

Was Shostakovich's *Second Cello Concerto* a Hidden Homage?

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Abstract: Shostakovich's direct quotation from the Odessan street song "Bagels, Buy My Bagels!" (Bubliki, kupite bubliki!) in his *Second Cello Concerto* Op. 126 (1966) featured an unusual style, even in relation to some of his other compositions referencing popular and Jewish music. The song is widely known as one of the icons of the Odessa underworld. Shostakovich's use of this melody as one of the main leit-themes of the Concerto can be compared to the use by the non-Jewish Andrei Sinyavsky of the Jewish pseudonym Abram Tertz, a bandit from the Odessa underworld—the only locus of freedom to tell the truth in a totalitarian society. The time of Shostakovich's address to this song remarkably coincided with the famous Soviet trial of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuly Daniel in the fall of 1965 and their final sentencing (February 1966) to years in a Gulag camp. The dramaturgy of Shostakovich's Concerto, written in the same spring of 1966, demonstrates the transformation of the theme of "Bagels" into a tragic image. The totality of circumstantial evidence suggests that this opus could be the composer's hidden tribute to the feats of Russian heroic writers.

Keywords: Dmitri Shostakovich; *Second Cello Concerto* Op. 126; Andrei Sinyavsky; Abram Tertz; Sinyavsky–Daniel trial; hidden homage; "Buy my Bagels!"; "Buy my Pretzels!"; "Kupite Bubliki!"

1. Introduction

Two interconnected, albeit insignificant, episodes from the biography of Dmitry Shostakovich are well-known but have not attracted scholarly attention and remained without comment to date.¹ Both refer to his *Second Cello Concerto* Op. 126, 1966.² The story of the first episode recounts that on 31 December 1965, while playing the game "My Favorite Melody" at a New Year's Eve party at his dacha, Shostakovich spontaneously began playing the Odessan street song "Bagels, Buy My Bagels!", and explained this by his youthful nostalgia. ("Bagels" is one of the translations of the Russian word *bubliki* or the diminutive *bublichki*. Other translations include "pretzels", "doughnuts", etc. I will use *Bubliki* for the song hereafter.) The second episode occurred four months later when the composer could not explain why he had referred to a "very similar" theme in his just-completed *Second Cello Concerto* (Glikman 1993, pp. 212–13).

The reference to *Bubliki* was not the first in Shostakovich's oeuvre. At the beginning of the third act of his opera *The Nose*, 1927–1928, a young street vendor enters and calls out to buy her *bubliki*. However, it is not a musical quotation there, only a one-pitch (*des*²) recitative, and the entire short episode is meant to animate the scene's theatrically. One possible explanation that comes to mind is that when an artist cannot explain some artifice, this could be due to subconscious or non-verbal inspiration. However, it is hardly possible to contend that the composer addressed the melody of this popular song in the Concerto totally subconsciously if we consider it in the historical context.

2. 1965 and Soviet Culture

The fall of 1965 marked several outstanding events in the Soviet cultural and political sphere. Two of these are relevant to this article.

The first is associated with the poet Joseph Brodsky (1940–1996), who was released early from exile. His story began in 1963, when he was convicted of *tuneyadstvo* (social



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parasitism). Brodsky was not a parasite. Because poetry and self-education were not enough to be considered work, then in his young years, he tried various professions, from millwork to working in a prison morgue, in hospitals, and on geological expeditions. The authorities were enraged by his independent behavior and openly pro-Western sympathies; however, lacking political reasons to send the young poet to prison for many years, they resorted to the minor charge of parasitism. The prosecution, nonetheless, included a KGB search, confiscation of his archives, confinement in mental institutions, arrest, and a trial that ended with his being sentenced to five years of hard labor.

The acclaimed poetess Anna Akhmatova, Brodsky's friend and mentor, commented that someday, such persecution would benefit him as a martyr of the Soviet regime. Her famous phrase is often quoted in Russian cultural folklore: "What a biography they are creating for our redhead! You'd think he hired them³." Akhmatova did not remain idle. Seeking an influential team, she met with Shostakovich in Moscow on 17 December 1963 to discuss possible options for helping Brodsky. The whole affair ended when the group of cultural dignitaries, which included, in addition to Shostakovich and Akhmatova, Yevgeny Yevtushenko and several notable foreign cultural figures, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, were able to put pressure on the CPSU authorities. It took time, but Brodsky was eventually released in the fall of 1965 and returned to Leningrad in December.

Shostakovich could have celebrated this victory with pride if another plot against two writers had not unfolded that same autumn. It took place in Moscow and lasted about six months—from September 1965 to February 1966. It had a political aspect, was highly scandalous, and was broadly publicized. This was the famous Sinyavsky–Daniel show trial.

The mid-1960s were characterized by the transition of Soviet dissent to an active phase. In May 1965, Andrei Amalrik, a writer and historian best known for his 1970 essay *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?* (Amalrik 1970), was arrested for the first time. In 1965, too, Vladimir Bukovsky was released from the Special Psychiatric Hospital in February of the same year after two years of "treatment for schizophrenia". In December 1965, he helped to organize a demonstration in central Moscow to protest against the trial of Sinyavsky–Daniel and demand that it be open to the public—only to be arrested again and confined in another psychiatric hospital. Bukovsky also helped Alexander Esenin-Volpin—another prominent dissident of the older generation, a famous mathematician and writer who, before immigrating to the United States, had spent a total of fourteen years in Soviet *psikhushkas*, prisons, and exile. The individuals noted above were only a few of the leading figures among the most known and seriously persecuted. However, there were many more in their circle who were also under close surveillance by the KGB.

Andrei Sinyavsky (1925–1996), a writer and professor of literature at Moscow University, and Yuly Daniel (1925–1988), a writer and poet, were arrested and charged with anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda for publishing their works abroad. As devoted citizens, patriots, and combatants in World War II, they were all motivated by their love for their homeland, which made them critical of Soviet society's shortcomings and imperfections, not to mention vices.

Such writers could not be published at home since this would compromise the official lies about the success of socialism. They could only be published without censorship in two ways: *samizdat* (private typewritten self-publishing in a small number of carbon copies) and *tamizdat* (publishing abroad, beyond the Iron Curtain). Both approaches were closely monitored by the KGB, which operated with two vast armies of informants: one inside the country and the other abroad.⁴ *Samizdat* was considered highly suspicious and criminalized if containing political content; *tamizdat* was illegal and criminalized by default.⁵

The more active the dissident movement became, the harsher the Soviet Government acted. Thus, the years 1963–1965 were marked by a transition from the short-lived Khrushchev "thaw" characterized by an open and relatively active de-Stalinization to the curtailment of freedoms by the Brezhnev regime. Writers and poets again became primary targets as influential rivals to the socialist ideology. As Duncan White wrote,

Certainly, compared to the restrictions on writers under Stalin, there had been some progress toward liberalization. But the Kremlin was no longer interested in a soft touch. A big show trial would indicate that the winds had changed and deter anyone else seeking to publish in *tamizdat* (White 2019, p. 509).

