in no way comprehensive. There are numerous other instances of poems about death and many other examples of dodecaphony in instrumental and vocal works from this period, but in this chapter I have endeavored to offer a representative sample that lays the groundwork for the analyses of the following chapters.

## Chapter 2 Striving for an Artistic Ideal

As silent memory before my very eyes  
Unveils the scroll on which my life is writ,  
Then I, recoiling from the sight of so much shame,  
Shudder and curse and shed the bitter tears  
Of anguish, that for all they flow so free  
These piteous lines can never wash away.<sup>1</sup>  
- Alexander Pushkin, "Memories"

As shown in Chapter 1, Shostakovich continually fought physical infirmities throughout the final years of his life and thus was constantly reminded that each of his compositions might be his last. The result of this was a large number of his late works that feature representations of death. With his thoughts frequently returning to his mortality, it is not surprising that Shostakovich would have also begun re-examining his life's actions. This seems to have been the case in 1968 when he wrote a letter to Isaak Glikman, confirming that not only was he re-examining his life, but he felt that it fell short of some unstated goal.

Tomorrow is my sixty-second birthday. At such an age, people are apt to reply coquettishly to questions such as "If you could be born over again, would you live your sixty-two years in the same way?" "Yes," they say, "not everything was perfect of course, there were some disappointments, but on the whole I would do much the same again."

If I were ever to be asked this question, my reply would be: "No! A thousand times no!"<sup>2</sup>

To understand Shostakovich's negative reaction to this question, we must first understand the moral standard to which he compared himself and why he might have felt that he had

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Pushkin, "Memories," quoted in Dmitri Shostakovich and Isaac Glikman, *Story of a Friendship*, trans. Anthony Phillips (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 301-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 154-5.

not lived up to it. This chapter will examine the concept of the True Artist—an artistic ideal demonstrated through texts from Shostakovich’s late works—and present the significant biographical events that may have weighed on his mind as he reviewed his life.

### **Qualities of the True Artist**

The easiest way to discern Shostakovich’s personal conception of what I have chosen to call the True Artist is to examine the heroic depictions of the artist in the texts he chose for his vocal works. The use of these texts as a basis for understanding Shostakovich’s feelings assumes that his use of a text is a validation of the poet’s message, or as Philip Bullock has stated it, “the composer’s voice *is* the poet’s echo.”<sup>3</sup> Given that Shostakovich was never concerned with disguising irony in his music, it is reasonable to assume that where Shostakovich treats a text seriously he is validating at least a portion of its meaning. Galina Vishnevskaya lent credence to this assumption in her autobiography.

Yes, there was good reason why the authorities were vigilant in censoring those works that Shostakovich chose to accompany with text. They knew that he wrote only about what he himself had experienced, and hence were afraid to give him the opportunity to speak the truth through the voice of the singer.<sup>4</sup>

Not only does Vishnevskaya state that Shostakovich had a personal connection to the texts he chose to set, but she also points to one of the qualities of the True Artist portrayed in the verses analyzed below. Collectively, the texts of Shostakovich’s late

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<sup>3</sup> Philip Ross Bullock, “The Poet’s Echo, The Composer’s Voice: Monologic verse or Dialogic Song,” in *Shostakovich Studies* 2, ed. Pauline Fairclough (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 209.

<sup>4</sup> Galina Vishnevskaya, *Galina: A Russian Story* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 275.

vocal works represent the True Artist as one who speaks truth to power and to the people, and does not receive recognition or accolades.

### **Speaking Truth to Power**

In Russian culture, the ideal of the artist who speaks truth to power has a long history, going back to the early nineteenth century. Long before the rise of the Soviet system, Alexander Pushkin set the precedent for later Russians in his decision to “increase his authority as a poet by writing to and about Russian rulers.”<sup>5</sup> This brought the poet into direct conflict with Tsar Nicholas I, who kept Pushkin under censorship and surveillance for many years.<sup>6</sup> Pushkin trusted his popularity to shield him as he spoke out against the offenses of the Tsar, and although he was still punished with exile, censorship, and surveillance, this only elevated him as a seminal example for later Russian artists, most famously Dostoyevsky, Pasternak, and Solzhenitsyn. Pushkin’s example also became a favorite allegory for Russian writers to retell in their own way, a trend remarked on by George Gachev. “‘The poet and the tsar’ has been since olden days the main theme in Russia and tempts all our writers to tackle it.”<sup>7</sup>

One writer inspired by the Pushkin legend was Marina Tsvetayeva, who developed a personal relationship with her own fictionalized version of the Russian poet through a series of poems written across her career.<sup>8</sup> Her 1931 poem, “The Poet and the Tsar,” set by Shostakovich as the fourth song in the 1974 cycle *Six Poems by Marina*

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<sup>5</sup> Stephanie Sandler, *Commemorating Pushkin: Russia’s Myth of a National Poet* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 256.

<sup>6</sup> Antonina W. Bouis in Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *Fatal Half Measures: The Culture of Democracy in the Soviet Union*, ed. and trans. Antonina W. Bouis (Boston: Little Brown, 1991), xi.

<sup>7</sup> Georgy Gachev, “Andrei Siniavskii-Abram Tertz and Novel Goodnight! (Confesstory),” in *Russian Studies in Literature* 28, no. 1 (Winter 1991-2), 27.

<sup>8</sup> Sandler, 214.

*Tsvetayeva*, presents not only her idealized portrait of Pushkin, but actually focuses on condemning Tsar Nicholas I for his attempts to silence Pushkin's criticism.

Along the otherworldly  
Hall of the Tsars. . .  
Who's this adamant  
This marble one?  
So majestic  
In the gold of regalia.  
Wretched watchman  
Of Pushkin's glory.

Rebuking the author  
And snipping his manuscript,  
The beastly butcher  
Of Polish land.

Look at him sharper!  
Never forget:  
The Singerkiller  
Tsar Nicholas  
The First.<sup>9</sup>

In her poem, *Tsvetayeva* is clearly more concerned with denigrating the Tsar than glorifying Pushkin. This choice reflects the parallels between this poem and Pushkin's own "Monument," in which he had already thoroughly glorified himself.

I've raised a monument not made by human hands.  
The public path to it cannot be overgrown.  
With insubmissive head far loftier it stands  
Than Alexander's columned stone.

No, I shall not all die. My soul in hallowed berth  
Of art shall brave decay and from my dust take wing,  
And I shall be renowned whilst on this mortal earth  
Even one poet lives to sing.

. . .

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<sup>9</sup> Marina Tsvetayeva, "The Poet and the Czar," trans. Sergey Suslov, in Dmitri Shostakovich, *Complete Songs: The Last Years*, Delos DE 3307, 2002, CD liner notes.

And long shall I a man dear to the people be  
 For how my kindling lyre bid kindly feeling glow,  
 I in a tyrant age who sang of liberty,  
 And mercy to all men laid low.

To God and his commands pay Thou good heed, O Muse.  
 To praise and slander both be nonchalant and cool.  
 Demand no laureate's wreath, think nothing of abuse,  
 And never argue with a fool.<sup>10</sup>

Deciding not to repeat Pushkin's assertion that his greatness stemmed from his "praise and slander" of the Tsar, Tsvetayeva focuses her text on Pushkin's antagonist. She trusts her audience to recognize that it is Pushkin's willingness to stand up to the Tsar's villainy that makes him worthy of praise.<sup>11</sup>

Literary scholar Stephanie Sandler has argued that Tsvetayeva's fictionalized conception of Pushkin is a reflection of her own life.<sup>12</sup> This could possibly have been another source of artistic inspiration for Shostakovich. Marina Tsvetayeva was a staunch individualist who decried both the Tsar and the Bolsheviks.<sup>13</sup> Much of her poetry remained unpublished during her life, and she was forced for political and financial reasons to leave Russia and remain in exile for a number of years. Upon her family's return to Russia in the late 1930s, her husband was executed as a spy, leaving Tsvetayeva and her children without income. Throughout her life she felt like an outcast. "Not only with 'politicians,' but also with writers, I am—not; with no one, alone, my whole life through, without books, without readers, without friends—without circle, without hearth,

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<sup>10</sup> Alexander Pushkin, "Monument," in *Selected Lyric Poetry*, ed. and trans. James E. Falen (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2009), 208.

<sup>11</sup> Shostakovich sets the text describing the Tsar's statue with a pair of simultaneous tone rows, representing, perhaps, not only the imposing statue of a long dead Tsar but the moral death of authoritarian censorship.

<sup>12</sup> Sandler, 215-6.

<sup>13</sup> Lily Feiler, *Marina Tsvetaeva: The Double Beat of Heaven and Hell* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 86.

without protection, belonging nowhere worse than a dog.”<sup>14</sup> In August 1941, rather than continue her life of isolation, she hanged herself.

Like all Russians, Shostakovich was steeped from childhood in the artistic legacy of Pushkin, the True Artist. It is therefore important to note that when choosing a representation of the poet, he avoided repeating the accolades, instead choosing the only two of Tsvetayeva’s nine poems about Pushkin in which the poet is dead (“The Poet and the Tsar” and “No, the Drum Did Beat”). By doing this, Shostakovich acknowledged Pushkin’s mythologized legacy, but rather than repeating what his audience already understood, he focused on placing this legacy in the context of death.

Pushkin may have provided the traditional Russian model for speaking truth to power, but it was in Yevgeny Yevtushenko’s poem “A Career” that Shostakovich found the most literal depiction of this artistic quality. The poem, which Shostakovich chose for the conclusion of his Symphony No. 13, focuses on Galileo’s stand against the Catholic church, comparing him with a forgotten peer who could have also spoken truth to power but chose to protect his career and family instead.

Galileo, the clergy maintained,  
Was a pernicious and stubborn man.  
But time has a way of demonstrating  
The most stubborn are the most intelligent.

In Galileo’s day, a fellow scientist  
Was no more stupid than Galileo.  
He was well aware the earth revolved,  
But he also had a large family to feed.

Stepping into a carriage with his wife,  
After effecting his betrayal,  
He believed he was launched on a career,  
Though he was undermining it in reality.

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<sup>14</sup> Marina Tsvetayeva, *In the Inmost Hour of the Soul: Selected Poems of Marina Tsvetayeva*, trans. Nina Kossman (Clifton, NJ: Humana Press, 1989), viii.

Galileo alone had risked asserting  
The truth about our planet,  
And this made him a great man. . . His was  
A genuine career as I understand it.<sup>15</sup>

Here, Yevtushenko and Shostakovich equate scientific and artistic truth, asserting through Galileo's example that the True Artist refuses to stifle his truth no matter the consequences. Although the poem's text illustrates this quality with the parallel stories of Galileo and the forgotten careerist, it was actually a friend of Yevtushenko's who inspired this poem. As Yevtushenko explains, Yuri Vasiliev was a painter who made a stand for his artistic truth.

After the war [Vasiliev] first worked, like many students, in the sickly sweet pastry style of realism. But honor and glory be to him for being one of the first Russian Soviet artists to return to the forgotten, besmirched traditions of the great avant-garde. . . . Members of the Moscow Artists' Union party bureau appeared at his door to check the ideology of his pictures. . . . Yuri Vasiliev stood in the doorway with his small children and wife and with a loaded carbine in his hands. He said that if they dared cross his threshold without his invitation, he would kill his children, his wife, and himself.<sup>16</sup>

It was to Vasiliev that Yevtushenko dedicated "A Career," and whether or not Shostakovich knew the story that inspired the poem, he was aware of Yevtushenko's own artistic stand.

Yevgeny Yevtushenko was a young Siberian poet who in September 1961 took advantage of the new artistic freedom provided by Nikita Khrushchev to publish "Babi Yar," a poem decrying the Nazi massacre of Jews in Kiev during World War II. When

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<sup>15</sup> Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *The Poetry of Yevgeny Yevtushenko*, ed. and trans. George Reavey (New York: October House, 1967), 63.

<sup>16</sup> Yevtushenko, *Fatal Half Measures*, 183.



the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* published the poem, it quickly received criticism organized by the Central Committee's Department of Agitation and Propaganda.<sup>17</sup> Another newspaper, *Literaturnaya Rossiya* accused Yevtushenko of focusing on the Jews killed in the massacre and excluding the Slavs, both Ukrainian and Russian, who were also murdered.<sup>18</sup> The paper even published a harsh poetic response by Alexey Markov.

What sort of real Russian are you,  
When you've forgotten your own people?  
Your soul, like trousers, has gotten tight  
And as empty as a staircase landing.<sup>19</sup>

In December 1962, after Shostakovich had publicly announced his Symphony No. 13, which begins with a setting of "Babi Yar," Yevtushenko had a chance to literally speak truth to power. Khrushchev seemed to have a change of heart about artistic freedom after being incensed by a gallery of abstract painting and sculpture. The day before the scheduled premiere of Shostakovich's Thirteenth Symphony, Khrushchev called a reception for writers and artists at which he condemned one of the sculptors of being a "pederast," and one of his spokesmen condemned Yevtushenko for "Babi Yar," repeating the usual criticism.<sup>20</sup> Yevtushenko replied directly to both critics, saying that the government could not decide what an artist's subject should be, and defending abstract art by invoking the indisputable greatness of Picasso. Khrushchev, seeming to take a line from an earlier era, responded with a proverb: "The grave cures the hunchback." Refusing to back down, Yevtushenko answered the threat: "I think that nowadays it's no longer the grave, but life."

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<sup>17</sup> Vishnevskaya, 276.

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 400, 412.

<sup>19</sup> Alexey Markov quoted in Yevtushenko, *Fatal Half Measures*, 296

<sup>20</sup> Isaak Schwartz in Wilson, 404.

In choosing to set “The Poet and the Tsar” and “A Career,” Shostakovich not only validated the quality exhibited by the subjects of both poems, the True Artist speaking truth to power, but he also chose verses by two poets who themselves exemplified this quality. Tsvetayeva’s entire life was a rejection of the existing political power structures, and Yevtushenko boldly rebuked Khrushchev in defense of his own art and that of others.

### **Speaking Truth to the People**

The second quality of the True Artist found in Shostakovich’s song texts is related to the first. Not only must the artist speak truth to power, but he must also speak truth to the people, particularly when that truth is unpopular. In two songs Shostakovich chose texts that depict the artist as the prophet of misfortune and bearer of terrible truths.

The earliest appearance of this quality in Shostakovich’s songs is in the second of the *Seven Poems by Alexander Blok*, “Gamayun the Soothsaying Bird.” Blok’s poem is a depiction of a character from Russian folklore and an interpretation of a painting by the Russian Symbolist Viktor Vasnetsov. The text of the poem describes not only the bird herself, but also her horrific visions.

