

A note on asterisks: Footnotes have already been included in the published book and have been translated. Translation and historical notes that do not appear in the footnotes but are useful for historical context come from my own research. Ukrainian place names are transliterated according to Ukrainian spelling (ie. Kyiv, Odesa) with respect to the current war.

Letter 1: (without a date)

I have urgent business for you. Call me when you have 15-20 minutes to talk to me. D. Shostakovich.

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*Footnote: Written on the front side of the card- "Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich, 9 Marat Street, apartment 7. Telephone 496-37."

Obviously, the composer wrote the note without knowing where Sollertinsky's house was. As it is only addressed "to you,*" this was likely the first letter from Shostakovich to Sollertinsky.

** Translation note: Shostakovich uses the formal "you" here. The informal "you" will be used in the following letters, coinciding with their *bruderschaft* toast.

Letter 2: 20 Aug. 1927, Detskoe Selo

My dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I was extremely happy to receive your postcard. For such a small space, you combine many needed considerations and witticisms, that I am amazed. I did not write to you because I was in a bad mood. The Muzsektor (Music Sector) sent me only 500 rubles the day before yesterday for my loyal sentiments. In connection with this, my mood improved, and I decided to write to you. Tomorrow I'm going to Moscow. The Muzsektor sent me a telegram for a demonstration of my revolutionary music. On my return, I will write of my summer adventures in detail. I recently received a letter from Malko, in which he warns me of our imminent break with him and, like Chamberlain*, accuses me of such. Progress is being made on "The Nose," as well as my German. In my next letter, probably by Wednesday, I will begin with the words "mein lieber Iwan Iwanowitsch*."

Your D. Shostakovich.

*Footnote: Chamberlain Ostin, British statesman.

**Historical note: At this point, Shostakovich was attempting to learn German, and Sollertinsky was attempting to learn piano, although nothing came of either's endeavour.

Letter 3: 10 Jan 1928, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I did not write to you immediately, because things have gone back to normal only now. The only thing that consoles my yearning for Leningrad in this circumstance is that I have good work here. "The Nose" made strong progress. In the theatre, I begin my work tomorrow. What will happen? Relatively, I will probably tell you about my symphony, or N. A. Malko will. After the concert, this busy episode happened, a characterization of "my friend," M. V. Kvadri. One of my acquaintances told me about this episode yesterday. I came in half an hour before the concert and stood (waiting) to buy my ticket. Having bought the ticket, I sat down in my seat in the 16th row and hid behind a newspaper, in order to avoid M. V. Kvadri. I succeeded in doing this. I met him at the time of my exit "bow out." Kvadri suddenly appeared on stage, quickly hugged me, kissed me thrice in the Russian custom, and loudly shouted, "Go to the stage! Take a bow!" It is very characteristic how he got to the concert. He went with the administrator and with the loud laughter of others surrounding him, demanded two tickets on the basis that "Shostakovich's symphony was dedicated to me." His acquaintance, an orchestra musician, for greater persuasiveness, added, "after all, this is Kvadri! The spiritual father of Shostakovich!" They were given the tickets. At intermission, among all the congratulations, the administrator came up to me and apologised before me straightaway for giving Kvadri the tickets. I was slightly surprised, but "forgave him." And yesterday my acquaintance told me about this episode, and I remember it all.

Here are some current developments-

Here I live in the company of geniuses*. A genius producer, a "genius actress," ("Ah, Zinka! How you performed yesterday. It was very brilliant!"), a "genius composer" and "genius poetess." These last two are the "genius" children of the poet Esenin and a "genius" actress. The boy (a composer) gets on my nerves. He pokes at the keys of the piano, and Meyerhold says, "something extraordinary is immediately felt." The girl reads poems:

"The kitty cat played.

The girl danced.

The dog got up,

And bit the cat on the nose.

The cat started crying,

The dog barked," etc.

Zinaida Raikh speaks in a pleasant voice, "This is absolutely excellent! She inherited a sweet muse from her father! Ah, Sergei, Sergei! Ah, Esenin, Esenin!"

"Great job, children! Great job," says V. E. [Meyerhold]. "Shostakovich! I believe they did a great job. I believe it."

Raikh says: "What do you say, Dima? (That is what they call me here.) Tanya inherited her father's talent, but where did Kostya's musical talent come from?"

Meyerhold: "From you."

Raikh: "Why from me? I am in fact an actress, not a musician."

Meyerhold: "You are an actress. You have known to the end what the written word is. And where the written word ends, music begins, said Heine. Do you believe this, Dima?"

He shudders slightly. Often he asks, "Do you believe this, Dima? And? What?" I have to agree in sullen silence.

This is how my life goes, cheerfully. Yesterday I was at Kerzhentse's. He is now Deputy statistician, Former Plenipotentiary in Rome. I met interesting people, among them Raskolnikov** and Eisenstein***. In general, I really miss you. I love you and I miss you. Write. D. Shostakovich.

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Historical note: Here, Shostakovich sarcastically refers to Vsevolod Meyerhold, a theatre director and playwright, and Meyerhold's wife, Zinaida Raikh, an actress.

** Footnote: Political figure and diplomat.

*** Historical note: Sergei Eisenstein, film director.

Letter 4: 11 Jan 1928, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

If you will write to me, be sure to mention Meyerhold in the address (V.E. Meyerhold for Shostakovich), or else I will not reach it.

Greetings, D. Shostakovich.

Letter 5: 21 January 1928, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I'm sorry that I write on such inelegant paper; I have no other paper. I have wanted to write to you for a long time, but I didn't have the time to. I have spent all my free time working on "The Nose." Now, I'm writing the entire note, and therefore I'm doing nothing. It's a terrible feeling to be addicted to manuscript paper. In general, life isn't bad. I don't have much work, and I can't tell exactly what it is. Not long ago was the meeting between Mestkom and Erkak, jointly with the administration and at this meeting, I was approved on "what musical parts." To start with, I make arrangements for musical parts, I am responsible for the parts entrusted to me, etc. I attend theatres intensively. In addition to all Meyerhold productions, I saw "The Armoured Train" and "The Days of the Turbins" in the Khudozhestvennom (theatre), and "Rift" in the studio, Vakhtangov's "Day and Night" in the Kamernom and many others.

In the Khudozhestvennom, I saw an amazing cast of actors. Artists- some of the best. "Day and Night" is an extremely cheerful operetta and a very good production. But in one place I am slightly sick of the incredible aestheticism. Green flashlights, blue

lighting, women in short skirts and multicoloured pants. Terrible, but "beautiful." "The Iron Train" as a performance is extremely successful, despite the presence of Kachalov (rise up the people and for freedom - give up your wives and mothers. We will achieve our peasant freedom with our meat. Hey, Pyatrukha! Look, is there a member of the bourgeoisie hiding under a bush?). In everything there is a full glare, in order to achieve the style of the peasant-Russian-revolution.

"Fault" was a lousy play, so much that I was ashamed that I watched the whole show.

In "The Days of the Turbins," there was a place of such genuine tragedy that even in the theatre, there was loud crying. But it was all spoiled by the last act, with the official ending. The play that made a strong impression on me was "The Inspector-General," which I saw in Meyerhold's theatre. Now I have seen it three times there, and seven times in all. The more I saw it, the more I liked it. I listened to Malko. Tchaikovsky's violin concerto and 3rd suite. Twelve-year-old Borya Feliciant participated. Borya played technically well, sometimes absolutely antimusically. In general, the phenomenon was not brilliant. After the 3rd Suite, Malko was wildly successful. He was called back four times. At intermission, I went to give my thanks to him for the concert. He sat without a tailcoat. His bald head was shining, and so was his face. With his whole being he expressed, "finally I am understood, appreciated!" I did not hear "Ecstasy." I went home. "Volitional impulse" and "flight" act strongly on the public. So probably after "Ecstasy" he was a success. At the concert, I met A.V. Lunacharsky, who told me a few kind words and expressed the hope that he would succeed in encountering my triumphs "in detail."

In the evening, I spoke to my mother on the telephone. I (was able to) hear (her) wonderfully. What a great human invention. Meyerhold's children have a nanny, who has tender feelings for me and sometimes pisses me off. Especially in the mornings, when she enters my room and begins to say, "it's time to get up, it's time to get up," while pulling off the blanket and groping my naked body. Yesterday, it got to the point where she kissed the part of my body that touches the chair when I sit. I told her yesterday that if she didn't stop touching me, I would tell Zinaida Nikolaevna. Today, therefore, she was quieter. Her hands did not penetrate beyond the chest*. At first, it made me laugh; now it annoys me; the thirty-four-year-old maid craves what must be (to her) heavenly bliss. Hell knows she's ugly. If tomorrow morning she touches and kisses me again, then I will definitely complain. When we meet again, I will tell you more about her in detail.

It worries me that, at the conservatory, I still haven't been given a postgraduate handout. I fear that my hard work will be without pay. I sent them 35 rubles not long ago. I couldn't send more, because I received 1/4 of my salary and paid part of it to my hosts. Yesterday I spoke with my mother, about money for the conservatory that hasn't been issued yet. Hell knows what else. I think that in February, I will live in Moscow, but in

March I'll quit my job and return to Leningrad. Not long ago I had (met?)... Messelman or Musselman*, whom Varzar** happens to know. He struck me with his presence. Don't forget to write to me. I was terribly glad with your letter, and will also be glad with the next. Your loving D. Shostakovich. Knipper*** sends regards.

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*Footnote: An orientalist and journalist.

**Footnote: An unknown relative of Nina Varzar.

***Footnote: Composer Lev Knipper.

Letter 6: May 11 1928, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Today I met R. I. Gruber* (musicologist). He brought me terrible boredom. He will go to visit me again on Wednesday, May 16th, at 2 o'clock. He will ask me to show him "The Nose." It would be good if you came to visit me too at the same time. I will kill three birds with one stone- 1) I will feel less bored at Gruber's, 2) I will see you, and 3) I will be able to show you "The Nose." Come; I will be extremely grateful to you. I really missed you. Call me somehow. D. Shostakovich. P.S. Yesterday I saw His Majesty, the Afghan Padishah Amanullah-khan.

*Footnote: Musicologist

**Footnote: King of Afghanistan from 1919-1929. Went on an official visit to the Soviet Union in 1928.

Letter 7: 17 July 1928, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,
Come visit me this evening at 9. I will be very glad.

Letter 8: 20 July 1928, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,
Just now, they called me from the "Evening Krasnaya Gazeta" asking for a note on "The Nose" in the department of "News for future seasons." I would be very grateful to you if you found time to stop by today, because tomorrow I need to hand in a note to the editor and read what I write.
D. Shostakovich.

Letter 9: 22 November 1928, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, It seems to me that the suite (for "The Nose") sounds very interesting and good. I have no fears for this. I am afraid of Malko (who has an absence of rhythm). The singers sound gorgeous. The balalaika and flexatone sound very good.

I hope that they will learn for the concert and improve in all regards by 35%. For 100%, they need to learn more. Therefore, no matter how pleasant it may be to me, I advise you not to come. Samosud is still learning; Malko still is not successful by the 3rd rehearsal. Your D. Shostakovich. From Tsekubu* I moved to Comrade Sokolnikov's. If you are coming, then call 3-49-24.

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Footnote: Central Commission for the improvement of the life of scientists and artists, created on the initiative of A. M. Gorky in the 1920s.

Letter 10: 15 December 1928, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

If you would be so kind, find a way to quickly hand me some Negro "blues" music. Arnshtam often asks about them. Besides, if you can, come visit me on Saturday 15 December in the evening. D. Shostakovich.

Letter 11: 26 January 1929, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I have some business for you. If you possibly can, call me today on the telephone number 38-86 or 5-82-66 and call about my "New Babylon." I will be there at 6, then I will be home. The business is interesting enough, at least from my point of view.

D. Shostakovich.

Letter 12: March 22 1929, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I have a big request for you. Come to the Piccadilly theatre today at 8. I personally invite you, as well as the artists and the bureau of the Kinofactory*. There, two boxes will be reserved for us. After the viewing, there will be a discussion of my music. I informally request you, in case I am attacked, to rehabilitate me. If Vladimirov* will say that it is forbidden for my music to be played with a trio or other ensemble, then speak, if you can. It is necessary for you to tell me which piano and orchestral parts are required for the ensemble. If you can, call me before leaving for the Picadilly.

D. Shostakovich.

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*Footnote: This was an invitation to see the film *New Babylon*.

**Footnote: A conductor.

Letter 13: 3 July 1929, Sevastopol

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Sorry for writing with a pencil. I don't have any ink at the moment, and the store is closed. Today I went to Sevastopol and observed the main attractions. I saw the "Panorama,"* Chersonese**, the great T. Baulin, and the smallest lady in the world, P. Novikova, whose photographs I will send to you as a token of friendly affection. I was very satisfied with the Chersonese. The "Panorama" reminded me of a creation by our fellow city-dweller, I. I. Brodsky ‡. In any case, it left a great impression on me. On the road to the post office, I was seduced by an exhibition of living phenomena. A session lasts 10 minutes, in which 8 are being spent reading an excerpt from a lecture by a Kyiv professor, and 2 are spent buying photographs of Baulin and Novikova. It cost 20 kopeks to enter. Pictures were 10 kopeks each. On Friday 5 July, I think I will go to Sukhum, and from there to Gudaut (both cities in Grozny- footnote). I feel good, but am only confused by the absence of telegrams from home. On July 1, I transferred money by mail to my mother, in order for her to telegraph me in Sevastopol about their arrival, but no telegrams. But I don't think that they will disappear. Sevastopol is a very good city. I am happy that the weather is overcast here, and I am not suffering from heat. If you would like to give me news, write to my next address at Abkhazia, Gudauta, Gogolevskaya street, Obolonkin House. I wish you the very best. Regards. D. Shostakovich.

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*Footnote: A painting.

**Footnote: Ancient Greek ruins in Sevastopol.

***Footnote: An unusually tall man.

‡Footnote: An artist.

Letter 14: 8 July 1929, Gudauta

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Today I went to Gudauta, and I must inform you on this subject, as if you suddenly decide to write me a letter, you will know where to write to. I spent two days in Sevastopol. On the 3rd morning, I left for Sukhum. The ticket from Sevastopol to Sukhum cost 26 rubles- very cheap for a 1st-class price. It's a very comfortable cabin, with a chessboard, radio, and other such cultured amusements. The greatest advantage that the *Lenin* has is a complete lack of pitching and tossing, and very long stops. During these stops, while I was in a state of wakefulness, I got out and studied the area. In this way, I was in Yalta. I managed to see Chekhov's dacha, and also his sister, M. P. Chekhova. Yalta is a wonderful place. Next I will study the area of Novosibirsk, the mother of the cement industry. This little city is unremarkable, with the exception of a few new buildings, which stand out strongly against the background of small houses. The heat there is incredible. In Novosibirsk, the steamer stayed for 10 hours. I went to the movie theatre and saw "The Man and Livery." I didn't get the debate "Theatre and modernity." The speaker was Zel Shteiman, who I was familiar with from the Evening

"Krasnaya Gazeta," and the "famous" critic, Comrade Gorbachev*. After, I went down to Tuapse and Sochi. I saw no attractions there. In Sukhum I saw a monkey nursery. In Gudauta, there are no attractions, except for the sea, sun, and mountains. A wonderful place. There are no people there at all. The beaches are completely empty; now I am enjoying the peace. I don't need to go anywhere for now. If you would like to go somewhere, go to Gudauta. Telegraph me; I will look for your room. I would be terribly happy if we could go back together. By the way, in the last letter, I forgot to send you greetings from Meyerhold. My meeting with him was quite interesting. Next time, I'll write about it to you.

I wish you all sorts of blessings.

Write. Don't forget.

D. Shostakovich

P.S. Abkhazia. Gudauta. There is no need to write Obolonkin's house, etc., because mail is not delivered to houses. You have to go to the post office to get the letters. DS.

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*Footnote: Critic Georgi Efimovich Gorbachev.

Letter 15: 18 July 1929, Gudauta

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I received your letter today. "I read it with pleasure*". I was shocked by Katunsky's death. (O. K. Katunsky, whom Shost worked with). From whom shall I now ask for a fee? I was counting on him. A process with his heirs will have to be started.

On Meyerhold- On the day I left Leningrad, I received his letter with the answers to my questions. Besides, he asked me if I could visit him at his dacha, if I will be in Moscow. He lives in Saltykovka, in the dacha of K. and T. Esenin, probably as a relative. The other day, when I arrived in Moscow, I visited him. It took about 40 minutes to reach Moscow. It is a very good dacha.

First, he asked me this- "Well, what's going on with Ivan Ivanovich?"

Me- Nothing much (?); he lives at home.

Meyerhold- He's probably angry with me, isn't he?

Me- It doesn't seem like that to me. He hasn't said that to me.

Meyerhold- What?

Me- It doesn't seem like that to me. He hasn't said that to me.

Meyerhold- What didn't he say?

Me- That he's angry.

Meyerhold- And he probably thought that I'm not at all like what I am. Me- Hmm...

Meyerhold: He probably thought that I was, you know, somebody... (He gestured.)

Me: Exactly, exactly.

Meyerhold: Zinochka, Zinochka! Dima here says that Ivan Ivanovich didn't think that way of me until he met me.

Z. Raikh: And what did he think?

Me: He thought that Vsevelod Emilievich, you know, (I gesture) turned out to be not at all like he thought.

Meyerhold: You see, Zina! If he met me earlier, then he would have known exactly what to think of me! And? Me: He now thinks that he should have.

M+R: (gesturing together): And what does he think?

Me: He thinks that, well, so to say, earlier that Vsevelod Emilievich was like this, but isn't like that at all. M+R: And which one is it?

Me: That you're not like that at all, not like he imagined you before. Meyerhold: Here, I said that! Ivan Ivanovich is a wonderful person!

Raikh: Ivan Ivanovich is a wonderful person (to me, contritely-) but there's something strange here- he is such a knowledgeable and empathetic person, but he doesn't love Esenin.

Me: But it can't be!

M+R: (sadly) Yes, yes. Silence. Esenin's spirit flutters invisibly. (had to look this up; it looks weird tho)

Meyerhold (shaking off heavy thoughts): So he rarely thought about me at all... (etc) In our next meaningful conversation, it was like the one above, only longer. After this conversation, I was given a question- why do you refuse to work with him at the theatre? I said that I don't know.

Meyerhold- He probably is mad at me, isn't he?

Me: No. For what reason would he be mad at you? Meyerhold: I also think that it's not worth it for him to be mad at me. And what do you think?

Me: Not worth it.

Meyerhold: Please send him my greetings. Me: Okay.

At lunch, Meyerhold cheered up and poured out fireworks of wit. Before dinner, we prepared ice cream. The film director Nesterov and the assistant director Kokin turned it. Before lunch, Kokin went out for a minute. Meyerhold noticed- "Since Kokin turns the ice cream, it is impossible to eat it." "Why?" asked a boy named Tulya. "Because he sweats, and his sweat will drip into the ice cream. Therefore, it is not edible." (seriously wtf am I reading) Then, we ate soup. Silence. For this reason, Vsevolod Emilievich looked at Tulya and gave the following witticism- "We will now call Tulya something different every day. Today "Tulya," then "Kaluga," then "Vyatka," "Moscow," "Penza," "Odesa.*" An explosion of laughter followed. The assistant director laughed loudly. Finally, he gave us the ice cream.

Tulya, a boy intelligent beyond his years, asked: "Who made the ice cream?"

His mother: "Shh. Shh."

Me: Kokin made it.

His mother (nervously looking at me): "Shh, shh!"

Tulya (brightly): Well, you can't eat the ice cream.

His mother (confused): Shut up, Tulya.

Me (to Tulya): And why?

(His mother gave an angry look in my direction.)

Tulya (again, brightly): Because he sweats, and he sweat in the ice cream.

There was now the silence of the grave.

Tulya's mother hissed something angrily to her son, causing him to badly spoil the air (Bear's disease†). She had to remove Tulya from the table to clear the atmosphere, which was heavily condensed in every sense. The ice cream was eaten in silence. After lunch, Zinaida Raikh allowed Tulya's mother to take her son to the bathroom. I

overheard this:

Tulya's mother: "You know, he's always like this. If you say something sternly to him, he will soil his pants. This is a straight case for Freud, Krafft-Ebing, and Doctor Jakobson." After I left, Meyerhold again asked me to send you his greetings.

My life is good. I have a lot of work. Despite this, I get rest. I tanned well (comparatively; I typically sunburn badly). I bathe and learned how to swim. I shaved my head, which is why I look like a hard labourer. There was one amusing adventure of the erotic sort, but other than that, everything is going smoothly. I feel peaceful. Every day, I take quinine for malaria. This form of prevention was advised to me by knowledgeable people. On the 28th, I leave here. First, to Batum on a steamer. In Batum, I will stay 2-3 days. Then to Tiflis by train. Maybe I will meet Vladimir Vladimirovich++. I don't approve of his physical tastes. As for his "internal content," I don't know. If you know his address, tell me. Upon arrival in Tiflis, I will greet him by kissing him three times. What a beautiful life!

From Tiflis, I will take the Georgian military road to Vladikavkaz. Then to Pyatigorsk, and then from Pyatigorsk to Moscow by airplane. I ask you to be relatively silent about the airplane. If you tell my mother, she will go mad with fear. From Moscow, I will probably travel to Leningrad by foot, as I am afraid I won't have enough money. Although it should be enough, I will be able to rationalise my expenses. Your letter is dated 13th July. Today is the 18th. I will be pleased if you write to me in Tiflis as soon as possible, or else your letter probably won't make it there. I went to the Cafe Kaplan one time. A beautiful cafe. They sent me a letter from Firs Shishigan from Leningrad. 14 enormous pages; very boorish. I will show you just in case. In the middle, he asks me "and nobody else" to direct the true path of "Mitka Zhiryanov". I unfortunately don't know who "Mitka" is. If you also know him, then direct him to (Shishigan) just in case. Well, I wish you all the best. I will wait for news from you in Tiflis.

Your D. Shostakovich.

P.S. - Send my regards to Boris Mikhailovich and Gauk, whom I recently sent a letter to asking to conduct my new "First Symphony."

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* Footnote: A reference to Nicholas II's famous signature.

**Footnote:

***Translation note: "Tulya" is a city in Russia; the joke is since he shares the name with a city, then he should be called a different city each day.

† "Bear's disease" here is a Russian euphemism for irritable bowel syndrome.

†† Vladimir Vladimirovich Dmitriev, theatre artist.

Letter 16: 7 August 1929, Tikhoretsk

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Fate, so to say, plays with people. Did I think I would find myself in the city of Tikhoretsk? No, I didn't think so. And yet I found myself here...! And how? I will tell you in order. On 3 August in Pyatigorsk, I bought a ticket for the airplane "Ukripovitrushlyakha", which took off on 6 August. I paid 54 rubles and boasted that, so to say, I was flying. The airplane should have taken off from Mineralnikh Vod** at 3 AM, and I took the last train there. At 2 AM, I went from the train station to the airport. It was dark. Angry dogs were grabbing at the calves of my legs; terrified, I returned to the train station. I talked to a very kind Red Army soldier, who was standing by on orders. I asked him, "how do I get to the airport?"

He, knowing that I was a passenger, recommended that I go at 4-5 in the morning, when it would be brighter outside. "They won't let you in at night. Anyone who comes closer than 100 steps will be shot!!!"

I got scared and made a telephone call. The phone was answered, and I was told that the airplane would take off between 6 and 7, instead of at 3. Without sleeping for a minute, I waited until dawn to go to the airport. In my soul, I was afraid that my valuable life would be cut short. I arrived at the airport, but nobody was there. Not a sentry, not a watchman, nobody. There were only two planes. Between 2 and 3, someone arrived. I referred to him, and he said, "the plane takes off between 8 and 9," instead of at 3. I continue to wait.

Then, there is a very handsome stationmaster. He asks me, after wishing me good morning, "are you an airplane passenger flying to Sochi?" I answer no; I'm flying to Moscow. "To Moscow," he says, sincerely impressed. "To Moscow. Here's an opportunity." He scratched the back of his head with a pen, which made the latter somewhat dirty.

Seeing my confusion, he said, "You see, I am only allowed to sell tickets to Sochi, and you bought a ticket to Moscow."

I said, "what do I do?"

"Here's what. Fly to Tikhoretsk, and there Comrade Gusev will make arrangements."

"And who is Comrade Gusev?"

"He is at the Tikhoretsk station. I'll send him a note."

He wrote on the note, and exactly at 11 o'clock (instead of at 3 AM), I flew. I did not feel nauseous, and the plane did not rock. It was very good; I only wanted very much to sleep. I flew to Tikhoretsk. When I arrived, Comrade Gusev was absent. From the airport, I went into the city. I walked for five miles under the scorching sun. Afterwards, I went back into the airport and handed Comrade Gusev the note. He read it, smiled charmingly and said, "you have to spend the night in Tikhoretsk, and tomorrow, you can fly at 5 in the morning."

"And is it probable that I will fly?"

He said, "well, if I say so, then probably. In fact, if I wasn't sure, then I wouldn't have said anything."

I apologised and cheered up. At this time, the plane from Moscow brought three passengers traveling to Sochi. In view of that, at a later time, the plane would no longer fly, and these passengers were also supposed to spend the night in Tikhoretsk. Comrade Gusev arranged for us to spend the night. He arranged for me and one other to stay with a cab driver by the name of Moroz; the other two with someone by the name of Oswald***. We slept.

The other day, we went to the airport. I will be brief. There were no seats on the airplane, and Comrade Gusev offered for USOA to cover the expenses for me to go by train, as there was no hope of me going by plane. I agreed, although this felt equal to dying. We arrived at the train station. Comrade Gusev gave me 29 rubles and 10 kopeks and showed us the departure stations. He promised to do whatever it takes. "If there are places, then you'll go- fact." Now, it is 11. The train left at 5 PM (note- he says 17; russia uses both the 12 and 24 hour clock). This means I waited for six hours. I sit and philosophise, I take a chance to go to the bathroom... and at the entrance was stopped by a powerful "Where?!"

I said, "to the bathroom, to pee."

"You are forbidden!!!"

I went back. Seeing the confusion on my face, the guard relented and said the toilet wasn't working. "It doesn't make me feel any better," as N. A. Malko jokes, when he is told that syphilis is not shameful; just a misfortune. When I finish the letter, I'll go look for the toilet. I have little hope of leaving Tikhoretsk. I am in horror and literally crying. My dear Ivan Ivanovich, do not tell my mother that I'm in Tikhoretsk. I'm terrified. If I can't get a ticket, I'll go back to the cabman. What a nightmare! How are you doing? I'm feeling bad.

Upon arrival in Leningrad, if this will ever happen, I will sit at the table and write two complaints to USOA for bullying me. One for the complaints office of the N.K.R.K.I.U.C.C.P. + and the other for the governing body of USOA. You can help me

write these complaints. In fact, this is an unheard-of mockery. I'm such a fool in the head++ for going along with this, and I can hardly restrain myself from writing, "and a lump jumped up from the nose of the Algerian Bey."++

My whole trip has been bungled, and it is all the fault of the USOA! I just want to sleep. In three nights, I slept four hours. I want to eat, but I am seized with horror at the sight of plump cockroaches floating in the borscht, which they serve in Tikhoretsk. I sit and philosophise. The whole station was full of passengers wishing they could leave, and they couldn't. No tickets! None! They spend the night in the station and do not lose hope, so I will also hope. How terrible! I can't help myself but cry. A little girl with insane eyes (about 7-8 years old) pokes me with a twig and laughs outrageously. She is here with her mother for five days. I hope to leave in 5. There's that. As to how you can receive this letter, go to the powerful people and ask them to do something regarding my departure from Tikhoretsk. I can be found at the address of "Tikhoretsk, remaining post." I don't know which province or oblast. Do it; I kindly beg you. Basically, my suffering is strong right now.

I kiss you hard,

Your D. Shostakovich.

-

*Translator's note: note- Comes from the "Ukrainian Society of Airlines." Translated for the rest of the letter as USOA.

**Translator's note: this literally means "mineral water," but in context, appears to be the name of a place.

*** Footnote: A relative of Osi Oswald; this is a play on the name of a German actress.

+ Translator's note: People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorates of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

++ Translator's note- the quotes "fool in the head" and "lump jumped up... Algerian bey" are references to Gogol's "Inspector General" and "Diary of a Madman," in which the main character gradually goes insane. Shostakovich is sarcastically implying that he, too, is losing his mind.

Letter 17: 8 February 1930, Rostov-on-Don

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I have a big request for you. If you don't have work to do, please take my symphony (the First) from Pashenko*. When you have it in your hands, call my mom or Zoya and tell them that I am asking them to send my First Symphony to Moscow at this address: Moscow, center, Neglinni street, Muziksektor Gozidat. When I was in Moscow, they asked me to do this. My mother or Zoya will come for the symphony. You are only required to receive the symphony in your hands. I will be very

grateful to you if you can do this. All the best. Write to me on occasion. P.S. It is warm here. It is raining. Spring.

*Note: A composer

Letter 18

From the translator: *The following link is an audio reading of an English translation of this letter by my acquaintance, researcher Maya Garcia. I have not translated this letter myself, but will transcribe Garcia's translation once time permits.*

<https://soundcloud.com/ghostakovich/shostakovich-sollertinsky-letter-18-a-young-peoples-committee-for-the-revitalization-of-ballet>

Letter 19: 9 July 1930, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Thank you for your postcard from Tuapse, and excuse me for only now getting around to answering. To be honest, there is nothing much to write about. Although at least, you're getting impressions. And as for me? The only impression I'm getting is meeting A.V. Gauk yesterday. He came to visit me, and we drank champagne. Then we went to see the directors of "The Golden Age," Vainonen and Kaplan (and drank beer). After seeing them off, we went to Gauk's. The three of us drank champagne. After such an eventful afternoon, I threw up that night. Here is the most interesting thing that happened with me. True, I made extra sure this time that Gauk is no Spinoza, but is overall a good guy. But it is generally worth it to make sure that what is black is black, and what is white is white. Write to me if Oblonkin, Kara-Murza, and Kara-Murza-Oblonkina made good arrangements for you*. I think that on the 20th, I will go to Baku, then to Tiflis and then to Odesa. But this plan is still a work in progress. Generally, I yearn for a lost sense of happiness in life. I recently visited the ex-leader of Russian music, B. V. Asafiev. We both cried; everything is sad. I don't see the point in life at all, having no happiness in it. Such is the nature of my decadent moods. I will not bother you with my writing. If there is a hunt, write to me. My greetings to your wife. Your D. Shostakovich. P.S. Did you receive money?