Living this in real time, the ordinary citizens seemed to be still experiencing the euphoria of freedom, not wanting to realize the changes taking place before their eyes. They still believed that an open trial for Sinyavsky and Daniel was possible. This did not happen, however, and the protesters achieved only a minor level of publicity for the trial. At the same time, conversations and debates in the broader society were as open as if they had taken place not in 1965 but in 1865, when, for example, intellectuals, including Leo Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Stasov, discussed Nikolai Ghe's painting *The Last Supper* and argued whether Jesus was spiritual enough or too secular. Nothing like this could have happened in Soviet Russia from the late 1960s until perestroika, when people could once again openly discuss things like the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel, who were fully acquitted in 1991, with the fall of the Soviet regime.

The Sinyavsky and Daniel case presented two scandalous circumstances. The first was their use of highly provocative pseudonyms. Second, widespread advertising in the Western world compromised the Soviet regime's declaration of itself as liberal and democratic.

With everything becoming known both abroad and inside the USSR, the people knew it, too, and the authorities came down hard with political and ideological condemnations. Liberalism was no longer the primary concern: those in power had to defend the system by attacking. As Richard Lourie noted,

The new regime has never had any intention of returning to Stalinism. <...> In fact, though the new regime has been cautious and business-like, preferring diplomacy and a "soft" image, it is still committed to the use of severe repressive measures. Sinyavsky and Daniel must have seemed to the successors of Khrushchev another legacy of his era of indiscretion which required terminating. <...> In effect, the arrest and trial of the two men is a small-scale equivalent of the invasion of Czechoslovakia (Lourie 1975, pp. 42–43).

The social atmosphere in Moscow in the fall of 1965 was described by Vladimir Vysotsky, a close friend of the Sinyavsky pair who admired Vysotsky and shared their love and knowledge of bandit folklore. In a letter to his friend Igor Kokhanovsky dated 20 December (when protests were taking place in Moscow), Vysotsky wrote the following:

<...> Well, now let's move on to the most important thing. Remember, I had a teacher Sinyavsky, Andrei Donatovich? With a beard. He also has a wife, Masha. So, for four months now, all of Moscow and everyone abroad have been talking about him. This is event number one. The fact is that he was arrested by the KGB. Because he published all sorts of works abroad: there—abroad—fiction has been published for several years under the pseudonym Abram Tertz, and the KGB decided that it was him. A linguistic analysis was carried out—the investigation has been ongoing for three months.

By the way, a small detail. During the search, they took away all the tapes with my songs and something even worse—with my stories and so on. So far, no repressions have followed, and I don't notice anyone is following me, although I haven't lost hope. That's it, but it's okay, now are different times, different methods, we are not afraid of anyone and in general, as Khrushchev said, we have no political prisoners.⁶

The trial took place on 10–13 February 1966, despite severe international pressure (including from foreign Communist movements, which was highly embarrassing for the CPUSSR). The writers were charged with anti-Soviet activities and sentenced: Sinyavsky to seven years and Daniel, as a wounded front-line soldier, to five. Readers of the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* could read condemnations phrased in the rhetoric of the 1920s and 1930s from party functionaries and official writers of the Stalin era, such as Mikhail Sholokhov.

A week after the trial, on 19 February, however, sixty-two members of the Union of Soviet Writers sent a long and carefully worded argumentation letter to the Presidium of the XXIII Congress of the CPSU, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR. Prominent Moscow writers, literary theorists, historians, and critics, including Iliah Ehrenburg, Victor Shklovsky, Arseny Tarkovsky, Korney Chukovsky, Yury Nagibin, Konstantin Paustovsky, Alexander Anikst, Bulat Okudzhava, and Bella Akhmadulina wrote, in conclusion, the following:

We beg you therefore to release Andrey Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel on our surety. This would be an act dictated by the interests of the country, the interests of peace and those of the world Communist movement.⁷

Shostakovich, naturally, did not sign this letter since he was not a member of the Moscow Writers' Union, although he was one of its recipients as a delegate of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. He was also appointed chairman of the Union of Composers of the RSFSR. He had little influence, however, on the hard line of the party. Belonging to one of the highest echelons of the cultural elite, he must, nonetheless, have been informed and instructed about the trial first-hand and knew more about the case than the general public.

Let us now turn to the focus of this essay: what is the connection between this trial and Shostakovich's quotation from *Bublik*?

3. Abram Tertz as a Symbol

The pseudonyms of the two convicted writers offer a point of connection. These are not the type of pseudonyms that public figures use for well-known reasons, such as to make them appear more attractive and unique to the public (e.g., Maxim Gorky, Anna Akhmatova, Mark Twain, or Andrei Platonov—the list is endless), to hide their ethnic identity (e.g., Ayn Rand or Boris Akunin), or to exploit political connotations (Lenin, Stalin, Molotov, Kamenev, etc.).

None of these motives served Sinyavsky and Daniel. The names they chose were charged with a sophisticated subtextuality of names–images that elicited specific ethno-social connotations. To begin with, their pseudonyms were antithetical to their nationalities, as they exchanged Russian and Jewish identities. The non-Jewish Andrei Sinyavsky chose the Jewish (or Jewish-sounding in the Russian context) name Abram Tertz. The Jewish Yuli Daniel chose the non-Jewish name Nikolai Arzhak.

Sinyavsky, as a more potent irritant to the authorities, drew most of the fire. It was fairly typical for a Jew to take a non-Jewish name—a historically familiar practice in those societies in which dormant or overt anti-Semitism is always a factor. There are very few examples in history, however, of the opposite—of what Sinyavsky did. This was unexpected, stunning, bold, and a move of pure arrogance. His choice was puzzling. What did he mean? Who was he mocking: Jews or Russians?

The answer lies in the social dimension. Abram Tertz and Nikolai Arzhak are not only names but also literary characters, even though literature is represented here by the lowest genre—the songs of thieves and the ballads of bandits. Both characters are bandits: thieves and robbers.