On the smooth endless waters  
Which the sunset has clad in purple,  
She prophesies and she sings,  
Unable to spread her confused wings. . .

She prophesies the oppression by wicked Tartars,  
A line of bloody executions,  
Earthquakes, and famine, and fires,  
The might of villains and the demise of the righteous. . .

On the smooth endless waters  
Which the sunset has clad in purple,  
She prophesies and she sings,  
Unable to spread her confused wings. . .

She prophesies the oppression by wicked Tartars,  
 A line of bloody executions,  
 Earthquakes, and famine, and fires,  
 The might of villains and the demise of the righteous. . .

Obsessed by eternal horror,  
 The beautiful visage beams with love,  
 But the blood-covered lips  
 Pronounce prophetic truths! . . .<sup>21</sup>



Fig. 15 – Gamayun: The Soothsaying Bird (1897)  
 Viktor Vasnetsov

Blok's depiction of Gamayun decrying "oppression" might seem to place this poem in the "Speaking Truth to Power" category, but there is a difference worth noting. Both

<sup>21</sup> Alexander Blok, "Gamayun the Soothsaying Bird," trans. Sergey Suslov, in Dmitri Shostakovich, *Complete Songs: The Last Years*, Delos DE 3307, 2002, CD liner notes.

“The Poet and the Tsar” and “A Career” imply that the artist is in direct conflict with power. For example, the Tsar directly rebukes Pushkin and shreds his manuscript. This is different from the Gamayun, who prophesies to the public about oppressive power. She turns a mirror to society, without regarding the consequence, showing the people the horror of their situation, a horror to which they seem to turn a blind eye.

Marina Tsvetayeva created a similar representation of the True Artist speaking dark truths to the people in her ode “To Anna Akhmatova” from 1916. The first verse of the poem, which Shostakovich selected to end his Tsvetayeva cycle, praises Akhmatova for reflecting back to Russian society the darkness that was infecting it.

O Muse of Weeping, the most beautiful of Muses!  
O reckless issue of a white night!  
You send black blizzards to Russia,  
And your screams pierce us like arrows.

And we start, and a hollow “Oh!”  
Uttered by hundreds of thousands gives you an oath.  
Anna Akhmatova! – the name is a giant sigh,  
And it falls into a depth that has no name.

We are crowned in that we tread the same land,  
And the same sky is above us!  
And those who are wounded by your deathly fate  
Will be immortal descending to the bed of death.

Domes are gleaming in my singing town,  
And a blind wanderer glorifies Holy Saviour. . .  
And I grant unto you my pealing town,  
Akhmatova – complete with my heart.<sup>22</sup>

Tsvetayeva’s early portrayal of Akhmatova as an artist who speaks unpleasant truths to the people was reflected by Akhmatova’s later career, a biography that, as a friend of the poet’s, Shostakovich would have known intimately.

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<sup>22</sup> Marina Tsvetayeva, “To Anna Akhmatova,” trans. Sergey Suslov, in Dmitri Shostakovich, *Complete Songs: The Last Years*, Delos DE 3307, 2002, CD liner notes.

A contemporary of Tsvetayeva, Anna Akhmatova suffered many of the same career setbacks as Shostakovich: a party resolution unofficially banned her works in 1925, she was condemned by Andrei Zhdanov in 1946 (only two years before Zhdanov's damning criticisms of Shostakovich), and some of her most important works were withheld from publication until the 1960s.<sup>23</sup> In particular, her *Requiem*, which was written over a twenty-year span and published in Germany in 1965, remained commercially unavailable in the Soviet Union until 1987, because of its unflinching depiction of the realities of life under Stalin. However, although it was not officially released until then, the poems from *Requiem* were disseminated through Soviet society much earlier, particularly in the 1960s.<sup>24</sup> It is fair to assume that at the time he wrote this song Shostakovich would have been familiar with the book's content and had it in mind as he set Tsvetayeva's text.

### Receiving No Reward

The final quality that distinguishes the True Artist is a lack of recognition and reward. This idea also had a long history in Russian literature, and similarly found a prominent voice in the work of Pushkin, particularly his "To a Poet."

O poet! scorn the people's quick acclaim:  
The moment of impassioned praise will cease,  
The frigid crowd will laugh and fools defame,  
But keep your firm resolve and be at peace.

Be czarlike—live alone and feel no shame.  
Allow your inner freedom to increase;  
Refine the fruits your cherished thoughts release,  
Asserting for your noble deeds no claim.

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<sup>23</sup> Elaine Feinstein, *Anna of All the Russians: The Life of Anna Akhmatova* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 222; Yevtushenko, *Fatal Half Measures*, 130

<sup>24</sup> Feinstein, 267.

For you alone must judge the work you do;  
 The strictest court of all resides in you.  
 And if you find it worthy, and your own?

Then let the motley crowd in fury curse  
 And spit upon the vessel of your verse  
 And try in puerile sport to shake your throne.<sup>25</sup>

Although Shostakovich never set this particular poem, its theme was suggested in “A Career” by its focus on Galileo as a figure who received punishment rather than reward for his efforts. The importance of this quality is reinforced and clarified by two later settings from Symphony No. 14 and *Michelangelo Suite*.

Of the eleven poems included in the Fourteenth Symphony, only one, “O Delvig, Delvig!” has a positive message. Wilhelm Küchelbecker wrote this verse to his friend and colleague, Anton Delvig, as a symbol of solidarity. Like their mutual friend Pushkin, these two poets were persecuted by Tsar Nicholas I for their support of the December Uprising, and Küchelbecker’s poem decries the lack of understanding and appreciation for their work while also acknowledging the eternal power of artistic friendship.

O Delvig, Delvig! What is the reward  
 For lofty deeds and poetry?  
 For talent what comfort is there  
 Among villains and fools?

In the stern hand of Juvenal  
 A menacing whip whistles for villains,  
 It drains the color from their cheeks.  
 And the power of tyrants trembles.

O Delvig, Delvig! Why the persecutions?  
 Immortality is equally the lot  
 Of bold, inspired deeds  
 And sweet poetry!

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<sup>25</sup> Alexander Pushkin, “To a Poet,” in *Selected Lyric Poetry*, 158.

Nor will our union die,  
 Free, joyous and proud!  
 But in both happiness and unhappiness will remain firm,  
 The union of lovers of the eternal muses.<sup>26</sup>

The text of this poem had personal resonance for Shostakovich. After completing the symphony, he dedicated it to Benjamin Britten, whose *War Requiem* had been one of Shostakovich's major inspirations, and sent a portrait of Anton Delvig to the Englishman's house as a gift, implying that the appearance of this poem in the symphony is a message of friendship and understanding directly from Shostakovich to Britten.<sup>27</sup> It is also a message that reaffirms that the True Artist speaks truth to power, expecting no reward. In fact, Küchelbecker specifies that the "reward for lofty deeds and poetry" is not accolades but persecution.

The opening song from *Suite to Words by Michelangelo Buonarroti* provides another example of the lack of recognition for the artist, framing the idea in a spiritual context. Titled "Truth" by Shostakovich, Michelangelo's sonnet exhibits the poet's surprise and discontent with how God has used him and with the lack of reward he has received for speaking the truth.

There are truths in sayings of old days,  
 Like this: he who can, never wants to.  
 Lord, Thou hast perceived Lie's babbling,  
 And hast given the babblers what they deserve.

As for me, I am thy servant; my labor's Thine,  
 Like beams are the sun's – though Thy wrath foretells  
 All that my ardor longs to achieve,  
 And all my efforts are therefore needless.

<sup>26</sup> Wilhelm Küchelbecker, "O Delvig, Delvig!," trans. Joan Pemberton Smith, in *Shostakovich; Symphony No. 14; Mussorgsky: Songs and Dances of Death*, Deutsche Grammophon D 110264, 1993, CD liner notes.

<sup>27</sup> Eric Roseberry, "A Debt Repaid? Some Observations on Shostakovich and His Late-Period Recognition of Britten," in *Shostakovich Studies*, ed. David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 229-30; Michael Mishra, "'I Lived On . . . in the Hearts of My True Friends' (1966-1975)," in *A Shostakovich Companion*, ed. Michael Mishra (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 284.

Methought Thy greatness would have me  
 Not as an echo for chambers,  
 But as a cutting edge of justice and weight of wrath.

But Heaven is indifferent to earthly merits  
 And it is as fruitless to expect its award,  
 As to expect fruit from a barren tree.<sup>28</sup>

In this poem, the artist is not only depicted receiving no reward but also as unsatisfied with the futility of his actions. As an artist, Michelangelo expects to be used as “a cutting edge of justice;” however, he finds that his work is “needless” and that expectations of reward, even heavenly reward, are “fruitless.” As mentioned in the previous chapter, Shostakovich did not believe in life after death and surely not in any sort of heavenly reward, so his personal reading of this poem would have been in a secular context. In that case, it is society that is indifferent to the artist’s merits and sees no need to compensate him for his work.

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The collective portrait these verses present is of an artist who neither fears to speak truth to power, nor to reveal unpleasant truths to the people, and who cannot expect recognition for his efforts. If, as these texts suggest, Shostakovich believed that these were the essential qualities of what I have called the True Artist, then how did the actions of the composer’s life compare to this ideal?

### **Shostakovich vs. the Artistic Ideal**

According to Maxim Shostakovich, his father’s general sentiment towards the Soviet power structure was summed up by Christ’s maxim to the Jews about Roman

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<sup>28</sup> Michelangelo Buonarroti, Sonnet III “To Pope Julius II,” trans. Sergey Suslov, in Dmitri Shostakovich, *Complete Songs: Famous Vocal Cycles*, Delos DE 3317, 2005, CD liner notes.



taxation: “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”<sup>29</sup> This laissez-faire attitude was also echoed in Shostakovich’s advice to Galina Vishnevskaya whenever she was incensed “over yet another injustice, ‘Don’t waste your efforts. Work, play. You’re living here in this country, and you must see everything as it really is. . . . Just be thankful you are still allowed to breathe!’”<sup>30</sup>

However, as the texts of the vocal works examined above show, there was a part of Shostakovich that also believed the opposite, that he had a duty to stand up to “Caesar.” Maxim states that his father also kept a postcard on his nightstand with a painting by Titian depicting Christ overturning the moneylender’s tables, an illustration of complete repudiation of power. Particularly in his later years, Shostakovich expressed to his closest friends that he wished he had acted more in line with the ideal of the True Artist. Edison Denisov reports that as early as 1957, Shostakovich complained to him, “When I think about my life, I realize that I have been a coward.”<sup>31</sup> Only three years later, in a fit of depression over joining the Communist Party (more on that event below) Shostakovich told his friend, the musicologist Lev Lebedinsky, “I’ve been a whore, I am and always will be a whore.”<sup>32</sup>

Shostakovich made one of his most meaningful remarks on this subject in a letter to his student, the composer Boris Tishchenko from February 1974 that implored Tishchenko to reread Anton Chekhov’s short story “Ward No. 6.” One of the main characters of this story, Dr. Andrey Yefimovich Ragin, is a doctor in the mental ward of a

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<sup>29</sup> Wilson, 349.

<sup>30</sup> Vishnevskaya, 399.

<sup>31</sup> Edison Denisov in Wilson, 345.

<sup>32</sup> Lev Lebedinsky in Wilson, 377.

provincial hospital who deplores the existence of his place of work but chooses inaction, reasoning that he alone cannot affect change.

In his opinion the most sensible thing that could be done was to let out the patients and close the hospital. But he reflected that his will alone was not enough to do this, and that it would be useless; if physical and moral impurity were driven out of one place, they would only move to another; one must wait for it to wither away of itself.<sup>33</sup>

As Chekhov's story progresses, Dr. Ragin befriends one of his patients, a relationship that leads his peers to believe that he too is insane. Again choosing inaction, Dr. Ragin allows this to continue until he himself is committed as a patient to the ward. At the conclusion he explains to his friend the reason for his course of inaction and condemns himself for his weakness.

“I could not, I could not do anything. We are weak, my dear friend. . . . I used to be indifferent. I reasoned boldly and soundly, but at the first coarse touch of life upon me I have lost heart. . . . Prostration. . . . We are weak, we are poor creatures . . . and you, too, my dear friend, you are intelligent, generous, you drew in good impulses with your mother's milk, but you had hardly entered upon life when you were exhausted and fell ill. . . . Weak, weak!”<sup>34</sup>

In his letter, Shostakovich not only told Tishchenko to reread this story, but added that he had come to identify with Dr. Ragin's character. “When I read in that story about Andrey Yefimovich Ragin, it seems to me I am reading memoirs about myself. This especially concerns the description of the receiving of patients, or when he signs ‘blatantly falsified accounts,’ or when he ‘thinks’. . . and to a great deal else.”<sup>35</sup> This comment, coming a

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<sup>33</sup> Anton Chekhov, “Ward No. 6,” in *The Tales of Chekhov*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: The Ecco Press, 1921), 10:46-7.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 10:104-5.

<sup>35</sup> Dmitri Shostakovich quoted in Laurel E. Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 279.

year before Shostakovich's death gives the most comprehensive depiction of how he viewed the actions he had taken—or refused to take—during his career.

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To explain why Shostakovich may have reacted so negatively to his self-reflection, the next section of this chapter will present some of the ways in which Shostakovich's actions (and inactions) fell short of the model of the True Artist revealed in his vocal works. These paragraphs do not reflect the totality of Shostakovich's actions in these areas. Rather the biographical information has been selected to show why he sometimes felt he had failed at upholding the artistic standard. This section will begin with an examination of Shostakovich's concessions to the Soviet power structure (i.e., failing to speak truth to power and the people) and then present evidence of the types of recognition he received during his late years.

The event that weighed most heavily on Shostakovich's conscience at this time occurred in 1960 after Nikita Khrushchev created the position of First Secretary of the Russian Federation Union of Composers especially for Shostakovich.<sup>36</sup> In order to receive this title, acceptance of which was obligatory due to Khrushchev's involvement, Shostakovich was first required to become an official member of the Communist Party.<sup>37</sup> To secure Shostakovich's entrance into the party, the government sent a representative, Pyotr Pospelov, to Shostakovich's house in June 1960 to convince him to become a party member. Glikman later quoted Shostakovich's recollection of this meeting.

Pospelov tried everything he knew to persuade me to join the Party, in which, he said, these days one breathes freely and easily under Nikita Sergeyevich. Pospelov praised Khrushchov [sic] to the skies, talking about his youth –

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 213; Wilson, 369.