-

Footnote: Kara-Murza-Oblonkina maintained the house where Shostakovich was staying.

Letter 20: July 13, 1930, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Thank you for your little postcards. I was not dissatisfied with them (so to say, I recommended Gudauta, and god knows how that turned out). On the 15th, I went to Odesa. I will be there for a long time. Write to me there, about how

you live, and mainly if you received money, which I telegraphed to you to the address "Gudauta, general delivery?" You didn't mention your postcard, and I was worried that they didn't get it. Please inform them in Odesa. If you decide to return to Odesa, you will bring me great joy. I am bored without you. I'm generally bored and sad. Send my greetings to Vera (I don't know her patronymic).

I kiss you hard,

Your D. Shostakovich.

Address- Odesa, general delivery.

Letter 21: 17 July, Odesa, 1930

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Today I arrived in Odesa. I will live here for a long time. It's a beautiful city. If on your way back, you stop by Odesa, you won't regret it. I went to the post office today, I thought, to receive news from you. None showed up; it is too early. Anyway, write to Odesa, general delivery. Summer in Odesa is much more attractive than autumn or winter. My mood even got a little better. My dear friend, I swallowed a lot of dust, so much so that I still cough, although I have only been in Odesa for about 12 hours already. Tomorrow or the day after, the wonderful Bleiman* will arrive (n). Today I met Utesov** , and we had a conversation about his directing career. He complains that his voice is disappearing, and on this occasion, he decides to become a director. He is correct. I kiss you. D. Shostakovich.

-

Footnote: A screenwriter or film critic.

Footnote: Stage artist.

Letter 22: 19 July 1930, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I am sitting in my room and drinking Tsinandali wine to your health, while I shall inform you of mine. I feel disgusting. It seems to me that you are also partly to blame for my difficult experiences*.

Maybe I'm wrong. When we meet in Leningrad, let's discuss the question- I make the reservation that whether it is your fault is objective, and that I am convinced that you did not mean to harm me. It's funny to even think that. I am a pretty restless person. Therefore, I ask you, if you aren't too lazy to send me a telegram, in which you will let me know if you received the money I sent to the address: "Abkhazia, Gudauta, general mail." The fact is, that I already received your postcard from Leningrad, which you don't mention anything about money in. I got worried. So, telegraph me at this address: "Odesa, general mail," about this situation. I live wonderfully here, and work a lot. In fact, isn't it true that "wonderful" for the artist means constant, uninterrupted work? True, I'm already sick of this work, and I take advantage of the proximity of "Ukrintrest***", perhaps more than I should... In Odesa, there is a famous neurasthenic,

L. O. Utvesov, and his gifted poet companion, I. L. Selvinsky. I have lunch with Utvesov every day. God be with them, the neurasthenics. Especially those like Utvesov. With one eye, he breeds neurasthenia, and with the other, lets out emotional sobs, yet this gives rise to great sympathy in me. In terms of personality, he reminds me of Meyerhold, but without Meyerhold's dirty tricks. Today, I listened to his "tea jazz." All of these groups are touring now in Odesa.

I am not especially delighted by "tea-jazz." True, they play well- Skomorovsky (trumpet player) somehow launches trills, the drummer will knock out the intricate figures, but... (The damned one flashes before my eyes... Shtm! Shtm! You don't understand any of this. You all are dry as crackers. shtm... shtm...) Because of the invisible presence of N.A. Malko, I liked it less. I can just see how he would go to Utvesov's dressing room and tell the most remarkable facts from his (that is, Malko's biography). But looking at tea-jazz, Utesov is definitely the biggest artist in the USSR, except, of course, Kostomolotzk***, whom Malko considers a genius. I am extremely glad that I have made his acquaintance (Utesov, not Kostomolotzk). Write to me, about how long you intend to stay in Gudauta. If I soon succeed at finishing my business in Odesa, I would wave to you in Gudauta. We would have met there, chatted, reminisced about the old days- you look away, and suddenly, time passes. Greetings to your wife.

I kiss you,

D. Shostakovich.

Odesa, general mail.

-

*Footnote: It is unknown what Shostakovich means here.

**Translator's note: Unsure; possibly a Ukrainian organisation.

***Footnote: Actor, dancer, and graphic artist.

Letter 23: 26 July 1930, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I was very pleased to receive your letter from Gudauta. My mother sent it to me. I've been living here for 10 days already. "I lived a decade and praised God*." If I will spend any longer here, I don't know. If on August 1, Derzhopera** pays me a bribe, then perhaps I will go somewhere. My life is wonderful here, without prospects. I am very glad that you appreciate the wit of Comrade Kirshon (dramaturge). He speaks beautifully. That's it "behind shades- against the wall"****. The layman Gauk went from Leningrad to Baku on 13th July. That's all I have to say. In Odesa, I met more acquaintances. On the first day, Utesov. Then more followed: S.E. Radlov, I.V. Shegoleva, Bleiman, Trauberg's wife, tea-jazz, B.A. Ilyich, Faier, the director of the Bolshoi theatre, and assistant director Radlov were my acquaintances today. He said he was going to New Athos. I asked him to send you my greetings, if he meets you. Ilyich also honoured me with a visit. In addition, many Odesan acquaintances were made,

such as the composer Femelidi and many others. In the following days, I met some Ukrainian composers. Yesterday, I listened to a symphonic concert of works by them. Besides Femelidi, (who can complete the glorious galaxy of Persinov and others†, it was very bad. Obviously, Lyatoshinsky was bad. After the concert, I went to a lecture by Dankevich on Ukrainian musical culture. Throughout the whole lecture, I only understood one word: "Shostakovich." My neighbour kindly translated for me that this word was used in an unflattering context.

Utesov introduced me to the circus director, Comrade Dankman. I found out the news that this comrade was a non-party comrade. Nevertheless, he makes quite a strong impression. A sort of surviving Ekskuzovich++ on an all-Union scale. Dankman really loves children. Sometimes, when he sees a little boy or girl, his whole soul will tremble. He gives them horses and acrobatics. A very handsome person, and only slightly small in stature, a tiny bit shorter than the violinist Sher. He was surrounded by a whole staff of magnificent circus employees. So, you've decided to abolish your family life?‡ Well, well. We are free birds. How will your mother in law, the mother of your wife, react to this? How long do you intend to live in Gudauta? It is a good place, but boring. I doubt the spectacle of watching the frogs there will quench your passion for decades, maybe for an hour at maximum. Not much. In general, it is insanely boring. I read a novel by Bruno Yassenko there, "I am Burning Paris." I read it and thought this was Ehrenburg's work, but it turned out to be Yassenko's. I didn't read anything else. How long do you intend to live in Abkhazia? Write to me.

Your D. Shostakovich.

PS. Say hello to your wife for me.

-

*Translator's note: Possibly a quotation.

**Footnote: Odesa worker's theatre of opera and ballet.

***Translator's note: Unsure of what this means; possibly a proverb or quotation.

†Footnote: A hint at the well-known story of how Sollertinsky, who did not like Scriabin's music, in one of his lectures said approximately the following: "Among the brilliant pleiad of composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries are Arensky, Cherepnin, Persianinov, Zlatovratsky and others—Skriabin occupied, if not first, then far from last place." In this list, along with real composers - Arensky and Cherepnin - there was a minor writer Zlatovratsky, as well as a fictitious person - Persianinov.

++Footnote: A musical and public figure.

‡Historical note: Refers to Sollertinsky's divorce to his wife Vera.

Letter 24: 2 August 1930, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I was very pleased that you wrote a letter to me from Gudauta. I am in constant melancholy, and therefore, your letters lifted my spirits. They gave me cheerful energy, so to speak. Life isn't good nor bad, but okay. I travelled to Kyiv for two days, where I met the brother of Y.C. Nikolski, E.D. Vigilev*. They have different fathers, but the same mother. Vigilev staged "The Golden Age." He really looks like his brother, but the difference between them is that his brother gravitated towards music, while he gravitated towards dance. It is very funny to imagine Yuri Sergeevich as a dance teacher or ballet master, but I didn't have to imagine; I saw it myself. Vigilev, amusingly, looks just like his only brother. I read with pleasure about the Gudauta TRAM. But all this makes me wary: is this not mimicry of a class enemy? The social composition of the Gudauta TRAM leaves much to be desired. Pharmacists and former priests will not make our proletariat art, only proletariat artists. The layman Gauk arrived in Odesa with Gerdt. I am more and more convinced that the tradesman is very far from Spinoza. I met him twice, then went to Kyiv. I returned to Odesa yesterday, and sent a postcard to inform him of this. I feel a strong boredom here. The company of Bleiman and the wife of my friend L. Trauberg does not please me. Bleiman is very boring; he stutters and is deaf. Trauberg's wife pretends to be a lovely creature and is advanced at this; Bleiman runs her errands for her.

Maybe, after the warm embrace of his wife sometime, Trauberg will laugh at the enamoured Bleiman, but still will allow him to visit and borrow money. Not long ago, Bleiman told me that Trauberg owes him more than a thousand rubles. This is when Bleiman earns 300 rubles a month, and Trauberg 600. What?! Bleiman has a crystal-clear soul. So, you're liquidating your family life. Regards. Still, I envy you. You have a rich personal life, and mine, generally, is shit. I'm going as soon as the Odesan Dzhersopera pays me money, and then, I'm leaving Odesa. To where, I don't know; I'm still looking. Be healthy, happy, and successful. I will telegraph you where to write to. And write to me about what you are doing in Leningrad.

Your D. Shostakovich.

Footnotes: Composer and ballet master, respectively.

Letter 25: 5 August 1930, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, In 10 days, I'm going to Batum. If you think of writing to me, write to "Batum, general post." I am strongly tired of Odesa. The only thing that brings me joy is the presence of the tradesman Gauk. He is a very charming person. Every

day, I go swimming with him. So, that's that. I kiss you hard. Send greetings to our mutual friends (at your discretion). D. Shostakovich.

Letter 26: 8 August 1930, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I'm writing to you about a matter of extreme importance. I know that you are generally a quite talkative person, and therefore I am not only asking you, but begging you, not to tell anyone about this letter. So, I'll begin to briefly talk about what's going on. On the evening of the 6th of August, after dinner with Gauk, I went to stay at the London hotel. I wanted something to drink, so I went to a restaurant and sat at a table, where Faier (a director from Moscow) and Ermolaev (a ballet director from Leningrad) ordered a Nazvan* and began to drink. After a while, two girls entered the restaurant, and one gave me a look. She was pretty. I winked at her, and I thought that this ended the fleeting flirtation. After five minutes, the girl went over to me and began this conversation:

Her: Excuse me, is your last name Shostakovich?

Me, internally flattered: Yes, that's me.

Her: My friend and I made a bet; she said it wasn't you, and I said that it was.

What should she give me for losing the bet?

Me: Ask to be seated at our table.

Ermolaev and Faier were practically drooling. After a light conversation consisting of, "ah, that's awkward," her friend approached me. They sat down and we carried an easy, relaxed conversation. I found out that her name was Rosalia Mikhailovna Baumshtein, and her friend was Zinaida Efimovna (I don't remember her last name). We talked about modern literature, music, etc. I ended up paying for dinner and taking them home in a cab. It must be said that I felt Rosalia Mikhailovna's thigh under the table and discovered its virgin elasticity. In the cab, I felt it with might, and found she was a charming creature. Her friend delicately looked away. The other day, Rosalia Mikhailovna went with me, and after a minute, Gauk came, and we went swimming. She has a beautiful figure. I was very sorry to hear that she had to go to Batum with her friend that day, so we agreed to meet in Batum. "Ah, it will be fun to travel together." This whole idyll continued until their send-off to Batum, but they did not go. Rosalia Mikhailovna's friend was detained at the pier; I found out that she was a professional prostitute. But I felt an extraordinary love for Rosalia Mikhailovna (really). I was tearing at my hair, beat against the wall, and grabbed L. O. Vkusovich**, who was in Odesa and visited me yesterday. There was a knock at the door. Her friend came in. "I was already released; everything is in order. Now, we'll go to Batum together. Oh, how fun!" etc. I was terribly happy. The day before yesterday, I was with Gauk, and he began to "warn me" about "prostitutes, scoundrels, etc." He brought me to the point where I told the manager of the hotel about them and asked him to make sure that they were

not allowed to see me. The manager said that the prostitute and her friend were criminals, and told me nothing else. He didn't know anything. Late in the evening, I went to a restaurant and sat at a table. A waiter comes up to me, and I order a veal cutlet. He asks me, "one or two?" I'm surprised and ask, "are the cutlets so small that one is not enough?" He doesn't answer and leaves. I look across the room and see Rosalia Mikhailovna.

I was so hooked on her that I almost wept with delight and love. We began to talk. When the waiter returned, I demonstratively confirmed: one cutlet, one bottle, and one glass. She shrugged. Before that, in the morning, I went with her to the city garden, where we went to a secluded spot and kissed like mad. It seemed that love had visited me. But afterwards, at the historic pier, I decided to break up with her. It didn't work out (see line 10 on this page). She sadly asked why I changed my mind so drastically. I asked her to come meet me at 4:30 today. Exactly at this time, her friend informs me: "Rosochka is 20 minutes late." I found out that the hotel manager's orders were being carried out poorly. Then her friend went and said, "When Rosochka comes, send her downstairs to have lunch. She has not had lunch yet." I said, "okay." The next letter is a continuation.

-

* Translator's note: A town in Russia famous for its mineral water; I'm assuming the name of the town is used as a shorthand for the water itself or another beverage.

** Unknown

Letter 27: 16 August 1930, Gudauta

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I suddenly arrived at this place, where you spent your honeymoon. How I got here is not so secret, but more like an adventurous romance. You spent your honeymoon here, and I fled here from a honeymoon. In this letter, I will continue the story from my previous letter, which I will explain to you. Briefly speaking, I almost got married. In this, I was prompted by two circumstances- 1) her charming appearance and pleasantness, and 2) schismatic sentiments (in the words of Raskolnikov, the hero of "Crime and Punishment.").

It all ended in an escape from the steamship at Sukhum station at 3 AM, in a torrent of rain. I went to the registry office in Odesa, but forgot my documents at the hotel, to my surprise. I beg you to not tell anyone, including Gauk. The tradesman is only partially aware of the course of my adventures. He did not know about the registry and intent of marriage, and still does not know about it. I was outdoors at Sukhum from 3 to 8, in the pouring rain. All the hotels were overcrowded. In the morning, I took a bus to Oblonkina. I'm living in a room, which the actress Samarina occupied before me. I

feel wonderful. The only problem is a wasp sting on my buttocks. I survived, and I survive stoically. People here live "culturedly;" communication with them does not deliver me any pleasure or grief. This is water off a duck's back.* How are you doing? Here's some advice for you- Don't get married. Despite the fact that I'm now single, I'm now happy with it. When I return to Leningrad, I will tell you more about my adventures in Odesa. I kiss you and send regards. See you soon. D. Shostakovich.

P.S.- I won't stay here. Write to the address "Abkhazia, Gudauta, P.O. box no. 29, Oblonkina." D. SCH.

-
*Translator's note- the original text literally translates to "water off a goose," a similar idiom.

Letter 28: 17 September 1930, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Only now did I go to write to you- all this time there has been a lot of hassle and different issues. The season, in a word, has begun. Lots of "work." I sat down to work on the action movie "Alone." The movie is shit, and the music also. Despite this, externally I live well. I even met a girl. Besides her, there is L. Vkusovich, a rather nasty old hag. It shows too frankly that her body yearns for affection, and she is not averse to preying on a non-party specialist. I read "Working and Theatre." Malkov (musicologist) writes discussion articles, and Podolski poisons Piotrovsky**. Everything is okay. You lost the bet to me. Lyubinsky was not filmed. Here, they want to "sew" the cause of encouraging letunism* onto him. He sent an ad there, that the Mravinsky theatre needs musicians, and therefore, a competition was announced on this subject. Speaking of, there are many Odesan musicians who want to go there and try their strength. Find out if Armashevskaya*** lives with Vainonen. If not, try to take action when you return. She hurt my heart very much and kindled a fire last summer. Your D. Shostakovich.

-
*Note: "Letun"- refers to someone who often changed jobs.

**Footnote: refers to a critic who accused another of formalism

*** Footnote: A ballerina.

Letter 29: 26 September 1930, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, "I must say it straight"* how much your letter pleased me. As you know, I'm an old formalist, and I was mainly pleased with your letter's form, as opposed to the substance. The substance, "I must say straight," did not please me as much. I'm sorry about Zhakarka**. He had a kind soul. I'm sorry about Berggruen; as for Armashevskaya, your news didn't make me very happy. (Note- in an earlier footnote, it

was mentioned that Armashevskaya married Vainonen, a choreographer, in the late 20s; I'm guessing she was someone she liked at some point but rejected him?) I always remember Erbstein's poem and always apply his advice when I lie in bed with a woman, but there is no hope of lying with A. (note- Armashevskaya), and that is why I'm upset. It is true that in your letter, meetings with her are described in such a way that I laugh until colic in the stomach, but... through tears. Why don't I have horror books?*** That is, I "have" them, but I am becoming more and more convinced of your magical influence on the female sex.

I arrive in Leningrad on the 30th of September. I calculate that my train will arrive in the evening. On the first of October, I will be called up to the Red Army†. Arrange a visit between 2 and 3. So, my dear Ivan Ivanovich, Minkin++ told me only that there were no tickets for the 27th. Therefore, I will arrive on the 28th. All is sad; I am tired of Odesa. Here at least it is warm, but I dream of Leningrad, and not just of Leningrad, but also of you. I miss you. On the 30th, I will call you- a call between you and me. I can tell you some things about my adventures in Odesa. In general, I have a large reserve of optimism, which sustains my existence. If it wasn't for this circumstance, then.... I kiss you. Your D. Shostakovich.

-

* Footnote: A turn of phrase frequently used by party leaders at the time.

** Footnote: A theatre director who was removed from his post.

*** Translator's note: I was a bit confused by what he means here. He used the phrase "страшных книг," literally "scary books." I'm assuming that in this context, he jokingly says he doesn't read horror because he thinks his love life is "scary" enough? Another possible interpretation may be him jokingly stating that Sollertinsky's skill with women is supernatural.

† Footnote: During March 1931, DSCCH prepared certificates from the places of service for submission to the commissariat.

++Footnote: An unknown person.

Letter 30: 17 December 1930, Korosten

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Fate brought me to the city of Korosten. There is hope of getting out of here. The business is this- I went from Kyiv with a transfer, but my train was 4 hours late. That train, which I should have changed seats to, left on time. The next train, which I had to take from Kyiv, was late by 6 hours. Now it is nighttime. The train will come at 5 AM. I feel insignificant. There are so many people at the train station that I have to stand while writing a letter to you. So, I'm standing. It is a hectic time*. On the 25th, 26th, and 27th, "Alone" was being shot. On the 1st of January, 1931, I will have to give up "The Bolt"**. And now I have to stand. In Kyiv, I don't expect I'll have much fun. Quite the contrary, judging by the latest telegrams. Above all, I'm losing

courage, which I do not wish for you. I suppose you're sitting cozy and warm, while I'm standing here writing you a postcard. So, I finish. I wish you health. Maybe I'll get a ticket to leave for Kyiv. The line is huge. D. Shostakovich.

-
*Translator's note: Shostakovich uses the idiom "Время горячее," literally "hot time."

**Translator's note: I believe he means here that production will start on it.

Letter 31: 4 February 1931, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, The most vivid impression I had while in Moscow is this- Obedkov changed his last name to Obektov*. Everything else affects me less. I am living with Shebalin. The day after tomorrow, I will probably move to a hotel. I'll turn around, and now collapse. Maybe I will go to Sverdlovsk and Magnitogorsk. I will be in Moscow for 15 days. If you will come, telegraph me and stop by my room (if I have one). On the 10th, Maestro Nebolsin will perform a suite from the "Golden Mountains." Atovymán, Oborin, Shebalin, and Aleksandrov send their greetings to you. Melkikh* (composer and critic) also sends greetings. People are wonderful here. There are many opportunities to enjoy life. Now I will go with Oborin and Shebalin to the "gypsies"***. Write to me about your health, and if there's any chance that my dream will be within reach. D. Shostakovich. Address- Moscow, 19 Bolshoi Znamensky, road 13, apartment 1.

-
* Footnote: A characteristic phenomenon of that time was the replacement of dissonant surnames with a mandatory notification in the newspaper. "Obektov" also means "objects".

** Footnote: A composer and critic.

*** Historical note: Referring to a type of restaurant where live Romani music was performed. (While this word is largely considered pejorative in modern contexts, I have translated it as such for the sake of accuracy to the original text.)

Letter 32: 31 March 1931, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I hereby inform you that on the 3rd of May, 1931, I will be in Leningrad. I would like to see you on the same day. We can go to lunch. Let's sit down, drink, and have something to eat, and we can cheerfully pull our lifelines closer together. It is quite possible that my opera* will be performed at the Bolshoi theatre.

Everyone sends their greetings. Cheerfulness with its joyful, life-giving rays does not come from me. I'm in a bad mood. See you soon, Your D. Shostakovich.

-
Footnote: The Nose

Letter 33: 27 September 1931, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Now, after two hours have passed, I will depart on the ship "Crimea," which will take me to Sukhum, and then to Gudauta, wrapping up my three-day stay in Odesa. In general, I'm good. The day before yesterday, there was even good weather. Now, the sky is gloomy and the "gale" is quite strong. Not counting a thousand cinematographers, I also met the famous playwright-citizen Olesha. The day before yesterday, I went with him to the London hotel, and after three glasses of excellent vodka, a heart-to-heart conversation ensued. The playwright-citizen reported that in addition to the play ordered to him, he wrote plays "for himself." On the question of the themes of these plays, he answered with a tremor in his voice: "Art is catching fish in cloudy water," and didn't say much else. He drinks like a horse, and complains that it hurts him.

My second, but no less vivid, impression of Odesa was a conversation with an Odesan representative of the UAPM*. He was a very stupid, brisk bastard. I didn't find out his last name. I was introduced to him by a local musician. Yesterday morning, she called me on the telephone and expressed a desire to talk. I immediately felt my face take on a "smug" expression, like Keks'**.

I was disappointed when I found out that she came to convince me to switch to writing a mass song. "Think about it- such decadence... Tahiti Trot... light music... modernity..." poured out of her lovely mouth. I listened in admiration.

Keks woke up in me. "For this reason," I said, "life, so to speak, is beautiful."

I hugged her and tried to kiss her, and at that moment, felt a slap on my cheek. She shouted, "I'll be writing about this in Proletariat Music!" and left the room. I rubbed my cheek thoughtfully. By the way, she used the term "Sollertinsism". Traveling with me in the same compartment was a military man who also knew you. "A very excellent musicologist." Besides him, there were also two friends who asked their mother if you would come, and also had very good things to say about you. "The Golden Age" played the same role as Zavalishin's "Party Ticket"*** at the People's House. The director of the theatre left with the general. That is all I experienced in Odesa. I'm going to Sukhum together with Lipatov's squadron. He will live at the sanatorium in New Athos. Until then. I will write to you again from Gudauta. If you see "Hypothetically Murdered," write to me. The premiere is the 2nd. Don't forget. D. Shostakovich.

-

*Footnote: Ukrainian Association of Proletarian Musicians

** Footnote: Unidentified person

*** Footnote: Play about a communist's "political degradation in separation from the masses."

Letter 31: 1 October 1931, Gudauta

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Today I went to Gudauta. Everything is in place. The only bad thing is that it's cold here. It's raining and the wind is blowing. Today, I bought the (Tiflis) newspaper "Dawn of the East." I found an advertisement for a lecture by I. I. Ledagorov, "Our Musical Front." In Moscow, Ledorogov, and in Tiflis, Ledarogov*. I attached the cutting to this letter. I was at the kiosk "Union Press," and was happy to find the corresponding numbers for "Moscow Speaks"**. Consequently, on the 18th, I will acquire the next issue so you don't have to send me one. It is almost certain that I will be bored here. There are only the two Oblonkins here besides me. Both are from Moscow. One is an engineer; the other is an elderly lady. Yesterday in Sukhum, I shaved my hair, some of it having been stroked by some lovely ladies' hands. Because of this circumstance, my mug is the colour of Bordeaux red wine. Lipatov says that I looked like Gandhi. When I look in the mirror, my horror turns into a strong disgust. And in fact, it will take no less than four months to grow back. From this, I conclude that hair dye is not only for women, but also for men, if they so feel like they need it. Maria Nikodimovna*** saw me, gestured with her hands, and cheerfully said, laughing, "you look funny without hair!"

Vasiliy Grigorievich sends you his greetings. He is very grateful to you. Arnold is now going to Sukhum. "Burning through life," as V.G. Papiros put it; he is not here. I will have to quit smoking. When I went to Sevastopol (where there was a ship standing by), I met one of the "little ones," named Fere††. We rushed to each other and hugged and kissed one another. Then, I called him a lackey, opportunist, and a son of a bitch. I introduced Lipatov to him. "Dear putz," I said, "let me introduce you to this opportunist son of a bitch, the composer Fere."

"I didn't hear that," Lipatov said, with his characteristic wit.

"Mmm, eeh! You allow a lot to yourself," said Fere. "You yourself are a representative of modernity."

"And proud, proud of this," I said. This conversation with the "little ones" ended, because he was strongly offended and left with his companion, reminiscent of Zara Levinin or Persianinov. Undoubtedly, if not the historic letter to the editor, then at least we will sign our "extended article," which we will publish in Literaturnaya Gazeta about what Fere told me: "This will also be about formalism." In general, a charming chat. In

Sevastopol, I went to see the Panorama. It was brought to the highest pre-revolutionary AKHR +++ . It was simply charming and grand.

I want to go to Yalta. Except for vodka, I haven't found anything here. In Novosibirsk, Lipatov and I went for a stroll. In Tuapse, we had lunch on a raft. Very neat. We spent one day in Sukhum. It was neat, but the high cost of everything is astounding—twice as expensive than at the "European." If you did not see Nikita Borisov, then what is Gauk up to? Is he still smart and does not sign papers? (They were probably signed by Neuman.) Like Erbshtein, he is an enthusiast of the symphonies of Popov, Arnshtam, and Shaporin. I'm now far away from all these charming, but symphonic, people. How foolish to consider Fedor Lopukhov a saint. He held a grand banquet for his "departure" from the Mariinsky theatre. If you go to such a banquet, write about it. If you find out (as tactfully and diplomatically as possible) about the letter I received from the mountains and the feelings that have arisen in me, write also. In a word, write to me more and more often. In view of the weather, I think I will be bored. Don't tell anyone my address. In fact, there are many unresolved issues in Leningrad. Well, I kiss you hard. I'm waiting for your scribbles. D. Shostakovich.

-

* Footnote: The correct spelling of this critic's name is "Ledorogov." The footnote also states that it's odd that Shostakovich comments on how his name is spelled differently in the paper, rather than the thesis of the lecture itself, which was about politics and art.

** Footnote: A journal.

*** Footnote: Oblonkina.

+ Footnote: Oblonkin. "Arnold" may be a relative of the Oblonkins.

++ Footnote: A composer.

+++Footnote: Association of Artists of the Revolution.

Letter 36- 14 October 1931, Gudauta

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I have not had news from you for a long time. Write to me about how you're doing. If the next "Moscow Speaks" comes out, tell me. It is not here yet, it's not available, and I don't know if it will be. Issues only come out here if they include "pulp reading." If there is some sort of controversy in an issue of "Moscow Speaks," then send that, too, if it is not too difficult for you. Write to me about how you're doing, such as with the Philharmonic. The local member of the College of Defenders* very craftily stole a watch from me. I filed a complaint with the local police department. I'll tell you how it was stolen when I return to Leningrad. Ask Lev Arnshtam to write to me how "Golden Mountains" is coming along. I wrote to him, but he didn't answer. Write to my Gudauta address- P.O. box 29. It's so much better than a general post. I wish you the very best. Write to me. D. Shostakovich.

-

Footnote: Likely refers to one Jordan Jordanovich Kartozi.

Letter 37- 14 October 1931, Gudauta

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I confess, your letter did not bring me much pleasure. After all, I sent a registered mail letter to the editor of "Moscow Speaks," where there was the following phrase: "Comrade Smirnov raised the question in a clearly Bolshevik manner..." etc. That's something with the blessing of the old fart, Feliks*, who will write a "note from the editor" on my unpublished letter. I imagine I will read that "the Journal, Moscow Speaks" was the center of every class-hostile dispute; all sorts of Ivanchikovs**, Shostakoviches, and others rejoiced at the opportunity to slander Bely's genius work, "Proletariats of all nations, unite". Alas, the coffin is for me, the mirror is for me, etc. Already, Verkhotursky probably postponed his order of my "May First Symphony." Straight trouble. I am afraid that Popov and Shaporin have been left high and dry, and I'm dead meat. (note- he uses two idioms- "вылезут сухими из воды," literally, "have come out of the water," and "мне крышка," which literally means "I'm covered;" a close English equivalent is "I'm dead meat" or "I'm busted".) Well, maybe I'll stay afloat somehow. But however, I need to be ready for anything. I just dropped a postcard for you in the mailbox and picked up your letter. I will look forward to the next one. All the same, I didn't think that this mess with "Moscow Speaks" would end so badly for me, as if I hadn't been harassed enough (note- buddy you've got a big storm coming). And now it will happen again; there is material.