Abram is the main character of the song *Abrashka Tertz, karmannik vsem izvestnyi* (a well-known pickpocket) or—in another version—“razboynik iz Odessy” (a robber from Odessa), which was sung to the highly popular melody *Na Moldavanke muzyka igraet* (Music is playing in Moldavanka), which had many contrafacts.⁸ Moldavanka is one of the cultural icons of Odessa and its oldest, once predominantly Jewish, vibrant, low-income/high-crime neighborhood. Abram Tertz thus represents a powerful symbol of the underworld and the underworld of the marginal Jewish community on the outskirts of the Russian Empire, even within the Soviet Union.

In counterpart, Nikolai, *Kol'ka, Arzhak, razboinik bez nozha* (a robber without a knife) is a Central-Russian ballad, also very popular, that had many contrafacts and was sung to the melody of the nineteenth-century romance *Razluka ty, razluka* (Farewell, oh farewell).

All those who wrote about Sinyavsky wondered why he had chosen the pseudonym Abram Tertz. For example, Lurie wrote the following:

The bridge to this new life was his pseudonym Abram Tertz. The choice of this name came up at the trial, and Sinyavsky of course did not admit that he knew of the thieves' song "Abrashka Tertz from Odessa." Since he was a known admirer of such sub-literature, the coincidence, in this case, seems striking, to say the least. Perhaps he chose the name because of its association with Babel's romantic criminals from Odessa, perhaps because it was related to the South (a symbol of the unconscious, which Sinyavsky was about to explore), perhaps its Jewish flavor attracted him because he was to touch on many of the sore spots in the relationship between Russians and Russian Jews (with a hint of identification with the victim, for the Doctors' Plot was still fresh in his mind), or perhaps the purely criminal aspect of it attracted him because he knew that by beginning his new career he had become a criminal in the eyes of the state. That he had become a criminal by remaining loyal to the highest ideals of Russian literature and the Revolution was just the sort of irony Sinyavsky-Tertz would enjoy. And there was a trace of guilt in the whole process, a contradictory guilt—that he hadn't been arrested with his father and thus wasn't worthy of the Revolution, and that he was at the same time betraying the Revolution, which had been associated in his mind with the regime and Russia for so long that he was never able to see them as utterly separate entities (Lourie 1975, p. 35).

At the end of his life, forty years after the official de-Stalinization of the Soviet Union and the development of Sinyavsky's alter ego and several years after de-Sovietization, in 1996–1997, the fully rehabilitated Sinyavsky first explained this in the broader Russian social context, "eulogizing" the power of Russian criminals as a leading player in Russian society as follows:

Power is being controlled and administered not by society but by the criminal world, historically the most enterprising part of Russia. Why the most enterprising? Because in highly centralized and normative Soviet society, where any personal initiative was totally excluded, flashes of independent thinking were produced or preserved only by criminals—both political, that is, dissidents, and purely criminal individuals—facing the authorities. Sadly, the ideas and programs of criminals have proved to be stronger than those of the dissidents. It is therefore most regrettable that the problem of Russia and Democracy is of greater interest to sociologists and politicians than the problem of Russia and Crime (Sinyavsky 1997, p. 80).

Joining Alexander Solzhenitsyn's warning of the Russian invasion into various fields, mainly propaganda, politics, and economics, Sinyavsky then predicted the problem of Russia and crime throughout the world:

In analyzing what has taken place, I want to speak in the native language of my alter ego, the Odessa bandit Abram Tertz: "We shall not calm down. We shall overrun all your rich lands like locusts. We shall overrun them and devour them. We will not put up with foreign gold and foreign blood. We shall take over your banks, your palaces, your Côtés d'Azur, and your San Franciscos. We are many and we are stronger". 'Yes, we are Scythians', as the unforgettable Abram Tertz said. "Yes, we are Asians, with slanting and greedy eyes!"⁹

Forty years earlier, when Sinyavsky found the solution to his destiny and gave himself a significant pseudonym in order to tell the truth at all costs, he might not have developed yet such a comprehensive view as that in the above quotation. However, he found his social function, which encompassed such contiguous images as *enfant terrible*, Holy Fool (or *yurodivy* in the Russian tradition), dissident, internal emigrant, and perhaps others. In addition to writing fiction under the pseudonym Abram Tertz, he was a literary scholar and critic, among whose works was a book that offers a key to understanding his creative thinking and code of conduct in life, *Ivan the Fool: Russian Popular Belief: A Cultural History* (1991). Mikhail Epstein writes as follows:

The best illustration of the archetypal, folkloric roots of Sinyavsky's thought may be found in his interpretation of Ivan the Fool, the traditional figure of Russian folk tales. Foolishness, for Sinyavsky, is the most profound and reliable indication of genuine wisdom. A fool does not follow the conventional path of success but instead finds himself in the most ridiculous and humiliating situations; nonetheless, in the Russian tradition, this brings him to the ultimate triumph—finding a miraculous source of wealth and marrying a princess. It is by his vulnerability and non-conformity that he invokes the blessing of some higher spiritual force. The underlying **principle** of foolishness is a refusal of rationality and an openness to the randomness of existence. Sinyavsky finds that the archaic cult of foolishness has affinities with the wisdom of the most profound philosophers, whose knowledge proceeds from an acceptance of the limits of knowledge (Epstein 2020).

Sinyavsky's activities, unthinkable in the Soviet Union, correspond to the definition of *yurodivy* given by Sergey A. Ivanov, who emphasized that such shockingly outrageous and markedly unruly behavior is "caused neither by mistake nor by feeble-mindedness, but is deliberate, irritating, even provocative (Ivanov 2006, pp. 1, v)".

It is noteworthy that another cultural hero, Shostakovich, is also perceived by many, starting from Solomon Volkov, as *yurodivy*.¹⁰ Indeed, as Esti Sheinberg has demonstrated, irony, satire, parody, and the grotesque play a crucial role in his music (Sheinberg 2000). Often exercising subtextual ambiguity in relation to the personages of his works, Shostakovich, for example, romanticized a fearless, noble brigand such as Jamie Macpherson in "Macpherson's Farewell" from *Six Romances on Verses by English Poets* (Op. 62 #3, 1942), whose music he quoted in the second movement of *The Thirteens*, "Humor" ("Gallows Humor" would have been correct, although probably censored). Another example presents the controversial folk hero/criminal Stepan Razin in *The Execution of Stepan Razin* (Op. 119, 1964).

Lewis Owens, in his essay "Documentary. On Trial: Shostakovich, Sinyavsky And Socialist Realism", seems to find an essential kinship in their aesthetics:

Sinyavsky (as did Shostakovich) offers his own credo which should serve to fill the existing aesthetic vacuum. It is a call for a search for new art forms; a rejection of 'literal realism' in favour of 'fantastic realism' with a stress on metaphor, symbolism and imagery—in sum Gogolian grotesques that appealed so much to Shostakovich (Owens 2009, p. 52).