<sup>37</sup> Shostakovich and Glikman, 92.

yes, youth was the word he used – telling me all about his wonderful plans, and about how it really was time I joined the ranks of a Party headed now not by Stalin but by Nikita Sergeyevich. I had almost lost the power of speech, but somehow managed to stammer out my unworthiness to accept such an honor. Clutching at straws, I said that I had never succeeded in properly grasping Marxism, and surely I ought to wait until I had.<sup>38</sup>

Pospelov evidently returned later and wore Shostakovich down enough to get his signature on the official request for membership, but the composer decided to flee to his sister's house in Leningrad to avoid the official induction ceremony at the Composer's Union meeting at the end of the month, telling Glikman, "They'll only get me to Moscow if they tie me up and drag me there."<sup>39</sup> Shostakovich's flight resulted in nothing but a postponement of the event to a later date. After the ceremony was completed, his reaction to his family betrayed his consternation. He burst into tears when he admitted his defeat to his children and later confided in his wife that he had been blackmailed into joining.<sup>40</sup> To Glikman he quoted Pushkin: "There's no escaping from one's destiny."<sup>41</sup>

Regardless of how he felt about his new appointment, Shostakovich diligently carried out his duties as the First Secretary of the Russian Federation Union of Composers when his health allowed. In addition to attendance at the Union's meetings, his position meant that he was expected to sign public statements in support of the Union and its objectives. In these later years the practice of signing whatever was brought to him became second nature for Shostakovich. He explained this to Yevtushenko when the

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<sup>38</sup> Shostakovich and Glikman, 92.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Maxim Shostakovich in Michael Ardov, *Memories of Shostakovich: Interviews with the Composer's Children*, trans. Rosanna Kelly and Michael Meylac (London: Short Books, 2004), 159-60; Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, 218.

<sup>41</sup> Shostakovich and Glikman, 93.

poet criticized his willingness to put his name to anything: “Once I signed under words that I did not think, and ever since then something happened to me – I became indifferent to words I signed.”<sup>42</sup> This attitude led Shostakovich to sign statements that were factually incorrect, mistakes that the composer might have corrected had he known what he was signing.<sup>43</sup> According to his wife, Shostakovich’s name was even added to statements without his consent. In 1973, physicist Andrei Sakharov—who lived two doors down from Shostakovich—was officially denounced after making what were considered questionable remarks to the Western press. One of the *Pravda* articles in this campaign was signed by twelve Soviet composers, including Shostakovich. According to Irina Shostakovich the couple had purposefully left their house the day that the letter was due to be signed in order to avoid it, and Shostakovich’s name was added without his consent.<sup>44</sup> This did not prevent the composer from being condemned by some of his peers.<sup>45</sup> Within days of his name’s appearance on the Sakharov denunciation, writer Lidiya Chukovskaya skewered Shostakovich in an open letter defending the physicist. “Shostakovich’s signature on the protest of musicians against Sakharov demonstrates irrefutably that. . . genius and villainy are compatible.”<sup>46</sup> Another public snub came from the politically controversial theater director Yuri Lyubimov who publicly refused to shake Shostakovich’s hand.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Yevtushenko, *Fatal Half Measures*, 298.

<sup>43</sup> Wilson, 487-8. Vishnevskaya, 399.

<sup>44</sup> Irina Shostakovich, “An Answer to Those Who Still Abuse Shostakovich,” in *A Shostakovich Casebook*, ed. Malcolm Hamrick Brown (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 133.

<sup>45</sup> Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, 278.

<sup>46</sup> Lidiya Chukovskaya, “Gnev naroda,” *Protseess isklyucheniya*.

<sup>47</sup> Edison Denisov in Wilson, 489.

In addition to signing written statements Shostakovich was also expected to give frequent speeches, most often at Union meetings. The following is an example of one of these speeches quoted in the newspaper *Pravda*.

D. Shostakovich, First Secretary of the Russian Republic Composers' Union, told the meeting of the composers' *aktiv* that talent is the property of the people. He emphasized that the Soviet artist must devote his gifts entirely to the people and serve as =the Party's first assistant in the formation of the man of the Communist future.

[Quoting Shostakovich]

"It was my good fortune to be a participant in the Kremlin meeting, and it gave me great joy. I think that even those who were criticized were aware of the fatherly concern of the Party. The criticism was exceptionally benevolent. It is helping all of us to find the necessary direction in creativity. . . . Our creativity must take a firm Leninist position, must take the position of Party spirit and kinship with the people. Through our labor we must help to build communism."<sup>48</sup>

By the 1960s Shostakovich had had plenty of opportunities to practice delivering these kinds of vacuous, scripted speeches. As early as the 1948 Zhdanov decree, he had struggled through a humiliating public concession using many of the same platitudes. "When, today, through the pronouncements of the Central Committee resolution, the Party and all of our country condemn this direction in my creative work, I know that the Party is right. I know that the Party is showing concern for Soviet art and for me, a Soviet composer."<sup>49</sup> Like his written statements, Shostakovich rarely prepared his own speeches; they were ghost-written by a group of Soviet officials and musicologists. One of these,

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<sup>48</sup> *Pravda* (March 23, 1963) quoted in Priscilla Johnson, *Khrushchev and the Arts: The Politics of Soviet Culture, 1962-1964*, ed. Priscilla Johnson and Leopold Labedz (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1965), 204.

<sup>49</sup> Dmitri Shostakovich quoted in *Sovetskaya muzika* 1 (1948), 79.

musicologist Daniil Zhitomirsky, later described his experience writing a speech for Shostakovich.

I went to see Shostakovich with a prepared typescript [of a speech about Beethoven]. Immediately after my arrival various extremely important functionaries from the Committee for the Arts appeared. I read out “Shostakovich’s speech” distinctly and loudly. Then the Ministry officials expressed their profound thoughts. They gave one to understand that they were better and more thoroughly informed on all matters concerning Beethoven than “Shostakovich” was in his written speech. . . . They issued dozens of invaluable “directives,” which I diligently wrote down, while Dmitri Dmitriyevich sat in the darkest, furthest corner of the room in complete silence. What did he know about Beethoven!<sup>50</sup>

Shostakovich’s decision to join the Communist Party and his subsequent public support for the opinions of the Soviet power structure were hardly exemplary of the qualities of the True Artist.

Shostakovich also failed at the third quality discussed above, the lack of recognition and reward. Throughout his life, but particularly in his late years, he received many honorary titles and awards both at home and internationally. Table 2 on the following page is a selected list of these honors.

Shostakovich was wary of this recognition—“I am frightened that I will choke in an ocean of awards”—and reacted by penning the text and music for a self-deprecating song satirizing the many titles he had accumulated.<sup>51</sup> With his characteristic sarcasm, he pompously titled the song, “A Forward to My Complete Works and a Brief Contemplation with Respect to this Forward.”

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<sup>50</sup> Daniil Zhitomirsky in Wilson, 369-70.

<sup>51</sup> Abraam Gozenpud in Wilson, 377.

I scribble on paper in a spurt;  
 Then I hear catcalls, and my ear's not hurt;  
 Then I torment the ears of all the world;  
 Then I have it printed, and forever unrecalled.  
 This is a Forward that might be written  
 not only for my *Complete Works*,  
 but also to the complete works of many, many other composers,  
 both Soviet and foreign.  
 And here is the signature: Dmitri Shostakovich,  
 People's Artist of the USSR.  
 Followed by many other titles of honor:  
 First Secretary, Union of Composers of the RSFSR  
 (Simply the) Secretary, Union of Composers of the USSR  
 As well as very many other quite important responsibilities and  
 positions.<sup>52</sup>

Table 2 – List of Honors and Awards	
1958	Chairman of the International Tchaikovsky Competition Membership of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome Commandeur de l'Ordre des arts et lettres, Paris Honorary Doctorate from Oxford University Membership of the Royal Academy of Music, London Sibelius Prize, Finland President of the USSR-Austria Friendship Society Lenin Prize (for Symphony No. 11)
1960	First Secretary of the Russian Union of Composers
1964	All-Union Film Festival: Special Jury Prize (for <i>Hamlet</i> )
1966	Hero of Socialist Labor
1968	State Prize (for <i>The Execution of Stepan Razin</i> )
1969	People's Artist of the Buryat ASSR
1971	Order of the October Revolution
1972	People's Artist of Azerbaijan
1973	Sonning Prize, Denmark
1974	Glinka Prize (for String Quartet No. 14 and <i>Loyalty</i> )

<sup>52</sup> Dmitri Shostakovich, "A Forward to My Complete Works and a Brief Contemplation with Respect to this Forward," trans. Sergey Suslov, in Dmitri Shostakovich, *Complete Songs: The Last Years*, Delos DE 3307, 2002, CD liner notes.



### **Conclusion and a Note on Context**

Of course, not all of Shostakovich's actions were compromised by the power structure he worked under. In an article written to defend her husband's reputation and published in 2000, Irina Shostakovich defended his actions: "He considered it more important than anything else to be worthy of his talent and to develop it, evading his enemies and misleading them whenever possible. In the process, he managed to help many other people, protecting and supporting them."<sup>53</sup> In many of his late vocal works, Shostakovich did speak truth to power and the people, particularly in the song cycles *Satires* and *Six Poems of Marina Tsvetayeva*, and the Thirteenth Symphony. This duality in Shostakovich's actions confirms Levon Hakobian's assertion that the easy division of Soviet individuals into "the cowardly, cruel, corrupt communist elite, on the one side, and, on the other, the courageous handful of dissidents" is a useless construct.<sup>54</sup> It is not the purpose of this chapter to put Shostakovich in either camp. Rather, I have attempted to discern Shostakovich's personal opinion of his actions and the reasons for those opinions.

Over the last thirty years, much has been written about Shostakovich and his relationship to the Soviet power structure. The emergence of Solomon Volkov's *Testimony* brought on a rush of scholarship defending Shostakovich as a dissident and interpreting the "hidden meanings" of his works to Western audiences. This resulted in a backlash from scholars such as Laurel Fay and Richard Taruskin, who were more interested in fact-finding than myth-making. This chapter does not wade into these

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<sup>53</sup> Irina Shostakovich, 129.

<sup>54</sup> Levon Hakobian, "A Perspective on Soviet Musical Culture during the Lifetime of Shostakovich," in *A Shostakovich Casebook*, ed. Malcolm Hamrick Brown (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 216-7.

troubled waters. To quote Taruskin, “Who are we to judge his deeds? He faced pressures we cannot imagine, and nobody is required to be a hero.”<sup>55</sup> The single question I wish to answer with the material of this chapter is: how did Shostakovich view his own actions? While approaching death did he, to quote Pushkin, “recoil from the sight of so much shame”? The anecdotal evidence of Shostakovich’s statements to friends and confidants is not enough to definitively resolve this question, but points to an answer: Shostakovich believed he had failed as an artist. The next chapter will substantiate this claim by presenting narrative analyses of a selection of the composer’s late works, focusing on the increasing presence of failure in their musical fabric.

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<sup>55</sup> Richard Taruskin, *On Russian Music* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 326.

### Chapter 3 Narratives of Failure

Shostakovich's works require interpretation.  
They are not self-explanatory.<sup>1</sup>  
- Alexander Ivashkin

As he felt the approach of death, Shostakovich began reconsidering the actions and inactions of his life. This self-reflection led him to lament to close friends his failings as an artist and inability to live up to the expectations he placed on himself. The previous chapter established what Shostakovich saw as the qualities inherent in the True Artist by examining a series of vocal settings and established his feelings of failure through biographical information and anecdotal evidence. However, this leaves a question unanswered: how might this sense of failure have affected his music? To find the answer it might seem convenient to start with an analysis of the music that accompanies the lyrics examined in Chapter 2. This is inappropriate, though, because these songs musically represent the qualities of the True Artist, not Shostakovich's self-perception. If the goal is to locate traces of Shostakovich's self-reflection, then we must focus on music that is not tied to an idealistic narrative.

In Chapter 1, dodecaphony was examined as a trope that Shostakovich used to explicitly represent death, particularly in Symphony No. 14. However, Shostakovich did not limit elements of his compositional language to only one meaning, and this chapter will examine his use of tone rows as agents of failure rather than representations of death. To demonstrate the validity of this argument, the first section of this chapter will examine two vocal settings in which Shostakovich uses dodecaphony to connect the impression of

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Ivashkin, "Shostakovich and Schnittke: The Erosion of Symphonic Syntax," in *Shostakovich Studies*, ed. David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 267.

failure with those of death and the True Artist. The second part of the chapter will analyze Shostakovich's instrumental works from 1967-1970, focusing on the composer's use of 12-tone rows and their increasing importance through this series of pieces. It will argue that, as dodecaphony plays a more fundamental role in each successive work, the dichotomy created between tonality and the influence of tone rows leads to increasing tonal and formal failure.

### **Another Use for Dodecaphony**

Just as Shostakovich used poems that point to his conception of the True Artist, there are also two texts in his late song cycles that depict personal failures. Both of these settings use dodecaphony. First, I will examine the later of the two settings, pointing to its use of dodecaphony to simultaneously represent death and failure. Secondly, I will look at Shostakovich's first use of tone rows, arguing that their use is connected to the failure of the poem's protagonist.

The text of "Dialogue between Hamlet and His Conscience" from *Six Poems by Marina Tsvetayeva* considers the case of Hamlet and his role in the suicide of Ophelia. In Shakespeare's play, Ophelia is the daughter of a courtier, who falls in love with Hamlet against the advice of her father and brother. Each time they meet, Hamlet alternates reproaches and flirtation, and when he is forced to flee Denmark, Ophelia sinks into depression, convinced he is dead. Upon his return to Denmark, Hamlet happens upon a funeral that he eventually realizes is for the drowned Ophelia. He reacts to the news by asserting that he truly did love her.

I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers  
 Could not, with all their quantity of love,  
 Make up my sum. . .<sup>2</sup>

Marina Tsvetayeva's poem, used by Shostakovich as the third song in the cycle, is a pointed condemnation of Hamlet for the death of Ophelia. Reminded by his conscience of her suicide, Hamlet realizes that his actions were the cause of her death and questions whether he ever truly loved her. His conscience presses the matter, forcing Hamlet to face his own denial.

"She's on the river-bed, where mud  
 And weeds are. . . She went to sleep  
 In them, but even there she can't find sleep!"  
 "But I did love her;  
 Forty thousand brothers  
 Could not love so!"  
 "Hamlet! she's on the river-bed,  
 Where there is mud; Mud  
 And the last little garland  
 Has floated up  
 At the logs by the riverside. . ."  
 "But I did love her  
 As forty thousand. . ."  
 "Still less than one lover.  
 She's on the river-bed,  
 Where there is mud."  
 "But I. . . Did I love her?"<sup>3</sup>

Shostakovich opens his setting with a musical depiction of Ophelia sinking into her watery grave, a steady, mostly chromatic descent in the piano. The first three measures of the piano's descent, ending with the C major triad on the second quarter note of the third measure, represents a full chromatic aggregate, a collection mirrored by the

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<sup>2</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1994), 708.