Did I think that, somewhere, fate would connect me with Florestan and his board? (note- "Florestan" refers to a collective pseudonym of many journalists) I will eagerly await the arrival of the Gudauta "pulp." Just in case, let me know when the next issue of "Moscow Speaks" comes out. It is not here yet. The October 11th newspaper is here, but not the newspaper. Maybe it won't come. So, if it doesn't come out and I don't receive it, send clippings. (note- a footnote says that Shost didn't know it at the time, but "Moscow Speaks" had been replaced by a different journal called "The USSR Speaks," which was pro-RAPM) Here, there is gorgeous weather. I swam and sunbathed every day for a few hours. Few things upset me in these circumstances, like the College of Defenders representative who stole my watch. Other than that, everything goes very well. As for Mosolov, don't see his opera productions†† I feel bad for him. His compositions are bad, even poisonous. The complete opposite of Bely, who composes badly, and is praised. Hell knows they set an example. All that remains is to hope for Shaporin, who maybe will put in a good word for me in front of the librettist of the opera "Marxists." I didn't travel far to New Athos. This place is exceptionally beautiful. I saw vacationers there from Lipatov and Kuibyshev. I would not live there, although I was prepared to. It's very high up from the sea, and tiresome to climb up here after swimming.

So, my dear Ivan Ivanovich, write to me more often. I am afraid that you will have unpleasant material to write about. But write anyway, and never hide things from me. If

you find out somehow about Sverdlovsky's address, write about it. I kiss you, D. Shostakovich.

-

* Footnote: Feliks Yakovlevich Kon, newspaper editor and communist politician.

** Footnote: Participant in "Moscow Speaks" discussion; possibly a pseudonym for one Vladimir Ivanovich Blum.

*** Footnote: V.A. Bely, composer. Shostakovich is referring to a song he wrote.

† Translator's note: Shostakovich uses two Russian idioms here: "вылезут сухими из воды," literally, "have come out of the water," and "мне крышка," literally, "I'm covered." I have translated them as equivalent English idioms.

†† Translator's note: Shostakovich uses an idiom here that's difficult to translate into English: "не видать (...) как своих ушей," literally, "not seen, as one's own ears." Here, he means the opera should not be seen, as one cannot see their own ears.

Letter 38- 19 October 1931, Gudauta)

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Thank you for your letter. Your letters always make me terribly joyful. I'm joyful to know that life in Leningrad boils with excitement, and joyful to know that Shaporin has become a Proletariat's Composer*. It's high time! I was even a little surprised that you were one of those who dubbed Shaporin a Proletariat's Composer. Is the author of "Songs of a coachman" a "Proletariat's Composer"? No, a thousand times no. In connection with the theme, my watch was stolen by a member of the College of Defenders, Jordan Jordanovich Kartozi, who is currently getting acquainted with the local interrogation department. Whether or not he's complying is not clear. On the 6th of October, my watch was stolen, and I still don't have it now. The interrogation department sent the whole case to court. Nothing about this brings me pleasure. I went "on vacation," but instead, I sit around all day- first in the police station, then with the head of the interrogation department, and then with the New Athos G.P.U.

The head of the department was very nice and treated my case with great participation. But it has been an hour so far- and I can't see them like one's ears (note-see earlier idiom). I had a premonition. I leave, I think, on the first of November, if the money comes in. I need to say, I may have "spent a lot of money on the road,"*** and sent a request for reinforcements on the way to Leningrad. I received a telegram from the All-Russian Drama, which confirmed that the money was sent by telegraph. I will wait. If it comes before the first, I will still live here anyway. Then I will go to Batum (on day 5), Tiflis (on days 8-9), and then to Leningrad. Consequently, upon receipt of this letter, if you find the time, scribble to the Batum general mail. I will be very glad to receive news from you. If, in an hour, my interrogation begins, don't write; I will recount all this in Leningrad.

Here, the month of October is marvellous. It doesn't even look like October at all. It's hot, the sun is out, etc. Congratulations on your elevation to the rank of allies^{***}, and also for your appointment as a representative of Lenisskustvo[†] at the Mariinsky theatre. This is a respected institution (Lenisskustvo), which lives like a smoking room (not to be confused with Kurilko) and thus makes me happy. ^{††} The cost of alcohol here is terribly high. A bottle of vodka is 8 (eight!) rubles.

During my stay here, I drank two bottles with the help of the venerable V.G. Oblonkin. Let me end my letter on this note. I kiss you and wish you every sort of pleasure. I will wait in Batum for your letter. Your D. Shostakovich. P.S.- Did you find Sverdlovsky's address, by any chance?

-

* Footnote: This title meant he would be ensured better conditions for creativity and performance.

** Footnote: Reference to Gogol's "Government Inspector."

*** Translator's note: Not sure what this means.

† Footnote: Leningrad theatre and performing arts organization under the Leningrad Department of the People's Commissariat of Education.

††Footnote: Pun on Kurilko Mikhail Ivanovich, theatre artist and architect; Shostakovich is making a play on the Russian word *курилке*, or "smoking room."

Letter 39: 25 October 1931, Gudauta

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Tomorrow, I'm going from Gudauta to Sukhum. I will stay for three days, then go to Batum, where I hope to receive news from you. I will go with Boris Aleksandrovich*. This young man has a very vulgar face. He knows that I am the author of the music for "New Babylon" (sic!) and is my traveling companion from Batum. Anything further about him, I don't know. I will live in Batum for five days, with a relative of the wife of Vladimir Vladimirovich Dmitriev. Then, I will go home. I will leave Gudauta with the Oblonkins, this time with an unpleasant experience (my watch being stolen).

I am no longer a member here. Maria Nikodimovna is a bitch, Arnold is vulgar and exceptionally stupid, and Vasily Gregorievich is a petty crook (he charged me three rubles for registration, when according to the law, I should have paid not three, but only two). All of this makes me angry.

I came up with a charade riddle. How to say it: "What?! Exhaust fumes. Roar. From Nevi. In order to become a leading comrade?"^{***} Think about it and guess the answer before my arrival.

The weather spoils little by little. It's raining and cold in the evening and at night. At times, my teeth chatter against each other and my blood chills in my veins. I dream of watching "Hypothetically Murdered," if I will be able to survive long enough to return.

Send Gauk, Gerdt, and others my greetings. Do not bow to Kilchevsky in the literal sense.

-

* Footnote: Unknown.

** Translator's footnote: This is a Russian style charade riddle, in which small words are the answers to a series of questions. When put together, the words all form a larger word, which is the main answer to the riddle. Back when I was first translating these letters, I could not figure out the answer to the riddle (it is not given in the book), and posted it to *r/Russian* on Reddit, where some Russian speakers attempted to solve it. Some possible answers are given [here](#).

*** Translator's note: A pun. "Кланяйся" literally means "bow," but figuratively means "send greetings to."

Letter 40: 28 October 1931, Batum

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I'm writing to you mainly because I want to communicate with you, at least by mail. I can't say that my travels in the Caucasus were fraught with good acquaintances. No. People are greyish, there's nothing outstanding, if you don't count one young man, who works in Leningrad as the commander of all the markets in the Smolinsky district. His main quality is that he pretends to be a big drinker, but after the 3rd glass, he gets completely drunk, then paws at all the women, no matter how old or how beautiful they are (for example, M. N. Oblonkina) and then falls asleep. Waking up immediately, he drinks again, and seems to me, strongly suffers from it. Pleased from drinking, he doesn't get, but enjoys, that everyone who surrounds him accepts him as a drunkard and playboy. I met him in Gudauta.

From Gudauta to Batum, we left on the ship "Pestel." There was one noteworthy RAPM event. The Red Army all sang the notorious song by Khait, "Higher, and higher, and hi-i-igher." But the most wonderful thing was in Poti. In Poti, the steamer stood for seven hours and I, with a Muscovite who looked like Monty Banks*, and another Muscovite, who looked like N. Y. Myakovsky, went to the city. We went into the dukhan (in the evening)** There, there was a big company of revelers- two women and fifteen men. I tried to pay attention to what their social statuses were, but I never guessed. There were young people in stylish costumes, starched collars, and stunning hats. There was one old sailor, who had a shaved actor's face. Besides, there were very modestly dressed young people with dirty clothes and torn trousers. A violinist (an unusually distant man) and pianist played various light works. The company sang along. Finally, the "orchestra" played "The young moon is shining". The sailor couldn't resist dancing with one of the women. The dance was a great success. Then, the actor's face lit up and he read Zoshchenko's story, "Aristocrats." This also won storms of success.

The sailor, catching his breath, went to the violinist and asked him to play "Over the seas, over the mountains, and far away" by Koval. I'm on guard. The violinist and the pianist couldn't find this piece. Then I (and I was already drunk) went up to the company and said, "I'm Chemberzhdy! *** My best friend is Koval, the author of this song, and I'm ready to play this song!" I sat at the piano and began to play. The chorus picked up. The enthusiasm was indescribable. "Monty Banks" and "Mayakovsky" had gone, but I sat down with the company. We drank to the health of Sarah Krylova, Kartoffel†, and others. I barely made it to the ship. I will tell you everything in detail when I see you. On the 1st of November, I'm going to Tiflis. It's fiery hell here; now I'm going swimming. I hope to be in Leningrad by the 10th. I really hope I'll hear from you via general mail by the 1st. Well, be healthy. I wish you any sort of luck. I kiss you hard, Your D. Shostakovich. I live here in the hotel "Yalta." This lousy room costs 13 (sic!) rubles.

-

* Footnote: An American actor.

** Translator's note. Not sure what this means. Dukhan is a city in Qatar and is not far from Georgia, but this word is not capitalized in the letters.

*** Footnote: RAPM composer

†Translator's note: The German word "Kartoffel" is written here. This word means "potato" and is also used in Russian, but is capitalized here, so it may be a name.

Letter 41: 30 October 1931, Batum

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, The day after tomorrow, I'm leaving for Tiflis. I have probably not received your "news" yet, because I arrived in Batum too early, because the Oblonkins, together with the thief Kartosiya, have begun to make me sick. I hereby inform you that I have finished the first act of my opera. In my free time, aside from swimming and eating, I orchestrate. Supplies are terribly expensive, enough to make one's hair stand straight on end. Less than 25 rubles a day is not enough. It's a rip-off. But on the other hand, I read with pleasure about the ordinance to reduce prices in commercial stores by 30%. Growing up.* Well, see you soon. I flatter myself with the hope that on the 1st, maybe I'll receive your "scribble." Your D. Shostakovich.

-

* Footnote: Shostakovich uses the word "Растем," lit. "growing up." According to the footnotes, a saying denoting social optimism at the time.

Letter 42: 13 December 1931, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Apparently, I'll be stuck in Moscow for a long time. I live here with Shebalin's "bright, strong man" (B. V. Asafiev). A fervent pessimism does not leave me, despite numerous meetings with such cheerful metropolitan people. The flow

of life is interesting here. For example, I received on the 20th a request to come to a meeting with the bureau of the composers' section of the All-Russian Drama, devoted to the analysis of M. F. Gneissin's statements on the articles about him in "Proletariat Music" under the title "I am a complicated person"*. An unhealthy interest pushes me to go. On the 11th, I went to a concert under V. Shirinsky (Mayaskovsky, Kabalevsky, and Shebalin). Mayaskovsky's "sinfonietta" was absolutely disgusting. This venerable pessimist shaved off his beard, hence why the mystery of his appearance crumbled to dust. Under the beard was the typical rough physiognomy of a footman, veiled with sorrow for humanity. After the sinfonietta was a piano concerto by Kabalevsky, which seemed to me to make L. N. Oborin look like Spinoza in comparison with your news of neoproletarian composers, not to mention Shebalin's second symphony, which I really liked. Tomorrow, I'm meeting with Aseev and doing a lot of other things. One time, I socialized with Mayakovsky and others after the concert. The second time, with the actors and Bakhtangov. Both times, I got very drunk, and as a result, thoughts came to mind similar to those of the nobleman Dmitri Bosov (nasty, disgusting)**.

In general, I'm bored. Write to this address: Moscow, 19 Znamensky Street 13 Apartment 1 to V.Y. Shebalin for me. Your D. Shostakovich

-

* Footnote: Refers to Gneissin's response to accusations of formalism.

** Footnote: A reference to Dostoevsky's "Brothers Karamazov;" Shostakovich is likely saying that after drinking, he felt like the character Dmitri Karamazov in a scene where he was "barefoot and almost naked".

Letter 43: 25 March 1932, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I just came home and was filled with a variety of sensations. Now it's the second hour of the night. A minute ago, I called Pasha Markov. This passionate admirer of mine does not waste time. So, today I saw the premiere of "Othello." A uniform disgrace. Besides Melik-Pashaev (who is very good, the best conductor in the USSR), there was nothing good in the show. I remember only a few moments from it, showing that the director (N.V. Smolich) is "artificial." 1) In the second act, at the front of the stage, when Iago begins to arouse suspicion in Othello, when Othello's servant brings him the manuscript. Othello affectionately pats the servant on the cheek and lies down on the sofa to read the manuscript. When Othello turns away from the servant, at last the servant shrugs and, with a luxurious real cambric handkerchief, wipes his cheek, and with obvious contempt on his face, shrugs his shoulders again. 2) Iago, from time to time, plays with a "cup-and-ball" toy, luckily catching the ball in time with the orchestra. 3) Othello strangles Desdemona extremely frictionally (in a word, "friction." You probably know what this word stands for). 4) After

Othello's suicide, he falls on top of Desdemona. 5) And many other things. I forgot the most important thing. In the second act, Othello, not believing Iago, throws the latter in a basin of water. The spray sends water onto the unexpected audience. After "Othello", I went to the "gypsies"* to listen to the music, and received the greatest pleasure. They danced, wrapped in dradedam** scarves. From under their skirts, one can see decorative yarn stockings and lace bloomers. They looked beautiful, and the repertoire was melancholy. I nearly cried from pleasure. Perhaps there were no more impressions being made; my mood was terrible, with thoughts of suicide. However, they're not that scary, these thoughts of suicide, because at least I think frequently. I met V.N. Chaivanov outside. At one point, he completely vanished. He read an essay to the members of Mosraznepromshveiartel***, but underestimated them and was removed. I saw B. B. Krasin, and many others. Fans of the critical assimilation of the classical legacy of "Othello" are dissatisfied. Lovers of "clean" art are not quite satisfied, either. I am outraged and reported this to N.V. Smolich, to which he replied: "I hear from this." And this is true. Tomorrow, I will show him my opera (note- Lady Macbeth). I also want to show Malik-Pashaev. If you have something to write, then write to this address- Moscow, Metropol, no. 215. There are rumors that tomorrow, Kanin will arrive. He will probably have to be given a room.

I kiss you,
D. Shostakovich.

-

*Translator's note: See earlier.

** Translator's note: A kind of cloth.

*** Footnote: A fictitious organization.

Letter 44: 10 August 1932, Gaspra*

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Due to the lack of envelopes, I have to write you a postcard. Today, I went to find envelopes, and if I find them, I will write a more long and detailed letter to you. We live well, in a good room, with quite adequate beds, but the toilets are even worse than the Oblonkins'. They feed us well. From time to time, collective farmers come to the sanatorium and, after giving a brief analysis of the international situation, ask vacationers to help them clean tobacco because the sun is very strong and, as the posters say, "the collective farm is alarming." Vacationers, with rare enthusiasm, all rush out to the fields and clean up the tobacco, for the latter is exported, and in return, we get tractors and combines, necessary parts for blooming... I go swimming. P.A. Markov lives here, S.E. and A.D. Radlov*, Comrade Kaziko***, Jakobson, Slavyadinov (at the Khasta Aga sanatorium), and many other wonderful people of our time. I kiss you hard. Nina sends greetings. Write to my Crimea address- Koreiz, Sanatorium KSU "Gaspra." D.SCH. Don't give anyone my address.

* Footnote: Shostakovich and Nina Varzar registered their marriage, and they traveled to Gaspra together.

** Footnote: Poetess and translator, and her husband.

*** Footnote: Actress

Letter 45: 16 August 1932, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Today I decided not to go swimming, as I was busy writing your letter. To organize this, I think I'll divide the whole plot into the following milestones:

- 1) The trip on the train
- 2) Spending a day in Sevastopol
- 3) From Sevastopol to Gaspra
- 4) Gaspra.

A subdivision into four parts: a) The inhabitants, b) The food*, c) Personal life in a team d) The bathroom, e) Other.

So, at .40 on some day, I go to Crimea. The other morning when we arrived in Moscow, we found out that the train in Moscow wouldn't leave for eight hours, so we decided to "beat" these eight hours. First, we went to the Cafe Metropol, where I drank coffee, and Nina drank hot chocolate with "stoba"*** and a pie. We weren't in any hurry, so we went to the All-Russian Drama and met Atovmyan, who is cheerful and fresh. Then, I met with Sashetka Ostretsov. From his conversation with Atovmyan, I carried the following sad impression. Two people as wonderful as Atovmyan and Sashetka, were quarreling. The role of the "goose"**** was played by Sashetka's doubt of Atovmyan's "lines." No matter how sadly, the decorators of our time, Atovmyan and Sashetka, quarreled.

After some time, I met with Mosolov, and afterwards, everyone except Sashetka went to the shop. Aside from the aforementioned All-Russian Drama artists, I met Derzhanovsky (suddenly), Melkikh (in the same position), and Pikkel. The latter reported to me that he was offered the post of director of the State Theatre of Leningrad, but refused, because he was afraid that he could be attacked. "I, like you, are famous, and love experimenting," he said thoughtfully. In the shop, Mosolov got piss drunk. But God gave him health; at the Kursk train station, he came to see us off and brought a bottle of pre-revolution cognac for the road, which was strong enough to support me all the way to Sevastopol. Aside from Mosolov, Atovmyan and Sashetka saw us off. We moved on, happy in everything.

Together with us in the compartment were two movie actresses. The surnames of great film directors flew as they talked without end. And they gave me a compliment. "Your song is so beautiful!"

"Which one?" I asked.

"The one in "Golden Mountains," they said. "It's so pretty and melodious."
"Hmm," I said.

Aside from that, there was a conversation about money, and how to make sure it doesn't go to waste. One of them sewed money into her bra; the other sewed money into her bloomers. I expressed doubt as to the effectiveness of such a method of storing money. "Judge for yourself," I said, "but if you meet, for example, a young man who you think is so pleasant that he makes you want to take off your bloomers, instead of taking you, he'll take your bloomers and run away."

"Everything is provided for," said the film actress, "for if I even take off my bloomers, they will still remain tied around my waist with a special rope." I admired the exceptional resourcefulness of these actresses.

In the heat, dust, and stuffiness, we arrived at Sevastopol. There, I remembered the miscellaneous notes of the Evening "Red Gazette" about 50,000 open-air resorts. The square in front of the train station was filled with vacationers, eager to go to Sevastopol.

True, at the train station there were some authorized KSU members, but I said that I could not vouch for the fact that we would leave Sevastopol. The Moscow train drove up and a thousand vacationers poured out. Together with us were the tenor of the Bolshoi Theatre, Alexandreev, and his wife. The tenor turned out to be energetic and swore that we would leave Sevastopol by nighttime. "And until then, let's visit my mother. My mother lives in Sevastopol." We went to his mother's. To get to her house, we needed to take a small boat to the bay. Until the boat could depart, we had fun in the following way. We threw copper coins in the sea, and some boys caught them and hid them behind their cheeks. It was very cheerful fun. We had lunch with Alexandreev's mother, slept, and went to the train station. Then, we left at night. It began to rain, and it was still night when we arrived. We slept until morning in the living room of the sanatorium KSU. In the morning, we found a room (80 rubles a month) without bedbugs and with electricity, and got involved with life. On Wednesday, the inhabitants of Gaspra-C.E. and A.D. Radlov, K.K. Trevskoi, A.V. Shubin, Kaziko (from the Boldramt) and many other excellent people. At Khasta-Aga, there were P.A. Markov, L. Yakobson, and one of the greatest minds of our time, R.A. Slavyadninov. K.I. Reingrerdztz was somewhere else. Recently, I visited D. Tsiganov and his wife. Tsiganov reported that S.S. Prokofiev (sic!) was invited to the Moscow Conservatory to work as a professor of composition. We then went to visit Yalti Mariengof. The mosquitoes bite strongly here. They feed well. As for concerns of personal life, I enjoy the company of my wife and admire her more and more. The toilet is blocked. When you go there, the hostess' kids run around and with serious curiosity, watch through a crack in the door.

I am still not used to it, and I'm rushing to rest my soul in the sanatorium. Yesterday, I finished the third act of "Lady Macbeth." There is a little thought I have. Would it be possible for me to write the voice "bringing the hips together" ++ and have

the Philharmonic play it, but not in public? I dream about wiretapping. That is all. I kiss you hard and wish you all kinds of success. Nina sends her greetings. D. Shostakovich. P.S. Write to me, if necessary. Crimea, Koreiz, Sanatorium KSU, Gaspra.

-

* Translator's note: Probably a joke, as he writes about being bitten by mosquitoes later in the letter.

** Translator's note: A pastry

*** Translator's note: Reference to Gogol's "How Ivan Ivanovich and Ivan Nikiforovich Quarreled," in which two friends enter an endless feud over one calling the other a goose.

†Footnote: Bolshoi-Dramatevsky theatre.

††Translator's note: While I believe this refers to the sex scene in *Lady Macbeth*, the footnotes appear to suggest this may have been a line of scrapped dialogue from the opera.

Letter 46: 24 August 1932, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Thank you very much for your letter. Reading it brought me great pleasure. It's true that there was one mistake in it, that I would say was of a tactless property. You wrote that Stein* was removed from "Workers and theatre," but did not write whom Stein was replaced with. Knowing my curiosity, it wasn't good of you to not report this information. You acted exactly the same way about the removal of Zakhar Lyubinsky. But for some reason, the question of "living persons" is now less interesting to me. Kanin or Gisin, Bukhstein, or Bazkamen are invincible "yellow jackets"***. Listenable. If your life is flowing with dreariness, mine is the same. I got up at 8 in the morning, after an almost sleepless night (stuffiness; myriads of flies and mosquitoes). At 9, I had breakfast, 1:30 I had lunch, at 5, tea, at 8 PM, dinner, and at 10, lay down (la femme***, stuffiness, flies, mosquitoes) (note- he uses the French "la femme," or "the woman;" not sure if he means the hostess of the house or Nina, but I'm assuming he means that one of them is keeping him up?). And despite everything, I feel excellent. For aside from the stuffiness, flies, and mosquitoes, I have a spouse (the pleasure of both body and soul) and therefore, I don't need anything more. "How cute she is!" † An absolute delight in every way. Every word she says, every gesture, even the way her stomach rumbles fills me with an indescribable bliss. In this respect, I am happy.

Aside from this, I play tennis and volleyball. It resolves the issue of the stuffiness and insects (the flies and mosquitoes). Concerning drinking, nothing. This is also good. Occasionally, there are concerts. The tenor Alekseev sang and recited works by the artist M.F. Lenin. In general, it was good. The violinist Tsiganov lives here. He asks to send you greetings. Nina sends greetings as well. Don't be lazy and write, as I'm a

restless person. Throw me at least a little postcard. Nina sends regards, and I kiss you.
D. Shostakovich. P.S.- did you receive our "tourist" photographs?

-

* Footnote: A playwright.

** Footnote: Reference to a Lehrer opera.

*** Translator's note: He uses the French "la femme" ("the woman") here. I'm not sure if he's referring to Nina or the hostess of the house.

† Footnote: A reference to Gogol's *Dead Souls*, in which a character is describing the qualities of his wife.

††Footnote: An actor.

Letter 47- 30 August 1932, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Our photos are probably already ready in the "tourist" photo studio. Don't be lazy; get out and order them*. It would be interesting to see them. Nina and I will stay here until the 20th of September. On our return, we will stop en route in Moscow for five days. L.V. Nikolaev lives here and V.M. Serdechkov. The latter met with us one evening after lunch, and showed maximum courtesy. He apologized to Nina that he could not kiss her hand: "Sorry; I have fat lips." He, as you put it, is cordially polite. Write to me about who replaced Stein in "Workers and theatre" and in the All-Russian Drama. I kiss you hard. D. Shostakovich.

-

Footnote: Shostakovich is referring to a photo he and Nina took with Sollertinsky. Both of their families kept copies of it.

Letter 48: 11 September 1932, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, On the 18th of September*, we are leaving for Kyiv. If you receive this postcard, answer me via Kyiv general mail. I received only one letter from you. I miss you, and worry about your silence. Your letters always cheer us up and fill us with joy. Here, there's nothing new. There is an unusual heat, and the wind blows all the time. I kiss you hard, D. Shostakovich

-

Footnote: Shostakovich accidentally wrote the Roman numeral "XI" instead of "IX" in this letter. The error was corrected when the letter was published.

Letter 49: 14 September 1932, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Thank you, that despite your migraine, nerves, and heart, you wrote to me about your news. You know, when you don't send news to me for a

long time, I am a restless and worried person. On the 18th of September, we will leave for Kyiv. Your news about the Kyiv general mail, of course, gave me great joy. But consider the circumstance that from Kyiv, I will leave for Moscow on the 26th of September. I will spend my birthday (September 25th) in Kyiv. I will be turning 26. Yesterday, the Exvapomets* worker Weiss** came here. He spoke Russian badly and stutters, fawning over me with a vengeance. I wish you cheerfulness and joy. I kiss you hard. D. Shostakovich. Nina sends greetings.

-

Translator's note: Could not find a translation for this word; may be an organization.

Footnote: Hungarian musicologist, professor, and journalist.

Letter 50: 16 September 1932, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I received your postcards yesterday and the day before. I'm extremely shocked about the fire that destroyed the American Mountains*. How terrible! Apparently, you and I will no longer be able to experience those luxurious slopes, more exciting than the descent which one experiences during sexual intercourse. The day after tomorrow, we will leave for Kyiv, the ex-mother of Russian cities**. That will sum up our stay here. Nina has gained three kilograms. By doing this, she barely regained the weight she lost while she was ill ***. How much I've gained, I don't know. Tomorrow I will weigh myself. Neither she nor I had any diseases. I finished the third act of "Lady Macbeth." I've had two photographs printed. The first one is of Nina, Pasha Markov, and I. The second one is of Nina, L.V. Nikolaev, the violinist Tsiganov and I. Both pictures are coming back to Leningrad with us. We've met a range of excellent people. Upon returning to Leningrad, I expect persecution from TRAM. I took 400 rubles as advance payment and left. If TRAM kicks me out, then I will have to search for a new place. Everything seeks to intimidate me, but I'm not afraid++. Together with these letters, I'm writing you a letter about Rubim Shapiro, who reported about various unpleasant things for him.

I rested, filled with vigor and enthusiasm. The librettist for my ballet, "The Bolt," sent me some luxury postal paper from America, which is waiting for me in Leningrad. I read in "Izvestiya" about awarding the title of Honored People's Artists to the workers of the Aleksandrinsky Theatre. Besides that, something was awarded to the assistant director Comrade Sokov (sic!). I will tell you in detail about the aforementioned ceremony. Pasha Markov sent me a letter, in which he wrote that Petrov's withdrawal and appointment instead of our mutual friend Y. M. Yuriev (sic!- sic!). I pity Nikolai Vasilievich. Oh, well. Nothing under the moon is eternal ++

And a fresh breath of air (I remember the era of "Artistic Life" where Yuriev was withdrawn and Petrov was appointed) after a while replaces stale air. And in my sight, Nikolai Vasilievich can count on the modest post of director at the leading LAPP theatre.

The fate of this theatre is curious. Which theatre ran the comedy "Boots"? And will it emerge? I mean, Petrov, and not the theatre, will emerge+++ . The LAPP theatre, I guess, is kaput or kayuk ‡. I haven't heard anything about the LAPP theatre. ‡‡ In the following days here, the weather will become cold. The wind will blow. Nina and I bundle up under all the blankets and coats at night. Somehow, we keep warm. We will spend 5-6 days in Kyiv. I guess that a meeting with some Ukrainian composers will take place, although I will make an effort for the meeting not to take place. I'm not very interested in meeting Ukrainian composers. "She is very cute to me." This is me about my wife. Perhaps there is nothing more to write about. I kiss you hard. Nina warmly presses your hand and sends greetings. D. Shostakovich.

-

* Translator's note: Roller coasters are called "American mountains" in Russia.

** Footnote: Likely a reference to the Kyivan Rus.

*** Historical note: Not sure when Nina was sick, or what she was sick with.

+ Footnote/ translator's note: a reference to a quote about Tolstoy by L.N. Andreev. I had some difficulty translating this quote, as the phrase he used has a closer literal meaning to "everything scares me, but I'm not afraid."

++ Translator's note: Russian idiom meaning "nothing lasts forever."

+++ Translator's note: There is no distinction in the original Russian here between "he" and "it."

‡ Translator's note: "kayuk" is a slang term used in the Odesa region similar to the German "kaput." It comes from a Turkish word for a kind of boat, which had a tendency to collapse.

‡‡ Footnote: The theatre would be liquidated that year.

Letter 51: 10 April 1933, Sverdlovsk

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Yesterday at 11:06 Moscow time, we went to Sverdlovsk. In Sverdlovsk time, it's 1:06. Consequently, it's two hours ahead of Moscow and Leningrad. I met our administrator of the Sverdlovsk theatre, Comrade Khesin. Automobiles have not yet replaced the cart here: the theatre (does not) have at its disposal Buicks, Lincolns, or even Fords, just an old horse with Misha the driver. The train from Moscow was not late by a single minute. A first-class ticket for the international carriage costs 140 rubles. In my opinion, this is cheap (remember the Red Arrow?)* From the train station, we went to the Central hotel. There are no bedbugs. The room is small, but still, there are two beds. No bedbugs. No towels. The bed linen is clean, although the top sheet is too small. <...> Here I met 1/2 of the Glazunov quartet,

named Pechnikov and Rivkin. I didn't see the other half. They are having a concert here. In any case, meeting them was a pleasure. Today I saw the theatre, but not the director Comrade Khodes, or the conductor Pavlovsky.