Gogol is indeed often mentioned in writings about both Sinyavsky and Shostakovich.

The social function of Shostakovich and Sinyavsky as *yurodstvo* (in the broad sense) would seem to derive from their commitment to the ideals of the Revolution. The greater the disparity between the ideals and reality, the greater their inner need to reveal the bitter truth. The difference in their mediums naturally determined their *modi operandi*. While the overt words of literature prevent the writer-*yurodivy* from being published under a regime that drives him and his work into exile, music provides the composer with the possibility of subtext and symbols, giving him endless opportunities to disguise the moral or political intent of his message, while affecting the listeners' emotions and feelings.

Paradoxical or not, both had to lie in order to tell the truth. Interestingly, both Sinyavsky and Shostakovich feigned innocence by pretending not to know why they had chosen to use Odessan underworld references. Here is a fragment of the transcript of Sinyavsky's court hearing:

Prosecutor: "Why did you choose this particular name?"

Sinyavsky replied: "I just happened to like it. I don't think that it can be explained in any rational way".

Prosecutor: "Had you ever heard the pseudonym before?"

S.: "No, I hadn't" (Hayward 1966, p. 291).

Yuly Daniel's reaction was similar.

Shostakovich, too, stated that he had "no way to explain" why he used the *Bubliki* theme. He had a reason.

The music of the Concerto, due to its contrasting images, quotations, mysterious motifs, and *Bubliki's* shocking introduction, transparently hints at the existence of a hidden message. Familiar with the approach of the official music critics (only such individuals were published in the main newspapers), Shostakovich could expect *Bubliki* to attract their attention and speculation. The extremely bitter life experience of the previous three decades (the infamous *Pravda* editorial article "Muddle Instead of Music" had been published in 1936) had taught him caution. Understanding which way the wind was blowing following the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel, he seems to have considered it necessary to avoid any speculation.

Consequently, he repeated what he had done with the *Tenth Symphony*. Then, back in 1953, counting on the KGB to have his correspondence perused, he built a legend around his quotation from Mahler—who was, at the time, banned in the USSR. To do so, he began a correspondence with his former student, composer and pianist Elmira Nazirova. Five months before the premiere of the symphony, when the draft was already composed, he wrote to her that her name was encrypted in one of the themes of his new symphony. Shortly afterward, the composer stopped writing to her. Every educated musician, using Solfège and Latin music notations to decipher the sequence of the letters ELMIRA, would have recognized Mahler's opening theme from *Das Lied von der Erde* (Kravetz 2000, p. 162).

Following this maneuver, Shostakovich seems to have created a cover in the letter to his friend Isaak Glikman. On 27 April 1966, he wrote the following:

I have just finished the 2nd concerto for cello and orchestra. Since this work has no literary text or program, I have a hard time writing anything about this opus. It is lengthy. It has three movements. The 2nd and 3rd movements go without a break. In the second movement and at the climax of the third movement, there is a theme very similar to the Odessa song "Buy bagels!". There is no way I can explain what caused it. But it's very similar.¹¹

The style of this passage is no different from Shostakovich's usual simple and laconic writing. However, the selection of information about the composition gives it the appearance of an affidavit. He gives a dry description of its structure, saying nothing about the nature of the composition. Moreover, he emphasizes the absence of any extramusical ideas in the music ("no literary text or program"). The composer disowns any cognizance of using *Bubliki* as a quotation. He even overplays it a little, feigning surprise at the similarity of this melody to a commonly known song. He repeats "very similar" twice. However, as the autograph shows (Figure 1), the composer dissembled it deliberately.

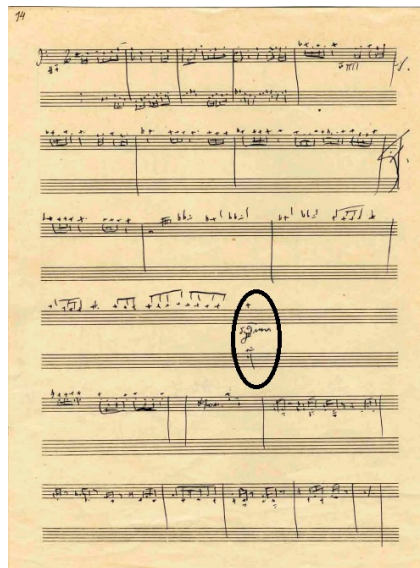


Figure 1. Autograph of the draft of the *Second Cello Concerto*, p. 10. Published with the kind permission of Irina Antonovna Shostakovich and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Creative Heritage of Dmitry Shostakovich.

4. Abram Tertz and *Bubliki*

The timing of the first episode, in which Shostakovich played *Bubliki* on New Year's Eve, 31 December 1965, coincided with a peak in awareness of the Sinyavsky–Daniel case among the Soviet cultural elite. This was eleven days after Vysotsky's above-quoted letter (20 December) and 26 days after the protest demonstration in Moscow organized by Alexander Esenin-Volpin and his team demanding a public trial for Sinyavsky and Daniel (5 December, the official holiday celebrating the Stalin Constitution of 1936). This chronology suggests that Shostakovich must have been well aware of the trial, Sinyavsky's pseudonym—Abram Tertz—and its meaning as an Odessan underworld character. All this must have stunned and intrigued him and others.

The question is to what extent *Bubliki*, which had suddenly rung in his head, could be semantically associated with the image of Abram Tertz and whether the musical dramaturgy of the soon-to-be-composed Concerto reflected the Sinyavsky drama.

The common denominator of these two cultural symbols—the image of Abram Tertz and the social existence of the song *Kupite Bubliki* among ordinary people—was Odessa, with all its Jewish overtones. Shostakovich associated this song with his youth at a New Year's Eve party. Indeed, the song first appeared in 1926, and the circumstances are well-known.¹² Yakov Yadov wrote texts for the Odessa Theater of Miniatures parodying the bandit's ballad about the NEP (New Economic Policy) realities. The source of the melody is considered to be either G. (or S.) Bogomazov or borrowed from some popular foreign foxtrot. The Jewishness of this song seems to be rather acquired than original. The dominant Jewish presence on the Odessa entertainment scene, on the one hand, and the subsequent export of this song to the United States with its huge Jewish immigrant community, iconically performed and recorded by The Barry Sisters as a Yiddish hit, on the other hand, turned it into a Jewish traditional song in the cultural perception, including as part of the wedding repertoire in Israel.