<sup>3</sup> Marina Tsvetayeva, "Dialogue between Hamlet and His Conscience," trans. Sergey Suslov, in Dmitri Shostakovich, *Complete Songs: The Last Years*, Delos 3307, 2002, CD liner notes.

second half of this introductory phrase, which also compiles all twelve tones before reaching the vocal entry (Fig. 16).



Fig. 16

Once this occurs, the slow chords become a ceaseless stream of eighth notes which end only after the last word of text has been sung. These incessant eighth notes may represent the nagging insistence with which Hamlet's conscience forces the truth upon him. As the text ends with Hamlet's final question—"Did I love her?"—the piano's descending phrase from the introduction is repeated with a final cadence on G. Shostakovich's decision to repeat this figure not only reminds Hamlet (and the listener) of Ophelia's fate, it also seems to implicate Hamlet in her death by musically answering his question with a dodecaphonic reminder of his moral failure.

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The earliest use of a tone row in Shostakovich's oeuvre is in "Secret Signs," the sixth song from *Seven Poems of Alexander Blok*, where the compositional device is used to portray artistic failure. The poem used in this song depicts, in typical symbolist language, dream-like visions from which the narrator wishes to escape because he feels they predict destruction.

Secret signs light up  
upon a solid, relentless wall.  
Golden and red poppies  
brood over me in my sleep.



in which Shostakovich depicted the True Artist as a prophet who does not waver in the face of a dark future. This comparison suggests that the speaker in “Secret Signs” fails the test of a true artist because he not only fails to proclaim the dark future he sees, but he desires to avoid the “war and fire” by remaining in the past. The appearance of the second tone row at this moment directly associates it with the narrator’s moral failure (Fig. 18).



Fig. 18

### Failure in the Instrumental Works







Fig. 20

Shostakovich's use of the tone rows in the Violin Concerto No. 2 is particularly innocuous. They have no lasting effect on the stability of the work's tonality or form, but this is not the case for the next three instrumental works.

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For the remainder of the works in this series—String Quartet No. 12, Violin Sonata, and String Quartet No. 13—the presence of tone rows has a dramatic effect on the shape, harmonic and formal, of each work. In order to clearly express the impact of the tone rows and the progressive failure of each of the pieces in the series, I will employ a narrative framework proposed by Byron Almén that examines the antagonistic relationship of competing elements, a feature not present in the Violin Concerto No. 2.

In a 2003 article on musical narrative, Almén presented a newly developed framework designed to counter the objections of Jean-Jacques Nattiez and others about the usefulness of narrative analyses.<sup>7</sup> In order to build this framework, Almén defines musical narrative as “the process through which the listener perceives and tracks a culturally significant transvaluation of hierarchical relationships within a temporal span.”<sup>8</sup> He then outlines a three-step methodology for using this definition of narrative as the basis for analysis.

An analysis of musical narrative must take into account 1) an assessment of the semantic characteristics of musical elements, both in isolation and in context; 2) an understanding of how these elements mutually influence

<sup>7</sup> Byron Almén, “Narrative Archetypes: A Critique, Theory, and Method of Narrative Analysis,” *Music Theory* 47, no. 1 (Spring 2003), 1-39; Jean-Jacques Nattiez and Katherine Ellis, “Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?,” *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 115, no. 2 (1990), 240-257.

<sup>8</sup> Almén, “Narrative Archetypes,” 12.

and mutually define each other as they succeed one another in time; and 3) an awareness of the cumulative, global effect of these relationships in terms of the opposition "order vs. transgression" and the logically possible outcomes of such an opposition, or narrative archetypes.<sup>9</sup>

To analyze a piece of music Almén proposes that the analyzer determine which two major elements of the work are in clear conflict with each other and establish which is the dominant element. This element, he proposes, is the basis of order in the piece, with the competing element representing disorder. The final part of Almén's framework consists of four narrative archetypes that reflect different outcomes of the interplay between the two opposing elements as their influence over the work changes or remains the same.

The playing out of these tensions between an order-imposing hierarchy and a transgression of that hierarchy results in the following strategies which contain the central definitions of narrative archetypes.

- I. Emphasis on Victory
  - A. Comedy—victory of transgression over order
  - B. Romance—victory of order over transgression
- II. Emphasis on Defeat
  - A. Irony/Satire—defeat of order by transgression
  - B. Tragedy—defeat of transgression by order<sup>10</sup>

In applying this framework to my analyses of Shostakovich's music about failure, I will employ the dichotomy "tonal vs. dodecaphonic" as the compositional elements that Shostakovich sets in a "hierarchical relationship." This will highlight the increasing influence that dodecaphony has on the series of works in question, a shift that eventually leads to failure.

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<sup>9</sup> Almén, "Narrative Archetypes," 12.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

Written a year after the Violin Concerto No. 2, the Twelfth String Quartet is the first of Shostakovich's works in which the dodecaphonic material attempts to overtake the piece, creating a true hierarchy of elements that the concerto lacks. This quartet is composed in two movements, of which the second makes up nearly four-fifths of the quartet's performance duration. In the first movement the dichotomy is rather benign. Much like the tone rows in earlier pieces, these rows assist in transitions and help establish the tonality of various sections. This establishes tonality as the dominant element, and at the opening of the second movement the tone rows begin their attempt to transgress against the established hierarchy.

The quartet begins with another introductory tone row that both establishes the tonic—it moves from the leading tone to the dominant and ends with a drop from dominant to tonic—and simultaneously foreshadows the conflict between dodecaphony and tonality (Fig. 21).

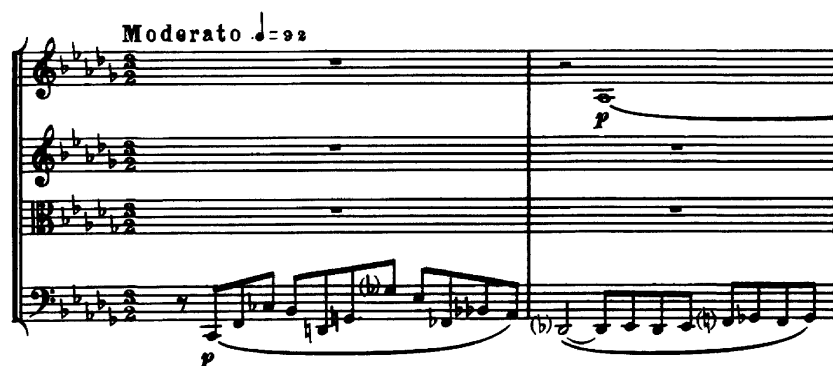


Fig. 21

In her description of the opening row, Laurel Fay describes the dichotomy represented in this initial tone row.

The opening measures of the quartet present, in capsule form, the basic polarities which pervade the work as a whole: the tonal instability provided by the rhythmically undifferentiated twelve-tone statement in the cello is

resolved, by means of a conventional melodic cadence, into a stable tonal context. The resultant rhythmic and harmonic effect, achieved retrospectively, is that of an extended upbeat to the second measure.<sup>11</sup>

The conflict between tonality and dodecaphony, however, remains subdued in the first movement. The next appearance of a tone row occurs at the transition between the Primary and Secondary Areas, and, like the opening row, it is structured to prepare the Ab tonality of the Secondary Area by outlining its tonic and dominant pitches (Fig. 22).



Fig. 22

Throughout this short sonata-form movement, similar tone rows return frequently, but only as connective material between the movement's sections, following the earlier model of tone-row usage established in "Secret Signs" and the Violin Concerto No. 2.

However, this dynamic instantly changes with the opening measures of the second movement. The first four measures of the second movement present a twelve-tone theme—it includes the full aggregate as well as a strict tone row beginning on the fourth beat of m. 2—that is the first of a series of four thematic areas that each rely on dodecaphony for important material (A: mm. 1-61; B: mm. 62-83; C: mm. 96-121; D: mm. 131-8). It is in this opening section (A-D) that all sense of the quartet's tonic, or any tonal center, is lost. Even in C, the only section that does not feature a tone row in its melody, the first violin's highly chromatic melody is accompanied by a layered triple-

<sup>11</sup> Laurel E. Fay, "The Last Quartets of Dmitrii Shostakovich: A Stylistic Investigation," (PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1978), 18-9.

canon at the minor-second of tone rows in the lower strings (Fig. 23, the canon begins in the cello on beat two of m. 114).



Fig. 23

These opening dodecaphonic two-hundred measures (A-D), considered by Paul Dyer to be the exposition of a sonata form, are followed with a section where twelve-tone recitatives are contrasted with a tonal chorale, giving the work its first direct conflict between the two sides of the tonal-dodecaphonic dichotomy.<sup>12</sup> After two cycles of the recitative and chorale material (mm. 227-50), the latter and its relative tonal stability seems to take over, even though the B theme from the “exposition” attempts to return and fails to complete its tone row (mm. 261-5). This material is quickly replaced by a pizzicato tone row that leads to a development of material from the “exposition,” the chorale, and the Primary Area of the first movement (mm. 282-367), climaxing with

<sup>12</sup> Paul Eugene Dyer, “Cyclic Techniques in the String Quartets of Dmitri Shostakovich” (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1977), 244.

material from the A portion of the “exposition” (mm. 331-9).<sup>13</sup> The first half of the development contains no tone rows, but this abruptly changes when the lower strings interrupt the climax with a twelve-tone chord (m. 340). A return of the recitative-chorale pairing leads to a re-emergence of the first movement’s Primary Area in the tonic (mm. 368-98), a return that has consequences for the “exposition” material when it is partially recapitulated in the final ninety measures of the quartet: although the A and B material is repeated complete with the respective tone rows, both are subjected to a tonal context. In the end, the subjugation of the dodecaphony by Db major is completed and the quartet ends with an affirmation of tonality.

Unlike Shostakovich’s previous use of tone rows, this quartet gives dodecaphony an active role. It competes with tonality for prominence in the quartet, transgressing the established order of the first movement and dominating a major portion of the second movement. The eventual belabored defeat of the tone rows by tonality puts this work in Almén’s category of Tragedy—“the defeat of a transgression by an order-imposing hierarchy.”<sup>14</sup> As the next two instrumental works put increasing emphasis on dodecaphony, they begin to require the use of a new narrative archetype.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is one possibility that Almén neglects in his matrix of archetypes: what if a hierarchical relationship of order-disorder is created in a piece but then invalidated at its close, so that neither element is victorious and both are defeated? This possibility adds a

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<sup>13</sup> The terminology used in this thesis to describe the sections of sonata form are unique to this thesis. They are derived from those used in Hepokoski and Darcy’s seminal book on sonata theory but have been altered to focus on the prominence of tonal “areas” over themes in the two sections of the exposition. James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 137.

new archetype, an archetype that I have labeled *failure*. If neither element achieves dominance and both disappear, then the piece has failed narratively, and it is this state that I will argue is present in the next two of Shostakovich's instrumental works.

\* \* \* \* \*

The same year that he produced the Twelfth Quartet, Shostakovich wrote his only violin sonata as a gift for Russian violinist David Oistrakh. In this sonata, the tonal-dodecaphonic dichotomy results in a complete failure of both sides. Neither is able to achieve dominance over the other, and the work ends inconclusively.

The introductory passage of the first movement presents two dodecaphonic phrases in the piano: one ascending (mm. 1-3) the other descending (mm. 5-7). This pattern is repeated four times in the first half of the Primary Area (Fig. 24).



Fig. 24

This figure, comprised of a complete aggregate (AG1 in Fig. 24) and its inversion (AG2), suggests G as the movement's tonic, following the pattern set by the tone rows in the previous works.<sup>15</sup> Both aggregates begin on G, a G is the note immediately following them, B-natural/flat is placed centrally and repeated in each, and the D-G relationship is emphasized at the end of AG1 and beginning of AG2. The measure placed between the aggregate and its inversion also repeats G, its dominant, and Shostakovich's favorite

<sup>15</sup> Lyn Henderson has suggested E as the implied tonic of the movement instead of G, citing the E-B relationship in the second measure. I, however, think the evidence given above favors the G reading. Lyn Henderson, "Shostakovich, the Passacaglia, and Serialism," in *A Shostakovich Companion*, ed. Michael Mishra (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 429.



flattened second scale degree. In the piano's accompaniment, the violin's entrance on D coincides with the G at the beginning of the figure's second repetition, confirming the implication of the introduction. The G tonic is again implied at the quasi-cadence at m. 64 by a G-B dyad in the violin and arpeggiated triad in the piano. This cadence comes at the beginning of the Transition into the Secondary Area, whose tonal center is D. Up to this point, the movement has been a fairly standard sonata form complete with Primary Area in the tonic (although with dodecaphony), Transition, and Secondary Area in the dominant. But at measure 117, where the development should begin, Shostakovich repeats the aggregates from the Primary Area as a canon in the tonic, initiating a combined development and recapitulation. By the time the Secondary Area returns in Eb (m. 173)—a signal that the tonic is losing control of the movement—the dodecaphony has also disappeared; AG1's final repetition is ninety measures before the end of the movement (mm. 140-3). What emerges instead in the movement's brief coda (mm. 225-30) is a quartal motive first heard in the development/recapitulation as part of a new transitional theme that interrupts both Primary (mm. 152-3) and Secondary Areas (mm. 193-4). In the coda this new material subverts the attempt in the violin and piano's left hand to reassert G as the tonic of the movement, instead ending on a quartal chord (B-E-A) over a G pedal tone. The two elements dichotomized in the movement's opening have each failed to assert dominance; the ending is neither tonal nor dodecaphonic.