Tomorrow I'm going to watch the premiere of Lossky's staging of the critically acclaimed "Tsar Saltan." I will watch it and describe it to you. Today at 7, I'm going to show "Lady Macbeth." The paper "The Ukrainian Worker" will write about my arrival on the 10th and at 7 in the evening, how I will "play through it on the piano and sing the text of the opera". The instruments in the State Opera are nightmarish: None of the keyboards have ivory. I will have to play on naked pieces of wood. In terms of broadening one's horizons, the journey in Sverdlovsk undoubtedly gives lots of impressions. To multi-story "Americanized" buildings and "Mirgorod" puddles and muddy streets, the distance is enormous. But I'm postponing my inspection of the city until tomorrow. The celebration of the Sverdlovsky theatre is postponed until a future season. This is very nice: a profound speech won't have to be made. People here are very charming and polite. In the theatre they complain that the dress rehearsal for the show "The Tale of Tsar Saltan" lasts 8 (sic!) hours.

For the premiere, they hope to settle on one hour. It's boring and tiresome, but tomorrow's premiere will still have to be listened to. The theatre's opera repertoire is usual. Leningrad only differs in the presence of "The Four Despots"*** and the ballet "Karmanol." "The Flames of Paris" have not been put out***. "Parisian Outposts" also. In Moscow, I read "The Golden Calf" by Ilf and Petrov. This little book is undoubtedly full of talent. On the train to Moscow to Sverdlovsk, I read it again with great pleasure. Ostap Bender sees "The Golden Calf" as better than "The Twelve Chairs." I received a gift from the author of the book "Confrontation," Galina Serebryakova. I will see her and her respected husband in Moscow. Besides an untalented book, I received an excellent hygiene device as a gift: a toothbrush and a brush for one's nails in an excellent box, and some marvelous English glue. These are all from London, no lie†. That's all for now on my impressions of the trains from Moscow and Sverdlovsk. I'm going back to Moscow, where I expect your little letter. Write to the address of Pasha Markov (66 Moscow, Khomotuvsky, road 12, apartment 8, P.A. Markov, for me.) He will deliver it to me. Greetings to your spouse ++.

I kiss you hard, D. Shostakovich.

-

* Historical note: The Red Arrow is a train that runs from Moscow to Saint Petersburg that was first used in 1931 and was historically used by elites and important figures. It's still in use today.

** Footnote: An opera.

*** Footnote: A ballet by Asafiev.

† Translator's note: The expression used is closer to "not cheating," but I believe "no lie" is a closer translation.

++ Footnote: Sollertinsky just had his second marriage at this time, to Irina "Rene" Frantsevna Gabar, a dancer.

Letter 52: 13 April 1932, Sverdlovsk

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Three days into my residence in Sverdlovsk gave me quite a lot of impressions. The most vivid was the premiere of "The Tale of Tsar Saltan." The luxury is incredible; the commotion on stage is indescribable. But everything swam excellently indeed under the baton of the conductor A.M. Pazovsky. He is a brilliant director, and it's a terrible shame that he spends his days in Sverdlovsk. There is a place for him in the likes of Leningrad or Moscow. I haven't heard such a fine finish, such a wonderful quality orchestra in a long time. He is the only bright spot against the dark backdrop of Sverdlovsk. On the evening of the 10th, I showed "Lady Macbeth." The workers accepted its guidance very well. Another time, I showed excerpts with the orchestra. This also was received well. Along the way, valuable considerations were given, in the form of questions: 1) Tell me, maestro, if a man and a woman lie in the same bed*, does it not seem to you that this is indecent? 2) What place does a sexual act have in our time of writing heroic operas? 3) And other pearls of wisdom from empty orchestral heads. Pazovsky answered all these questions, and he answered them intelligently. At the end, he assured me that he would try to learn this opera well. There is a terrifying provinciality and lack of culture here. Rostov-on-Don compared to Sverdlovsk is Leningrad compared to Govnosrach. Many, many cultural workers have to work here. Many are building. There is a mass of new multi-story buildings. I was struck by the uncultured homes of the musicians in the orchestra. By comparison with all of Sverdlovsk musicians, Sergeev the 14th** is Spinoza.

Despite my "satirical mind," I always get annoyed with this mental boorishness (see the above questions from the orchestra musicians). There's a lot of fuss, but it's boring, and I'd sooner want to be in Moscow or in Leningrad. I dream of this in ecstasy, that tomorrow night I'll sit down on the train and, after 50 hours, I'll be in Moscow. The cost of life here is cheap compared to Moscow or Leningrad. Viennese schnitzel costs six rubles. In the National, it costs 12-15 rubles†.

There are good shops, where we go to have lunch and dinner. "Wonderful people"++ include the theatre director Comrade Khodes, his deputy Comrade Zadorsky, head of the literary theatre department (of the local Pitrovsky Mikhailovsky theatre) Comrade Aleksandr Yakovlevich (I don't remember his surname), and the composers Frolov and Trambitzky.

The composers want to go to Leningrad, but apparently don't have the guts to move. Maybe today I will go to the local organizing committee of the Sverdlovsk Union

of Composers. They promised to show me Sverdlovsk's creative projects. "Tsar Saltan" was staged (...) Lossky, the former director of the Bolshoi Theatre, was fired from there. Now I'm going to have lunch. After lunch, I'll drink a glass of purified water to your health, and Nita ††† will keep me company, because Doctor Badmaev advised her to drink like a horse. That's all for now. Write to Pasha Markov's Moscow address. He will give it to you.

I kiss you,

D. Shostakovich

P.S.- Nina kisses you. P.S. P.S.- We kiss Irina Frantsevna. SH. Send greetings to Gauk, A.A. Ashkenazy, and V.E. Iokhelson.

-

* Translator's note: On stage.

** Footnote: Another character made up by Shostakovich, like "Persianinov."

† Historical note: Hotel National- a luxury hotel in Moscow built in 1903. In 1931, it was renovated and housed many pre-Revolutionary artworks and artifacts, some of which are still there today. In 1932, around when this letter was written, it reopened to guests.

†† Footnote: Another Gogolism.

††† Footnote: Nina's nickname.

Letter 53: 20 April 1933, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I read your letter with pleasure. I'm joyful that everything ended as well as possible for you, and upset that Vilbushevich died*. This man set an example in everything, a model musician and activist. When I reported this sorrowful news to our Moscow friends, all of them said, "how come? How come? He was always at all the general meetings." The fame of his social work has reached Moscow. Without any pleasure, I listened to Anserm yesterday**. The program consisted of Stravinsky's boring works. I was pleased to listen to the first act of Lady Macbeth with the orchestra and singers. I will arrive on the 26th.

I kiss you,

D. Shostakovich

-

* Footnote: A pianist and composer.

** Footnote: A Swedish conductor.

*** Footnote: Works like "Petrushka" and "The Firebird."

Letter 54: 22 April 1933, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I write to you with utmost gratitude for the letter I received, which was passed on to me by Gauk. I'm arriving in Leningrad on the 25th with the aforementioned Gauk. I had a nice time in Moscow. I only miss my wife, because I am very accustomed to my lady's company*. Today, I'm going to have lunch with S. M. Radomsky. In the evening, I will meet with fellow writers. Tomorrow, a concert, and the day after, my departure to Leningrad. I severely missed you. Set aside an hour or two on the 25th so that we can meet and talk. This postcard, along with 19 others, were given to me by the wife of the ambassador in London**. They are beautiful postcards, and there are more like these. Until tomorrow. I kiss you and your wife hard. D. Shostakovich.

-

* Footnote: Nina was in Crimea at the time.

** Footnote: Refers to Galina Serebryakova, Marxist writer and wife of G.L. Sokolnikov.

Letter 55: 25 August 1933, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I have a request for you: Please find out if the Mikhailovsky Theatre will show the first act of "Lady Macbeth" or not. In both cases, write to my Crimea address. Koreiz, Sanatorium KSU "Gaspra." If you don't receive notes, telegraph me. I kiss you hard. D. SH. P.S. Arrived quite safely.

Letter 56: 27 August 1933, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I have already lived here for more than 24 hours. There are a lot of scientists here. Among them, Professor Ushcheminkhin and his assistant professor Prishcheminkhin. A cat is chasing chickens outside my window. She has already eaten three, and I strongly envied her, because the sanatorium food gave me indigestion. The food consists of minced herring, herring pate, zucchini, stuffed peppers, and peppers stuffed with zucchini. Besides that, a lot of eggplant caviar*. I had chicken for lunch. The same, which one of the greatest minds outside our time wanted to see in the soup**. Not truly chicken; only halves of chicken appendages (half a wing, half a leg, half-stitched together, etc.). I drink tea here. My face is red as Bordeaux wine. I'm nervous. No matter where I go: I'm nervous because my face is as red as Bordeaux wine, and it's red as Bordeaux wine because I'm nervous. It's a kind of "squaring the circle"***. There are bedbugs at night. I am not bitten, but my wife is. I care, but she

pretends not to care, because she puts on a poker face †. The wind is blowing; it's cold. I kiss you hard. Your D. Shostakovich.

P.S.- I found out that the Mikhailovsky Theatre is showing the first act of "Lady Macbeth."

-

* Translator's note: A dish consisting of eggplant and other mashed vegetables, which does not contain actual caviar.

** Footnote: Refers to a legend about the French king Henri IV, who supposedly said, "if God prolongs my life, I will ensure that there would not be a single peasant left in my kingdom who would not be able to have chicken in his pot." Variations on this quote are common in Russian literature.

*** Translator's note: This refers to a famous mathematical problem. I believe Shostakovich means here that this is a difficult issue with no easy solution.

† Translator's note: The phrase he uses here is "ей приходится делать хорошую мину при плохой игре," literally, "she puts on a good face with a bad game." I have translated this as an equivalent English idiom.

Letter 57: 1 September 1933, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, The weather has become so wonderful, it doesn't even seem like weather at all. The wind blows; the rain pours. My face is as red as Bordeaux wine. Remember Lipatov and his functionality?* Here, I have exactly the same physiognomy. Please write to me if the Mikhailovsky theatre has shown the first act of Lady Macbeth- not out of service, but out of friendship. Call Samosud and ask him. Of this and of anything else, write to me. If I don't receive your letters, telegram me this message: Koreiz, KSU Gaspra Sanatorium, not received by Shostakovich. All in all, seven words.** Cheap and cheerful.

I am very bored here. Firstly, Nita has been lying in bed for five days already with a high temperature, and secondly, the coloring of my pretty, more-or-less good-looking face plunges me into despondency. Thirdly, your absence, and fourthly, Polovinkin's presence***. Here, there are many scientists of both sexes. Among them lives the twenty-three-year-old beauty Nina Vasiliyevna Khoroshko. She is very pretty and not brought up on the salon mazurkas of Chopin, but, "well, (inaudible)". For example, the following conversation on the tennis court:

Her tennis partner: You will lose this game to us!

Khoroshko: And see here! (she makes the fig gesture in her partner's face.+) Or: "What are you messing around with here? Go to hell." In all, a very charming, pretty virgin(?!) girl. How is Gauk doing? Does he continue to put on a poker face++? When I met him, he thanked Iokhelson all the time for the following: "finally, he fulfilled my requests, and with the help of a pacifier+++ , freed me from the position of artistic director

of the philharmonic." Write to me more. How is the "cleanse" going?‡ Have Gisin, Rokhlin, or Shapiro been "cleansed"? Write soon. I look forward to your letters. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna.

I kiss you hard. D. Shostakovich.

P.S. Professor and assistant professor Prishchemikhin and Ushchemkhin send you greetings.

-

* Footnote: Unknown what this refers to.

** Translator's note: The telegram is seven words in the original Russian.

*** Footnote: A relative of L.A. Polovinkin, composer.

† Cultural note: The "fig gesture" originates in ancient Rome and consists of making a fist and wrapping the index finger around the thumb. It is considered obscene in many cultures; in Russia, it signifies denying a request.

†† Translator's note: See idiom note for the previous letter.

††† Footnote: Referring to help from the Union of Composers.

‡ Footnote: From 1932-33, "cleanses" were held in all institutions. At this time in history, this referred to meetings where members were required to answer questions about their backgrounds and political ties, and could risk being fired or exiled from the city. (This word could possibly be translated as "purge," but I went with "cleanse" to avoid confusion with the "Great Purges" of the later 1930s.)

Letter 58: 9 September 1933, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Today, I received your letter. Like always, everything that came out of your pen brought me pleasure. Unfortunately, you didn't write anything about the first act of "Lady Macbeth." In case you find out if it will be shown, write to me if yes, and also if no. We live well here. In these past days, the food has become wonderful. There is so much food (and relatively delicious food, too), that I often can't finish it all. For instance, grapes appeared. They cost six rubles per kilogram. In Moscow, they cost four rubles for 20 kilograms. In Leningrad, they probably cost the same. With nothing to do, I've learned that I'm pretty decent at playing billiards. I drive the balls into the pockets aptly enough. The case described by my "own correspondent" (remember "Modern Idyll" by Saltykov-Shchedrin*?) doesn't quite match. (note- the reference refers to how, in the book, the events of a wedding differ from how it was covered in the newspaper in the report of "our own correspondent." The event that Shostakovich is comparing to the book is unknown.) When I arrive in Leningrad, I'll tell

you more about this episode. Nina went out for a few days, but now became sick again. Her health is bad. The sun, air, and water aren't helping. I want to treat her with the urine of pregnant women ("Gravidan")** They say that surprising results are obtained from it.

I composed a few numbers of "Priest" here. Tsekhanovsky*** requires prompt and efficient execution of the contract. I regret that I have not delivered on this, and I did not go to the Party "cleanse" of Leningrad workers in the fine arts. I really liked the permanency of the artist Pleshakov. Didn't he organize the re-exhibition of the corridor of the theatre directorate on the theme of "Artists working in the guest theatres, and those not working in them"? Apparently, the boy still has not lost hope of doing this as a career. He fights energetically, but nothing has come out of it yet.

My mood is not especially cheerful. However, my health is wonderful. My mug has gotten better and now looks pretty clean. On the occasion of my mug, they did a blood test on me. The result was excellent- 88% hemoglobin, 500,000 of something else, which means a good overall composition. Greetings to your wife. Write more. What about the philharmonic? And Sashetka Gauk? I kiss you hard, D. Shostakovich

-

* Footnote: A novel.

** Historical note: Gravidan was a drug created in 1929 by the scientist A.A. Zamkov from chemical compounds found in the urine of pregnant women. It was regarded as a cure for various diseases in the 1930s, and research on it took off in 1933-34. However, it was discontinued in 1964 by the USSR Ministry of Health; in the context of this letter, it would have been seen as a new and effective cure at the time.

*** Footnote: "Priest" refers to *The Tale of the Priest and His Workman Balda*, an animated film Shostakovich wrote the score to. Tsekhanovsky was a graphic artist and film director.

Letter 59: 16 September 1933, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Rarely, rarely do you pamper me with your letters. I live dully, monotonously, and therefore it would be no sin to write to me more. Today, the composer V.V. Pushkov came to the "Nyuru" sanatorium. The latter reported to me about the fate of Gerken* and other like-minded people. Besides that, he reported to me about A.A. Ashkenazy's return from his vacation. Pushkov is a breath of fresh Leningrad air. From yesterday to now, a strong hurricane is raging, which is snatching trees and tearing off the roofs of houses (true, the roofs are very frail and the trees are very, very skinny: it's better to call them growing twigs). This horror is very interesting. It's difficult to go outside, but I enjoy the struggle against the raging elements. Today, L.A.

Polovinkin left for Moscow. He has composed a suite for two pianos. He showed it to me yesterday. It's pretty good. I'm bored within my soul**. I want to be in Leningrad soon. I was at the Simeizskoi observatory for a short while. I watched the stars and understood all the frailty of my existence at the sight of the majestic spectacle of Saturn with its rings, and Jupiter with its 9 moons***, etc. "The void of the abyss of stars is full, The stars are countless, and the abyss is bottomless." † Such a strong picture. I recommend that you visit the Pulkovo Observatory and enjoy the above spectacle. Write to me. I will stay here for a while. I kiss you hard. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. Your D. Shostakovich. P.S.- The Malegot Theatre is showing the first act of "Lady Macbeth."

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* Footnote: Director, translator, and librettist.

** Translator's note: This expression is somewhat difficult to translate. The Russian language uses "in the soul" like English uses "in the heart." In this context, Shostakovich is stating that he's extremely bored on a deep level.

*** Historical note: Recall that this letter was written in 1933; more of Jupiter's moons are known today.

† Footnote: Lines from the Mikhail Lomonsov poem "Evening Reflection of God's Majesty at the Sight of the Great Northern Lights" (Вечернее размышление о Божием величестве при случае великого Северного сияния). The poem expresses a feeling of insignificance compared to natural phenomena.

Letter 60: 26 September 1933, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Today I received your letter from the 21st of September. I should have left from here today, but due to Nina's sickness, we're delayed until the 30th. On the 2nd, I'll be in Moscow, and on the 4th or 5th in Leningrad. If Stiedry* arrives before me, then send him my greetings and thoughts of great pleasure for agreeing to play my concerto** with me, and that it is desirable that he enjoy the concert and accompany me, if not with pleasure, then in any case without disgust. If not for Nina's ill health, I would consider our stay in Gaspra a success. First, I learned how to play billiards pretty decently, and secondly, I'm also feeling very good. I'm very happy that you "worked well" with Ossovsky and that V.M. Parfenov will be director of the financial and domestic branches of the Philharmonic. I also send him my greetings. Nina is now resting and asking to send you and Irina Frantsevna greetings. I haven't composed anything here, except a

few numbers of "The Tale of the Priest and his Workman Balda." I miss you very much. I'm shocked by Gauk's petty tricks***. I kiss you hard, D. Shostakovich

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* Footnote: An Austrian conductor.

** Footnote: The First Piano Concerto.

*** Footnote: Unknown what this means.

Letter 61- 16 September 1933, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I only now went to write to you. This whole time, I've been busy day and night. In the morning, rehearsals of "Lady Macbeth," in the afternoon and evening I correct Muzgizovskaya's proofreading. On the 14th, Brik and Zhelobinsky performed for "Soviet Art*."

Brik delivered a few introductory words and read some passages from the opera "Komarinsky Muzhik." Zhelobinsky played a few fragments on the piano. Afterwards, everyone praised them unconstrainedly. I also performed and scolded Brik, albeit through "vague wording." Brik took advantage of this and after the final words, "exposed" me, at the same time, rather demagogically. I returned home in the mood of the pre-April era***. But I momentarily healed. I saw Shebalin, Atovmyan, and Oborin here, and listened to a concert of Polish music, which I didn't like. In general, I live stormily. I'm getting tired, but at the same time, my vivacity of spirit has remained. I kiss you hard. Write to Nationale no. 233. Your D. Shostakovich.

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* Footnote: Writer and composer. The journal "Soviet Art" arranged a performance and discussion of their works.

** Translator's note: "Muzhik" refers to a male peasant.

*** Footnote: Referring to the Apr 23 1932 All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks decree, which liquidated all artistic communities, including the RAPM.

Letter 62- 6 April 1934, Ivanovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I have already been living for a few days at Ivanovo. We live well and walk a lot. Here, there's marvelous air and wonderful weather. Ivanovo is a large village with all the charms a village can offer. There are forests here, where we go walking, and it's very nice to sit on some stump and listen to the forest noises as nature awakens from its winter sleep. Here, the snow has not completely melted yet. Therefore, there's a terrible amount of dirt on the streets. I met our mutual friend Shkolnikov here. His wife gave birth to a lively little boy six weeks ago: he will be a

conductor like his father. Tomorrow, he (Shkolnikov) will arrange my meeting with Ivanovo musicologists. A banquet is out of the question. But a shot* of something to drink and a herring sandwich will be provided. In Moscow, I met Atovmyan. He was attacked. The Composer's Union continues to work, but in the words of Chelyapov, Gorodinsky, Gankovsky (political/cultural figures), his eyes take on a displeased expression and he begins to "act nervous." His sunny mood is gone and he wants to leave. "I'm looking for a warm place and it already seems that I will be a consultant of the arrangement of exhibitions in the foyer of the new Service Bureau of the Working Spectator at Simonov's P.R.Z.A.R.N. theatre. He cleaned up his act brilliantly. All allegations of opportunism on the musical front were removed. It has been sealed, the stamp pasted on. And after all, Knipper, Kabalevsky, and co. attacked him. He is mortified by the circumstance. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. Write to me at the address of Ivanovo, GPU. V.R. Dombrosky will deliver your letter for me. My wife and Dombrosky send greetings. D. Shostakovich.

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*Translator's note: Shostakovich refers to a *charka* here, which is a small cup for drinking strong drinks.

Letter 63- 10 April 1934, Ivanovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

The day after tomorrow, I will leave the beautiful town of Ivanovo and the wonderful Dombrovskys. I didn't do much during my stay here, but I wasn't bored. Nina and I have been going to the circus each day for the past few days. Right now, there's French wrestling going on. Each day, one of three pairs of wrestlers competed. Tonight's match will begin at 10:30 in the evening. A fascinating spectacle. This spectacle awakens the inner Roman in me, and I felt genuine excitement meeting Aleksandr Cyclops (the heavyweight) and the crowd favourite, Hadji-Murad*. The crowd is extraordinarily active during the fight. There's whistling, swearing, applause, etc., especially among the ladies, which is understandable. As far as I remember, women have always had a weakness for wrestlers. Besides the entertainment, we go walking in the forest. The weather is divine; the sun is melting the snow. Streams babble noisily, and zephyrs blow over the hillocks. In this respect, I quite agree with I. A. Khlestakov, who also rejoiced at the sight of hillocks.

I read a lot. V.R. has a mass of books. Without a doubt, reading books gives us an endless supply of food for the mind and heart*. I'm leaving the day after tomorrow. Yesterday, I called Atovmyan on the telephone. I asked him to book tickets for the 14th of April. On the 13th, I will watch "The Human Comedy" by Balzac- Sukhotin's production at the Bakhtangov theatre. There, my creativity will replenish itself little by little. Atovmyan responded to my question and said, "Wonderful. When I see it, I will tell

you about it in detail." This made me a little happier. I really love Levon Tadevosovich and I'm really upset about his misfortunes these past few days (note- Atovmyan was expelled from the Composers' Union for "criminal activity", although Shostakovich felt he was innocent). I didn't receive a letter from you, and I must confess that I do not expect to receive one, because it'll probably come too late for me to pick it up, even if you wrote it in response to my previous one. So, on the 15th, I will be in Leningrad. Do not send one, especially today, and come to me to dine on what God has sent (note- I found this quote used by Pushkin and Tolstoy, so I'm guessing it's a somewhat antiquated saying; I wasn't quite able to find out exactly what it meant though) I kiss you hard. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. Nina and Dombrovsky send greetings. D. Shostakovich

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* Translator's note: The first wrestler is referred to as Александр Циклоп, or "Aleksandr Cyclops." I'm assuming this is a stage name, as there's no footnote elaborating on who either of them are. "Hadji-Murad" is likely a stage name after the Avar Caucasian resistance leader who lived from 1818-52 and was known for leading Dagestan and Chechnya in a resistance against the Russian Empire; there's also a Tolstoy novella based on him.

** Footnote: A reference to a line from Tatiyana in Tchaikovsky's "Evgeny Onegin." Shostakovich parodied this with a line from Sergei to Katerina in "Lady Macbeth."

Letter 64- 18 May 1934, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I beg you to accept Vasiliy Petrovich Dmitriev, teacher of the school in which I am the "music chief" (school unknown). He has a list of important things for you, and I beg you to help him by resolving to do these things. The case concerns the celebration of Palladi Andreev Bogdanov*. V.P. Dmitriev says that the organization for this concert totally depends on you**. P.A. Bogdanov was the former cappella conductor before Klimov and served there for 35 years. D. Shostakovich.

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* Footnote: A composer and conductor.

** Footnote: Possibly due to Sollertinsky's presence in the Philharmonic.

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Letter 65- 29 June 1934, Novosibirsk

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I'm sorry that I haven't been able to write to you. The truth is to say, I'm caught in some confusion, and therefore, I haven't had anything on my mind, except... that, in general, you probably can already guess for yourself*.

I left on the ship "Armenia." On the 25th of June, I went to "Abkhazia," but the motor broke down in Poti, and for 30 hours, the passengers were sent to the oncoming "Armenia," which sailed to Batum, and on the 27th of June, they were sent to their destination. All of this took two days' time, and my nerves were highly strung as a result. Only now have I just woken up. How are things in Leningrad? The season almost ended at the Malegot, and self-critical meetings were held. The crowd on the ship is friendly, but boring. No entertainment, except going out on the deck and back to the cabin. Greetings to your wife. Your D. Shostakovich.

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* Footnote: Likely refers to Shostakovich's affair with Elena Konstantinovskaya, which lasted from 1934 to mid-1935.

Letter 66- 7 August 1934, Polenovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Finally, at the end of my travels, I've reached my intended destination. The path was pretty boring, but I'm here all the same. Polenovo is only good from afar. In general, here, there's melancholy and lots of actors. Nature, however, is marvelously pretty. I will stay here until August 5- one month. Getting here from Moscow is very difficult. First, three hours by train, then two hours of waiting, and then 40 minutes by light glider. Consequently, returning to Moscow will be hard. Therefore, I will have to stay here for a whole month without a break. Here live some of the greatest minds of our time, such as the mimic artist Mamochkin-Vizhachikh*. There is no one else like him. In Moscow, I met Z.I. Lyubinsky. He is familiar with topics such as the VIEM** in Moscow. It was a pleasure to meet him. It was also a pleasure to listen to his figurative speech ("this proves about this," etc). He reported to me that the fate of Vasiliy Evgenievich is very sad, because he did a lot of dirty deeds***. In Moscow, I gladly saw Shebalin. He concluded a number of contracts, and received lots of advancements and fun. Alisha is in Zheleznovodsk. How rash, Semyonovna! + I also saw Atovmyan. He is putting on a good face while playing a bad game. I feel very sorry for him. I saw Popov. He composed a violin concerto and is possibly very healthy. Shebalin composed his 2nd Quartet while less healthy. But, please, keep this between us. I expressed enthusiasm to him.

In Baku, I met B.M. Freidkov. I should say that he is a most pleasant and excellent person. Many wonderful conversations took place between him and I, while I was suffering from boredom of Baku. At this time, I am not having much fun. Earnestly, I ask you: write to me, but take into account that your letter will probably be read not only by me, so therefore, do not abuse anyone. In general, I'm depressed. Nina is healthy, but I'm afraid she could fall ill. She is very weak. I kiss you hard. D. Shostakovich P.S. My address: The city of Taruss, Serpukhov District. Polenovo. GABT House of Rest.

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* Footnote: Meaning unknown.

** Footnote: All Union Institution of Experimental Medicine.

*** Footnote: Writer and critic. Unknown what Shostakovich is referring to.

† Footnote: Referring to a folk song. "Alisha" is Shebalin's wife, Alisa.

Letter 67- 9 July 1934, Polenovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

The weather is becoming rainy, and the streets are getting muddy. I have to sit at home or on the balcony. The former owner of Polenovo probably drank well in such weather. Nature is extraordinarily beautiful, but my head is empty, and if you knocked on my forehead, only a hollow sound would be produced, like wood.

The newspaper isn't here. As for what's going on in the world, I don't know. In any case, in the restroom, I read "An Advocate of Formalism," the article by S. Dinamov, in which he gave a worthy response to the author of "Komarinsky Muzhik" on the subject of formalism. In issue no. 5 of "Sovetskaya Muzyka," there is a thunderous article by Gorodinsky and Iokhelson about the "historic discussion" of LenSSK on "Lady Macbeth." They gave a worthy response to your formalist statements*. Generally, they gave lots of worthy responses. Oh, great. I love it**.

I think with wild terror that I will need to live here until the third of August, and today is only the 9th of July. Write to me about what you're doing in Leningrad, in Toskovo (note- village near Leningrad, where Sollertinsky went to relax) and in other major areas. How are things on the island of Wania Peeteri unsi Leningrad?***

V.L. Kubatsky lives in Poleveno. Three of his wives live in the same area; the fourth is departing. All sit at one table, as well as the daughter of the second wife and the son of the third. A wonderful community. I envy them. The wives are in a strange relationship with each other and only occasionally let down some kind of hairpin. There are no pretty ballet employees at the shops here. In this respect, unsi Leningrad provides more food for the mind and heart. Nina is suffering. Her hair dye is gradually fading, which turns out to be unflattering. She groans and shouts, "at least henna, at least henna!" In the literal sense of the word, we're talking about henna hair dye. Ivan Ivanovich, would you travel here with your wife? Think about it and telegraph me. It costs 300 rubles a month per person. I'll talk to Malinkovskaya and see if she can arrange another room for you, eh? Just think, I'm dying of boredom and the inability to talk to these cultured people. And the public here is boring and uncultured. So, come, and in any case, write to me at this address: City of Taruss, Serpukhov district. Polenovo, GABT House of Rest.

D. Shostakovich

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* Footnote: This refers to a discussion from 16-20 Feb. 1934 on "Lady Macbeth" and its value as Soviet repertoire. While describing the opera as "remarkable," it condemns

those who considered "humanity" a measure of its evaluation. Sollertinsky was heavily criticized, with half the article devoted to accusing him of this.

** Translator's note: I wasn't quite sure how to translate this, but it appears to read as sarcastic- "Ух, хорошо. Люблю." He also uses an expression that literally translates to "the fat reduces," but I couldn't find what this expression means. It could possibly mean that the situation is getting more worrisome, like running out of reserves.