No less important is that its content belongs to the same criminal underworld as that of Abram Tertz. Its main character, a girl, sells bagels, shivering from the night cold and begging passers-by to buy them. Describing her family, she mentions her father as a heavy drinker, her mother as a pickpocket (in some versions, a whore), her sister as a prostitute (or just hanging around somewhere), and her younger brother as a pickpocket. She herself knows how to sell illegally (without a “patent”—a reality of the Soviet NEP based on private entrepreneurship). Thus, just as Abram Tertz had acquired signs of marginality—

ethnic, social, and geographical, there could not be a more appropriate musical symbol than *Bubliki* of the same marginal community—the Odessa Jewish underworld, even if only tangentially.

As broadly known, Jewish topics and idioms are very notable in Shostakovich's ethical, aesthetic, and stylistic approaches. This aspect has attracted vast amounts of research, to which the present author has also contributed (Ritzarev 2001, pp. 114–30; Ritzarev 2005–2006, pp. 43–69; 2023b). Common to both Sinyavsky and Shostakovich are their demonstrable Jewish references despite neither of them being Jews. The difference between them was that, unlike Sinyavsky, Shostakovich addressed the Jewish topic in many different ways and for various motivations.

It began in 1943–1944, with his anger at the tragedy of WWII, including the Holocaust, the personal loss of his student composer Veniamin Fleishman, killed in defense of Leningrad and whose unfinished opera *The Rothschild's Violin* Shostakovich completed in 1943–1944, and, finally, the untimely death of his best friend and spiritual mentor, the prominent philo-Semite, Ivan Sollertinsky. All these affected him with tremendous emotional force, stimulating his fundamentally new creative approach to Jewish music. It was then that he wrote the tragic *Second Piano Trio* Op. 67 in memory of Sollertinsky, in which he featured Yiddish *freylechs*. This was not, however, simply a quotation of a folk tune, as practiced by others. Shostakovich revealed its enormous expressive potential, allowing him to forcefully and piercingly convey the shocking reaction to the catastrophic tragedy.

As the two following decades showed—from that *Trio* to his Thirteenth Symphony *Babi Yar* (Op. 113, 1962), in which he stopped using Jewish idiom because such content was already being openly expressed in Yevgeny Yevtushenko's poetry—what Shostakovich needed was Jewish references for the *subtext*, for what could not be verbalized. This was his way of protesting and retaining his dignity and conscience. In his solidarity with the Jewish tragedy of the Holocaust, Shostakovich elevated Jewish music to tragedy¹³ like nobody else in the world. This made him de facto the founding composer of Jewish art music without compromising his status as a classical Russian art-music composer, and it is not a paradox.

Both communities, the Russian Jews and the Russian intelligentsia, belonged to marginalized parts of their country. It was this point that these two great representatives of the Russian intelligentsia, Shostakovich and Sinyavsky, clearly realized. This understanding led them to the expression of their protest against totalitarian power betraying the ideals of the Revolution. Having promised freedom and prosperity, it instead brought terror, corruption, and poverty to a humiliated people. Both Shostakovich and Sinyavsky, nonetheless, remained loyal to these ideals despite their complete disillusion and despising the resulting pseudo-democratic and criminal state. Their ultimate anti-hypocrisy approach made them open to the culture of the socially marginalized, whose music possesses extraordinary expressive power, be it the repertoire of the Roma people, Klezmer, Afro-American blues, or Russian bards.

Being “highly informed” of what the broad public was not supposed to hear,¹⁴ Shostakovich would have known that Sinyavsky had collected and studied bandit folklore since the latter's papers had been confiscated during the KGB search. This was also voiced in the prosecutor's questions at the trial, secretly recorded by some of those who were allowed to attend. One way or another, Shostakovich's being inspired by *Bubliki* in possible association with Sinyavsky's pseudonym of Abram Tertz was in complete harmony with the complex ethno-socio-cultural spectrum of Jewish music that he definitely felt and artistically re-created when needed, patently in the *Second Cello Concerto*.

5. Dedicatee?

Many listeners feel that this profoundly tragic composition was the composer's reaction to some irreversible loss. Regarding the identity of the possible dedicatee of the homage, Alexander Ivashkin suggested that it could have been Anna Akhmatova. His first and most weighty argument is related to the proximity of two dates: 5 March 1966, the

day of Akhmatova's death, and 17 March, the beginning of Shostakovich's work on the Concerto. Other arguments include the following:

Soon after Akhmatova's funeral, Shostakovich, according to Fyodor Druzhinin, the violist for the Beethoven Quartet, said the following in memory of Akhmatova: "Akhmatova was the queen of Russian poetry!" <...> Akhmatova and Shostakovich had known each other since they were young, but they did not get together very often. One of their last meetings took place in Moscow, at the Ardovs (close friends of Anna Akhmatova), on 17 December 1963. <...> Later, in 1965, Akhmatova visited Shostakovich in Repino, near Leningrad, and lamented about how she could not give him her latest book *Beg vremeni* (The Flight of Time) (1965), which had still not seen the light. In 1958, Akhmatova brought the composer her newly published book of poems, with the following inscription: "To Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich, in whose era I live on earth. Akhmatova 22 December 1958 Moscow". She dedicated her poem "Music" to Shostakovich ("In it something wondrous burns") <...> Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony is mentioned in the first rendition of the final lines of the epilogue of Akhmatova's main composition "Poem Without a Hero". We also know of her perspicacious assessment of Shostakovich's Eleventh Symphony, "1905", which she immediately highly praised: "In it, songs soar through the black ominous sky like angels, like birds, like white clouds!" Shostakovich never wrote music to Akhmatova's poems, but he often talked about her: "She is immutable. And quiet... She has experienced enough pain to last for several lifetimes. . . What she has been through is beyond compare" (Ivashkin 2012, pp. 88–89).

The author also points out the similarity of their most terrible experiences of ideological persecution (Shostakovich in 1936 and 1948 and Akhmatova in 1946); he draws attention to certain gestures in the *Second Cello Concerto* which can be heard later in the composer's song "To Anna Akhmatova" from the vocal cycle *Six Songs on Poems by Marina Tsvetayeva* (1974); and provides some general aesthetic references to the atmosphere of the Silver Age—the era of Anna Akhmatova's establishment as a poet.