This sonata's third movement repeats a similar pattern of harmonic failure (both tonal and dodecaphonic) in a new formal structure, the passacaglia. The appearance of the passacaglia in this movement directly relates it to the subject of death. Not only have ground bass structures been linked to sorrow and death since the Baroque period, but

Shostakovich's earlier passacaglias confirm that he also considered the passacaglia a symbol of death. The first extended passacaglia in his oeuvre appeared in *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* following the heroine's murder of her father-in-law.<sup>16</sup> Later instances of the form occur in String Quartet No. 6 and Piano Trio No. 2, both accompanying mournful elegies, the latter of which is immediately associated with both the Holocaust and the death of Shostakovich's friend, Ivan Sollertinsky.<sup>17</sup>

The third movement opens with an introduction (mm. 1-8) consisting of two overlapping tone rows. However, unlike the first movement, these rows do not become important in the remainder of the movement, a passacaglia with sixteen variations on a theme (mm. 9-19) on the tonic G. After eight variations in G, the passacaglia is transposed a half-step up for its ninth variation (mm. 107-16). At the same time a secondary theme, built out of three new tone rows, is added in the violin, and it is the inclusion of this theme that sets up the movement's conflict. The following three variations, featuring both the ground bass and rows theme, increase in intensity until the piano bursts into a climactic cadenza (mm. 163-180) immediately followed by a violin cadenza of equal intensity (mm. 181-197). The piano then interrupts the conflict with a restatement of the first tone row from the introduction (mm. 198-202), which is followed by individual restatements of the ground bass (mm. 205-15) and rows theme (mm. 216-20). But, neither theme is able to achieve dominance, and they are recombined in the final variation (mm. 221-44) before the first movement's development material interrupts, bringing the work to a close in the same vague manner as the first movement. However,

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<sup>16</sup> Lyn Henderson, 410.

<sup>17</sup> Patrick McCreless, "The Cycle of Structure and the Cycle of Meaning: The Piano Trio in E Minor, Op. 67," in *Shostakovich Studies*, ed. David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 113.

there is one notable difference: in addition to the G pedal tone and the quartal chord, Shostakovich adds a C#-D trill to the final chord, at once completing the G-B-D triad but dispelling the sense that this final sonority is tonally stable. Again, both the tonal center and tone rows have failed to achieve prominence.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are few musical representations of failure as poignant as the Thirteenth Quartet. In this work, Shostakovich takes the tonal-dodecaphonic dichotomy and their mutual failure beyond the limits of the Violin Sonata, allowing the failure of the harmonic elements to also lead to structural failures throughout the quartet's ambiguous form.

The quartet was written in the summer of 1970 while Shostakovich was between polio treatments at Dr. Ilizarov's clinic. According to an anecdote from Beethoven Quartet violist Fyodor Druzhinin, the seed of the Thirteenth was actually planted two years earlier, at a 1968 recording session of the Quartet No. 12.

I was playing with some panache a diminished seventh chord that went up to a high B flat in the third octave, playing *ff* . . . with loads of vibrato.

Suddenly I heard the familiar grating voice behind me. "Fedya, that's a B flat, a B flat," said Dmitri Dmitriyevich, who had unobtrusively crept up behind me.

I affirmed that it was indeed. . . .

[He] murmured in response to some private thought. Then he asked if I could land straight on that note, without the preceding passage. I answered that it was possible. . .<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Fyodor Druzhinin in Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 499.

When Druzhinin first laid eyes on the score of Shostakovich's Quartet No. 13, he immediately recognized the last note, an unprepared Bb in the third octave of the viola.<sup>19</sup> This places the initial conception of the Quartet No. 13 in the same year as the previous quartet and Violin Sonata. The serious compositional work on the quartet occurred at the same time Shostakovich was working on his final film score, *King Lear*, a project he had entered into with his long-time collaborator, director Grigori Kozintsev. His work on that score directly affected the composition of String Quartet No. 13, providing the beginning of its first theme (mm. 9-20).

Structurally, the Thirteenth Quartet is one of Shostakovich's most unconventional; the only one of the series written in a single movement. Several scholars have pointed out the increasing cyclicity of Quartets Nos. 11 and 12, a technique that reaches its apex with the 13th.<sup>20</sup> The ABCBA structure of this quartet has led most commentators to describe it as palindromic.<sup>21</sup> However, in her thesis about the late quartets Laurel E. Fay has pointed out the problems that come with this interpretation of the quartet's structure.

Shostakovich does not maintain the symmetry strictly on all levels. The lengths of the individual sections are not symmetrical in their proportions. . . . Between corresponding sections (A & A', B & B') strict symmetry plays little part. The 'events' in corresponding sections are not identical, nor are they presented in reverse order. . . . As can be seen, Shostakovich is not constricted by a literal approach to symmetry in this work. The flexibility demonstrated here is

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<sup>19</sup> This calls into question Olga Dombrovskaja's suggestion that this final note was "evoked" by a similar Bb at the end of the storm music from the *King Lear* film score. Olga Dombrovskaja, "Hamlet, King Lear and Their Companions: The Other Side of Film Music," in *Contemplating Shostakovich: Life, Music and Film*, ed. Alexander Ivashkin and Andrew Kirkman (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 160.

<sup>20</sup> Eric Roseberry, *Ideology, Style, Content, and Thematic Process in the Symphonies, Cello Concertos, and String Quartets of Shostakovich* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), 470-506.; Dyer, 294. Fay, "The Last Quartets," 118-26.

<sup>21</sup> Fay, "The Last Quartets," 37; Roseberry, *Ideology, Style, Content*, 470; and McCreless, 29.

analogous to the flexibility with which he treats, throughout his career, works in more traditional forms.<sup>22</sup>

As Fay states, Shostakovich often bent traditional forms to fit his own conceptions, and the Thirteenth Quartet is no different, incorporating elements of sonata and scherzo forms while ultimately failing to fulfill the expectations of either.

Sonata form is a constant presence in Shostakovich's œuvre, from his seminal First Symphony to the Viola Sonata composed on his deathbed. When he began his series of string quartets (he conceived of a set of twenty-four, one in each key), Shostakovich began with a sonata form (the opening movement of the First Quartet).<sup>23</sup> This set a precedent for the rest of the series, and he began each of the subsequent quartets, with the single exception of the Eighth, with a sonata form movement, often including a second sonata in the finale. Thus, it is undoubtable Shostakovich would have considered doing the same when beginning work on the Thirteenth Quartet. Olga Dombrovskaja's discovery that the opening section of the quartet (A, mm. 1-92) was composed after the two central sections (B, mm. 93-174; and C, mm. 175-315) had already been written does not necessarily contradict the assumption that Shostakovich would have considered how the finalized form of this quartet relates to the standard sonata form that he had used so many times before.<sup>24</sup> In fact, her analysis of the primary sources for this quartet suggests that it was precisely Shostakovich's desire to find a fitting theme for the Primary Area that kept him from considering the quartet complete after finishing the B and C sections.<sup>25</sup> Analyzing this quartet as a manipulation of sonata form also resolves the

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<sup>22</sup> Fay, "The Last Quartets," 122.

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, 437.

<sup>24</sup> Dombrovskaja, 160-1.

<sup>25</sup> As will be clarified on the following page, in the quartet's final form the B section stands in for the Secondary Area and C replaces the development.

problems of balance in the repeated material that Fay mentioned in the quote above. The corresponding thematic areas in the exposition and recapitulation are not expected to mirror each other, and it is not at all unusual for them to be shorter the second time, i.e. in the recapitulation.

The suggestion that the Thirteenth Quartet can be viewed as a corrupted sonata form is also strengthened by keeping in mind the expectations that Shostakovich's intended audience would have had. Soviet audiences were well educated in traditional classical structures and steeped in Beethovenian sonata forms. They were also familiar with Shostakovich's previous quartets, which were available in recordings by the Beethoven Quartet and regularly performed live. Given the prominence of sonata form in these earlier quartets, it is reasonable to assume that the audiences for which Shostakovich conceived the work would have expected to be presented with another sonata form.

The reversed order of the recapitulation might be seen as an argument against analyzing this quartet as a sonata form, but this ordering has a parallel in the Arch-Sonata forms of some of Shostakovich's early-period works.<sup>26</sup> Identified in an article by Michael Mishra, the Arch-Sonata is a form in which the recapitulation begins with the Secondary material, effectively turning the traditional sonata form into a palindrome with the development at its center. An example of this is the first movement of the Cello Sonata in D minor, Op. 40, in which the Secondary Area emerges from the development (m. 171) before the eventual recapitulation of the Primary Area (m. 196). Although Shostakovich

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<sup>26</sup> Michael Mishra, "Shostakovich's 'Trademark' Form: The Arch-Sonata in the First Movement of the Fifth Symphony," in *A Shostakovich Companion*, ed. Michael Mishra (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 366-71.

stopped using this form in his middle period, the Thirteenth Quartet's palindromic structure seems to recall the Arch-sonatas of his early pieces. The difference here is that, instead of a proper development, Shostakovich substitutes a Scherzo. Fig. 25 is a diagram of the quartet's structure. It designates A, B, and C along with their implied tonal center, and also shows the sonata and scherzo portions with the corresponding measure numbers.

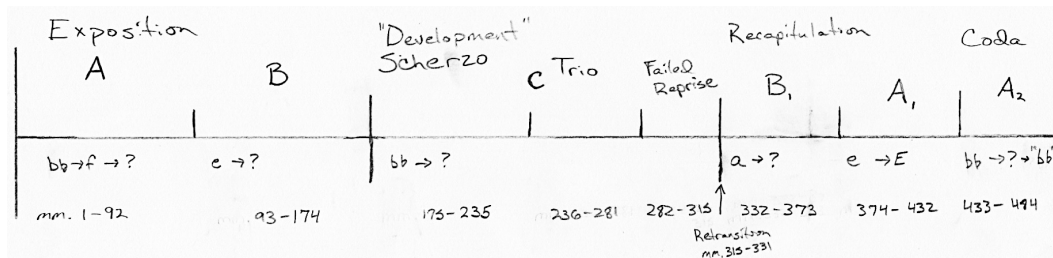


Fig. 25

The failure of this quartet's sonata structure starts well before the removal of the development becomes apparent. Each of the sections of traditional sonata form that Shostakovich retains, two clearly defined thematic areas in both exposition and recapitulation, fail to fulfill the structural roles they play in other Shostakovich works. Yuri Kholopov has helpfully described the typical exposition of a Shostakovich sonata form:

A firm and strong tonic in the principal theme, a softened but definite tonality in the secondary theme, a short and well-directed modulation in the first [transition]. . . ; the concluding part is constructed variously, demonstrating the tonal definiteness of the end of the exposition.<sup>27</sup>

The Thirteenth Quartet fails each of these conventions, giving the entire piece a feeling that has been described as “harrowing,” “acoustical pain,” and “distinctly unsettling.”<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Yuriy Kholopov, “Form in Shostakovich’s Instrumental Works,” in *Shostakovich Studies*, ed. David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 68.

<sup>28</sup> Wilson, 495; Roseberry, *Ideology, Style, Content*, 489; Fay, “The Last Quartets,” 40.

The Primary Area (mm. 1-92) is formed from three elements: a twelve-tone row (mm. 1-8), a lament (mm. 9-33), and a tonally ambiguous ascending motive (mm. 38-43). As in the Twelfth Quartet, the tone row (TR 1) is presented at the opening by a solo instrument, in this case the viola (Fig. 26).



Fig. 26

Unlike the row that began the Twelfth Quartet, the tonality of the Thirteenth is established at the beginning of TR1 with a Bb minor triad. Even here though, Shostakovich inserts a bit of ambiguity; the first three notes heard are Bb-Db-Gb, immediately suggesting Gb major rather than Bb, and it is only after the Gb appoggiatura has resolved to F that the true, Bb tonality of the phrase is revealed. TR1 ends on a B natural—another example, although enharmonically respelled, of Shostakovich’s favorite flattened second scale degree—that resolves downwards to the tonic, and if the other instruments were to enter here we could say that Bb had been reaffirmed as the tonal center. However, Shostakovich adds three extra notes that change the entire trajectory of this passage from an assertion and reaffirmation of Bb to an ascending line leading to C, as the quasi-Schenkerian diagram below demonstrates (Fig. 27).



Fig. 27

The voice leading of the top line moves from Bb, through the aforementioned B natural, to C. Simultaneously, a chromatic descent occurs from the opening Bb, ending on G, the



dominant of the final C. As the viola reaches its rest on C, the pitch's importance is immediately confirmed as the other instruments join the texture, creating an octave C. This is the work's first structural failure: instead of establishing the tonic, or at least a tonal center, the opening line leads away to the supertonic.

This unison C begins the second segment of the Primary Area, a lament taken from the score for *King Lear*. In the film this music accompanies a scene change from Edgar burying his father, the Earl of Gloucester, to Edmund's war against the French. A letter from Kozintsev, the film's director, to Shostakovich describes the emotional impact this music was intended to have.

I would like the theme of the music to be associated. . . with grief, human suffering, which has no limits. Not some individual complaint but the grief of the whole people. In Shakespearian dimensions it is the lament of the earth itself. A requiem perhaps? Only not with an orchestra but the chorus alone and without words. Grief has no words, there is nothing but weeping.<sup>29</sup>

Shostakovich composed this lament, which lasts four minutes in the film, in nine fragments that Kozintsev could rearrange and repeat as needed to fit the film's editing, and it is only the first of these fragments (see Fig. 28 on the following page) that he separated out and used in the quartet, completing the rest of this section with newly composed music based on the lament.<sup>30</sup> The fragment's tonality is F—clarifying after the fact that the insistence on C at the end of the introductory tone row was preparing the dominant of the ensuing F tonality—and, in the *King Lear* version, resolves to a half cadence in the sixteenth measure (see Fig. 28). In his use of this fragment in the quartet,

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<sup>29</sup> Grigori Kozintsev, *King Lear: The Space of Tragedy*, trans. Mary Mackintosh (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977), 242.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

though, Shostakovich slightly adjusted the music to fit its new context, making the rhythms less regular and adding a moment of failure. In the parallel measure in the quartet the second violin and viola “miss” the half cadence, producing a minor-second instead of unison (Fig. 29, m. 20).

Adagio ♩ = 40

S  
A  
T  
B

9

Fig. 28

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vc.

9

Fig. 29

This failed half-cadence is predictive of the rest of the section. The F tonality is never confirmed through a cadence, instead modulating back to Bb, but this is also not confirmed with a cadence. Instead TR1 inserts itself into the texture and eventually takes over, as the Primary Area transitions to its third thematic element.

In general, Shostakovich's Primary Areas take the form of ABA<sub>1</sub> (a good example is the first movement of String Quartet No. 12—A: mm. 1-9; B: 10-23; A1: 24-30), and the Thirteenth Quartet's Primary Area attempts to do this as well. TR1 and the lament together comprise the A section, followed by a B section dominated by a recurring chromatically ascending motive (Motive X) that first appears in the second violin (Fig. 30).



Fig. 30

After this motive is presented, the rest of the Primary Area is taken up with attempted returns of TR1 that are constantly subverted by Motive X. No consistent tonality is implied in this section, which ends when the opening phrase of the lament twice attempts a return (mm. 75-92), on the second attempt establishing E rather than Bb. This robs the Primary Area of a full return of the A section, failing the ABA<sup>1</sup> model that Shostakovich was so fond of, and failing to reaffirm the Bb tonal center of the Primary Area.