*** Footnote: Meaning unknown.

Letter 68- 14 July 1934, Polenovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Why aren't you writing to me? Write to me somehow and soon. I miss you and your letters. I spoke to A.A. Ashkenazy, who is in Moscow, on the telephone. I asked him to send you my greetings. He said that you were away in Toksovo. How are you living there? I really miss you. Be sure to write. Did you read the No. 5 issue of "Sovetskaya Muzyka" where Iokhelson and Gorodinsky gave you worthy praise*? Well, goodbye for now. Taruss. Serpukhov district, Polenovo. GABT House of Rest. D. Shostakovich

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Footnote: In the article mentioned above, Gorodinsky and Yokhelson found in Sollertinsky "recurrences of the unprovoked aggression of modernity." With regard to Sollertinsky's article "The Creative Way of Shostakovich" in the collection published by Malegot for the premiere of "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District", they, in particular, wrote: "the composer is taking the wrong path." And they further emphasized: "If Sollertinsky does not hear Tchaikovsky's reminiscences in the opera Lady Macbeth, if he does not feel a clear turn to Russian musical classics in this opera, then he is hardly capable of hearing anything." The article accused Sollertinsky of "revanchism." (Translator's note: In Russian, unlike the neutral term "revenge," the concept of "revanchism" carries a clearly negative connotation and is not applied to any loser on any side, but only to the initiators of unfair and unprovoked aggression.)

Letter 69- 22 July 1934, Polenovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Why aren't you writing to me? It makes me very sad. Every day, I eagerly await a letter from you, but there are none. I'm bored. Be sure to write. Here, life passes quietly. In my eyes, the weather is good (no sun, and rain from time to time). I can't stand heat. I want to return home soon. It's tiresome here, worse than bitter radish*. A few days ago, a rumor spread that Dmitrov and Bela Kun** were coming here. Upon this occasion, one singer immediately began to exercise her voice. When they asked her why she was doing this, she said, "Any day now, the Bulgarian party member Dmitriev is coming here with a lady. They say a concert will be arranged in their honor."

"And which lady is Dmitrov coming with?"

"I don't know her. But her name is Bela Kuntz."

It was a plot worthy of Uksusov's pen. But in general, disgracefully boring, to the point of pain in the cheekbones***. Be sure to write. D. Shostakovich

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* Translator's note: A Russian idiom meaning something is boring and unpleasant.

** Footnote: Bulgarian and Hungarian Communist leaders, respectively.

*** Translator's note: Idiom suggesting yawning so much, one's cheekbones hurt.

Letter 70- 26 July, 1934

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Your letter, like a balm, spilled over my yearning soul. I read it, as I read all your letters, with the greatest pleasure. First of all, business. 1) If Rafalovich and co. are tried in the near future, I earnestly ask you to secure a place for me there. In this case, of course, if I don't have time before it starts after I arrive in Leningrad. 2) I'm unable to get a dacha in Toskov for August. I predict that there will be a big heat wave, and fear that Nina will have a difficult life in the city.

Today, Marina Semyonova's husband came to Polenovo, Comrade Karakhan, who was enthusiastically met by Darsky and Bindler*. The weather here is good by all accounts- i.e., indescribable heat. The public here is boring, although I come across the most excellent people- for example, the mimansa drummer Comrade Damochkin-Vizhachikh.

After five hours, I played volleyball and experienced great pleasure from such lessons. On the 4th of August, I think I will depart. Consequently, I will be in Leningrad by the 6th or 7th. Do not tell anyone about my forthcoming arrival, as I wrote home that I will be back between the 15th and 20th. T.T. Bogoturyantz and Moritz** are not here, and therefore I had nobody to describe your suffering of appendicitis to in vivid detail. The pimply author of "Komorinsky Muzhik" and "Name Day" is coming here***. He is strongly embarrassed by fame, which has suddenly befallen him. He smokes a pipe and messes with his hair. It is visible throughout that he is strongly embarrassed. I saw his "Name Day." It is instrumented well, and it seems to me that the opera will be very successful. It has a lot of "absolutely realistic" effects. Mother Volga, a chorus coming from behind stage. Beautiful. I wrote two fugues. One for four voices, and the other for three. I will play them today on the piano. They are ugly and unemotional. Despite all this, I will write a third, and a fourth, etc. Life is impossible, composing nothing. In relation to technicality, fugues stand at a middle level- not much below them. But they may as well pass for bare formalism. I write for full hands, instead of exercises for pianists or trombonists.

I read issue no. 6 of "Sovyetskaya Muzyka," the issue dedicated to Leningrad. It has a large leading article by S. Ginzburg†. The motto on all the articles could be "the further into the woods, the less firewood there is"††. There is, however, a decent article by A. Semyonovich Rabinovich. There are some sparkles of domestic thought in it. This is all. I kiss you hard. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. I approve of your stay in Toksovo. D. Shostakovich.

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* Footnote: Ballet artist, diplomat, and theatre figures.

** Footnote: Unknown.

*** Footnote: Zhelobinsky.

† Footnote: This article condemns RAPM's criticism.

†† Translator's note: Proverb meaning "the deeper you get into a situation, the more dangerous it becomes."

Letter 71- 1 August 1934, Polenovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I'm going to leave on the 4th.

On the 6th, I'll be in Leningrad. Before my departure on the "Aurora," I will spend a few days in the city. I hope that we'll get to see each other and talk about the problem of socialist realism in music. I've already heard about Mozer's* article. It would be very good if you could save this article until my arrival and translate the parts concerning S. Gauk** for me. By the way, should I send him a letter of congratulations, as the world press has begun to talk about him? I miss you very much. On the 5th, I will send you a telegram with the exact day of my arrival, including my Leningrad address. I kiss you hard. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. D. Shostakovich.

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* Footnote: Swedish music historian and critic.

**Footnote: Aleksandr Gauk. Shostakovich and Sollertinsky used the diminutives "Sasha" or "Sashetka" for him; the mentioned article was in French, hence Shostakovich's request for a translation, and included reviews on some concert programs, including ones playing Shostakovich's works.

Letter 72- 1 August 1934, Polenovo*

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Nina really loves nature and fresh air. Therefore, we're staying here until the 10th of August. Consequently, we will be home between the 12th and 13th. This really upsets me, because I love good company even more than beautiful nature and fresh air (you, and a few others, to a lesser extent). Upon receiving this letter, write to me, because I'm very bored without you and your letters. I really need to talk to you. Residence in fresh air and reading gave me a wealth of food for the mind

and heart. I want to share with you the questions that concern me. Today Zhelobinsky left, accompanied by ballet workers. This circumstance led to my thought, that the best remedy for acne and blemished facial skin is not philadermin-lamers, lanolin, or Tekhe cream, but wealth and fame, as despite his acne, the author of "Name Day" made great progress here and broke more than one ballerina's heart. The Authorized Commissar of Internal Affairs in Ivanovo, V.R. Dombrovsky, checked out from the Kremlin hospital and now lives in Luga, healing from his illness. Write more often. I'm highly bored and "melancholic." I kiss you hard. D. Shostakovich. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna.

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* Footnote: Listed as a different letter, but sent the same day as the previous one.

Letter 73- 9 August 1934, Polenovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I was waiting for your letter, but now it looks like I don't have to wait any longer. On the 12th, we are leaving Polenovo. A few days ago, I received a letter from A.A. Ashkenazy, in which he wrote about the similarity between him and the pederast Tsurmilen*. I am afraid that the pederast** will strongly spoil the blood of Ashkenazy and Iokhelson, and also me***. I always get anxious about my upcoming return to Leningrad after my prolonged absence.

I want to sing a quintet from "The Queen of Spades," but I don't have anyone to sing with. I'll have to limit myself to the part of Tomsky†, Comrade Afinogov came here to rest before leaving. He obviously is courting A. Messerer's wife, and he isn't making progress. Afinogov stutters, because he really loves Sudakevich (the film actress). Do you remember the case of Professor Maksimovich and I?++

Afinogov, choking on laughter, asked me, "is this true?" Then he said that he knew the person who organized this "prank," but is connected with this person by a word. I, it seemed, guessed who it was. On this occasion, I think of visiting the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs and talking about the cheerful behaviour of this person. Nina had to lie down in bed for two weeks after this "prank," due to a strong nervous turmoil. Besides this, he told me that you were a victim of this person's "prank," which I didn't believe. If so, if this prank really took place, and this prank is just ugly in meanness and hooliganism, I propose to you 1) to be quiet about my return, 2) to visit the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs with me, and 3) to be quiet about my desire to visit the People's Commissar to ask about the "prank" with Prof. Maksimovich and the "prank" on you, if such a thing took place. I'm 95% convinced that I guessed who is the author of the prank. To avoid repeating these cruelties, I want to file with the People's Commissar. How are you? Do you live in Toksovo or have you already gone back to Leningrad? In any case, I beg you to be in Leningrad on the 15th or 16th of August. At this time, I think I will be home. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

P.S. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna

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* Footnote: Composer and naval officer. Translator's note: the word "pederast" in a Russian context, according to a dictionary site, may refer to either a man who has sexual relations with boys, as it means in English, or a term for a homosexual man in general; I've seen mixed results on how offensive this term is, with some people saying it's a neutral term for a homosexual man and other people saying it's offensive; considering this was the 30s, I'm not sure if it carries the same connotations as it does today. It's unclear which context is used here, and the footnote doesn't elaborate.

** Translator's note: Shostakovich here uses a word derived from "pederast" with a similar connotation, which is considered offensive. It's sometimes used as a slur against homosexuals and sometimes as a general insult, depending on context. I'm not sure if the insults Shostakovich uses are specifically to attack Tsurmilsen for literally being homosexual, or if they're meant to be general insults, possibly to attack his masculinity, as while an artistic feud (see below) is alluded to in the letter, actual acts of homosexuality or pederasty by Tsurmilsen are not.

*** Footnote: This is referring to financial overruns of the Soviet Cultural Commission, which Shostakovich blamed Tsurmilsen for. In 1931, Tsurmilsen also sharply criticized his article "Declaration of the Composer's Rights."

+ Footnote: Refers to a character in Tchaikovsky's opera "The Queen of Spades;" Shostakovich refers to a part in the opera which literally translates to "I'm afraid."

++ Footnote: Shostakovich is apparently referring to a prank arranged by one N.V. Boslovsky, who called Shostakovich's mother and told her that Shostakovich had been injured, then the family doctor, Professor Maksimovich, and the NKVD, whom he told a thief was lurking around the Shostakovich household. Professor Maksimovich was arrested and jailed until the situation was cleared.

Letter 74- 10 August 1934, Polenovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I received your letter today. I'm upset again. I'm very outraged that such bastards like Tsurmilin and Co. are listened to, and because of them, my vacation is disrupted, and the blood of Ashkenazy and Iokhelson is spoiled. I'm rushing to get home, but objective reasons are getting in the way. I hope that I'll be able to leave by the 12th. However, I'm not sure of this. Everything is very sad. Send my greetings to Ashkenazy, so that he is not sad or upset. However, I myself know that this advice is not worth a penny. I kiss you. Greetings to your wife. Nina sends greetings.

D. Shostakovich

Letter 75- 17 November 1934, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I hasten to report some Leningrad news to you. O.V. Legran was dismissed of the position of Director of the Leningrad Philharmonic in view

of the transfer to another job*. The interim director, A.V. Ossovsky, was appointed. He used to perform duties temporarily. The Soviet Control Commission approved the decision of the LSSK based on the last survey. Therefore, in this case, everything is going as well as possible. I really want Ashkenazi and Iokhelson to go on vacation. Both of them look bad, as if they'd be more beautiful in their coffins. They need a good rest.

Yesterday, I had a conversation with A.I. Ugarov and was very satisfied with it. We talked a lot about you, and much good has been said about you to the highest degree. He really doesn't want you to go away from Leningrad and for this, suggests the appropriate conclusions (an apartment, work, etc.)** In general, everything is going smoothly so far. Yesterday, there was a concert at the radio committee of my compositions. N.S. Rabinovich performed my 1st Symphony, piano concerto, and three scenes from "The Golden Age." He did very well. Great job. The opening remarks by V.M. Bogdanov-Berezovsky were rejected, and therefore, the concert went without accompaniment. This was also good, because other than you, nobody in the USSR knows how to speak about music. Today, I hope to go to your presentation in Moscow. A specialist was on the radio and said that it would no longer stink. I'll check today. The affairs of V.E. Rafalovich are not important, although I think that he worries a bit too early. I'm also worried about the repercussions. I should say, that lately, I strongly began to sympathize with him, and if I hear anything bad about him, I will feel it as a personal affliction. Although, let's wait- we'll see. I hope that my letter reaches you. If you can hunt down the time, answer. I really miss you. Don't be late in Moscow. Come back soon.

I kiss you hard. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. Your D. Shostakovich.

P.S. I'm in melancholy. Straight trouble.

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* Footnote: Sollertinsky's relationship with Olga Vladimirovna Legran was apparently very difficult; "transfer to another job" was a common Soviet euphemism for someone being fired from a position.

** Footnote: Sollertinsky was living in a cramped apartment at the time with his family, and was considering leaving Leningrad. Shostakovich and Ugarov were able to arrange for him to get a new apartment.

Letter 76- 11 February 1935, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, In order to check the efficiency of the postal system, I sent you a postcard. Happy housewarming! D. Shostakovich

Letter 77- 10 March 1935, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Apparently, I will not get out of here anytime soon. Maybe I'll be able to return to Leningrad less and less, because the question of my moving has

been decided unexpectedly vigorously. On the 16th, I will speak to Voroshilov*. The question of my trip abroad has already been positively resolved**. The trip will last about a month. At this time, an apartment will be getting ready, which I have already seen. I am very sad to part with Leningrad, but nothing can be done. This is the desire of the Government. If there was a really good attitude towards me in Leningrad, then I would have stayed, but the case with the apartment for N.V.*** showed me clearly that the attitude towards me is indifferent and cold. Now, everything has been settled. The apartment I will leave to N.V., I myself will move with my mother to Moscow. I beg you to write to me about yourself. How are you living? How is your mood? Write to me at Atovmyan's address: Moscow, 9 Nizhny Kilovsky lane, room 8, apartment 11.

It is necessary that you write, because I will not be in Leningrad anytime soon, depending on all circumstances.+ Every day, I visit Dombrovsky. He leaves a strong impression on me. Often he remembers you and sends you greetings. If I move to Moscow, then I will definitely drag you along with me, because parting from you would make me very sad. I kiss you hard. Your D. Shostakovich. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. You must write.

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* Footnote: Politburo member close to Stalin in the 1930s; in charge of the Bureau of Culture after the Civil War.

** Footnote: His trip to Turkey, Apr.- May 1935.

*** Footnote: Nina.

+ Footnote: Shostakovich here refers to the divorce with Nina. They divorced Feb. 3 1935 and remarried March 23.

Letter 78- March 31, 1935, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I wrote you a postcard somehow. Did you receive it or not? I live wildly. I don't have time for visiting friends and acquaintances. V.R. Dombrovsky feels bad. I spoke to the doctor from the NKVD hospital. He told me that V.R. is hopeless. (Do not tell anyone about this.) I'm visiting him nearly every day. Tomorrow he will go abroad. There is some hope of his health improving, but not much. GABT wants to stage my ballet*, for which Lapukhov was ordered. Today, it was demonstrated. Everyone was delighted with the music, and same with the libretto. It seems like the story with "The Bolt" will be repeated, although we'll have to see. Lower these "quirks" from your shoulders and get down to business. Litovsky and Boyarsky were outraged at Popov's symphony being banned**. They are going to set up commission. I also proposed to assemble the jury who rewarded Popov, and have them either flog themselves or disagree with Repertkom. In this case, there is hope to see Stetsky. I'm going to Turkey on the 8th. Meanwhile, they are sewing me two suits (a black one and a light one), a tailcoat, tuxedo, two coats (mid-season and summer), two pairs of

boots, etc. All of these will definitely increase my wardrobe. "Go like this," says the parrot while being dragged away from its cage by the cat***. This is my mood on going to Turkey, as I've heard about their pretty deplorable orchestra. Go write to me. How is your mood, how are you? I eagerly await your letters. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. I kiss you,

Your D. Shostakovich.

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* Footnote: The Limpid Stream.

** Footnote: In the evening edition of Krasnaya Gazeta, V. E. Iokhelson published the article "From someone else's voice," where he criticized the symphony, since it gives "a subjectively limited reflection of reality and most distorted themes."

*** Translator's note: This is a literal translation, as the figurative meaning is difficult to translate. The original Russian is "ехать так ехать," and the phrase apparently refers to an old joke.

Letter 79- 7 April 1935, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, So, I have not received a single letter from you. It's a pity. I'm very pleased by your letters in my extremely bitter mood. Tomorrow at 8 in the evening, I'm going to Odesa. From Odesa, I'm going to Istanbul at 11 in the morning (and then to Constantinople). Now, I've returned from a "cocktail party" at the Turkish embassy. It was very boring, although I liked the cocktails. Now I'm going to have shashlik*. I kiss you hard. Greetings to your wife.

Your D. Shostakovich

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Cultural Note: "Shashlik" refers to both a roast meat dish and a social event in which people gather to roast and eat the food itself.

Letter 80- 9 April 1935, on the road from Moscow to Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, It's already past 12, so all of our company* are leaving on the train. We are traveling very well. Lev Oborin is also traveling with us, which makes me very happy. I hope that I'll receive your letter in Odesa. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. Lyova** sends greetings. D. Shostakovich

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* Footnote: Other artists and musicians

** Footnote: Lev Oborin.

Letter 81- 11-13 April 1935, from the path from Odesa to Istanbul

On the "Franz Mehring" with the Philharmonic. Greetings from the sea.
Oborin and Shostakovich

Letter 82- 13 April 1935, Istanbul

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I arrived safely in Istanbul. I will not forget being "under the sail" for a long time. I have never seen such beauty before. This evening, I'm going to Ankara. Istanbul is an exclusively beautiful city. Now I'm at the Soviet consulate. We are wonderfully welcomed here. The consular staff is very affectionate and hospitable. I kiss you hard. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. Your D. Shostakovich

Letter 83- 14 April, 1935, Ankara

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I'll try to be brief while writing to you about my arrival in Turkey, or rather, the arrival of our brigades. Yesterday, on the 13th of April, I got up at 5 in the morning and went onto the deck of the "Franz Mehring." The steamer was anchored in the Bosphorus Strait. At 6, the sun rose. It should be said that the view of Istanbul from the deck of the ship literally shook me with its beauty. It is absolutely impossible to imagine. You need to see it for yourself. I'm writing your letter from Istanbul. I hope that you receive it. My day there was like this: We go from the pier to our embassy, where they gave us a warm welcome. Then, we have lunch, which was held in our honor by Istanbul artists. After that, we took a walk for a while and went to the train station. In the wonderful international train car, we went to Ankara. Here, we are staying at the "Ankara Palace" hotel. My room is quite decent. I took a bath, and washed away all the dirt from the road. After that, I headed to the embassy with Comrade Karakhan. Comrade Karakhan treated us to breakfast. It was very delicious and nice. Karakhan himself left a wonderful impression on me. I forgot to write that he, together with a group of comrades from the embassy, met us at the train station. After breakfast, Lyova and I went into the city, returned home, rested, and went for another walk.

I returned to my room to write to you. I had a lot of impressions, so much that they're still muddled in my head. Ankara is a very beautiful city with many new buildings. There is one flaw: it is a terribly hot day, and the evenings are windy and dusty. There is literally no escape from the dust. That's all for now. Tomorrow evening, there will be a reception in our honor at the embassy. And the days after tomorrow, there will be daily speeches. I miss you very much. My mood is unimportant due to bitter family circumstances. But I need to hope that everything will fall into place sooner or later. On the 10th of May, I hope to return home. I kiss you hard. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. Your D. Shostakovich

P.S.- Here, they told me that Paul Hindemith is in Ankara. Tomorrow, he will be at the embassy reception.

Letter 84- 17 April 1935, Ankara

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, It has already been a month since I left Leningrad. I brutally miss you. And apparently, I will not return soon, because it's not known yet when we'll go home. Life is pretty troublesome. Starting today, there will be concerts every day. The 19th will be Oborin's and my piano concerti. And then more concerts (preprogrammed) where I will play little things on the piano. Time goes by imperceptibly. One flaw: due to my neurasthenia*, I'm terribly nervous before every show. I envy Lyova and all the singers, for whom shows and concerts are ordinary business. I met Karakhan. The most charming person. I kiss you hard. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. D. Shostakovich.

- Soon we'll be driving around to different cities.

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* Translator's note: An antiquated term for a variety of mental disorders, today commonly recognized as anxiety or related mental conditions.

Letter 85- 21 April 1935, Ankara

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I strongly miss you. I want to meet you soon and chat about this and that. My mood is sour due to family troubles. If not for these troubles, everything would be good. Almost every day, I perform at concerts. The most successful day was the one before yesterday. I played 24 preludes and the concerto. Lyova Oborin played instead of the orchestra, and played marvelously. On the 25th, I will play the cello sonata, if the cellist has time to learn it. The members of our brigade are very charming people. Aside from Oborin, who is definitely good, Oistrakh makes a very good impression on me. And the others are good, too. We live amicably. I kiss you hard. Your D. Shostakovich. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna.

Letter 86- 23 April, 1935- Ankara

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,
Happy third anniversary of the Central Committee's historic decree of restructuring in literature and art organizations. I live very well, only a little restlessly. I hold concerts almost every day and go to different appointments. Of these appointments, I remember the "mug of beer" with the Czechoslovakian ambassador to Turkey most of all. We drank beer, ate sausages, and danced. During the dancing, our hospitable host shouted from time to time in broken Russian, "oh, speak up!" Today, I saw a disgusting French film at the movie theater. Last time, I saw the charming actress Francesca Gaal. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. Around the 20th-25th of May, I hope to be home. I kiss you,
D. Shostakovich

Letter 87- 28 April 1935, Ankara

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Happy May 1st*. Although you won't receive my letter in time, well, at least accept my belated well-wishes. I'm sending you a photo** of Lyova Oborin and I. We won four games of tennis with our embassy. I must confess, I don't like the photograph, because I'm not too visible. Our stay in Ankara is coming to an end. On the 1st at 12, we're going to Smyrna, or, as they say here, to Izmir. I am incessantly exhausted of concert activity and I dream of resting. Only Comrade Stokitsky came back (the TASS correspondent in Ankara). He treated us to shashlik and pelmeni. Because I haven't had either of these dishes in a while, they were received with great pleasure. Comrade Stokitsky himself and his wife are wonderful and charming people. I have a lot of impressions, which are still muddled and unformed. When I return, I'll tell you everything. In Smyrna, we will stay for 4 days, and 7 days in Istanbul. Then, we'll be on the ship home. I'll be in Leningrad on May 25th. I kiss you hard,

Your D. Shostakovich

P.S.- Greetings to Irina Frantsevna

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* Cultural note: In Russia, this is International Workers' Day, a holiday which originated in the Soviet era.

** Footnote: The photograph is small, fuzzy, and unreproducible, but depicts Shostakovich and Oborin taking a walk. It's still in the possession of the Sollertinsky family as of the book's publication.

Letter 88- 1 May 1935, on the road from Ankara to Izmir

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Happy May 1st, and I wish you fortune in everything. Today at 12, we left for Izmir, where we will stay for 6 days. We are going in a decent international train car. I'm traveling in a compartment with Lyova. At the nearest station, I'll toss this postcard in the mail. In Ankara, I was wildly tired. Now, I suffer from strong heat. Everyone is hoping for night. Maybe we'll freshen up. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich P.S. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. Lyova sends greetings.

Letter 89- 2 May 1935, Izmir

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, We arrived safely in Izmir. We're staying at the hotel "Ege." A wonderful title, and there are more such titles here*. I have a little room here, with a balcony that allows me to see the sea, which is a consolation. We arrived at 7 in the evening. I have not seen the city yet, but my first impressions were good. We're staying until the 6th. On the 6th, we're heading to Istanbul, and then on the 16th to Odesa. I miss you very much. On the 25th of May, I hope to be in Leningrad. On the road, I tossed a postcard in the mail for you at the station. Have you received it? Generally, I wrote to you often. I hope that you received my letter. I kiss you hard, D. Shostakovich P.S.- Send greetings to Irina Frantsevna.

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* Translator's note: In Russian, this is an interjection, similar to "a-ha." In Turkish, it means "Aegean."

Letter 90- 5 May 1935, Izmir

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Tomorrow, we're going to Istanbul. This is the last stop of our tour in Turkey. I can summarize our stay in Izmir: three concerts, of which I participated in two. Yesterday, we took a wonderful trip to excavations of the ancient city, which existed 21 centuries ago, Pergamon. We took walks around the city; it was interesting and beautiful. The local governor gave us a warm welcome. The day before yesterday, he treated us to breakfast, and to tea today. A very charming and cordial person. Lots of fun. All of us are thoroughly tired and thirst for rest. Once you receive this, write to Odesa general mail. I hope that I can read your letter when I arrive. We're leaving Istanbul on the 16th.

I kiss you hard, D. Shostakovich

Letter 91- 7 May 1935, Dardanelles

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, We're going on a steamboat through the Dardanelles. A historic place, which you probably know well. We're remembering you. I'm passing the pen to Lev*.

Dear Ivan Ivanovich! It must be admitted that the reason why we wrote you a postcard, in addition to wanting to cordially greet you, is because of a desire to boast: they say that this is the place to write from. The winds blow!

L. Oborin and D. Shostakovich

*Footnote: From this point on in the letter, Oborin is writing.

Letter 92- May 8, 1935

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Today, we arrived safely in Istanbul. When we were in the Dardanelles, Lyova and I scribbled you a postcard. We tossed it in the mail to you in the city of Cannakale. This is not as remarkable as the fact that 40 kilometers away from Cannakale is the notorious city of Troy. Excavations are being made there. We traveled there and saw many interesting things. On the 16th, we leave for Odesa. If you send a message there, I will be terribly happy. I'm tired of the trip and drawn to my homeland. I want to rest. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

Greetings to Irina Frantsevna.

Letter 93- 7 July 1935, Polenovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I arrived quite safely. Today I went by car across some 5 hours to Polenovo. I live here in the 4th building. My room has a balcony. There is a

wonderful view of the Oka River. In a word, endless pleasure. A portrait of the weather: Cold; the wind blows and the rain pours without stop. Polenovo brings a beehive to mind, in which there are two queens: E.K. Malinovskaya and V.I. Mutnikh* (note-Mutnikh- director). The first (Malinovskaya) proves the proverb "if you drive nature out the door, it will fly in through the window." This ex-director bears her title of ex-director with dignity. A curious psychological study.

The charming Tamara Bakh and Natasha Chudon are not here. But instead of them is one Nina Ivanova (not the ex-secretary), an ardent admirer of the author of "Name Day." In terms of communal amenities, it's good here. Plumbing, sewage, and electricity are functioning, but the same cannot be said of my stomach, which for the third day is not. Constipation. The phenomenon is terrible. Apparently, the first treatment will be with Dr. Badmayev. S.S. Prokofiev is here and many others. The food here is delicious and satisfying. I hope that it will continue to be the same. The sun is out. I can see it through my window. Sounds of Chopin's C-minor preludes are heard from below. A complete arsenal of poetry, and more importantly, an incomparable feeling of loneliness. Because of this, I forgive the cold, rain, and dampness, reconcile with the departure from Leningrad and the fact that my suitcase is in the storeroom, and the storekeeper had a day off and left with the keys, I forgive constipation, and many other things. The luxurious view from my window soothes the depths of my soul. Two things to say about this business. First, be sure to write, and second, mention the question on the bathtub in your letter**. I paid for the plumber's work. I did this because I don't think it's acceptable that you should have to pay for this. I paid him mere trifles and beg you to accept this gift from me. I'm interested in the question of whether he completed the work, or disappeared after receiving the money. I wish you a good life from the depths of my soul. Don't drink too much. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna; write soon. Your D. Shostakovich

The city of Taruss, Serpukhov region. Bolshoi Theatre house of rest.

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* Footnote: A director.

** Footnote: Shostakovich bought Sollertinsky a large clawfoot bathtub for his new apartment and paid for the installation as well.

Letter 94- 10 July 1935, Polenovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, This is the third day of my stay in Polenovo. I'm bored. Today I took a bath (sic!). Still, a gigantic conquest of Polenovo's construction. In view of this, I remembered you. Is the bathtub working yet? I'm very worried about this question. Today, N.A. Smolich came from Moscow, the wife of our mutual friend N.V. Smolich. The latter arrived safely in Paris yesterday. V.V. Nebolsin sends you greetings. He marveled without a second thought at the compilation of the Leningrad Philharmonic concert

season*. The weather has improved a little, although there is a piercing cold, especially in the evening. I have to put on a fur coat. Everything else is good, although not at all satisfying. Lunch is sufficient enough, but I have no appetite for dinner and breakfast. There has been a relative decline in the condition of my health. My stomach is reluctant, but it's beginning to function. I'm looking forward to the days where I can say, "well, now I'm quite healthy." However, it's not just my stomach. I think about the future of my life with anxiety. Be sure to write. D. Shostakovich

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* Footnote: Sollertinsky planned concerts at the Philharmonic, and Nebolsin wanted to be included in the concert season.