Several points seem to confirm the assumption of Anna Akhmatova as the hidden dedicatee despite three reservations:

1. In 1966, both Shostakovich and Akhmatova enjoyed secure celebrity status in the Soviet official ideological ranks. (Akhmatova's status in these ranks was much lower than that of Shostakovich but still high enough not to compromise him with her friendship). Shostakovich had no real reason to *secretly* pay tribute to her.
2. The soloist and protagonist of the Concerto is the cello. Semantically, this instrument is more associated with masculine than with feminine images.
3. If the *Bubliki* quotation was really meaningful for the fabula of the Concerto (regardless of the possible Sinyavsky–Tertz symbolism), what could connect this marginal (in the Soviet space) song with Anna Akhmatova and her Silver Age and/or Stalinist era of terror, with her charismatic figure or, conversely, with her as a victim of Soviet Power? It should also be recalled that the melody had haunted Shostakovich's imagination since 31 December (as documented, but maybe even earlier), at least two months before her death. For Akhmatova, 1965 became a year of triumphant national and international recognition, and nothing had foreshadowed her death. Although it was known that she had suffered from heart disease since the early 1950s, New Year's Eve 1966 was not yet the time for Shostakovich to conceive a requiem for this great poet.

6. What Musical Drama Tells Us

Now, having presented the available circumstantial evidence, I shall further support my hypothesis that Shostakovich's *Second Cello Concerto* presents a (concealed) tribute to Andrei Sinyavsky (or, more broadly, Sinyavsky as a symbol of freethinking under Soviet rule). In the following interpretation, I suggest that the musical images and their correlation may reflect the story of Andrei Sinyavsky as it unfolded before Shostakovich's eyes.

The persuasiveness of my arguments will inevitably differ for each reader. Among the most comprehensive arguments to this day is the above-mentioned analytical essay by Alexander Ivashkin. Since I adhere to my own narrative, however, our interpretations will naturally differ on some points.

6.1. Themes and Images

The Concerto is exceptionally rich in its imagery, and the images materialize as themes, timbres, and episodes. Most appear more than once, like characters in a drama. Some return in different guises, while others remain unchanged, depending on their functions. Contrasting images appear partly conflicting and partly supportive. The composition is replete with action, sometimes thrilling, more so than the traditional instrumental concerto genre. The virtuosity of the cello part is fully subordinated to the expression of particular stages of the plot. It is no coincidence that Shostakovich viewed this Concerto as his fourteenth symphony with a solo cello part.¹⁵

The two sides of the conflict—the protagonist and the antagonist—are easily identifiable and recognizable. The cello represents the first; the brass fanfares represent the second. Even an inexperienced listener, if presented with this dichotomy, would correctly determine which part relates to the individual and which to the State.

Protagonist. The warm human sound of the cello never seems to leave the stage. It continues to be present in our emotions long after the performance has ended. The cello opens the Concerto, playing the main theme almost solo. The melody unfolds over the quiet support of bass strings, expressing a wide spectrum of moods and emotions, such as nostalgic reflection and even lamentation, but establishing a contemplative tone of wise positivity and dignity. The first movement is devoted mainly to this melody, which undergoes a metamorphosis on a symphonic scale. However, at the end of this movement, and also when it returns at the end of the Concerto, the melody remains unchanged and unaffected by what has happened during the drama, thus reinforcing its essential integrity.

The theme–protagonist is vocal by nature. Although framed in a mostly quadruple meter, its free rhythm and asymmetrical phrasing refer to the melodicism of Russian lyrical *prot'yazhnyye* songs, while its modality is purely Shostakovichian. It is a meditative monody, and many of the motifs of the Concerto, mainly within the minor third or diminished fourth intervals, grow from its fabric. Descending semi-tones of the *pianto* topic play a primary role in the melodic line and all its gestures. Although the melody contains some large skips, the sequence of its motifs creates a sense of enclosed space and inescapable doom. It is no coincidence that, at the end of the story, one of these motifs turns out to be related—almost a quotation—to Mussorgsky's Introduction to *Boris Godunov*. Among Russians, its folk-like theme is consensually perceived as *the truth of/about* Russian people, finally personified in the opera by the image of *Yurodivy*.

Although we may not know which Hero might have inspired the Concerto's main theme and what it symbolized for the composer, according to the associative cluster, this cello theme could refer to an individual character, a noble idea, or the idea of the Russian people as a whole. While this could have referred to many Russian humanists, at that particular historical moment, Andrei Sinyavsky seems to have been the most suitable figure (if the posited Tertz–*Bubliki* association is correct).

It is noteworthy that in Shostakovich's oeuvre, as in Russian musical tradition as a whole, from Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar* to Shostakovich's *The Seventh* and further to the work of Slonimsky, themes of a vocal nature symbolize positive patriotic images. In contrast, their "adversaries", associated with aggression, violence, and oppression, are of instrumental origin.¹⁶

Antagonist. This musical image is represented by orchestral episodes based on a loud and aggressive brass fanfare. Its most impressive entrance opens the third movement by "cinematographically" suddenly crashing into the second movement, which was in the process of developing its *Bubliki* music. This short fanfare-like call radically opposes both the protagonist's cello solo melody from the first movement and the *Bubliki*, conveying

panic, fuss, and anxiety. Its short motif transparently alludes to Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Golden Cockerel* (1906) and not without subtext. The phrase is sung in the opera with the words "Kiri-ku-ku: Rule them, as you lie abed!" (translation from Pushkin by Oliver Elton). This final opera by Rimsky-Korsakov is best remembered as a political satire, mocking the weak and irresponsible Russian autocracy in the pre-revolutionary years (Abraham 1971). As a student of Maximilian Steinberg, who was himself the student and son-in-law of Rimsky-Korsakov, Shostakovich would have known first-hand the opera's history: its political issues, censorship, and ban. Even if this quotation had been recognized by a minuscule part of the audience, it would have been the best he could do to address the symbolism of State and Power. In addition to the purely musically terrifying image of the following orchestral *tutti*—*fortissimo*, with a rigid rhythm, emphasized by percussions and the entire arsenal of expressive means—this music declares might and absolute power, against which man is not able to fight (reh 66).

Seemingly in sharp contrast to both, the *Bubliki* movement–image is nevertheless closer to the first movement than to the last, and in all respects. First, the *Bubliki* theme is again presented with a solo cello, which is the dramatis persona of the main-theme protagonist. Second, its melodic structure is based on the same minor third as the rest of the cello's thematicism. The contrast between the first and second movements is thus not conflicting but lies more in their generic essence than on an emotional level. The protagonists of the first and second movements are the same. He simply puts on the mask of *yurodivy*, probably Abram Tertz, symbolized by the Odessa dance song, inappropriate to the polite society of a philharmonic audience.

6.2. An Imaginable Scenario

Below is a conceivable scenario of the events superimposed on the Concerto score, as if it were the soundtrack to Sinyavsky's story. I present it in chronological order as a three-act drama: I—Andrei Sinyavsky, II—Abram Tertz, and III—The Trial.