According to Kholopov's analysis, the objective of the Secondary Area in Shostakovich's earlier sonata forms is to establish a "softened but definite tonality," a

goal that this Secondary Area fails to achieve. Although it begins with a tonal-center defining dyad, E-B, the material of this section quickly moves into dodecaphony and abstract atonality, devolving into a series of violent episodes built from clusters, intense dynamic contrasts, tone rows, and a new three-note motive (m. 120). The disjointedness of the Secondary Area causes it to function as more of a transitional section, rather than a stable thematic area that establishes a secondary tonality for the movement.

Since the exposition has failed to establish coherent material to develop, the development is replaced with a central scherzo, as noted earlier. However, much like the sonata form exposition, this scherzo fails to achieve its traditional form. I have chosen to analyze this section as a scherzo because of its similarity in tone to the ghostly scherzos in such earlier works as Beethoven's String Quartet in Bb, Op. 130, Mahler's Symphony No. 4, and Berg's Lyric Suite. In addition, the main triplet motive in this section of the quartet recalls the central Scherzo from Mahler's Symphony No. 7. The main theme of this Scherzo—taken from a movement marked *Schattenhaft* (“Shadowy”) that occurs at the center of a five-movement palindrome—is notable for its triplet turn figure and dotted rhythm accompaniment, the retrograde of which is noticeably similar to the motive Shostakovich used (compare Figs. 31a and b on the following page).



Fig. 31a – Mahler: Symphony No. 7



Fig. 31b

Strangely, the accompaniment for the theme built from this motive is a twelve-tone ground bass played pizzicato by the cello. The intervallic content of this complete aggregate suggests that the tonal center has finally returned to Bb (mm. 175-9). This ground bass is repeated three times before being rhythmically compressed and converted to a strict tone row (mm. 190-2) for two further repetitions.

After a disappearance and return of the passacaglia theme (mm. 225-31), the trio emerges. Although this trio retains the triplet motive from the scherzo, the unstable tonality of the scherzo is replaced with a quasi-octatonic environment produced by the accompaniment material, and the main focus of this section is redirected to a slow theme in double stops played first by the viola (mm. 253-62) then by the violins (mm. 263-78). In measure 282, the cello restarts the passacaglia theme, but begins on Ab instead of Bb and only gets two measures into it before passing it on to the violin, which begins the pattern on G. The cello then attempts a version on A, followed by the violin making another attempt on Ab. Failing to reprise the scherzo's passacaglia, the cello turns to the trio theme, and the scherzo dissolves in another structural failure.



passage that lasts twenty-eight measures. This solo attempts to bring back a final iteration of TR1 to complete the palindrome (the four note phrase in mm. 454-5 resembles the opening of TR1 if its first interval were inverted), but settles instead for a new row that ascends to the heights of the viola's range. After an apparent resolution to an A-E dyad, the viola leaps up a tritone to the high Bb that Druzhinin had once demonstrated for Shostakovich and is joined by the violins for the horrifying closing note (Fig. 33).

The musical score for measures 468-480 is presented in four staves. The top staff is for Viola (Vla.), starting at measure 468. The second staff is also for Viola (Vla.), starting at measure 474. The third staff is for Violin I (Vln. I), starting at measure 480. The fourth staff is for Violin II (Vln. II), starting at measure 480. The bottom staff is for Viola (Vla.), starting at measure 480. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of three flats. Dynamics include *mf*, *pp*, *cresc.*, and *fff*. The Viola part in measure 474 has a *mf* dynamic. The Viola part in measure 480 has a *pp* dynamic. The Violin I and II parts in measure 480 have a *pp* dynamic. The Viola part in measure 480 has a *pp* dynamic. The score concludes with a *fff* dynamic in the final measure.

Fig. 33

## Conclusion

Shostakovich's instrumental works between 1967 and 1970 show a progression of failure based on his inclusion of dodecaphony as an important element of his harmonic language. Each successive work in the series allows this element a more vital role in the fabric of the piece, and this in turn leads to an increase in harmonic and structural failure. This appears to be related to Shostakovich's increasing concern with his self-perceived personal failure during this period, which seems to have been echoed in his exploration of

musical failure in these works. To do this he relied on a musical element, dodecaphony, that was associated in Shostakovich's mind with both artistic failure and death itself.

The next chapter will explore how this changed after 1970. Shostakovich's instrumental works gained a new purpose, putting less emphasis on failure and instead focusing on the protection of his legacy. Although they still contain tone rows, the focus of the works shifts towards emphasizing a combination of self-quotation and the quotation of major works from the classical canon. Chapter 4 will explore this final trend in Shostakovich's late works, which culminated in his final work, the Viola Sonata.



## Chapter 4 Reflections on a Legacy

Dmitri Shostakovich was as defenseless as the  
rest of us, but he had much more to lose. He  
had to worry about the future of his work.<sup>1</sup>  
- Irina Shostakovich

The music Shostakovich wrote during the last four years of his life indicates a shift in the composer's attitude toward his own mortality. As Chapter 3 demonstrated, Shostakovich's compositions from 1967-1970 were a reflection, in both words and music, of the antagonistic attitude he had towards mortality. The Fourteenth Symphony grew from his obsession with death and negative view of it, while his purely instrumental works of the period show through their structural and harmonic language the moral regrets of a man facing death. However, there is an abrupt change in Shostakovich's musical language beginning with Symphony No. 15 written in 1971 and continuing through his final work, the Viola Sonata. The pieces written between 1971-1975 lack many of the characteristics of the earlier works examined in Chapter 3, instead showing a composer who has begun to reflect and comment in a positive way on the musical legacy of his compositions, a legacy that brings him peace in the face of death. This chapter will explore the elements in Shostakovich's final compositions that point to this change in perspective and offer an explanation for the shift.

### **Failure Vanishes**

The most significant sign that something had changed within Shostakovich is a considerable difference in tone between the instrumental works of the late 1960s and

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<sup>1</sup> Irina Shostakovich, "An Answer to Those Who Still Abuse Shostakovich," in *A Shostakovich Casebook*, ed. Malcolm Hamrick Brown (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 128-9.

those that followed. The pieces examined in Chapter 3, which date from 1967-1970, demonstrate an increasingly antagonistic relationship between their dodecaphonic and tonal materials that disrupts their structural foundations. When compared to these works, the four instrumental pieces composed in Shostakovich's final four years—the Fifteenth Symphony, Fourteenth and Fifteenth String Quartets, and Viola Sonata—are much more tonally and structurally stable. Although they still use tone rows (with the exception of the Fourteenth Quartet), these rows no longer disrupt their harmony and form, and instead work with the tonal material to support the conception of each movement and the composition as a whole.

Unlike the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Symphonies, the Fifteenth is a traditional, purely instrumental symphony in four movements. Shostakovich told Glikman that it reminded him of his Ninth Symphony, which was also “ideologically free.”<sup>2</sup> The first of these was completed in June 1971 during Shostakovich's final visit to the clinic, operated by Dr. Ilizarov, that provided the only relief from his polio symptoms (see Chapter 1). The first movement of Symphony No. 15 is in a traditional sonata form with two light-hearted themes that recall the playfulness of the Ninth Symphony and may reflect his fondness for the time spent at the lakeside clinic. Unlike the exposition of the Violin Sonata or Thirteenth Quartet, the exposition of this movement clearly outlines the keys of its Primary and Secondary Areas (mm. 1-82; 82-119): A and E, respectively. Also in keeping with tradition, the exposition ends with a cadence on E just before the beginning of the development (m. 144). Although the Secondary Area contains a prominent tone

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<sup>2</sup> Dmitri Shostakovich and Isaak Glikman, *Story of a Friendship*, trans. Anthony Phillips (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 315. Alternate translation provided from the original Russian text by Dr. Olga Haldey.

row in its second motive (mm. 88-90), when this material is repeated six measures later (mm. 97-100) the tone row has been removed. It is in this form that the motive is later developed as a polyrhythmic canon in the movement's development and coda (mm. 255-278; 439-56). At no point does dodecaphony challenge the underlying tonality of the movement's sections, nor is the order of the recapitulation inverted as was the case in the Thirteenth Quartet. All of these details combine to make this movement Shostakovich's first conventional sonata form since Violin Concerto No. 2 from 1967.

Tone rows have a much more prominent role in the Fifteenth Symphony's second and third movements, but never as a serious threat to their tonal or structural stability. In the second movement, tone rows (e.g., mm. 17-27; 39-44) are employed as transitional material between the somber brass chorales (e.g., mm. 1-17; 54-110) and central funeral march (mm. 127-207) discussed in Chapter 1.

Dodecaphony is more prominent in the third movement, with tone rows providing the main theme of the scherzo (mm. 1-17). Although they are given an important role here, the rows still do not conflict with the underlying tonality established by the G pedal tone. Neither do they disrupt the movement's form, which is a traditional scherzo and trio, each part in binary form complete with (written-out and re-scored) repeats of each section.

The finale is the only movement of the symphony that approaches the type of tonal and structural failures present in the instrumental works from the late 1960s. Like the Thirteenth Quartet, this movement uses an Arch-sonata form (see Chapter 3) with a twelve-tone passacaglia replacing the development. But unlike the Thirteenth Quartet, this movement is able to achieve a tonally conclusive ending. After an introduction made

from three quotations of Wagner (more on this below), the Primary Area (mm. 17-60) presents a naïve theme that equally suggests D and A as the tonic. The Secondary Area (mm. 60-104) comes closer to establishing a tonal center, coming to rest on E at several significant moments (mm. 64, 76, and 99). The central passacaglia (mm. 105-248), whose ground bass consists of an overlapping complete aggregate and an 11-pitch row, does not develop any material from the exposition, focusing its eight variations on chromatic counterpoint that frequently employs motives from the introduction. After the passacaglia reaches its climax, the recapitulation proceeds in reverse order. The secondary theme returns (mm. 249-291) without a stable tonal center, leading to the Primary Area now confidently in A major (291-328). The concluding coda recalls material from the symphony's second and first movements leading to a forty-measure A major chord held in the strings that outlasts the timpani's insistence on the passacaglia's ground bass, closing the symphony in a bright halo of tonal intransience.

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After completing the Symphony No. 15, Shostakovich entered an unproductive period, composing no new works until the spring of 1973. He was severely disheartened during this time, because of his lack of artistic inspiration and the deterioration of his health. In December 1972 his lung cancer was discovered, and the ensuing radiation treatments left him enfeebled. "I am almost helpless in all daily matters. I am unable to dress or wash myself independently. Some spring has broken within me. Since finishing the Fifteenth Symphony I haven't composed a single note. That is a dreadful circumstance for me."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Shostakovich and Glikman, 291.

The month after his release from the hospital, his spirits were boosted by a visit from Yevgeny Mravinsky, the conductor to whom Shostakovich had frequently entrusted his premieres. As they conversed, Mravinsky suggested that it might do Shostakovich some good to disregard his health restrictions and drink some vodka.<sup>4</sup> Evidently this was exactly what Shostakovich's muse required, because the next day he began work on the String Quartet No. 14 and excitedly telephoned Isaak Glikman to tell him the good news.<sup>5</sup> Less than a month later, the quartet was complete.<sup>6</sup>

The circumstances surrounding this quartet's conception seems to have had a direct influence on its tone, which is much more pleasant than that of Quartets Nos. 12 and 13. In contrast to its immediate predecessors, the Fourteenth Quartet returns to the relatively conservative harmonic language and structures last used in the Ninth and Tenth Quartets from 1964. It also returns to a more traditional three-movement structure (fast-slow-fast), that still exhibits the symphonic scope typical of many of Shostakovich's earlier quartets (Nos. 2-6 and 9-10).

The first movement is in sonata form with a reversed recapitulation (Arch-sonata, see Chapter 3) with a unique harmonic structure that emphasizes the return of the tonic in the recapitulation. The Primary Area is in a clear F# major while the Secondary Area begins in Eb major (m. 73) and moves into an unstable D minor (m. 89). When the Secondary Area returns at the beginning of the recapitulation, it is in Ab major (m. 375) but quickly abandons this key for a tonally ambiguous section. However, unlike the ambiguities of the Violin Sonata and Thirteenth Quartet, this passage is used to build an

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<sup>4</sup> Aleksandra Vavilina-Mravinskaya, "Obruchyonniye muzikoy," *Muzikal'naya akademiya* 4 (1997), 100.

<sup>5</sup> Shostakovich and Glikman, 321.

<sup>6</sup> Shostakovich and Glikman, 292.

expectation for the return of the Primary Area material. This expectation is further heightened with its return (m. 422) but with the melody in C#. Shostakovich finally releases the tension with the return of the quartet's F# major tonic (m. 437), highlighting this moment by rewriting the primary theme into a bright, ascending figure.

The third movement is in an ABA form with a lengthy coda that brings back material from the second movement, a technique that Shostakovich uses to pointedly reaffirm the central tonality of the quartet. After the chromatic, tonally ambiguous B section (mm. 145-238), the A<sup>1</sup> appears in the tonic but highly abbreviated (m. 239) before the second movement material returns (m. 251). The first theme of the second movement is in its original key, D minor, but is usurped by the romantic central theme of the earlier movement (m. 270), which is transposed here from its original A major to F# major. Shostakovich uses this moment to re-establish the tonic and clearly demonstrate its supremacy as the quartet comes to a close.

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The year after completing the Fourteenth Quartet, Shostakovich returned to writing instrumental music with another quartet. Unlike the previous work in the genre, the String Quartet No. 15 was written in disheartening circumstances, which are reflected in its dark tone. During the spring of 1974 Shostakovich was separated from two of his best friends and collaborators, cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and his wife Galina Vishnevskaya. This was due, in part, to an open letter published by Rostropovich in 1970, supporting Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who had been denied the opportunity to receive his Nobel Prize by the Soviet authorities. Rostropovich and Vishnevskaya even invited the writer to stay in their home, resulting in a Soviet boycott of all performances by either

musician. In response, Rostropovich and Vishnevskaya asked permission to leave the country for two years, a request that was granted. By the end of the summer their family had permanently left the country, leaving Shostakovich distraught. When he was told the news he asked, “In whose hands are you leaving me to die?”<sup>7</sup>

These circumstances may explain the presence in the Fifteenth Quartet of a narrative referencing death. Like the Eleventh Quartet, this quartet is a quasi-suite, a series of interconnected, titled character pieces whose titles seem to indicate that, like the Symphony No. 14, the Fifteenth Quartet is about death. The opening movement is titled “Elegy” followed after two intervening movements by “Nocturne” and “Funeral March.”<sup>8</sup> However, after “Funeral March” gives way to “Finale,” the Fifteenth Quartet significantly diverges from the pessimistic view of the works from 1967-1970. The finale brings back material from all of the previous movements, signaling that there is a musical legacy that remains even after death and burial. The quartet ends on a hopeful note: an Eb-Bb dyad with a trill between Gb and G-natural. Coming at the end of Shostakovich’s longest quartet, written entirely in Eb minor, the presence of a G-natural in the final Eb chord suggests an ending of hope, which contrasts with the despondent conclusions of the Symphony No. 14 and String Quartet No. 13.<sup>9</sup>

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Perhaps the most conflicted work of the four, Shostakovich’s Viola Sonata is still able to reach a confident, hopeful conclusion. Knowing he was about to be checked into

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<sup>7</sup> Mstislav Rostropovich in John Rockwell, “Rostropovich – I Feel Like a Native,” *New York Times*, January 18, 1981.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 1 for a discussion of funeral marches in late Shostakovich as well as the nocturne being a symbol of death.