Letter 95- 17 July 1935, Polenovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Thank you for the letter. Like all your letters, I read it with pleasure and admiration. Once again, I was cheered with the confluence of our tastes. The great Semyachkin produced the strongest impression on me of our time. I even cut out this article in order to read it with you once I return to Leningrad, and it turns out that you already read it and reacted to it with the same admiration that I did*. Yesterday, I received a telegram from Vasily Evgenievich (note- Rafalovich) that the business was stopped and, due to a lack of evidence, everyone was acquitted. It should be said that I'm extremely pleased. First of all, justice prevailed, and secondly, I was absolutely right in this matter and believed to the end that there was no business, only "fuk..."** or a strong misunderstanding. For obvious reasons, the feeling of joy has already disappeared: "What poisoned his sweet moment? Precisely, he achieved his goal." (A.N. Scriabin)**

I'm happy that the case is closed and proud of the outcome.+ It seems to me that now, something needs to be done so that this vice is punished. Here, it's cold and rainy all the time. Only today there was some sunlight. I lead a very quiet life. The most that I do is to sit on a bench in the evenings with N.P. Ivanova and talk about ballet, the bad weather, etc. My hand reaches out by "inertia" to touch, but I immediately draw it back into my pocket. But there is material for touching, and N.P. Ivanova reacts energetically to the touch. It is a shame that the plumber has disappeared. This makes me very upset. Although I need to hope that sooner or later, the bathtub will be installed.

You have not written to me or called me on the phone. How are things on this front? The case of Stenich++ shocked me. If he drove his wife to suicide, he belongs in jail. If she killed herself only because he fell out of love and left her, then she was a fool and maybe even a bastard. I spoke to Mutnikh. He insists that I stay in Moscow. I don't know if it's worth it. Apparently, due to family circumstances. Write soon. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna.

Your D. Shostakovich

P.S.- If it's not difficult, find out if my wife went to OPOCHKA or not.

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* Footnote: Shostakovich refers to D.S. Davydovich, theatre critic; the article concerns reviews of Shakespeare plays. According to the footnotes, it is "free from ideological predetermination."

** Footnote: note- A word from the lexicon of Sobakevich, a character in "Dead Souls," also used in "The Nose."

*** Footnote: A line from Scriabin's "Poem of Ecstasy;" the full line is "What darkened this joyful moment? Precisely, he achieved his goal." This also rhymes in Russian.

† Footnote: Shostakovich also reported to his mother that he was glad Rafalovich was acquitted, but Rafalovich would be persecuted once again in 1938 and was not rehabilitated until 1955.

††Footnote: A translator and critic.

Historical note: Broken marriages were fairly common in the 20s and early 30s Soviet Union. Due to the "free love" culture of the NEP era and the fact that getting a divorce was extremely easy during the time, it was common for couples to marry and quickly abandon the marriage. Stalin would impose restrictions on divorce, abortion, and the legality of homosexuality, as these contributed to a low birth rate and rapid industrialization required a large workforce.

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Letter 96- 22 July 1935, Polenovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Today I received your letter somehow with sad news: the plumber, telephone, Druskin, and Eldosha* Regarding the decision, no matter how hard I try, I can't remember what you wrote about. About the telephone, I'll give you some advice: Speak to Yascha Smirnov**. Mentions in his article about an absence of Mozart's operas in the Kirov theatre gives you every right to do so.

And I'll give you some advice about the bathtub: wait for me; on the 1st of August I'll be home, or contact some plumber from the Krestovsky housing estate. As for M. Druskin, then the matter is more complicated. In any case, "I'll give advice: don't be discouraged." Frankly, I talked to this young man, and he really upsets me because of his stubborn inability to "choose a career"*** But his stomach probably works properly, (inaudible), it is necessary, etc. etc. About Eldosha, I don't sympathize: jealousy and vice are great monstrosities. I rejoice in the rapid growth of composers in the face of V. Adler.† About my sorrows, I obviously won't spread them, especially considering yours. Tell Iokhelson that, if the opportunity arises, I will go to Siverskaya††. About "my opinion," things are worse. G. Popov, who I met in Moscow upon my departure to Polenovo, promised to give me his score so that it would be easier for me to accept "my opinion," but the promise has not been fulfilled so far. It's difficult for me to "analyze" by memory, but I would like to go over the score with an enthusiastically critical eye†††. I

miss you very much. I hope that you will have a nice time in Siverskaya. I'm very upset about the death of Natan Zarkhi. I only knew him a little, but I feel very sorry for him. Don't be discouraged.

I kiss you hard, D. Shostakovich

P.S. Send greetings to Irina Frantsevna

I received a letter from Dombrovsky. He is healthy and eager to work.

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* Footnote: Druskin: musicologist and close friend of Sollertinsky; Eldosha: nickname for Bogdanov-Berezovsky.

Translator's note: "Eldosha" comes from "елдыжить" or "елдыжничать" - "to quarrel" or "to yell." Can refer to a cantankerous person, but can also be profane in some contexts. It is unclear why Shostakovich uses this nickname.

** Footnote: Cultural official and Party leader.

*** Footnote: Druskin at this time changed from being a pianist to a musicologist due to modern music being denounced as formalism.

† Footnote: V.A. Adler, Shostakovich's fellow classmate at the conservatory. Apparently, this refers to his entry into the LSSK.

††Footnote: A dacha in the Leningrad oblast.

††† Footnote: Refers to Popov's 1st Symphony, which caused controversy with the LSSK while Shostakovich was away.

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Letter 97- 27 July 1935, Polenovo

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I received your letter, in which the description of Siverskaya bursts with cheerful optimism. Here the weather is horrible, and it's boring, although the ballet workers' minds find entertainment here. I'll describe some to you. One night, A.A. Tsarman jr*. was running around the room with his friends and called everyone to the room, where he lived with A.A. Tsarman sr., his father. What was the matter? It turns out that A.A. Tsarman sr. had an erection, after not having one for 27 years. Shocked by it, he sent his son for his friends, in order to show them such a rare phenomenon.

One afternoon, one of the goats (...). The event alone is not outstanding, but one ballet worker decided to elaborate on this modest event. He collected the goat shit in a candy bag (interestingly, goat shit looks like round lollipops) and began to pretend to eat it, taking it out of the bag. Another worker approached: "What are you eating?"

"Candy."

"Give me some."

"You're welcome."

The other takes one, puts it in his mouth, and exclaims, "yes, this is shit!" The first replies, "how quick-witted you are!" The laughter of those present is indescribable. Generally, fun people. On the first of August, I'm staying in Leningrad, in Siverskaya. In Moscow, I'm staying for two days. And maybe more, depending on the possibility of getting a railway ticket. I miss you very much. When I come back, we'll talk. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. Your D. Shostakovich

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*Footnote: Ballet artist

Letter 98- 30-31 October 1935, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, My democratic inclinations strongly influenced me to decide to call the "little ones" and treat them to a glass of vodka. All of them worked on "The Limpid Stream". My mood is sour, because I'm still afraid that "The Limpid Stream" will take off soon. I haven't spoken to you on this topic in Leningrad, because I don't want to upset my relatives, who I really love and will be upset by my "failure." This is how things are today: Today was the first rehearsal on stage with the orchestra. It went very well. Everyone was delighted. But I feel the worm of doubt in my soul, that I'm ready to "accept" the withdrawal of the ballet, which I'm sure will take place one of these days. I beg you not to accelerate things and not to speak to anyone anywhere about this. In any case, for me, this was a very good exercise. I think that you understand my mood excellently. I think that it's clear to you that "The Limpid Stream" is my shameful failure. And I regard that this is how it was from the very beginning.

I only want you to believe in this attitude of mine, and to understand, and having understood, to forgive me. What I could do during "The Bolt" I can't do now. And I understand this very well and scold myself mercilessly for it. I would be very happy if you would immediately answer this letter and reassure my restless soul. Just don't take notes; that would make me uncomfortable, although I think that you, knowing me pretty well, understand my attitude towards the above opus. (...) I strongly believe that in this case, you won't leave me in an extremely difficult moment of my life, and that the only person whose friendship I cherish, the apple of my eye, is you. So, write to me, for god's sake. I kiss you.

Your D. Shostakovich

P.S. - Greetings to Irina Frantsevna P.S. P.S.- A divorce with Nina is out of the question. I only now understand to the very core what a wonderful woman she is and how much I love her. D. SCH

My address: Moscow, 51 Bolshoi Karetniy street, room 17, apartment 110, telephone 3-3463.

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* Footnote: A group of artists.

** Footnote: Lopukhov- choreographer, Mordinov- director, Dmitriev- artist, Faier-conductor.

Letter 99- 17 November 1935, Moscow

My dear friend Ivan Ivanovich, I hope that you received the telegram about the Shakespeare conference taking place on 25 November*. I hope that we will meet here and get to talk and catch up.

I will be brief about what I'm doing. Today was an almost complete rehearsal of "The Limpid Stream." I sat through half of the first act and left. My reason for leaving is as follows: In the evening, I called Faier and asked him, "how are you"? From his words and tone, it became clear that he wasn't doing well. The only thing that makes everyone enthusiastic is my music. In general, he will come to me at 12 at night and tell me in detail. I also called Lopukhov. The latter said in a cheerful voice, "there were 36 workers in the Moscow factories. They are delighted. Arkanov is categorically against the show, but Mutnikh is categorically for it." In general, at 10 in the evening, he will tell me more in detail. He knows my opinion on all this. He thinks that Arkanov's line will take over, because he supported the "offended." On the 21st, I'll go to see "The Limpid Stream." I.A. Akulov** will have to decide whether or not it will "be or not be." In this way, all will be clear on the 21st. I'm taking it easy. I think that there won't be a campaign in "Izvestiya" and other press organs. Lopukhov is the only thing that torments me. He will be painfully sorry for me if this whole enterprise fails. He is a very good person and I sincerely love him. I beg you not to tell anyone about this. In the Bolshoi Theatre, there has been one event: V.L. Kubatsky has been dismissed from work. He was dismissed from directors' and conductors' studios. Yesterday, I was with him and tried to comfort him. Here ends the sad part of my letter.

Today, I was greatly happy to visit the final meeting of the Stakhanovite Congress. At the presidium, I saw comrades Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Kossinor, Mikoyan, Postishev, Chubar, Andreev, and Zhdanov. I listened to the presentations of comrades Stalin, Vorshilov, and Shvernik. Vorshilov's speech captivated me, but after listening to Stalin, I absolutely lost all sense of reason and shouted "hurrah!" along with everyone in the hall, and applauded without end. You will read about his historic speech in the newspaper, so I won't tell you what he said. Of course, today was the happiest day of my life: I saw and heard Stalin. The congress begins today at 1 PM. This is why I left rehearsal at the Bolshoi Theatre. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. I kiss you hard, Your D. Shostakovich P.S. I would be happy if you replied to my letter. My address: Moscow, 51 Bolshoi Karetniy street, room 17 apartment 110.

* Footnote: This refers to the All-Russian Scientific and Theoretical Conference on Shakespeare. Sollertinsky took part in it. Among the material presented was his article in "Literaturnaya Gazeta," where he wrote that Soviet composers hadn't done much in terms of Shakespeare, and that "there is one work that is very talented and very bright - this is the music of Shostakovich to Shakespeare's "Hamlet". It is distinguished by serious musical merits, but, alas, it is extremely difficult to remove it from Akimov's whole conception." This refers to the 1932 stage production of "Hamlet" with music by Shostakovich, not the later film.

** Footnote: A Party official.

Letter 100- 21 December 1935, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I went to write to you on the day of my arrival in Moscow, but, as you see, I'm writing to you only now. When I was leaving Moscow, A.A. Ashkenazi went to see me off. He told me that you were strongly offended by me, that I did not speak with "tone" at the meeting of the LSSK, where Samosud was honored. On one angle you are correct, and on the other you are not. The meeting was generally dedicated to Samosud's honor. But it bore an extremely masochistic character. There were no composers there. Even Portov and Pustilnik* gathered no more than 10 people. Smart Samosud, of course, felt this, and therefore, my first and last words were largely syrupy. Without this, a 5000-ruble award could not be announced to Samosud. Aside from this, the day before, you and I had an argument**, and decided to postpone the matter for another time. And finally: If I am guilty of offending you in the future, forgive me. I'll try to be smarter and more energetic. I consider you a unique musician, and furthermore, my personal friend, and I will always support you in all situations of life, especially since I believe your line is absolutely correct.

Again, I beg you: Don't be angry with me. But the syrup still needed to pour down. In Moscow, everything is the same. Yesterday, I was watching the film "The Girl Friends" at the movie theatre. My seat turned out to be right next to Meyerhold's. The latter is still healthy and jealous. He cringed at the success of his former colleague, L. O. Arnshtam. His meeting with me was dry and vicious. Apparently, I've been talking a lot recently about my feelings about him, and it got to him. It's also surprising that at the meeting with him, I felt incredible hatred and contempt. He was also there with his mare, Raikh***. I kiss you hard, Your D. Shostakovich Greetings to Irina Frantsevna

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*Footnote: Composers.

**Translator's note: Translated as "argument," but what he literally says is "a conversation about banging fists" (беседу о стучании кулаком) and I couldn't find any idioms like this.

*** Translator's note: "Mare" (кобыла) can also refer to a tall, awkward woman.

Letter 101- 29 December 1935, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Happy new year and new happiness. I wish you luck and fortune in everything. On the 26th of December, the premiere of "Lady Macbeth" took place. It went very well, but the press is scolding Smolich and Dmitriyev. In Moscow, I'm staying a while longer- up to about half of January. Today I received a letter from Glikman, who wrote to me about the tone Iokhelson spoke in about my apartment. And the blind man also received a letter. My answer to his letter: telegram Iokhelson that I refuse the apartment on Kirovsky Prospect. This, of course, upsets me. But I hope that sooner or later my family and household affairs will improve. Because of his rudeness, my mood became sad. Due to this, I decided to write to you about this in order to pour out my soul a little. Once again, Happy New Year. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. Your D. Shostakovich.

Letter 102- 6 January, 1936, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, You haven't written to me, and I haven't heard news from you. How's your life going? How's your health and mood? How's Irina Frantsevna? And in general, what's going on in Leningrad? I live quietly. The premiere of "Lady Macbeth" went well. There were three stagings and all three were successful. Melik-Pashaev did very well. The other day, I finished the second movement of my symphony*. It has an intermezzo with an Allegretto tempo, which lasts for ten minutes. I'm satisfied with how it came out. Now I'm orchestrating, to use an expression of the late Verkhotursky. When I get home, I'll show it to you. I'm going home on the 19th. Yesterday, the tour for "Quiet Flows the Don" opened at the Malegot Theatre. The show was very successful. Gorodinsky told me his opinion during a conversation. In general, it's negative. Such words including "ignoramus" and "epigone" flew from his tongue. He uttered a whole series of phrases like this, so many that if I didn't know it was Gorodinsky speaking, I would have thought it was you. Nevertheless, the success at the theatre made me happy, although I think that no awards will be given**. (note- It was the custom of the time, after creative reports in Moscow, to honor their participants with government awards and honorary titles.) Today, "Komarinsky Muzhik." That's what I'm strongly afraid of. The Mikhailovsky Theatre is here in full force, right down to the girl in charge of menstruation***, the courier Augusta Ivanovna. That's all, Ivan Ivanovich. Write to me soon. Your D. Shostakovich I have a different apartment now. Not 110, but 61.

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*Footnote: The 4th symphony.

**Footnote: It was the custom of the time, after creative reports in Moscow, to honor their participants with government awards and honorary titles.

***Translator's note: The word used is "менструациями" (menstruation). Potentially a hyperbole suggesting the theatre is run meticulously, as menstruation cannot be controlled naturally?

Note: *At this point, to make the formatting process easier, I will keep in my original note formats, while removing unnecessary notes like personal observations and commentary. The word "note" in parentheses indicates any footnotes, historical notes, or translation notes; parentheses without the word "note" are in the original letters.*

Letter 103. 9 January, 1936, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Today, I received your letter full of unhealthy pessimism. I will be in Leningrad on the 14th of January. Subsequently, I will be able to visit the evening vigil mourning the memory of A. Berg. His death saddened me no less than it saddened you. The deceased man was a genius. I'm sure that he will be appreciated sooner or later. Little made me happy about your intent to change your profession. You don't need to do this.

I'm really tired, but not of the banquets in honor of Malegot and I. These have not yet been observed, with the exception of one (in my honor). I'm tired of unrest and of the success of "Quiet Flows the Don." It's good that you criticized the issue of "Sovetskaya Muzyka," dedicated to Leningraders. Apparently, I'm strongly looking at life through Gorodinsky's rose-coloured glasses. Judging by your descriptions of speeches on Kremlev and Khubov (note- musicologists), everything has stayed the same. In any case, I advise you not to change your profession. I don't just advise you; I earnestly beg you. "Russia has many linguists" (note- a line of indecent couplet from the collection of the Free Russian alphabet and the Anthology of Russian shameful words - in the spirit of Ivan Barkov, a mischievous poet, famous for obscene verses and poems), but not a lot of musicologists. If we were to lose one like you, it would be a catastrophe. You do the most extremely useful work. You think that you are swearing in vain, and that the light is shining on Yascha (note- Smirnov). In any case, I beg you not to change your profession upon my return. I'll be back, and we'll work together on the musical front in Leningrad, at least based on my conversation with Gorodinsky, Dinamov, and a few other comrades. Let's talk to Iokhelson and Yascha. In any case, "I advise you not to lose heart," etc. The tour is going well. In the "Moscow Evening" paper, a review on "Quiet Flows the Don" appeared. E. Kann (note- musicologist) finds influence in Tchaikovsky and Bladramberg (note- composer), Serov, and Shostakovich. Along the way, she declares that the weakest thing in the performance is the music. This is true in the "Moscow Evening."

Today, Kann wrote that Malegot's "Lady Macbeth" is better than that of its affiliate. Bear in mind that E. Kann expresses her opinion to almost all of Moscow. I'm being criticized for writing a commendable article about this work. (note - that is "Quiet Flows the Don;" although Shostakovich helped Dzherzhinsky with the orchestration, he did not mention this in his article and instead focused his article on praising Samosud's conducting and the theatre.) So don't forget that the light did not converge... Gorodinsky says it straight: "In our time, is it really possible to write in the language of Tchaikovsky, N. Feopemptovich Sovovev (note- composer), etc.. " Your words. So, I ask you again- spit on Khudov and Kremlev and don't throw music out.

I kiss you hard, D. Shostakovich

Letter 104- 28 January 1936, Arkhangelsk

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, On the 26th, I went to Moscow. In the evening, Ginsin came (note- GABT theatre administrator). He didn't find out any news. But while I am sitting with him, the assistant GABT director Leontev called me and demanded me to the affiliate branch immediately. "Lady Macbeth" was showing. The play was attended by Comrade Stalin and Comrades Molotov, Mikoyan and Zhdanov. The show went well. After it ended, the composer was called (by the crowd). I went to bow, and regretted that I didn't do it after act 3. With a grieving soul, I again went to Ginsin, took a briefcase, and left on the train. The train departs in 20 minutes. We went in a mediocre train car, which was in unsanitary condition, and arrived at 8 in the morning. We met Nikolai Andreevich (note- unknown). He kept us at the train station for a very long time. Then, I went to the apartment of the local conductor, Viktor Karpovich Subashiev. Kubatsky went to rehearse, and I'm sitting here waiting to find a temporary place to live. It's incredibly cold here. In Subashiev's room, it's also very cold.

I'm shivering from cold and scolding myself for coming here. I'm terrified that I'll be here until the third of February, for seven days. Don't say anything about the poor travel conditions I'm finding in Arkhangelsk, as I'm afraid that my relatives will worry. I already have a cold and a cough. Besides that, I'm in a bad mood. As you may be guessing, I think about what happened to your namesake, and what didn't happen to me. (note- he refers to "Ivan Ivanovich" Dzherzhinsky, whose opera "Quiet Flows the Don" was successful; Shostakovich also helped with the orchestration.) Besides that, I'm saddened about the incident with my former infatuation (note- likely referring to E.E. Konstantinovskaya's expulsion from the Komsomol and arrest). I really want to see you soon, so that we can talk about all these topics. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. Your D. Shostakovich If you write to Moscow, (Moscow, 51 Bolshoi Karetniy street, 17 apartment 61), I would be very glad. V.K. Subashiev sends greetings.

Letter 105- 30 January, 1936

(From) Arkhangel'sk.(30 Konstantinovsky st., room 10, apartment 67) Don't do anything. I will arrive on the fifth. Shostakovich

(note- telegram. According to the footnotes, this was also sent on the same date Shostakovich sent a telegram to Atovmyan that read "Thank you for your greetings. I will arrive on the Fifth. Shostakovich," which was supposedly a response to Sollertinsky proposing to take steps in response to "Muddle instead of Music." According to the footnotes, the edge of this telegram is torn off.)

Letter 106- 29 February 1936, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I live quietly in Moscow. I'm sitting hopelessly at home, waiting for a call. (note- Shostakovich attempted to contact Stalin about the "Muddle Instead of Music" situation.) I don't have much hope that I will be answered, but I hope nonetheless. I'm seeing almost nobody, but Shebalin comes by occasionally. In "Soviet Art," there's a report about a discussion at the "House of Cinema" that said, "The discussion continues on March 3. Comrades Eisenstein, Alexandrov, and Shostakovich have signed up." This message isn't clear to me. In any case, I've never been to the "House of Cinema" in my life, and therefore, it's impossible that I've "signed up." I've become the greatest of enemies with the honorary director of the arts, professor Golonov (note- composer, conductor, and pianist; unknown why Shostakovich felt this way). The case is as follows: I accidentally went to the next rehearsal of "Quiet Flows the Don." After the rehearsal, the Committee of Arts Affairs, the management, and others had a discussion, which I attended. The honorary director of the arts, Professor Golonov, spoke with accusations and cruelty. He literally went into hysterics. Not waiting for the end of the hysteria, I left. It was the only "incident" at the time I attended in Moscow. Generally, I stay at home all the time and wait. Well, be healthy and successful in everything, my dear and only friend. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna. D. Shostakovich

Letter 107- 9 July 1936, Mill Creek

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I'm giving you my address. Mill Creek (note- dacha near Leningrad), Naberezhnaya Street, Korunetz house. I hope that you and Irina Frantsevna will visit us. If you would telegraph the day and train, then I'll go meet you. I beg you to come. D. Shostakovich.

Letter 108- 3 September 1936, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Comrades Kubatsky and V.A. Semyonov (note- ballet artist) just left. The latter told me that he was fired from technical work at the Bolshoi Theatre. I contemplated this matter for a long time. Kubatsky told me about a curious episode from the life of our friend A.V. Gauk. A.V. Gauk, departing to the Far East, decided to arrange a creative report regarding the Radio Committee orchestra. He talked a lot about his creative paths, methods, work, and elaboration on his works. The orchestra musicians

made remarks that offended his ego, which resulted in A.V. Gauk falling into... a faint. The end of this creative self-report was very unsuccessful. E.P. Gerdt replaced V.A. Semyonov. Tomorrow at 4:10 PM, I'm leaving for Odesa. Aside from what you've mentioned, I haven't seen anything. In Odesa, I'll write. Write to me. D. Shostakovich

Letter 109- 5 September 1936, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, This evening, I arrived in Odesa. The weather here is wonderful. I arrived perfectly safe. We're staying with Trauberg at the "Red" hotel. There aren't any rooms in the "London" hotel. It's all the same to me. Here, we have a huge room, with two bedrooms and a bathroom. My address is detailed on the back of this letter. Tomorrow, I want to go see "Aida" at the local opera. Besides that, I will complete my experience with "Natalka-Potalka" (note- opera by NV. Liysenko) and "Zaporozhets Across the Danube" (note- opera by S.S. Gulak-Artemovsky). Both of these works are in the repertoire. Write soon. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna,

Your D. Shostakovich

Letter 110- 10 September 1936, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, How are you? What's new? There's a little happening with me. I live on loans, only because I have a notice that on September 8th (sic! And today is the 10th) I was transferred 1000 rubles by telegraph (!!). I already owe Trauberg, Kozinev (note- director of "New Babylon" and other movies Shostakovich wrote music for), and many others. At a restaurant, I use credit, but my ear nervously awaits to hear "... the head of the buffet is serving you for the last time" (note- a reference to a line in Gogol's "Government Inspector;" the line he's referencing is "the master gives for the last time"). Well, that's okay. Somehow. I think that when I receive money, I'll write a mean note in "Socialist Communication" (note- not a real newspaper, although there was a newspaper with a similar name called "Socialist Connection"). Until then, I refrain. The manners in Odesa are lovely. For example, yesterday, I went on a tram. Suddenly, the tram stopped, not at the tram stop, but between stops. "Wagman, Wagman!" (only in Odesa do they call those loading the railway carriages that), shouted the conductor (and also) "what's up?" The wagman answered, "over there, a house is on fire."

"So move the carriage, so the passengers can see," shouted the conductor. Yesterday, I saw Babel (note- the writer Isaak Babel). There's a striking contrast between him and his work. He speaks in a kind, loud voice, has a resoundingly mellow laugh, and is generally a cheerful man, but is very nice. A lot of our mutual friends are here, mainly the glorious representatives of cinematography. Today, the artist Georgi Alekseevich Bondi came here. If you meet him, ask him to read his compositions. He is extremely talented. This is how my days go. I want to receive news from you. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna, Your D. Shostakovich

Letter 111- 10 September 1936, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, In the previous letter I wrote to you, I advised you to acquaint yourself with the works of the artist Bondi. His name is not Georgi Mikhailovich, like I wrote, but Alexei Mikhailovich. That's all I want to tell you. My life is the same. D. Shostakovich

Letter 112- 15 September 1936, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, You still haven't written anything to me. I wrote you two letters and about three postcards (not counting this one). Not good, not good. I'm coming home around the 10th-15th. Here, everything is good: I'm lively, well-fed, well-dressed, and healthy. Go write, at least briefly. Your letters always cheer me up because of the general briskness of your pen. Pass warm greetings to Irina Frantsevna, Your D. Shostakovich

Letter 113- 20 September 1936, Odesa

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, This letter probably will arrive shortly before my arrival. I'm leaving straight for Leningrad on the 22nd. Consequently, I'll see you soon. I was unsatisfied by my stay in Odesa, as my plans were not fulfilled. I wanted to go to Batum and back by sea, but this didn't happen due to the stupidest reason: Cards. I sat down to gamble twice and ended up losing 1000 rubles. My luck was phenomenally bad, and I didn't have any practice at all. Now I'm once again left without money and, due to this, decided to go home. My other plans were completed. At the local opera, I saw "Aida," "Zaporozhets Beyond the Danube," "Natalka-Poltavka," and "Swan Lake." I became sad. Besides that, I visited Professor Stolyarsky (note- violinist and professor at the Odesa conservatory). A charming old man. By inertia, two mothers showed me two gifted children. I am convinced again that Kozintsev and Trauberg, despite some shortcomings, are very good people. And finally, one more amusing thing:

The operator Moskvim (note- film operator who worked with Shostakovich) and I engaged in acts of gluttony together. We went to the London Hotel and ordered various phenomenal dishes, a day in advance. Along the way, we drank "gin," "whiskey," "sherry-brandy," etc., along with other luxurious drinks (note- he puts these all in quotation marks; possibly because he's transliterating English words), which the London Hotel has in abundance. This business brought me massive pleasure. I gorged myself to death. I got up full from eating, but at the same time, light as a dream. The so-called unhealthy feeling is not felt (unhealthy fullness: remember the pelmeni at the shashlik?), but a feeling of satiety. I almost didn't sleep at all tonight. The reason why: the harsh loss of yesterday's games. I pondered on this topic: Unlucky in cards, unlucky in love, unlucky in profession. (Note- a reference to "Queen of Spades") Well, Ivan Ivanovich, I'll see you soon. I hope Irina Frantsevna gets better soon, so that on my thirtieth birthday, I

have the opportunity to invite her, among a small number of guests. I press your hand,
D. Shostakovich

Letter 114 - 7 May 1937, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Yesterday, we arrived safely in Gaspra. It's very nice here. It's the first time I saw Crimea in bloom. After all, after a month, the sun will begin to burn, and all the rich vegetation will dry up and turn yellow. But now, it's healthy. We saw "Anna Karenina." It's a gorgeous, but slightly boring, show. The other day, I met with Khachaturian and Shebalin, and we had lunch with Khrennikov. (note- Tikhon Khrennikov- composer. He would become the General Secretary of the Composers' Union in 1948.) The first and second responded to my new symphony (note- the 5th) with great praise. The third already got acquainted with it in Leningrad and also praised it. My mood isn't very good due to the troubles that have befallen Nina. (note- Nina's mother was arrested twice on false charges, on April 13, 1937 and June 25, 1937. The second time, she was sent to an NKVD camp. She was released on February 29, 1940, and charges were terminated on June 8, 1957.) She is outwardly peaceful, but I feel that she is experiencing drama right now. Around us are cheerful people, and she also tries to be cheerful, but her suffering is indescribable. Maybe you can understand her condition. You are a keen psychologist, and it's probably clear to you what she is suffering from right now, and I suffer from it too. It's very hard to live through. I need to hope that everything will work out. I beg you to write to me, as often as possible. I will probably get bored here. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

P.S. - Greetings to Irina Frantsevna

Letter 115- 14 May 1937, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I'm waiting for your letter, and confess I've lost hope of receiving it. You should have received mine by May 7th. I live well. It's quiet here, the weather is beautiful, and the food is excellent. I'm bored without you. I met A.N. Dolzhansky here (note- musicologist; specialized in Shostakovich's works). He lives in the "Khasta-Aga" RABIS (note- trade union of art workers) sanatorium. He told me that you refused to go to Kislovodsk and that he's going there. I don't have any more news. The only newspapers I read are Pravda and Izvestiya. Don't forget to write. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna.

Your D. Shostakovich

Letter 116- 26 May 1937, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I received your letter. I confess that I was really worried, as I didn't have news from you or even a telegram. I read about Gauk, by chance, in an issue of "Soviet Art" (note- this likely refers to an article where Gauk was accused of

"unsatisfactory" and "unsystematic" musicianship). It serves him right. On June 2nd, we're going to Moscow. We'll stay there for a couple of days and go home. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich
Greetings to Irina Frantsevna.