The first movement contains a contrasting middle episode (reh 16) between exposition and recapitulation of the main theme. Its character is a typical Shostakovichian *scherzo*, which develops into a dramatic climax. Evoking a mixture of emotions, it produces an ambiguous impression of teasing: sometimes childishly innocent, sometimes mocking. The orchestra playfully casts sparkling, mischievous glances. Gradually, in increasingly frightening moments, contrasting feelings of fear, fervor anxiety, and overexcitement accumulate. The *tutti* becomes more and more aggressive as if chasing the cello, which responds with panicking passages.

The real climax begins with the strokes of the bass drum (reh 26). Like a supernatural command, it forces the cello to respond, but its response turns out to be an internal dialogue, one phrase of which is *pizzicato* chords arguing with the drum strokes, and the other is a *cantabile* (arco) in an upper octave reminiscent of the main theme. All this gives the impression that this episode presents a difficult dilemma. *Cantilena* phrases with their persistent As-G-As-F motif allude to *Dies Irae*. The drum strokes push the cello toward something still obscure, encroaching upon the unknown. Over time, both the drum strokes and the cello's responses become quieter, but the listener is already prepared for more ominous events.

I will loosely label this episode "Dilemma" because it is followed by a pacification that marks the dilemma being resolved. Regarding the essence of this dilemma, if we superimpose it on Sinyavsky's life, it could refer to whether or not to become a dissident writer published abroad. One can imagine that the choice was vital. He jeopardized his freedom, even limited in Soviet conditions, and had to split his personality. This was probably when he tested the *yurodivy* pseudonym, preparing to "reincarnate" into Abram Tertz.

The momentousness of the previous episode is indicated by the following incredibly sudden catharsis (reh 28). In continuation, another episode (reh 31) brings magically instantaneous, physically perceptible relief. Musically, it is made from "nothing"—only a

fragment of the main theme, played by the cello in parallel tenths in the high register. This effect of “amazing grace”, however, leads me to locate it in the exclusive functional category of the *middles*, which Michael Beckerman examines from a new perspective and defines as “a zone with different laws and different rules” (Beckerman 2011, p. 164). I will focus on this function later because Shostakovich used several short episodes of this kind, mainly in the Finale, and they are clearly of exceptional importance in the fabula of the Concerto. For now, I will conventionally call this function “A Clear Conscience”—something so powerful that it gives the protagonist the indestructible strength to survive.

The rest of the first movement returns to the Russian *prottyazhnaya* song of the main theme. The short and faint memory of the *scherzo* episode passes in a surreal way. The movement ends peacefully and quietly. Retrospectively knowing what follows in the second movement, we can interpret this moment as the completed “transfiguration” of Andrei Sinyavsky into Abram Tertz.

The second movement is a relatively short *scherzo* based on *Bubliki* and developed with all the Shostakovichian virtuosic colorfulness. The composer used a minimal segment of its melody, sufficient for recognition. As a result, the phrase was framed in the same minor third, alternating with the major third, similar to the typical variants of the protagonist’s motifs from the first movement. The cello continues to act as a common presenter, uniting both movements with homogenous thematicism. Therefore, despite the initial surprise of the listener who suddenly recognizes the appearance of *Bubliki* in serious music, the overall sound is organic. Abram Tertz and Andrei Sinyavsky are one and the same—a single and integral personality.

The third movement, the picturesque beginning of which I described above as the image of the antagonist, develops dramatically, enacting all the characters and images of this symphonic Concerto. As noted, its main theme resembles Mussorgsky’s theme of the Russian people that opens *Boris Godunov*. Almost a century later, Shostakovich unleashed its dynamic potential in an open clash with the furious drum strokes. However, upon reaching the climax, he introduces *Bubliki* (reh 100), whose desperate energy of criminals with nothing to lose, with their freedom to tell the truth as a privilege of marginality, sounds like a force at least comparable to that of totalitarian power. If we translate the score to our script, it could cover the six-month period of events from the arrest of Sinyavsky and Daniel to the public attention and uproar and the condemnation campaign in the official newspapers—to their trial, sentencing, and transport to a Gulag.

Much of the music in the Finale can be associated with the reflections of the arrested protagonist. Here, the function of the “Clear conscience” symbolic episode surfaces again, returning in parallel thirds instead of tenths. However, there is an essential development of this feature when a new theme appears, surprising the listeners with its mysterious ending. Alexander Ivashkin called this a “rhetorical flourish”, which indeed seems to be thanks to the apparent cadential gesture, including the suave trill on the penultimate note. This sublime theme appears five times in the episodes of reflections (rehs 73, 79, 85, 90, and 106), notably in the same pitch and the main key of G major. A sudden diatonic major mode and a clear ending on the tonic are similar to the baroquesque cadences in minor-mode compositions. Like a divine signature, this emotional haven provides a feeling of numinous, immediate comfort, relieving the pain and freeing the soul from lingering fears and doubts: “The Sealed Signature of Blessing”.

These themes—symbols of goodness seem to be examples of the *middles* according to Michael Beckerman, whom I quote:

I maintain that musical middles exhibit rare properties. Indeed, when you throw the basic materials of Western sound up in the air, the parts do not come down randomly; certain kinds of things make their way to the beginning and end, and other, very different kinds of things find themselves falling into the middle. And this middle, whether in Alice in Wonderland or a Beethoven symphony, is quite simply somewhere else, a zone with different laws and different rules. <...> Middles have also attracted their share of compositional attention as a place to

hide things. The very psychoacoustic weakness of their placement makes them attractive. <...> Middles may be too disturbing, delicate, odd, or precious to touch the real world, and perhaps they must always be protected by the hard walls and edges of opening and closing gestures. Indeed, they are probably forgotten as we applaud and leave the hall. However, in my view much of the Power of the musical experience depends on the way middles haunt our dreams for days, months, and years after we have seemingly forgotten them (Beckerman 2011, pp. 164, 177, 181).

What also seems important in connection with Shostakovich is Beckerman's appeal to literature scholars like Charles Altieri, who pointed to the middle as the locus of ethical concern, and Leo Strauss, who dealt with the problems of philosophers working under repressive regimes and their "writing between the lines":

He [Strauss—M.R.] notes that their writings begin and end "in the quiet, unspectacular and somewhat boring manner which would seem to be but natural." But there is something hidden: "Only when he has reached the core of the argument would he write three or four sentences in that terse and lively style which is apt to arrest the attention of young men who love to think" (Beckerman 2011, p. 179; Strauss 1952, p. 24).