<sup>9</sup> Shostakovich’s close friend, Benjamin Britten, had previously used this same technique at the end of his Violin Concerto, although there is no evidence of Shostakovich’s knowledge of this work.

the hospital, Shostakovich hurried to complete the sonata in the first week of July 1975, writing the finale in a single night and giving the fair copy to the publishers the morning before his penultimate hospitalization.<sup>10</sup> Just over a month later Shostakovich was dead, and the sonata's dedicatee, Fyodor Druzhinin, gave the public premiere at a memorial concert in October before a rapt audience.

The first movement is written in a sonata form without development, a type of sonata form that Shostakovich had used in the opening movements of several string quartets (Nos. 4, 7, 9, and 10). In the Viola Sonata, however, the developmental process is not eliminated; instead, Shostakovich thoroughly develops the material as it is being introduced. Because of this, the tonal language of this movement is highly chromatic. The Primary Area (mm. 1-70) suggests C as a tonal center in the first four measures before a melodic tone row subverts the establishment of a clear tonality (piano, mm. 5-8). The Secondary Area (mm. 71-156) is even more chromatic, vaguely suggesting Bb as a tonal center in its opening motive. The recapitulation brings the Primary material back at its original pitch and the Secondary material transposed to A. At the close of the coda, it is clear that the diminished triad that first appeared prominently in the opening of the Secondary area (see mm. 71-2) has infected the Primary tonality, and the movement closes with a diminished triad on C.

The second movement, which is mostly a re-arrangement of material from Shostakovich's 1946 unfinished opera based on Nikolai Gogol's play *The Gamblers*, is the most tonally stable of the sonata. Perhaps due to its early date of conception, the opening material—originally the opera's overture—is clearly in Bb minor. Unlike the

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<sup>10</sup> Laurel E. Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 284.



scherzo from the Symphony No. 15, this movement does not conform to the genre's traditional structure. After a presentation of the "trio"—an incongruous mix of newly-composed scalar material (mm. 124-153) and rewritten music from *The Gamblers'* balalaika-accompanied aria, "Wily fellows, these" (mm. 154-193)—the movement fails to reprise the overture music from its opening. Instead themes from the scherzo and trio are treated to a quasi-development that continues until the music dies away on a questioning Bb minor figure marked *morendo*.

The finale will be discussed at length later in this chapter, so for the present purposes it is sufficient to make a brief point about its conclusion. The final measures consist of a bright C major chord that emerges from a movement that has yet to settle on an underlying tonality, often flirting with but never establishing D as the tonal center. After all the tonal wandering, this C major conclusion is one of the most peaceful and restive moments in all of Shostakovich's oeuvre.

### **The Importance of a Legacy**

The use of cyclical construction in the Symphony No. 15 and String Quartets Nos. 14 and 15, in particular the return of earlier themes after references to death, suggests that Shostakovich may have been using a new narrative in these pieces. The music associated with death that caused failure in the fabric of earlier works is here redeemed by the reappearance of earlier material. This idea has a parallel in Shostakovich's thoughts on death and legacy. Not only is there evidence that he hoped his work as a composer would earn him a sort of redemption from his personal failures, but he also believed that an artist's legacy was a way to overcome the tyranny of death.

There is anecdotal evidence that suggests that Shostakovich believed an artist's legacy could in some sense redeem personal failures. The most pertinent example of this is an undated story from the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko.<sup>11</sup> According to Yevtushenko, when he confronted Shostakovich about the composer's willingness to endorse any action or statement from the Composer's Union, Shostakovich replied that, although he did not bother reading many of the documents he signed, at least in his music he had been honest. "In music I never signed a single note that I did not think. . . . Perhaps I will be forgiven for that at least."<sup>12</sup> This was hardly the first occasion on which Shostakovich expressed the idea that artistic honesty and genius could in some way atone for one's actions. As early as 1958, he had discussed an incident with Isaak Glikman in which Glikman had apparently been asked for forgiveness by an ailing peer who had politically wronged him. After musing on the validity of "repentance in the face of approaching death," Shostakovich wrote that because the individual in question had written "a string of melodious and graceful compositions," he must have "at least some passing resemblance to a human being."<sup>13</sup> By the time of his discussion with Yevtushenko, it seems that Shostakovich's belief in the redemptive nature of art had taken on a new, personal meaning, an interpretation that was perhaps a response to his focus on failure in the late 1960s.

A surprising reference to this same idea is made in one poem used in the Fourteenth Symphony, and it is coupled with the suggestion that an artistic legacy is a

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<sup>11</sup> For more information on Yevtushenko, his relationship with Shostakovich, and their collaboration on the Thirteenth Symphony see Chapter 2.

<sup>12</sup> Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *Fatal Half Measures: The Culture of Democracy in the Soviet Union*, ed. and trans. Antonina W. Bouis (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991), 298.

<sup>13</sup> Shostakovich and Glikman, 78.

kind of immortality. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the poem set in the symphony's ninth movement, "Oh Delvig, Delvig!," is on the surface an assertion of the kinship between its author and his fellow poet Anton Delvig. However, it also contains the assertion that an artist's creations allow him to achieve immortality.

O Delvig, Delvig! What is the reward  
For lofty deeds and poetry?  
For talent what comfort is there  
Among villains and fools?

In the stern hand of Juvenal  
A menacing whip whistles for villains,  
It drains the color from their cheeks.  
And the power of tyrants trembles.

O Delvig, Delvig! Why the persecutions?  
Immortality is equally the lot  
Of bold, inspired deeds  
And sweet poetry!

Nor will our union die,  
Free, joyous and proud!  
But in both happiness and unhappiness will remain firm,  
The union of lovers of the eternal muses.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, the third verse's assertion that "immortality is equally the lot of bold, inspired deeds and sweet poetry" must have given Shostakovich comfort, reassuring him that both art and action can form one's legacy after death.

These beliefs may have informed Shostakovich's interpretation of the final sonnet included in his 1974 cycle *Suite to Words by Michelangelo Buonarroti*, which also explores the idea of legacy as immortality. Titled "Eternity" by Shostakovich, the sonnet is written from the perspective of an artist—possibly Michelangelo himself—who at first

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<sup>14</sup> Wilhelm Küchelbecker, "O Delvig, Delvig!," trans. Joan Pemberton Smith, in *Shostakovich; Symphony No. 14; Mussorgsky: Songs and Dances of Death*, Deutsche Grammophon D 110264, 1993, CD liner notes.

claims to be sleeping, later realizes that he is actually dead, but concludes that his legacy provides him with immortality.

So Fate has granted me untimely sleep,  
But I am not dead, though buried in a grave;  
I'm still alive in thee, whose laments I can hear,  
Because true friends reflect each other's image.

I seem to be dead, but, to soothe the world,  
I live as a thousand souls in the hearts  
Of all those who love; therefore, I am no dust,  
And am not subject to deathly decay.<sup>15</sup>

Like Küchelbecker's poem, this sonnet appears to focus on personal relationships, with no mention, however, of the immortality of "sweet poetry." But, when interpreted in the context of the earlier poem, it is possible that this sonnet held a similar meaning to Shostakovich. The narrator's claim that "I'm still alive in thee, whose laments I can hear," may refer to Shostakovich's compositions—"true friends" that reflected his image—rather than to individuals. Through these compositions, which reveal how Shostakovich wished to have lived (see Chapter 2), he would truly be able to "live as a thousand souls in the hearts" of his audiences after his death.

### **Recapturing Youth**

The shift in Shostakovich's thinking from an obsession with failure to a belief in redemptive legacy also had its roots in the public reappearance of the compositions of his youth. An overlooked part of his legacy for many years, these early works saw a resurgence in popularity beginning in the 1960s.<sup>16</sup> The most prominent of these works

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<sup>15</sup> Michelangelo Buonarroti, trans. Sergey Suslov, in Dmitri Shostakovich, *Complete Songs: Famous Vocal Cycles*, Delos DE 3317, 2005, CD liner notes.

<sup>16</sup> The information in this paragraph comes from Derek Hulme, *Dmitri Shostakovich: A Catalogue, Bibliography, and Discography* (Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 13-45.

were the Symphony No. 4, which was finally premiered in 1961, and *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, which gained immense success in 1963 after being rewritten as *Katerina Izmailova*. These large works were not the only ones that remerged; in fact a wealth of even earlier works were given their first recordings and publications in the mid to late 1960s. One of Shostakovich's earliest chamber works, the Prelude and Scherzo for string octet was recorded in the USSR for the first time in 1964 by the Borodin and Prokofiev quartets, and again by the Beethoven and Komitas Quartets in 1969. Although his First Symphony had never completely disappeared from the concert stage, the same could not be said for the experimental Second and Third Symphonies, which were first recorded in 1965 and 1964 respectively. He had also written a wealth of avant-garde piano music in his youth, which was republished for the first time in several decades by Muzgiz in 1966, a publication that also included the first printing of the five extant preludes from his Op. 2. These Preludes were also recorded for the first time in 1969, as were Piano Sonata No. 1 and *Aphorisms*. These successes were accompanied by whispers that a Complete Edition of Shostakovich's œuvre might be forthcoming, a rumor that inspired Shostakovich to write "A Forward to My Complete Works and a Brief Contemplation with Respect to this Forward."<sup>17</sup>

In 1974, Shostakovich experienced the triumphant return of the most ambitious work of his youth, the opera *The Nose*. After its initial run in 1930, it had never been restaged in the Soviet Union, and the only Russian score for the opera was buried for years in the Bolshoi Theater's bomb shelter.<sup>18</sup> Conductor Gennadi Rozhdestvensky

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<sup>17</sup> David Fanning, "Shostakovich, Dmitry" in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, accessed June 23, 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Gennadi Rozhdestvensky in Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 508; Hulme, 45.

rediscovered the score in the late 1950s, but it wasn't until 1974 that the opera was produced by the Moscow Chamber Music Theater with Rozhdestvensky conducting. Overseen by Shostakovich, for whom attending rehearsals was a major feat of will power, the theater's run of *The Nose* was a success, and resulted in the first audio and video recordings of the opera in the original Russian (an Italian recording had been produced in 1964) as well as the first publication of the score in Shostakovich's piano reduction.<sup>19</sup>

As usual, Shostakovich commented on the resurgence of his early works indirectly through his choice of text for the opening song of the 1973 cycle *Six Poems by Marina Tsvetayeva*. Titled "My Verses," and written in 1913, Tsvetayeva's poem speaks of the value that she places on the works of her youth and her confidence that they would not be forgotten.

My verses written so early  
That I did not yet know that I was a poet;  
Snapped off like splashes from a fountain,  
Like sparks from rockets.

Which rushed in like tiny devils  
Into the sacred place where slumber and incense prevail,  
My verses of youth and death  
—Never read verses!—

Scattered in the dust of bookshops  
(Where no one has ever bought them!)  
My verses, like vintage wine  
Will have their time!<sup>20</sup>

In his setting, Shostakovich gave Tsvetayeva's assertion of the importance of her youthful works an extra layer of significance through his use of a twelve-tone row as the

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<sup>19</sup> Boris Pokrovsky in Wilson, 505-8; Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life*, 281.

<sup>20</sup> Marina Tsvetayeva, "My Verses," trans. Sergey Suslov, in Dmitri Shostakovich, *Complete Songs: The Last Years*, Delos DE 3307, 2002, CD liner notes.

song's introduction. Its appearance implies that the approach of death brings a heightened urgency to the resurrection of these youthful works (Fig. 34).



Fig. 34

### Written Reflections

The influence of Shostakovich's earlier compositions is not just felt in the reemergence of long dormant works from his youth. He also included self-quotations in several of his compositions from 1971-1975. This technique, although used more frequently in these years, had previously been used in the String Quartet No. 8, which Shostakovich filled with a network of self-quotations. In this quartet, he used this as a way to memorialize himself at a time when he was filled with regret for joining the Communist Party and may have been considering suicide.<sup>21</sup> In the works of his last four years, these quotations, taken from both his early and mature works, served a similar purpose: to memorialize Shostakovich's artistic work and reflect on its meaning. In these final works, Shostakovich also began inserting recognizable portions of notable works from other composers, a signal that he was not only reflecting on his own legacy but simultaneously considering its relationship to that of earlier composers. The public nature of these quotes from works by Beethoven, Wagner and others, which he knew his audience would immediately recognize, also served to place Shostakovich side-by-side

<sup>21</sup> For more on the circumstances surrounding the composition of the String Quartet No. 8, see David Fanning, *Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 8* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 17-23 and 145-150.

with the “great” composers in the minds of his listeners, a position that a composer wracked with insecurities (see Chapter 2) and concerned with his legacy would highly value. The importance of both types of quotations is reinforced by their frequency. Five of the six major works (including the Tsvetayeva and Michelangelo cycles) from 1971-1975 include quotations from either Shostakovich or another well-known composer.

One of the most significant works to use quotations is the Symphony No. 15. In a discussion with Isaak Glikman about his compositional process for this symphony, Shostakovich coyly hinted at his reasons for employing the technique.

Shostakovich said to me, with an enigmatic and, it seems to me, slightly guilty smile: “I don’t myself quite know why the quotations are there, but I could *not*, could *not*, *not* include them.” The thrice-repeated negative was pronounced with great force. I offered the thought that since the creative process was not always accompanied by logic, it was possible that he had been guided by pure intuition. Dmitri Dmitriyevich ruminated and said: “Maybe, maybe.”<sup>22</sup>

Shostakovich may not have been explicit about his reasons for including these quotations, but an examination of their use in the Symphony No. 15 shows that they can be divided into two types: those that make a comparison of motivic material and those that create intertextual references on the theme of death.