Letter 117- 6 February 1938, Tbilisi

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Generally in Moscow, the performance of my 5th Symphony has been received with great success. The concert on the 2nd of February went better than 29th January. Gauk conducted very well. The orchestra played wonderfully. The newspapers warmly applauded this piece*. Ivestiya, Working Moscow, Soviet Art, and Evening Moscow all responded. In Izvestiya, Goldenweiser wrote, (note- a pianist and composer) in Working Moscow, Braudo (note- musicologist), in the evening paper, Fliyer (note- pianist), Neuhaus (in each column) (note- pianist), and in Soviet Art, S. Ostretsov. Nothing on it has been written in Pravda yet. On the 3rd, Nina and I safely departed, and on the 6th, we safely arrived in Tbilisi. At the train station, we met B.A. Arapov (note- composer), N.S. Rabinovich (note- conductor), the director of the Gofilet, the chairman of the GrSSK, and someone else. The director of the GrSSK turned out to be the composer and award recipient Comrade Kiladze. We're staying at the Orient Hotel, room 15. So far, we're coming to our senses after a generally tiring journey. Outside, we met Andrei Balanchivadze (note- composer). He's coming to Leningrad soon to stage his ballet. Generally, the people here are nice, and the city of Tbilisi is gorgeous. I haven't been here since 1931. The city is not directly recognizable. The streets are flooded with asphalt, and buses and trolleys drive on the roads. Despite this, the beginning of February is very warm here. I don't wear a coat. It's difficult for snow and frost to stay on the ground here, where the weather is surprisingly warm and nice. Well, that's all for now. Tomorrow, I'm playing my piano concerto. On the 13th, N.S. Rabinovich is performing the symphony. I kiss you hard. Greetings to Irina Frantsevna.
D. Shostakovich

P.S.- I will return to Leningrad on the 19th of February.

*Footnotes: The footnotes here include some of the reviews Shostakovich received in the paper:

Goldweiser: "The symphony captures the listener from the very first sounds with its significance and richness of musical content."

Braudo: "Its scale is truly grandiose. The symphony captivates and conquers from the very first bars. Great skill serves in it to express great feelings and thoughts. <...> Shostakovich's new symphony has a pronounced autobiographical character." Braudo wrote that the 3rd movement "speaks the language of genuine tragedy."

Fliyer: "In terms of significance and strength of influence, this, undoubtedly the best work of Shostakovich and one of the most interesting phenomena in Soviet musical literature" neuhaus Deep, significant, exciting music, classical in the integrity of the concept, perfect in form and mastery of orchestral writing, music that amazes with its novelty and originality and at the same time, as if familiar for a long time, so it truthfully and sincerely tells about human feelings.

Ostretsov: "Assessing the symphony as the first ideologically significant for DDS, he devotes most of the article to the analysis of the "lack of wealth" associated with the "burden of the past." Thus, the author believes that here "the pathos of suffering in a number of places is brought to a naturalistic scream and wail." In movement III, he finds "contemplation brought to a detachment that stands on the verge of mystical ecstasy" and "expressionistic" zigzags.

Letter 118- 26 June 1938, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, We're all really distressed about your illness. (note- Sollertinsky was hospitalized for four months with diphtheria, which temporarily paralyzed his legs, arms, and jaw. Shostakovich wrote him letters during his hospitalization until he was allowed to visit in person.) Please get well soon; I miss you very much. The day before yesterday, I went to the dacha and received a telegram from Irina Frantsevna about your illness. I will stay here, in order to stay informed of its progression. Life goes as normal. True, I stay at home almost all the time and don't see anyone. The premiere of "Mutiny" (note- opera) didn't go very well. M. Druskin wrote in "Leningrad Pravda" that among the successes of the Maly Opera, "Mutiny" is not counted. Today, my mother left for Moscow. She sends you greetings and wishes you a speedy recovery. I kiss you hard, D. Shostakovich

Letter 119- 28 June 1938, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, We miss you dearly and look forward to your speedy recovery. In any case, we heard from the hospital that your illness is progressing normally and without any complications. Life stays the same, without any incidents. The season is coming to an end. However, at the Kirov theatre, "The Heart of the Mountains" premiered. I hardly go out, because my apathy is great, and I'm far more interested in football matches, and there hasn't been one in six days. I wrote the second movement of my quartet (note- the first). It turned out to be a theme and variations. Today, a correspondent from the "Evening Moscow" called me, Comrade Driskin (such a strange surname!) (note- a reference to "The Nose." No information found on who Driskin was.), who asked me if I wanted to talk about my quartet. Glikman has fallen ill with the flu. Apparently, we won't meet. The SSK is desolate; all have left on vacation. Dunya was the only one elected in the Soviet RSFSR (note- a nickname referring to I.O. Dunayevsky, composer). My sister Zoya has opened up her voice. "An outstanding

dramatic soprano," as her teacher says, charging her five (5) rubles an hour. Today, the LSSK will listen to the Krasny-Admoni opera, based on "The Undertaker" by Pushkin. I'm looking forward to listening to jokes like "the composer killed the undertaker" with pleasure. That's all for now. Get well soon. D. Shostakovich P.S. Unfortunately, I found out yesterday that you did not receive a single one of my letters. I write to you every day, and this upsets me.

Letter 120- 29 June 1938, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Today, Irina Frantsevna told me that you have a normal temperature and that your illness is progressing normally. I'm very happy to hear this, although I would be even happier if you didn't get sick at all. I miss you very much. Yesterday, I went to the premiere of Balanchivadze's ballet "Heart of the Mountains." It should be said that I liked a lot about this ballet. Obviously, Chabukiani was good (note-ballet artist), both as a director and as a dancer. The rest were good too, and their dance skills were almost as good as Comrades Kaganer and Lepestkov's (note-Shostakovich is likely parodying the names of dancers Messerer and Lopukhov). Very good, but the music less so in places. The crowd attending the premiere was extremely upset about your illness. Many of them asked to send greetings to you. Everyone was very distressed about your illness. On the second of July, I'm going to the dacha. I will write to you from there, but it seems my letters from there will not be very interesting, because life there is absolutely uneventful. Irina Frantsevna just called and said that you were moping. It's in vain. Don't worry and don't be depressed, although I understand very well that it is difficult and unpleasant to be sick with such a serious illness. Get well soon and don't be glum.

D. Shostakovich

Letter 121- 2 July 1938, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, Olga Pantaleimonovna is perfectly healthy and doing well in all regards. Glikman told me this yesterday. Currently, she lives at the dacha, and therefore, I could not speak to her on the telephone. Please don't worry about her, but consider yourself more. Follow all the medical professionals' instructions carefully, and soon you will be healthy and able to enjoy all the joys of life. We miss you so much. Today, I'm going to the dacha for three days. On the 5th, I'm returning, and I hope I'll find out about a sharp improvement in your health. Yesterday, I saw Arapov and Popov. We met N.V. Tolstaya in the evening (note-poet) (the ex-wife of A.N. Tolstoy). Both of these composers send you greetings and hope you get well soon. Yesterday, I went to the accounting department of the Malegot and received 1000 rubles, which was listed for me under the contract for the opera "How the Steel Was Tempered" (note- one of Shostakovich's unrealized project; based on a famous socialist realist novel). So, little by little, I pay off my debts. My quartet is stuck. I wrote two movements and then

stopped. Popov wrote the opera "Aleksandr Nevsky." Kochurov wrote the opera "Kutuzov." When you leave the hospital, save three days before shaving so I can see what you'd look like with a beard. It would be very curious to see you with a beard. Get well soon,

D. Shostakovich

Letter 122 11 July 1938, Leningrad

Dear friend,

It's terribly sad that you are spending your much needed and precious vacation still sick. In any case, when you get better, you need to get plenty of rest. I spent five days at the dacha. I composed the third movement of my quartet; now, only the fourth remains. In the next issue of "Soviet Music," which I read at the LSSK, a certain Martinov writes with great warmth about your pamphlets on Gluck and Meyerbeer (note- Ivan Martynov, musicologist. According to the footnotes, his reviews of Sollertinsky's works were far from praiseworthy; Shostakovich is exaggerating here in order to cheer Sollertinsky up.) Along the way, he is rightfully indignant about the fact that the publishing house did not market these pamphlets luxuriously enough. That's how I understood his relation to the address of the publishing house. Many greetings are sent to you every day. The editors of "Izvestiya" and "Komsomolskaya Pravda" lament that you cannot write for them about "The Heart of the Mountains." It seems that summertime life more or less drags on. The theaters are closed, and at the SSK, the sound of billiard balls is not heard. Everyone is resting. You're alone sick. Get well soon and get some rest. I kiss you hard, D. Shostakovich

Letter 123- 18 July 1938, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

The following story happened with "Gogol in Life" (note- a book). This book was taken at one time by Zhenia Shneerson (note- one of Nina's close friends) and hasn't been returned yet. My strenuous attempts to catch her at home have not been successful. Tomorrow, I will take action energetically so that one day, you will have this book. I spent the last four days in Daimishch (note- a village in the Leningrad oblast). The heat there is intolerable. Yesterday, I returned to the city. Tomorrow, there will be an interesting football match. Dynamo (Leningrad) vs. Torpedo (Moscow). I'm terribly sad that you're sick, but glad that you feel better. According to the latest news, you insistently demand to eat. This is a sign of a speedy recovery. I'll see you soon. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

P.S.- I finished my quartet.

Letter 124- 27 July 1938, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I regret that, for the last few days, you haven't been receiving any letters from me. Now, I've come up with another way for you to get them. I will send letters to your apartment, and Irina Frantsevna will send them to you. I'm very happy that your illness is coming to an end, and that you will get better and will be together with us again. I live at the dacha. From time to time, I go into the city. I'm languishing from heat and boredom. I miss you very much. Glikman went to Gagra (note- a city in Georgia). Generally, there's almost nobody in the city, unless Krutz (note- composer) is in the Union doing business. I spent the past few days proofreading my 5th Symphony. It was printed quite personally, with relatively few errors. I also finished my quartet, the beginning of which I played for you. I rearranged the process of composing as I went along. The first movement became the last, and the last became the first. There are four movements in all. It didn't turn out so well. However, it is difficult to compose well. I need to be able to do this. Life is going without much change. I desperately want it to rain. But you- you're languishing from the heat. It's much more difficult for the patient. Get well soon. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

Everyone sends you greetings.

Letter 125- 25 August 1938, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Yesterday night, I arrived back in the city. Irina Frantsevna read your letter to me over the telephone. Many illnesses have befallen you. However, I am glad to say that you're steadily getting better. Tomorrow, I'm going to the conservatory to speak to Zagursky about your statement. (note- director of the conservatory; Shostakovich was going to speak to him to suggest that Sollertinsky would need a recovery period after leaving the hospital.) Don't be angry with me about the fact that I haven't written much to you. Alas, my life is uneventful, and thus, there's literally nothing to write about. I hope that you, while lying in the hospital, still had the opportunity to read all the newspapers, and therefore are up to date. In bad news: my housekeeper Fenya is sick. She needs an operation, which will last 1 1/2 months. But there is also pleasant news. For ATS subscribers, life is somewhat brighter: connection with subscribers at the ATS has accelerated, and in addition, when connecting numbers starting with AO (i.e., three- and four-digit, with zero or two at the beginning after letters "A") not one beep is given, but many: as if you are connecting with an ATS subscriber. This major victory on the communications front makes me happy. That's all. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

On the 1st of September, I will have settled down in the city. Hope you can visit.

Letter 126- 4 January 1939, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

We've begun to worry that we haven't heard any news from you. But thank God, you've arrived, and we're gladdened by it. According to your address, you haven't settled in Colchis, but by Zoekhvarra (note- a river in Abkhazia). What is that? Are you staying in a rest house or a hotel? I'm very happy that you're resting, although I'm a little worried that you're not very good at doing it. What's more, the weather, judging by your letters, is not very suitable for swimming and sunbathing. I spent New Year's at the Writers' House. It was fun. Many revelers there got drunk. Among them was our friend, the composer Solovev-Sedoi; he got punched in the face. Generally, scuffles, vomiting, and "tearing off all kinds of clothes" (note- a reference to Lenin's remarks on Tolstoy's artistic process) from the ladies were present in abundance. We had a nice time...

At 6 in the morning, we were home. New Years' didn't bring new happiness to the boxing master, Rykunov. After the New Years' celebrations, the former went home. His soul jumped, and he went to crush everyone he met. He did excellently (after all, a master) and wound up with the police. In sports circles, they are quite understandably awaiting his trial with curiosity. A financial event was held for the cinema. Movies are exempt from royalties. The grief of Dunayevsky, me, and many others is beyond description. So the opera, drama, ballet, and theatre continue to pay as before. This pleases I.I. Dzherzhinsky, L.I. Dzherzhinsky, and many others. Today, I will go to Moscow. On the 6th, I will play my piano concerto with the laureate of the All-Union competition, conductor Comrade Kondrashin. This, as a matter of fact, is all. My children are doing better. Everything else is the same.

Your D. Shostakovich

Write to me. Drive around your surroundings and get some rest. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna. Nina sends greetings.

Letter 127- 11 January 1939, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I was very happy to receive your postcard, and happy that you didn't forget me. I live well, but my children are still sick: a runny nose, a cough, but thank God, in good shape. At the end of December, I attended the premiere of "Othello." After the premiere, I felt a strong disgust for the show, and expressed this disgust in a review in "Soviet Art." (note- according to his review, he loves Verdi's "Othello," but hated this performance, similar to the earlier one.) My note caused a bit of a boom. Like for example, I received an anonymous note today from someone threatening to punch me in the face... "who wrote it, I don't know, but I'm a fool to read it." (note- a reference to Chekhov's "Book of Complaints." In Russian, this rhymes.) Pasha Serebryakov was appointed as director of the conservatory. I received your telegram from Gudauta. Somehow, you spent a lot of time there. Is the inventor of the new notation system still

alive? (note- unknown) She's already become an old woman. In general, I miss you. Come back soon. Greetings to your spouse from all of us,
D. Shostakovich

Letter 128- 3 May 1939, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I hasten to write to you about a conversation that took place on the train from Moscow to Sevastopol. Entering my compartment is the academic Volgin and his wife. I found that with him was a citizen, an associate professor and award recipient. The conversation was as follows: Volgin: Introduce yourselves to one another.

The award recipient: Lyazhka. (note- In Russian, this word means "thigh.")

Me: (not hearing him correctly) Of course, there are some excellent thick ones, but that's not to say that a well-built bust or a firm stomach also have their charms...

The award recipient: You didn't understand me; my last name is Lyashko.

In response to this, I quoted Zhevakin on the Midshipman Dyrka. (note- a reference to Gogol's "Marriage," in which the character Zhevakin talks about "strange surnames," including that of a midshipman named "Dyrka," which literally means "a small hole," but can also be used to refer to female genitalia.)

In this way, I met the writer Comrade N.N. Lyashko. We arrived safely. Days are hot here, and evenings are chilly. There's an extremely wide range of tourists. Here, one can meet and have friendly conversations with academics, state security lieutenants, and Krivonosov drivers (note- P.F. Krivonosov was a hero of labour and locomotive engineer; I'm guessing his name here is used to refer to locomotive drivers?). Today I live slightly bored for the second day in a row. They say that being bored is useful. Forgive me for writing in such shorthand. Here, it's difficult to get paper, and I took very little with me. Today, we traveled to Yalta. We met the poet and award recipient N.N. Aseev and his wife there. It would be nice if you would write to me. I will return on the 22nd of May. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

Letter 129- 17 May 1939, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Thank you for your letter. I was very happy to read it. I liked the news about the jubilee in Asafiev's honor. He is undoubtedly worthy of celebrating his holiday with great praise and honor. We live well, just a little bored. I'm going home on the 22nd or 31st. The weather here is well-established. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna,

D. Shostakovich

Letter 130- 23rd May 1939, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

My thirst for adventure has taken its toll on me: on 4 June at 7:00, we're flying out from Simferopol, and at 6:00 PM, we'll arrive in Moscow. Don't tell this to anyone, because if my mother finds out, she'll be terribly worried. But I'm extremely captivated by the speed of movement, and I was tempted. The 1st-class price is still the same.

D. Shostakovich

Letter 131- 29 April 1940, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

We arrived safely. Here, it's cold, and, to tell the truth, boring. Many people were here last year, including dramaturgs (Romashov) and composers (Zinoviy Kompaneets). The sun isn't out. It's cloudy, windy, and damp. I'm sitting and reorchestrating "Boris Godunov." The longer I work at it, the more I doubt that this work will come to fruition. Everyone will criticize me for this, including adherents of Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. First of all, for "encroaching," and secondly for the impudence with which I "opposed" myself. And others will find endless shortcomings- first that I didn't "change" it enough, the second that I "corrupted" it too much, etc. Great food for thought for Khubov and Zaslavsky (note- Shostakovich wrote in 1934 to Atovmyan that such critics criticized opera "without knowing what opera is.") But all the same, I do it, and tomorrow, I'll finish "The Faceted Chamber." I work here bored and cold all the time; yesterday and half of today, I wrote 16 pages of the score, which is quite a lot. The last scene, "Kromy," remains, perhaps the most difficult scene. I need to achieve something similar to "The Conflagration of Russia" (note- unknown what he means), but Mussorgsky left this image "unfinished".

On the 26th of April, I stopped by Moscow to see the premiere of "Semyon Kotko" by Sergei Prokofiev. However, this failed, because the repertoire committee again denied permission for this performance, obviously due to the mechanistic replacement of the Germans by Austrians (note- this opera is based on a book taking place during the Russian Civil War. The opera depicts when Ukraine was occupied by Germany, but due to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the USSR forbade art that depicted Germans as aggressors then, resulting in a change in the libretto). This was explained to me in a telephone conversation with the author of the opera. (note- he uses the word for "author;" it's unclear if he means Prokofiev or his co-librettist.) I'm interested to know if you're going to Moscow for the Decade of Leningrad Art and Literature (note- after this event, Sollertinsky was appointed as artistic director of the Leningrad Philharmonic). It would be extremely good if you could quickly inform me about the progress of this Decade, and write to me in general. Remember, I'm very bored here, and receiving your letters always makes me happy. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna and Dmitri Ivanovich (note- Sollertinsky and O.P. Sollertinskaya's son, named after Shostakovich;

he would grow up to be a philologist and member of the Leningrad Philharmonic Society.) Write soon,
D. Shostakovich

Letter 132- 25 April 1940, Gaspra

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

The weather is not cheerful. Besides the weather, it's difficult to have much fun here; I don't sing or dance; hence, amusement here is difficult for me. Therefore, I ask you: amuse me with your letters. My address is on the back of this one. Today, I visited the director (generalmusikdirector of the Yalta Philharmonic) (note- he means the German term "generalmusikdirektor," but misspelled it in the letter), Comrade V.K. Subashiev. You know of him, so therefore, I will not describe him to you. Greetings to your wife and children (note- O.P. Sollertinskaya's son from her first marriage, Kirill, would become a motorcycle coach.)

Your D. Shostakovich

Write.

Letter 133- 29 August 1941, Leningrad

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

We're leaving for Alma-Ata in two days. (note- this postcard was sent to Novosibirsk general mail, as Sollertinsky was being evacuated from Leningrad at the time. Shostakovich was going to leave with Lenfilm to Alma-Ata, but German forces blockaded Leningrad off the day this postcard was sent, and he would not leave until October.) We're all healthy. I really miss you. I finished the first movement of my symphony (note- the 7th), which I introduced to you before you left. I hope that I will be able to acquaint you with this composition when it will be entirely ready. Write to my Alma-Ata address, general mail. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna and the children. I kiss you hard. Nina sends greetings. Don't forget to write,

D. Shostakovich

Letter 134- 28 December 1941, Kuibyshev

Telegraph me Kuibyshev regional mail. Nina and children send greetings.
Shostakovich

Letter 135- 29 November 1941, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

It's already been over a month since I've moved to Kuibyshev, and have settled in here for good. We live decently enough. We have a warm 22-meter room. Nina and the children are healthy. Working is very hard, because the children make noise and

interfere, but it's impossible for me to deprive them of a cheerful childhood. The day after tomorrow, it will be two months since we flew out of Leningrad. We lived in Moscow until the 15th of October, and then since the 22nd, we've been living in Kuibyshev. Our mutual friends, aside from M.B. Khrapchenko, are here: Oborin, Shlifstein, D.A. Rabinovich, Samosud, and many others. Recently, the music school supplied my room with a piano (note- a music school was converted into a hospital; Shostakovich was given a piano, as the instruments were being taken out.) Lyova (note- Oborin) and I play four hands. Shebalin is in Sverdlovsk. If this letter reaches you, write to me. Write about the possibility of my arrival in Novosibirsk in 5-6 days. I miss you very much. If I receive an answer from you, I will try to board an airplane and fly to you. After a very bad mood, which I had upon arrival in the city of Kuibyshev, this (my mood) has improved and isn't so bad now. I'm bored without music, without friends. On the 30th of September, I finished the 3rd movement of my 7th Symphony in Leningrad. The 4th hasn't been written yet. If I go, my mood will improve. I really want to hear news from you. How are Olga Pantaleimonovna and the children? Write about everything. I kiss you hard,

Your D. Shostakovich

P.S.- My Kuibyshev address- 140 Frunze street, apartment 13.

Letter 136- 10th December 1941, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I finally received your postcard. I'm happy that everything is going very well for you, and that the season at our dear Philharmonic is going well. Please send greetings from me to all the Philharmonic musicians and especially E.A. Mravinsky. I finally settled down in Kuibyshev. Yesterday, I got a separate room. So far, I've lived in a single-room apartment, but now my apartment has two rooms and I feel wonderful. I've been helped a lot in terms of housing and supplies by M.V. Khrapchenko and especially R.S. Zemlyachka, who has paid the utmost attention to all of my needs. Nina, Galina, and Maxim are healthy, and all feel well, especially the children. They're at such a happy age. Their little bellies do not hurt, and they're fed, clothed, and warm, and therefore life is wonderful for them. I envy them. If only I was their age!

I started to compose the first and final movement of my 7th Symphony. We packed light when we flew from Leningrad. I took with me only the score of "Lady Macbeth," the 7th Symphony, and Stravinsky's symphony (my transcription and the score). (note- Symphony of Psalms). Sometimes I play it four hands with Oborin (he's here) and marvel at the beauty of this composition. These days in Kuibyshev, the Union of Soviet Composers has formed. The board was elected: Myself (chairperson), D.A. Rabinovich (assistant chairperson), A.S. Ogolevets (executive secretary), S.I. Shlifstein and S.A. Chernetsky (board members). The following comrades were elected to the Audit Commission: Solodukho, V.V. Nebolsin and Tsfasman. Today will be the first creative meeting. At this meeting, I will show the third movements of my Seventh Symphony. I sent your greetings to Samosud. I send greetings from him and a most

excellent person whom you probably remember, V.K. Vladimirov. Yesterday, Dodik Rabinovich told me sad news: V.E. Iokhelson died in the city of Chaklov.

I live quietly. I mostly sit at home and work. In the evening, my friends visit during the day: Oborin and Rabinovich. We play four hands, although there are very few notes heard. We drink tea and remember our friends, you and Shebalin most of all. They leave pretty early. Sometimes, we stay up until one in the morning, or two. We dream about returning home, to the cities of our birth. We dream ourselves into a stupor and oftentimes, to tears. I believe that you and I will soon be at home, and we will live the same as we did before we left. And while I miss you very much, I ask you: don't forget about me, and write more often. And let your letters not only be answers to mine, but write them regardless of what you receive from me. I promise that I'll write more often.

I don't know if I told you that on the road from Moscow to Kuibyshev, I either lost two suitcases containing all our clothes and underwear, or they were stolen from me. It was a very significant loss. Somehow, the status quo has been restored. Are you coming to Kuibyshev? Come and stay with us. Not long ago, I received a letter from Glikman from Tashkent. I spoke twice with A.L. Ostrovsky. He also called from Tashkent. He invited me to go there, but I don't want to. Here, I have some sort of arrangements. I even earn money by giving speeches on the radio. Besides that, the Bolshoi Theatre supplies me with money for "Boris Godunov." They owe me quite a lot for it, and somehow manage to pay me. I even have the ability to send transactions to my mother in Leningrad. She, as well as my sister Marusya, are staying there. R.S. Zemlyachka promised to help me get them out. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna, Kira, and Mitya. I kiss you hard,

Shostakovich

P.S.- My new address- Kuibyshev oblast, 146 Frunze street, apartment 9

Letter 137- 25 December, 1941, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Yesterday, I received your letter from December 9th. Thank you very much for writing, and for a detailed account of your life in Novosibirsk. D.M. Person (note-musicologist.) obviously told you that I live in bad conditions, etc. Now, I'm doing much better. I have an apartment with two bedrooms with all the conveniences I need (kitchen, washroom, bathroom, etc). I eat excellently at the canteen of the Council of People's Commissars. Besides dining, I have so-called "dry rations," which include many necessary nutritional products (butter, sugar, sausages, milk). Unfortunately, my dependents, who eat off the market, are somewhat worse off. Everything is at the market, but for a relevant and pretty expensive bribe. I earn money in the following ways: 1) The Bolshoi Theatre pays me for "Boris Godunov," 2) The Radio Committee, where I give speeches 6-8 times a month, pays for these speeches, and 3) the Committee of the Arts concluded a contract for the Seventh Symphony and payed some

of the sum. Besides this, Muzfond sent evacuation tickets in the amount of 1,600 rubles. In these ways, I am provided with housing and food. My apartment is pretty decent, and I have a piano, which was kindly lent to me by the music school. Obviously, tomorrow or the day after, I will finish the score of my symphony.

I have the following project. I want to spend 10-12 days in Novosibirsk. First of all, I want to see you, and secondly, to listen to our Philharmonic and symphonic music, which is absent from Kuibyshev. I desperately long* for music to the point where almost every day, I run to my neighbors, the Litvinovs (M.M. Litvinov's family, and they kindly, for the umpteenth time, wind up the gramophone and put on Haydn's E-flat major Symphony. They don't have anything else. (note- in the footnotes: According to F. P. Litvinova, she brought with her to Kuibyshev her husband's favorite records: symphonies by Mozart, Haydn, and Bach's Brandenburg Concertos. She recalled how DSCH, sitting on a mattress, on which her son Pavlik usually played, staged Mozart's 41st symphony, "Jupiter.") I spend my days in this way: I get up early and work until 4 o'clock. Then, I eat. After that, I go back to work. In the evening, someone stops by. Sometimes, Lyova Oborin and I play 4 hands. I wrote to you a lot, and often. It's such a pity that you aren't receiving my letters. I miss you so much. I kiss you,

D. Shostakovich

Greetings to your family from all of us.

**Translator's note on Shostakovich and the word "тоска":* The Russian word "тоска" (noun) or "тосковать" (verb) is often translated here as "yearning" or "longing," but in Russian, it's difficult to accurately translate and has more to do with an intense state of melancholy and longing, depending on context. It is described as "the feeling of a person who wants something, but does not know exactly what, but knows that the desired is unattainable."

From the Russian Wikipedia page on this word:

"No English noun conveys all the shades of the word. On the deepest and most painful level, it is a feeling of intense mental anguish, often with no explainable cause. In less severe versions, it can be aching heartache, a desire for something incomprehensible, painful languor, vague anxiety, torment of the mind, unclear craving. In specific cases, it means striving for someone or something, nostalgia, love suffering. At the lowest level - despondency, boredom."

Shostakovich uses it a number of times so far: for example:

Тоска по музыке дошла до того, что я почти ежедневно бегаю к моим соседям Литвиновым(...)

Here, he uses it to describe how badly he wants to hear music in this last letter, to the point where he asks to hear the Haydn symphony on the Litvinovs' gramophone.

From a letter in 1928, where he uses this word to refer to how badly he wants to return to Leningrad from Moscow:

Острая тоска по Ленинграду еще не изжита(...)

In 1930, he uses it to refer to a feeling of lost meaning and happiness in life:

А вообще я тоскую по утраченным смыслу и счастьем жизни.

In 1934, he uses it as an adjective to describe the state of his soul, and that

Sollertinsky's letter was able to alleviate this emotion "like a balm":

твое письмо, подобно бальзаму, пролилось на мою тоскующую душу.

-

Letter 138- 4 January 1942, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Right now, it's 11 PM Moscow time, and 12 local time. The watchman just came to the house on 140 Frunze street, where I used to live, and came here to deliver your letter to me, but arrived at my old address. I already wrote to you about moving to my new apartment. But if that letter didn't reach you, here's my address again: Kuibyshev oblast, 146 Frunze street, apartment 9. A.V. Solodovnikov (note- theatre critic) arrived here not long ago and told me a lot about you and the Philharmonic. I live in decent conditions here. I have a separate apartment, with two rooms, and with all amenities. On 27 December 1941, I finished my 7th Symphony. Three movements came out successfully. The fourth movement is still very fresh and therefore, I can't be too critical of it, but it seems to be good, too. The first three movements (especially the 1st and 3rd) passed the test of time, and I continue to like them now.

Local musicologists appreciate this opus, although they think that it has some shortcomings, albeit insignificant ones. For example, Samosud thinks that the 4th movement lacks a choir and soloists, and that due to these circumstances, it will be difficult to listen to, given that the first three movements last 52 minutes. Maybe he's right. A few organizations (the Arts Committee, the Organizing Committee of Soviet Composers, Kuibyshev Soviet Composers' Union) entered the Seventh Symphony in the competition for the Stalin Prize. I madly want to show this symphony to you, conducted by Mravinsky. I'm only afraid that soon, this could fail to happen. The Committee has speeded up its implementation and has already started writing. Samosud will be the conductor. My family is all healthy. My nervous system is clearly not okay. Often at night and suffering from insomnia, I begin to cry. My tears flow profusely, and I have no way to stop them. Nina and the children sleep in another room, and therefore, I don't disturb them. Often, I think about you, and it's clear that I miss your company. Maybe, I'll gather my strength and go to Novosibirsk for a few days. I really miss symphonic music. When I read your letters, I'm straight-up drooling from my appetite for it. In recent times, I think of treating my nerves; otherwise, it becomes difficult. I really care about the fate of my mother and Marusya, who remain in Leningrad. I'm really busy trying to get them here, but to no avail. News from my mother is rare and unreliable. I send her money, but so far, I have no confirmation from her in this regard. Judging by your letters, you live decently and your mood is good. God bless

you so that you keep feeling this way. I feel bad, due to my worries, which in turn are due to overwork (on my symphony), and for a variety of other reasons.