Shostakovich repeats these special symbols many times, every time closer to each other toward the end, as if seeing the protagonist off. Deciphering their meaning is a challenge. The only clear impression is that they are part of the sphinx-like leit-themes-images, functioning as the Hero's "Guardian Angels." Two other "angels" are attached to the main theme almost from beginning to end. The first is the harp. In most cases, barely audible, it faithfully drops sounds like a blessing and crossing. Another guardian angel is the horn, heralding conflicting events to come, similar to what the composer did in the *First Cello Concerto*. In contrast to these "good" timbres, the xylophone sound painting creates macabre associations: first, in the middle of the first movement ("Dilemma" episode), and then, noticeably, at the very end of the Concerto, chillingly, as if accompanying the arrestee's setting off on a long and unknown path to unfreedom.

The gallery of Shostakovich's musical images is vast. Some of those from the *Second Cello Concerto* have predecessors and/or followers in his other compositions. For example, in the Finale, the descending chromatic sequence of broken parallel fourths is repeated four times (rehs 72, 88, 101, and 102), each time closely before a "rhetorical flourish", as Alexander Ivashkin called it, or my "The Sealed Signature of Blessing". The predecessor of this sequence was in the *Suite for Two Pianos* Op. 6 (1922), written by a fifteen–sixteen-year-old composer in memory of his father, Dmitri Boleslavovich Shostakovich (1875–1922), and considered to be initially conceived as a first symphony. As Ivan Sokolov revealed, Shostakovich quoted this figure in his last composition, the *Sonata for Viola and Piano* Op. 147 (1975)—a farewell to his own life (Sokolov 2016, p. 81). The appearance of this quotation in the Finale of the *Second Cello Concerto*, thus, inscribes well into the series of homogeneous topics associated with tragic loss. Additional proof that this symbol had some special meaning for the composer is that, when finalizing score, he consulted with Mstislav Rostropovich about the technical difficulty in their performance, as well as the parallel tenths at the end of the first movement (Ivashkin 2012, p. 91).

Another example of wandering themes within Shostakovich's oeuvre is the **B** theme from the *Fifth Symphony* (reh 1), according to Marina Frolova-Walker's catalog of its themes (Frolova-Walker and Walker 2024, p. xvi). Played by the flute as in the Symphony, it is stated in the Finale of the Concerto four times (rehs 74, 75, 80, and 81).

This phenomenon of auto-quotations compromises any attempt to interpret them in connection with a particular dramaturgy; hence, the offered interpretation of images should be considered only one of many possibilities. On the other hand, it is crucially important that the sequence and correlation of episodes and images, as well as numerous allusions/quotations, the meaning of which can be comprehended by an educated audience,

are unique in this opus. This justifies a search for the plot and narrows the circle of plausible scenarios.

There is little doubt that the Concerto is an homage. However, the question remains: to whom?

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Notes

- ¹ I cordially thank my colleagues, prominent Shostakovich experts Esti Sheinberg and Olga Digonskaya, for their kind help and for sharing their knowledge.
- ² These episodes are well known. See, for example, (Fay 2000, pp. 247–48). The circumstances of the creation of the Concerto are meticulously documented by Alexander Ivashkin in his article (Ivashkin 2012, pp. 83–124).
- ³ RadioFreeEurope RadioLiberty, May 23, 2010 16:33 GMT. Joseph Brodsky Remembered. https://www.rferl.org/a/Joseph_Brodsky_Remembered/2050558.html (accessed on 30 January 2024).
- ⁴ Vladimir Volkoff, in his *Le montage: Roman*, 1982 (in English *The Set-up: A novel of espionage*, 1984), details how KGB agents working abroad tracked the delivery of typescripts from Russia to Europe for publishing in *tamizdat*.
- ⁵ This topic is explored in the book by (Komaromi 2015).
- ⁶ <http://vysotskiy-lit.ru/vysotskiy/pisma/letter-11.htm>, accessed on 30 January 2024.
- ⁷ Quoted from Richard Lourie’s book (Lourie 1975, p. 49) with reference to (Hayward 1966, p. 291).
- ⁸ This extremely popular tune is used with different lyrics, such as <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aw0GZyi9YEK> (accessed on 31 December 2023). See Alexander Sidorov, *Na Moldavanke muzyka igraet. Novye ocherki o blatnykh i ulichnykh pesnyakh* (Music plays on Moldavanka. New essays on thieves and street songs). <http://flibusta.site/b/564328/read> (accessed on 30 January 2024).
- ⁹ Sinyavsky (1997, pp. 81–82) cited Alexander Blok’s poem “Skify” (The Skythians, 1918), in which the Skythians (the Russians) warn the outside world of Russia’s primeval strength, given a new impetus by the Revolution. Alexandr Blok, *Sobranie sochinenii v 8-mi tomakh* (Complete collection of works in eight volumes. Moscow, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1960, vol. 3, p. 360).
- ¹⁰ Solomon Volkov developed this idea in several works, concluding that “in all probability, Shostakovich was influenced not by a real-life yurodivy, but followed the fictional model first presented by Alexander Pushkin in his tragedy ‘Boris Godunov’ (1824) and then magnified in the opera of the same title (after Pushkin) by Modest Mussorgsky (1869–1872)”. (Volkov 2004, p. xi).
- ¹¹ Только что я закончил 2-й концерт для виолончели с оркестром. Т.к. в этом произведении нету литературного текста и программы, то затрудняюсь хоть что-либо написать об этом opus’е. По размерам он длинный. В нем три части. 2-я и 3-я части идут без перерыва. Во второй части и в кульминации третьей части имеется тема, очень похожая на одесскую песню «Купите бублики!» Никак не сумею объяснить, чем это вызвано. Но очень похоже». (Glikman 1993, pp. 212–13).
- ¹² Vladimir Bakhtin. “Zabyty i nezabyty Yakov Yadov”. In *Neva*, 2, 2001: 231 Bakhtin published manuscript materials from the archive of Grigory Krasavin. https://www.russian-records.com/search.php?search_keywords=%C1%F3%E1%EB%E8%F7%EA%E8&l=russian (accessed on 25 April 2024).
- ¹³ The statement of elevating folk tunes to tragedy was pronounced by Prince Vladimir Odoyevsky regarding Glinka’s *A Life for the Tsar* and became a kind of criterion for a genuine foundation of a national school of composition.
- ¹⁴ I know this from Vladimir Aleksandrovich Chaikovsky, who was a director of The Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Academic Music Theatre, when Shostakovich’s opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, revised and re-named as *Katerina Izmailova*, was restaged in 1962, after its historical condemnation in 1936.
- ¹⁵ Dmitri Shostakovich to Dmitri Shepilov, 21 September 1966 (quoted by Alexander Ivashkin from (Rubtsova 1994, p. 142)).
- ¹⁶ This dichotomy may have deep historical roots in the Russian Orthodoxy that defined the path of Russian musical culture in general. The idea is developed in my essay (Ritzarev 2023a).

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