The first, most instantly recognizable quotation in the symphony is a four-measure section of Rossini’s *Guillaume Tell* Overture, which first appears in the middle of the Secondary Area of the first movement (mm. 110-4). This is the major example of a motivically significant quotation. Although on first hearing the initial appearance of the quotation is surprising and humorous, on closer examination it actually grows quite

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<sup>22</sup> Shostakovich and Glikman, 315.



naturally and organically from the material before it. The Secondary Area begins with the galloping rhythm of the Rossini in the trumpet (Fig. 35a, mm. 83-88), a theme which is repeated three measures later and directly foreshadows the *Guillaume Tell* quote that appears thirty measure later. In addition, the Rossini quote is prepared by a return of the trumpet's rhythm in the horn, which repeats the rhythmic motive for four measures before the quotation appears (Fig. 35b, mm. 92-96).



Fig. 35a



Fig. 35b

The fourth movement of this symphony features the second type of quotation, quotes that provide intertextual references on the subject of mortality. In the introduction of this movement, Shostakovich placed three motives from Wagner music dramas, which are each associated with death in their original contexts. Initially, the brass chorale plays the fate motive from Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, a theme that Wagner used throughout the cycle of musical dramas to signal the impending doom of the Gods. In Shostakovich's symphony, this motive is answered by another Wagner quotation, the rhythmic timpani motive directly associated with death by its prominent appearance in

Siegfried's funeral march in *Götterdämmerung*.<sup>23</sup> Shostakovich then repeats both motives, and the fate motive returns a third time before the final Wagner quotation emerges. As the fate motive's final repetition closes, the violins segue from the introduction into the first thematic area by way of the four opening notes of *Tristan und Isolde*, a drama in which the two lovers are only able to truly unite in death.

Later in this movement, Shostakovich inserts a parallel quotation from one of his own works into the central passacaglia. For this he chose a theme indelibly associated by his audience with the death and destruction of the Great Patriotic War (World War II), the invasion theme from the Symphony No. 7. To compose the theme for this passacaglia, Shostakovich took the rhythm and intervals of the opening notes of the theme from the Seventh Symphony and transformed it as the beginning of his dodecaphonic ground bass (compare Fig. 36a and b).



Fig. 36a – Symphony No. 7



Fig. 36b – Symphony No. 15

<sup>23</sup> The fact that neither the Rossini quote nor the funeral march rhythm are recreated exactly suggests that Shostakovich may have been reproducing these motives from memory.

The inclusion of this theme seems to echo the fatalistic nature of the Wagner quotes from the introduction—this time in Shostakovich’s own voice. To highlight the connection, Shostakovich then embroiders into the accompaniment a series of variations that borrow intervals from Wagner’s fate motive, creating a web of dialogue on mortality (Fig. 37).



Fig. 37

\* \* \* \* \*

Short quotations appear in each of Shostakovich’s three compositions from 1973 and 1974. The first of these is a fragment from *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* that appears in the finale of the Fourteenth String Quartet, where it serves a double purpose, at once recalling one of Shostakovich’s most formative early works and serving as a message of friendship to the quartet’s dedicatee, Sergei Shirinsky. As Shirinsky was the cellist of the Beethoven Quartet, Shostakovich gave the cello many prominent passages in the Fourteenth Quartet, including the melodic fragment shown in Fig. 38a (see the following page). In the fourth act of *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* this melody accompanies Katerina Izmailova’s cry of “Seryozha, my dearest!” (see Fig. 38b).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Seryozha is the familiar form of the name Sergei.



Fig. 38a – String Quartet No. 14

Fig. 38b – *Lady Macbeth*, Act 4

Thus, the quotation serves as a token of the friendship between composer and performer, and as a reference to an important early work. Additionally, it connects this quartet to the String Quartet No. 8, where the same quotation appears.<sup>25</sup>

Shostakovich's next work, *Six Poems by Marina Tsvetayeva*, was written the same year as the Fourteenth Quartet and also contains a short reference to an earlier work. This appears in the final song of the cycle, "To Anna Akhmatova," the opening three notes of which are taken from the prominent motive from the opening fugue subject of Shostakovich's Prelude and Fugue in Eb, Op. 87, No. 19 (compare Figs. 39a and b on the following page).

<sup>25</sup> David Fanning has interpreted Shostakovich's use of this quotation in the String Quartet No. 8 as a reminder of imprisonment and death due to the setting in which it appears in the opera. Fanning, *String Quartet No. 8*, 115-6.



Fig. 39a – “To Anna Akhmatova”



Fig. 39b – Prelude in Eb

Throughout the remainder of the song, Shostakovich repeats this motive twenty times, most often invoking it when the poet’s name is mentioned, suggesting that Shostakovich is drawing a parallel between Akhmatova and himself (see also Chapter 2).

Another brief quotation occurs in the middle of “Night,” the ninth song from *Suite to Words by Michelangelo Buonarroti*. Chapter 1 explored Shostakovich’s use of arpeggios in the accompaniment of this song, a texture that is prominently broken only once in the setting. Just before the statue replies in the second verse of the poem, the piano breaks into a series of chords that instantly recall the opening of Chopin’s Prelude in C minor, Op. 28, No. 20 (compare Figs. 40a and b).



Fig. 40a – Chopin



Fig. 40b - Shostakovich

### Schwanengesang

The last movement of Shostakovich’s final work, the Viola Sonata, is a significant case for this study, combining an extensive use of quotation with the promotion of early works. While still writing it, he told Druzhinin that the movement would be an “Adagio in memory of Beethoven,” a reference to both the elegiac quality of this movement and

its ubiquitous use of two motives from Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 14, Op. 27, No. 2, the "Moonlight" Sonata. The choice of an early piano sonata, rather than a late work by Beethoven, for such a reflective piece might seem strange, however the substance of the motives may explain this choice. They are: an arpeggiated motive in ascending eighth notes used in the accompaniment, and a dotted rhythmic figure repeated frequently by the viola (Fig. 41).



Fig. 41

Shostakovich's choice of arpeggios recalls the nocturnal arpeggios, while the dotted motive conforms to the funeral march trope that he often used to represent death. However, unlike the other works that use these tropes discussed in Chapter 1, the Viola Sonata transcends mortality. In one of his few direct statements about the meaning of his music, Shostakovich told Druzhinin that "the music is bright, bright and clear."<sup>26</sup> The

<sup>26</sup> Dmitri Shostakovich in Wilson, 531.

final C major chord does not so much overcome the funereal elements of the movement, rather it shows a composer at peace with mortality.

Just like the finale of the Symphony No. 15, Shostakovich enfold his own legacy into the quotation from Beethoven's most famous piano sonata. In fact, the self-quotation here is substantially more extensive than in the symphony, consisting of a string of quotations from each of Shostakovich's fifteen symphonies in order (mm. 65-92).<sup>27</sup>

Fig. 42, which is based on the work of Ivan Sokolov (completed by Krzysztof Meyer), shows the relevant viola and piano voice from this section of the movement, delineating the quotation from each of the fifteen symphonies.

The figure displays a musical score for Viola and Piano, spanning measures 65 to 92. The Viola part is written in treble clef, and the Piano part is in bass clef. The score is divided into four systems, each containing quotations from different symphonies. The first system (measures 65-70) includes Sym. No. 1, 2, 3, and 4. The second system (measures 71-77) includes Sym. No. 5, 6, 7, and 8. The third system (measures 78-85) includes Sym. No. 9, 10, 11, and 12. The fourth system (measures 86-92) includes Sym. No. 13, 14, and 15. The Piano part begins at measure 86. The score is labeled 'Viola' and 'Piano' at the beginning of their respective staves.

Fig. 42

Another self-quotation is a series of descending fourths that is first heard in the second movement of the sonata and is then used as the third major motive of the finale. The motive's original appearance was in one of Shostakovich's earliest works, the Suite in F# minor for Two Pianos from 1922, which was originally conceived as

<sup>27</sup> Ivan Sokolov, "Moving Towards an Understanding of Shostakovich's Viola Sonata," trans. Elizabeth Wilson, in *Contemplating Shostakovich: Life, Music and Film*, ed. Alexander Ivashkin and Andrew Krikman (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012, 82-94).

Shostakovich's first symphony. The sixteen-year-old composer left the suite in two-piano score until after he had completed the Symphony No. 1, at which point it was published in the original instrumentation. The suite's opening Prelude is based on the fourths motive (Fig. 43) that returns in the suite's finale.



Fig. 43

In the Viola Sonata the motive first appears in a viola cadenza in the middle of the second movement (mm. 193-5), and then returns in the cadenza that begins the third movement (Fig. 44a). Its relationship to the motive from the earlier suite becomes more specific in the climax of the movement when the piano adds the bottom voice to the figure, creating the parallel sixths of the original (Fig. 44b). The figure returns in this form twice more later in the movement (mm. 157-8 and 179-81).



Fig. 44a



Fig. 44b

A final quotation, a descending arpeggio, occurs just before the movement's final cadence (compare Figs. 45a and b on the following page). This time the reference is to



Richard Strauss's *Don Quixote*, where the arpeggio is a recurring part of the main theme. The appearance of this final quotation, recalling Cervantes' comical but idealistic hero, adds a final acknowledgement of the absurdity of taking one's life too seriously.



Fig. 45a – Strauss: Don Quixote

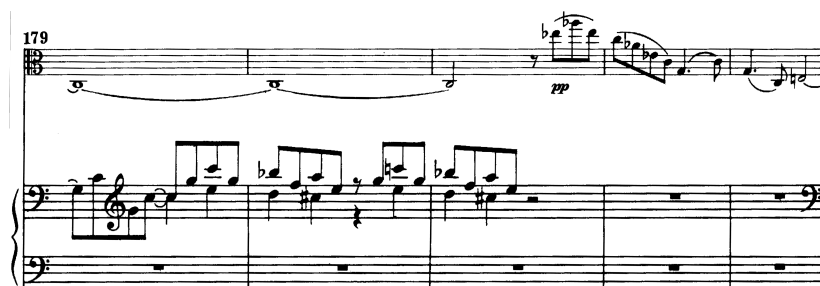


Fig. 45b – Shostakovich: Viola Sonata

## Conclusion

Compared to the relatively experimental works of the late 1960s, the tonality and structure of Shostakovich's compositions from 1971-1975 are noticeably more stable. It seems as if Shostakovich had finally come to terms with mortality in these years, a change that can be traced to his developing ideas of legacy. These ideas, expressed in his statements to friends and in his songs, not only resulted in the more assured compositions of his last four years but also led Shostakovich to include a wealth of direct quotations in these works. These quotations, from himself and other well-known composers, reflected on the importance of his musical legacy, a legacy that ensured Shostakovich's immortality.

## Conclusion Final Reflections

It shines with a miraculous light  
Revealing to the eye the cutting of facets.  
It alone speaks to me  
When others are too scared to come near.  
When the last friend turned his back  
It was with me in my grave  
As if a thunderstorm sang  
Or all the flowers spoke.<sup>1</sup>

- Anna Akhmatova, "Music"

The compositions created by Shostakovich in the final years of his life are unique in his œuvre and reveal an essential facet of his internal life at the time in which they were written, his concerns about death. An awareness of the feelings about mortality that he expressed both verbally and musically is imperative to understanding Shostakovich both as a man and as an artist, and opens up a meaningful discussion of the importance of the works of his late period.

Shostakovich's increasing obsession with death in the final years of his life originated, in part, from his escalating health problems, ailments that kept mortality at the forefront of his mind. He told friends that every piece he wrote might be his last, and these worries eventually affected his compositions from this period. He began using particular tropes to represent death in his music, frequently employing funeral marches, nocturnal arpeggios, and even dodecaphony as musical reminders of mortality.

This preoccupation with death also led Shostakovich to evaluate his life, particularly his actions and inactions. The evidence provided by the texts of several songs

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<sup>1</sup> This poem was originally dedicated to "Dmitri Dmitryevich Shostakovich." Anna Akhmatova, trans. Grigori Gorenstein, in Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, 2nd. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 360.

composed during this period support the idea that Shostakovich may have distinguished certain behaviors that he believed were expected from a True Artist. This moral code seems to have had three major pillars: the True Artist speaks truth to power, speaks truth to the people, and receives no reward. However, when he examined his own life, it appears Shostakovich concluded that his unwillingness to oppose the Soviet authorities—particularly in his position as First Secretary of the RSFSR Union of Composers—along with the number of honors and awards his fame brought pointed to a personal failure as an artist. It is true that Shostakovich also acted in ways that fit the character of the True Artist, but in comments to his friends and family, it seems he focused on his failings in these areas. This sense of failure began to affect a series of compositions authored from 1967-1970, undermining their structural integrity and harmonic language. In these pieces, an increasing importance was placed on the dodecaphonic element, often forcing the internal structure of these works to collapse.

However, after 1970, a new focus developed in Shostakovich's conception of mortality, and his attention turned to his artistic legacy and the possibility of immortality through art. This idea was perhaps suggested by the reemergence of some of his earliest compositions, and seems to have led to the frequent use of quotations in his final years. Some of these quotations were from his own pieces, while others were taken from well-known works in the classical canon, a combination that implies that Shostakovich was reflecting on his relationship, as a mature and lasting artist, with his peers. Whether or not his body survived, Shostakovich could be at peace, knowing that his music would continue on.

\* \* \* \* \*

This thesis is a necessarily brief overview of the effects of Shostakovich's preoccupation with death in his final years, and spans many subjects to provide evidence for its claims. Moving forward, our understanding of Shostakovich's career and music would greatly benefit from detailed scholarship focused on his musical language. More importantly, the methodology used here to illuminate the end of his career could also be applied to other areas of Shostakovich research.

Thorough musical analyses focused on each of the individual works referenced in this paper are indispensable to a deeper understanding of Shostakovich as both a composer and person. In order to do this effectively, a comprehensive method of theoretical analysis adapted specifically for use with his *œuvre* is needed. The complexities of Shostakovich's use of tonality, form, and other musical elements deserve more than the cursory overviews they have so far received. Additionally, studies of any sketches or working drafts that may exist for these pieces would help clarify Shostakovich's compositional process.

The methodology used throughout this thesis, although not new, has not previously been applied in Shostakovich research. Earlier attempts to infer narrative from Shostakovich's compositions have often been overtly political and subjective. However, by investigating the consistency and evolution of Shostakovich's use of musical tropes and techniques in both vocal and instrumental music, by comparing the textual and musical content of the vocal works, and by analyzing the instrumental pieces and relating them to the existing biographical information, I have hoped to establish an objective, comprehensive, and defensible method for examining meaning in the music of

Shostakovich, a method that allows his compositional choices to imply a narrative rather than confirm a pre-conceived idea.

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