For the purpose of subsistence, I signed an agreement with the local theatre of musical comedies to write the operetta "Tobacco Captain," with text by Nikolai Alfredovich Aduyev, a friend and coworker of Entilis (note- musicologist; "Tobacco Captain" obviously ended up abandoned by Shostakovich, Shcherbachev took up the music instead.) (N.A. Aduyev is married to Vera Isaakovna, whom Entilis, now at the front, had the good fortune to have as a wife). (note- V.I. was Entilis' first wife.) My evening went relatively quietly. Nina went to visit Villiams (artist and Anusya's husband) (note- Pyotr Villiams, theatre artist).

Only N.V. Fedyushov came to visit me (note- journalist), a very charming person and a worker for "Izvestiya," who I met in Kuibyshev. Usually, in the evenings, we always have many people over. Our most frequent guests include L.N. Oborin, Dodik Rabinovich and his wife (they left for Moscow yesterday), N.T. Kanin, Zozo Begiashvili, and Otar Kandelaki (Oborin's friends, who he once brought with him in the manner of the Popov brothers (note- Popov's brothers were only related to him through his mother), and who turned out to be very excellent people), P.V. and A.C. Villiams, a few choir singers from the GABT, the sculptor I.L. Slonim and his wife Tatyana Maximovna Litvinova, and others. And so, we're not bored; we made friends and acquaintances. But it's still not the same. I would give a lot in order to visit you one evening with a bottle of Kakhetian wine, or even without the bottle... However, one has to endure and wait. Today, I heard that S.I. Shlifstein is going to Novosibirsk. If this is so, then he'll deliver this letter. Tomorrow, I'll find out. Well, my dear friend, here's a description of our lives and being. Write more often. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna and the kids. It makes me happy that my namesake (note- D.I. Sollertinsky) is beginning to speak. Mine are growing little by little, and are healthy and full. Greetings to all, especially Mravinsky, and also to Sviridov. Tell him my address and ask him to write to me. I kiss you hard,
Your D. Shostakovich

Letter 139- 18 February 1942, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

It's almost been half a year since I saw you off to Novosibirsk. I remember that I went on foot from the train station. I walked home and pondered about how sad I would be to be separated from you, and that we'd hardly see each other anytime soon. Yesterday, we talked on the telephone. As you probably remember, the audibility was excellent. I'm obligated to call you again. The only thing that bothers me is that we talked until almost three at night, and I have deprived you of moments (hours or minutes?) of precious sleep. Already in the afternoon of 17th February, I was happy to find out that the summons to the station had been issued, and that you remembered me. At 10:30 PM Moscow time, I went upstairs to the Litvinovs' apartment, where

there's a telephone, and sat down to play Five Hundred and One (note- a card game) with Tatyana Maximovna and her husband, Ilya Lvovich. Then, the telephone rang, and after several "hello's," I heard your voice, which I have not heard since (if I'm not mistaken) 21 August, 1941... First of all, about business. The decision of the SNK about apartments for citizen evacuees concerns the citizens who left for a new place to work.

If the Leningrad Philharmonic is not gone from Leningrad forever, but returns, then the apartments are saved. If Novosibirsk becomes the base of the Philharmonic, then you are advised to do with the property belonging to you in one of the three specified ways (to sell it, transfer it to a relative or acquaintance, or transfer it to the State account in place of your new permanent residence). (footnote- Shostakovich is not entirely accurate in explaining this decision to Sollertinsky. It actually interpreted the evacuation to the East as a move to a new permanent place of residence. The living space of the evacuees was placed at the disposal of the executive committees of the local Soviets of workers, and personal property left in the apartments of the evacuees, at their request, could be transferred to relatives living in the city, or sold on their behalf, or delivered at the expense of the state at the new place of residence.)

Such an opinion exists here in the circles of the GABT (Samosud, Leontev, and others). The aforementioned people send their greetings, as well as the most excellent head of the creative workshop, who burns with creativity, V.K. Vladimirov. Lots of greetings to you from P.V. and A.C. Williams. Yesterday, the latter (Annusya), during my conversation with you, sat in my apartment and guarded my children's dreams. (note- I think he means she put them to bed while they talked?) Nina was at Gliels' and Oistrakh's concert. Annusya asked me to pass her greetings to you, but I forgot to do this. T.M. Litvinova asked if you've met a certain Lyuba (I forgot her last name) and if so, to ask Lyuba to write to Tanya. I forgot to ask you, how are you and your family eating? How are you earning money? We're not eating as well, but generally, we have enough to be full. Glikman, with whom I talked a few days ago, said that he sits on the food of St. Anthony. (note- idiom referring to eating very little, referring to St. Anthony's ascetic lifestyle) Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I kiss you hard. Write. True, these letters are painfully long. If you would like to call, then call me on long-distance to the middle of the city, because maybe the Litvinovs will leave. And if they don't leave, then I can always transfer the conversation to their apartment. I live a three minutes' walk away from the middle of the city. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna and the children. D. Shostakovich. (at the top of the page:) Here there are no envelopes and postcards at all. Due to this, the possibility of correspondence is somewhat difficult.

Letter 140- 8 March 1942, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Yesterday evening, I received a letter from your sister E.I. Sollertinskaya, addressed to the Bolshoi Theatre. She begged me to report everything that I know

about you. I immediately did so. I'm also telling you her address: Kuybishev oblast, p. Spigos, Raplan. E. I. Sollertinskaya. Now that she has your address, she will probably write to you about herself. She hasn't written anything about her life to me; she only asked me about you. We live well. On March 5th, my 7th Symphony was performed. Besides the symphony, nothing else was performed then. After the 1st movement, which lasted 32 minutes, there was an intermission. Then, the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th movements were played. It was greatly successful. The orchestra played gorgeously. Samosud was very good for the first three movements. For the last, he was a little tired. Nevertheless, he is 58 years old. But in any case, the 4th movement sounded earnest enough. I hope that soon, my relatives will come here from Leningrad. Not long ago, my mother sent me a telegram about this. Maybe in the coming days, I will visit Moscow, where my symphony is supposed to be played. Write, my dear friend; I miss you very much. I kiss you hard; Olga Pantaleimonovna and the children as well. Nina sends greetings.

D. Shostakovich

Letter 141- 31 March, 1942, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I've been living in Moscow for almost 10 days already. On the 10th of April, I'm going back to Kuibyshev. On the day of my departure from Kuibyshev to Moscow, my mother, my sister Marusya, and her son Mitya arrived. My mother has lost a lot of weight, and it's almost impossible to recognize her. Marusya and Mitya look pretty decent. My in-laws were here in Moscow when I arrived. Now, they're also going to Kuibyshev. My father-in-law looks extraordinarily strange, and it seems to me that he's slightly crazy. They are all going with me to Kuibyshev. In connection with these circumstances, I've moved to a new apartment. Now, I have an apartment with four rooms in a very nice building. I'll write my new address: Kuibyshev oblast, Vilonovskaya, 2nd apartment 2. The telephone number is 22-73. If possible, call me. In Moscow, I spend my time well, only very dully. I run errands and get very tired. I don't have time. Yesterday, the VOKS (note- All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries) sent me the score to my 6th Symphony performed by Stotowsky. It should be frankly said that I didn't like his performance much. The piece is learned well, for sure, but the interpretation doesn't suit me at all, especially in the last movement. He performed it very slowly and heavily. It lacks lightness and cheer, which is captured by Mravinsky. Send him many greetings from me. In all respects, it's sad that I didn't succeed in listening to him perform the 7th Symphony. He would have done it very well. S.A. Samosud performed it really well, but I really want to listen to Mravinsky's. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

Letter 142- 21 April 1942, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Today I flew from Moscow to Kuibyshev and was greatly pleased to discover your two postcards. In Moscow, I was dead tired. I hope that I'll be able to get a little rest here, and that I'll be able to go to Novosibirsk. I really miss you, and your company is as necessary to me as air. I dream that E.A. Mravinsky will perform my 7th Symphony, if only he likes it. S.A. Samosud performed it very well, but I'd like more to listen to E.A. conduct it. My mother lives here, as well as Marusya, her son, and Nina's parents. My father-in-law lies in hospital while his position is still difficult. He has the strongest degree of dystrophy (exhaustion). I already told you that I'm moving to a new apartment. If you do not receive these letters, I'll tell you my new address and phone number. Kuibyshev oblast, 2nd Vilonovskaya street, apartment 2, new telephone ATC 2-22-73. Write more often. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna and the children. I wish you health and prosperity in everything. I'll call you in the upcoming days. I hope that Novosibirsk will become warmer and you will not suffer from the cold as much. I kiss you hard. Everyone sends greetings.

D. Shostakovich

Letter 143- 28 May 1942, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Every day, I dream of going to Novosibirsk soon and seeing you after nearly a year of separation. One prosaic circumstance delays me: I have absolutely no money, and I was forced to make a loan twice already. But as soon as I receive the money, I will immediately fly off or depart. I'm having a difficult time right now. Including myself, there are ten people living here. But that's not all. My wife's loving heart knows no bounds when it comes to satisfying feelings of nobleness. Soon, her sister Irina Vasilievna, her husband Geras Grigorievich, and their daughter Allochka will be coming to Kuibyshev. They don't like Essentuki, where they are now located, and they are heading here to "advise" their mother, father, and sister about whether they should go to Kuibyshev or somewhere else. The other day, such words of "family advice" reached my ears about this, that it wouldn't be bad to write to Musya (note- Nina's third sister) and her husband Igor so they could "all be together." I think that Misha, the master percussionist of the TYUZ, should not be forgotten either, not to mention uncle Sasha, Pasha, Frosa, and many others. (Note- Pasha is the children's nanny; the other names are unknown.) My sister Marusya isn't lagging behind- she wrote to Vsevolod Konstantinovich's (note- her husband's) sister, Natalya Konstantinovna.

Thinking of her other relatives, I constantly remember grandfather Boris Viktorovich Mikhailov. (note- unknown) The aforementioned grandfather was distinguished, in the words of the late S.K. Bezborodov, by an extremely curious property: If a plate was placed in front of him, then no matter how much food was on it,

he would eat everything... well, okay then. Sooner or later, I will marry my daughter to an influential and financially secure person, and together with Maxim, his wife, and their children, and my second cousins with their wives and daughters, I will go to "live out the rest of my days in peace with my family circle," by the subtle definition of life given by V.V. Varzar (note- Nina's father) (he is inclined towards idyllic statements). Now, I'm wondering what will happen soon: Nelly, Gdalya (note- Irina and Geras), and Allochka's arrival, or that of the money.

If the money arrives earlier, then I will go to Novosibirsk and will miss my father-in-law for a short time, as well as my energetic mother-in-law and others. If Nelly, Gdalya, and Allochka come first, then I will enjoy myself in their society, and then go to Novosibirsk. Dear friend! Don't curse my address, reading these lines. I'm not accusing anyone. This is what must be done, but alas, my mind understands all of this. My heart does not accept strangers in my presence day and night, plus they don't flush the water in the toilet. For god's sake, don't show anyone this letter or state its contents. Alas, I love those who are close and dear to me, and am absolutely indifferent to G.G. Efros, who for some reason I am obliged to accept (...) I don't blame Nina, because she obviously thinks completely otherwise, when it comes to her relatives. She's a good person, but absolutely doesn't understand me on this matter. I told her that if she thinks it's possible to take care of such a colossal amount of people, then it would be better to write out from Leningrad, for example, Evlakhov or Boldirev (note- Shostakovich's students), because it's very difficult for these people there. She can't agree with this, because Boldirev is not our relative, but here we are obliged to help Gdalya, just because he's a "relative"! Ivan Ivanovich, I have no friends here whom I can talk to about this topic. Here I write to you: I beg you, don't read this letter to anyone or tell anyone about its contents.

Well, here I've poured out my soul, and it's become lighter, as A.A. Ashkenazy said. Is he somewhere? L.Z. Trauberg is here from mutual acquaintances. He's stuck here on the path to Moscow and can't fly out. Glikman departed and arrived safely in Tashkent. Not long ago, I saw two of my students. Junior Lieutenant Dobriy was here, in the ranks of the Red Army. He was near Kuibyshev and came here to say goodbye: He was already sent to the front. A.M. Lobkovsky also came here to coordinate a number of issues related to the children's division of the Leningrad Union of Composers. I was happy to see him. In conclusion, a moral can be taken from this: I despise all my whining about personal troubles. In our grueling time, such things should not be given as much attention. I terribly want to see you; if only this would happen. Greetings to your wife and children. I suppose my namesake has grown quite a lot. Nina, my mother, Marusya, Vasiliy Vasilevich, Sofiya Mikhailovna (note- Nina's mother), and Olga Dmitriyevna (note- unknown) all send you greetings. I don't doubt that I.V. Varzar, G.G. Efros, and Allochka would as well, but they have not arrived here yet. But they're coming and we're waiting for them.

D. SCH

P.S. - If you will write to me, don't mention the parts of my letter where I speak about my relatives.

Letter 144- 11 August, 1942, Sernovodsk

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I miss you terribly. Thank you for writing me a little postcard. I live in Sernovodsk now (note- resort in Kuibyshev oblast). I will stay for a few days, then return to Kuibyshev. There is no symphonic life in Kuibyshev now. Before my arrival from Novosibirsk, Samosud attempted to stage the Sixth Symphony twice, but this did not occur. First of all, there was no musical material, and second of all, he was called to Moscow, so that when I returned, the symphony was not staged. The Seventh will also not be played. Apparently, concerts are staged in the autumn. About my trip in Novosibirsk: while I'm afraid to think about it, it will be quite difficult to drag along a large family such as mine, but I terribly want to go there. I want to listen to music and meet with you and Sviridov. How is Sviridov? Did he arrive home, or is he still located in the village? If he has arrived, then send him a big hello. We are all healthy. How's your health? Are you going on tour or staying in Novosibirsk? How are Olga Pantaleimonovna and the children? It's very hot here. Sometimes the heat reaches 36 degrees. (note- 96.8 F) Today, it got colder. Generally, I'm very bored without you. Don't forget to write. We all send you greetings. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

P.S.- Greetings to Mravinsky and Ponomareviy. And also to A.N. Fain, Y.R. and S.R. Vainkopam, K.I. Sanderling, and others.

Letter 145- 24 September, 1942, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Tomorrow (25 September) is my birthday. I'm turning 36. I've already lived so much. Due to these circumstances, I'm in a lyrical mood. I live in Moscow now. In two weeks, I'm going to Kuibyshev, where I will solve all of life's questions. In particular, I will think of traveling to Novosibirsk, because I miss you, music, and also Sviridov terribly. If the Film Committee in Novosibirsk has the film "Abraham Lincoln," (note- 1930 American film), beg the committee members to show it to you. I've already seen it three times here and am in a state of supernatural rapture. It is a gorgeous work of art. Here, K. Ivanov played my Seventh Symphony very badly twice. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna, the children, and Sviridov. I kiss you hard. Write to Kuibyshev. D. Shostakovich

Letter 146- 4 October 1942, telegram from Moscow

Finally decided to leave for Novosibirsk telegraph the possibility of obtaining a heated separate three room apartment. When it is ready send an escort I will stay in Moscow until the tenth. Shostakovich

Letter 147- 17 October 1942, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

As you can guess, I'm strongly delayed in Moscow. There's no way for me to leave. That's all. Today, your telegram was sent to me from Kuibyshev, and also the telegram from the secretary of the Novosibirsk city committee VKP, Comrade Yakovlev. Both of these telegrams made me happy because I think my desire for a partial move to Novosibirsk will be fulfilled. I say "partial," because obviously, part of my family and Nina's relatives will not be going to Novosibirsk. Comrade Schwartz arrived there. I talked with her a bit, and she feels that Novosibirsk would be good for me. It's been a long time since I've heard from you, and I miss you very much. I also haven't heard much from Sviridov. However, neither he, you, nor I have any special fondness for epistolary literature. L.V. Nikolaev died in Tashkent on October 11. The other day in Tbilisi, "after a prolonged and severe illness," P.B. Ryazanov died. Pass this news to Y.V. Sviridov. Ryazanov was his teacher. Everyone sends you greetings, D. Shostakovich

Letter 148- 27 October 1942, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Here, after almost two months in Moscow, I've returned to Kuibyshev. I'm very upset that I haven't heard any news from you at this time. Three days ago, I sent you a telegram, but I haven't gotten an answer so far. What's going on with you? Why are you silent? It worries me. Don't be lazy and send news about yourself. I was very sad to hear about the deaths of L.V. Nikolaev and P.B. Ryazanov. Ryazanov left behind a little daughter and a wife. In Moscow, I met with Betty Schwartz. She told me that in Novosibirsk, she often meets with you and Sviridov. She said that you are very happy in every way to open your second season in Novosibirsk. I wish you success in these endeavors. I haven't heard from Glikman in a while. However, Mitya Tolstoy, located in Kuibyshev, says that he (Glikman) lives very well, more or less. After his long absence, L.N. Oborin returned to Kuibyshev. He talked a lot about A.V. Gauk and his wife. Myaskovsky, Shaporin, and other representatives of the gold fund went to Tbilisi from Frunze. Well, here I've told you almost all the news. I kiss you hard. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna and the children. If you meet Sviridov, send my greetings to him. Don't forget to write; I'm very bored. D. Shostakovich

Letter 149- 21 November 1942, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Today, while returning home, I thought to write you a letter, in which I wanted to reproach you in harsh and direct terms for being silent for so long. But I happily discovered that you did not forget about me at all, and wrote to me. Thank you. The most valuable thing in your letter is that you live and are healthy. Your willy-nilly long absence of news led to depressing thoughts- and too many of them, so that I earnestly beg you: Despite the absence of your taste for the epistolary, write at least two words, even if you have to force yourself to. It is untrue that after I departed from Novosibirsk, I only wrote you two letters. Despite my dislike of writing them, I wrote you much more. On the 23rd, I'm going to Moscow for two weeks. Obviously, a return to Novosibirsk will take place. Consequently, I stay in Kuibyshev. Here, winter has already come, and life therefore has become better, because I am extremely pleased by the absence of dust. The day after tomorrow, A.S. Melik Pashaev will conduct my 7th Symphony. Thank you for playing my 7th often in Novosibirsk. It makes me very pleased. If you know Druskin's address, please ask him if he knows something about the fate of I.V. Varzar and her husband G.G. Efros. Before moving to Tomsk, he was close to them. Greetings to your family and also Y.V. Srividov.

Your D. Shostakovich

Letter 150- 22 November 1942, Kuibyshev

Dear friend!

I, after a long fast, just drank 200 grams of vodka. (note- 7 ounces) This is, however, a minor circumstance; I took up the pen for a different reason. If you don't really know Gogol well, then I beg you to get his "Collected Works" in six volumes by the editors N.S. Ashukin, V.F. Pereverzev (sic!), and M.B. Khrapchenko (sic!). Get volume IV (the "Artistic Literature" state publishing house, Moscow 1937). In volume IV, go to page 343, which has the header "an excerpt from a lost drama." I should be honest, that I had never read all of page 343 to page 348 before. Now that I have read them, I am absolutely amazed by these gorgeous pages. By the way, on page 347, there are a few lines which entered the opera "The Nose." Due to this, I remembered the now deceased librettists (G.E. Ionin, A.G. Preiys, and Evgeny Zamyatin). (note- Preiys was also the librettist for Lady Macbeth) God! How good these pages are (343-48). I'm convinced that you, and probably Y.V. Srividov, will be able to appreciate these pages. In the same volume is the comedy "The Gamblers." I have mastered up to page 244 (note- referring to his work on his opera adaptation). It's turning out to be very good, with the right instruments. I am afraid that I will not finish it, because I am too enthusiastic about the material, which is very difficult. I wrote six romances. Five of them are dedicated to you, Glikman, Sviridov, Atovmyan, and Shebalin. I don't know who I'll dedicate the 6th to. (note- eventually, he dedicated it to Nina.) I dedicated a romance on the words of Shakespeare to you (sonnet 66 in Pasternak's translation). "In some days' time," I will send you all six. In time, you will be acquainted with them.

I kiss you hard, my friend,
D. Shostakovich

Letter 151- 6 December 1942, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Yesterday I returned from Moscow, where I traveled to participate in the Antifascist Rally of Arts Workers (note- Shostakovich gave a speech here). Upon my return, I found your postcard. I think that I will not move to Novosibirsk. This is due to great difficulties. Here, I have some sort of well-established life, and I will continue to live as before in Kuibyshev. It should be said that it's sometimes painful without you and boring without music. This was the main fire that kindled my wish to move to Novosibirsk. But since this (note- my efforts?) fails, then no need. You probably know that Shebalin was appointed the director of the Moscow Conservatory. He's already taken up his duties. He wrote a very good "Slavic Quartet," which I highly recommend the Glazunov Quartet to write out and perform in Novosibirsk. I also very much recommend, on the same subject, Prokofiev's quartet on Kabardino-Balkarian themes. Soon I'll send you and Sviridov copies of my new Romances- one of them dedicated to you, another for Sviridov. The others are also dedicated to my friends, L.T. Atovmyan, N.V. Shostakovich (my wife-friend), I.D Glikman and V.Y. Shebalin. Six in all. I dedicated Shakespeare's Sonnet 66 in Pasternak's translation to you. Well, my dear friend, that's all. I wish you and your family health and happiness. I hope I'll see you sooner or later.

D. Shostakovich

You probably already heard that B.L. Yavorsky has died.

Letter 152- 23 December 1942, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Happy New Year. Thank you for not forgetting and, even if a little, for writing to me. Today I returned from the trip to the cities of Ufa and Belebei. I spent eight days and eight nights on this trip. I returned to find your postcard. This made me very happy. Keep writing to me. I'm already sick with anger that I'm not in Novosibirsk, and due to this, I can't listen to beautiful music, which is performed by the orchestra of the Leningrad Philharmonic. For me, listening to good music is a biological need, which here, in Kuibyshev, I'm almost completely deprived of. I read about the greatness of Koval's new opera in an article in "Izvestiya" by Comrade... I forgot the last name. In this article, the opera is placed side by side with Mussorgsky's "Boris Godunov" and "Khovanshchina." I have made a little progress with my senseless opera. I think that soon, I'll abandon this pointless endeavor. You probably know that B.L. Yavorsky died, and that Shebalin is the director of the Conservatory. That's all the news for now. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna and the children. How are they feeling? Write.

D. Shostakovich

Letter 153- 26 January 1943, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, When you receive this postcard, I'll be completely healthy. Now, I've ended up aching with abdominal typhoid fever. With every hour, I feel better and better, while I'm still very weak and lying in bed. I received your postcard today, in which you expressed a desire to work under the guidance of V.Y. Shebalin. (note- according to the footnotes Sollertinsky did not have a good relationship with the director of the Philharmonic and would have gotten along better with Shebalin) I understand your wish well, and if necessary, I will speak to Shebalin, although it seems to me that your wish, in general, is futile. Why don't you work under the guidance of other, equally worthy people? However, it's up to you. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

Letter 155- 12 February 1942, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Since yesterday, I started to be able to get up. Yesterday, I spent two hours out of bed, and three today. Tomorrow more, etc. Across one and a half weeks, I will go outside and become completely healthy. I've suffered from abdominal typhoid. My mighty organism excellently dealt with this illness, but would not like to repeat the experience. The disease is severe and fully justifies its name: the abdomen hurts a lot, and also the head and many other parts of the body. Be careful: take care of your health. In 1940, I was vaccinated against abdominal typhoid, and this circumstance greatly eased my suffering. Myself and my whole family were vaccinated. Here's my plan for the future: when I recover completely: I'll go to Moscow. I was promised they were building a sanatorium for recuperation. What will happen next, I don't know. When the pains left me, I began to think up a sonata for two pianos. I pondered it, and now I'm going to write a little of it. A while ago, I sent you and Sviridov my Romances in the deluxe Muzfond edition (note- printed in manuscript form). Did you receive them? Today I received the score of the Seventh Symphony from you and Mravinsky (note- the published score). Dear friend, I miss you painfully, and believe that soon, we will be home, and will visit each other and chat about this and that over a bottle of good Kakhetian no. 8 (note- a Georgian wine). Take care of yourself and your health. Remember: You have children for which you are responsible, and friends, and among them is D. Shostakovich.

Letter 156- 19 February 1943, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I've recovered, and the day after tomorrow, I can go outside. I'm very bored without news from you. How's your life? Yesterday, I had a conversation with Betty

Schwartz, and she called me from Novosibirsk. (...) Yesterday evening, I had Lyova Oborin over. He has a great misfortune: The nerves in the fingers of his left hand are useless. The doctors said that it's temporary. Apparently it's long-term, because he's been treated for a week and a half already with no improvement. It happened to him directly after the concert, which he had to give in the city of Sverdlovsk. The concert lasted 20 minutes. Then, after the first conversation with the doctor, he fainted and was unconscious for 15 minutes. We hope that he will completely recover. At the time of illness, I composed the first part of my sonata for piano. I'm getting started on the second. So you see, I'm working. Yesterday, Lyova praised the first part and offered to black out the extra page, which I did. He's a brilliant musician and immediately corrected the flaw, which tormented my conscience. Everything else is the same here. I will probably go to the sanatorium by Moscow soon. Then, I'll live in Moscow. Try to call me somehow. However, don't call now, because I'll be leaving soon. Greetings to Olga Pantaleimonovna, Kirill, and Dmitri.

I kiss you hard,
D. Shostakovich

Letter 157- 1 March 1943, Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Yesterday, Betty Schwartz called me and told me about your wife and children's illness. (note- pneumonia) It's a horrible, difficult misfortune. I hope that they will endure this illness as well as possible and get well soon. I'm very sad that I am so far away from you right now, and cannot offer you any help. Tomorrow, I'm leaving for Moscow. I will go to the sanatorium nearby. I'll be there for 2-3 weeks, and will be in Moscow for the same amount of time. Then, I'll return to Kuibyshev. I should tell you that I will attempt to settle down in Moscow permanently, although I imagine I'll come across enormous difficulties. Generally, I'll decide everything on this trip, whether I'll be moving- or not.

I don't know- have you heard about the misfortune that befell Lyova Oborin? He has lost the nerves in his left hand. He was treated in Kuibyshev the whole month, and yesterday went to Moscow. I haven't noticed the results of the treatment. He is going through this misfortune quite courageously and hopes for a cure. I've recovered completely, although I'm very tired again from walking. But with practice, I'll stop tiring. Have you received my Romances and Seventh Symphony? Write to me if you have the time, if you wish, to my Kuibyshev address. In this case, your letters will be forwarded to me. I kiss you hard. I wish you a quick and prosperous recovery.

D. Shostakovich

Letter 158- 14 March 1943, Arkhangelsk

My dear friend Ivan Ivanovich,

My heart hurts like mad when I think about the misfortunes that have befallen you. How I would like if you had a complete recovery and for your life to go well in every respect. I'm at the sanatorium, where my health is recovering. It's very good here, but I don't like life at the sanatorium, and am strongly bored. Nina is in Moscow. I won't return to Kuibyshev; I'd rather not. Today, Nina looked at an apartment, which is provided to me in Moscow, but refused it, because in her opinion, it (the apartment) is absolutely not adapted for housing. This really upsets me. Well, maybe I'll succeed in receiving a better one.

I suffer from graphomania. I wrote almost all of my piano sonata, orchestrated the Romances, which you probably know, because I sent those to you quite a long time ago with a touching inscription (note- Shostakovich wrote "To dear Ivan Ivanovich Sollertinsky with best wishes. D. Shostakovich. 32. 1. 1943. Kuibyshev. Dear friend! Accept this modest gift, and remember these great words: "The love expressed by a gift is dearer to me than the gift itself." D. Shostakovich.") (note- the phrase, loosely translated as to better convey the intended meaning, is an expression derived from a folk song. The literal meaning is "I don't care about your gifts; love is dear."); writing the piano score to the opera "The Gamblers," which is far from finished and will likely never be finished; I continue to work on the score to the aforementioned opera, etc. Outside of work, although purely technical (for example, work on the keyboard), I feel bad and literally can't find my place, although there are few reasons for this (nerves, i.e., bad character). I wanted to write a cheerful letter to you, in order to cheer you up a little, but I have not managed to. I'm not Irakli Andronikov (note- a famous orator), nor am I the honored artist Obrazov (note- actor). Don't be angry with me. I kiss you hard and wish you an immediate recovery.

D. Shostakovich.

Write to me at this address: Moscow, 47 3rd Miuskaya 4/6, Organizational Committee of Soviet Composers.

Letter 159- 29 March 1943, Arkhangelsk

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I'm telling you a little news from my life. Upon returning to Moscow, I'll start work at the Moscow Conservatory, where I'm enlisted as a professor. I will have one graduate student (note- R.S. Bunin). I finished three parts of my piano sonata here. I don't have an apartment in Moscow yet, but they've promised me one. I live in the "Moscow" hotel, number 430. I don't want to leave Moscow. If the apartment issue is resolved, I will transfer the children from Kuibyshev. Nina is in Moscow now, taking care of various household and apartment errands, but so far, to no avail. Thank you for the news, which was brought by N.T. Kanin. N.T. Kanin is now located in Moscow, together with L.S.

Viven (note- actor and pedagogue). He came to report the creative plans for the A.S. Pushkin theatre. Be healthy and prosperous in everything,

D. Shostakovich

Write to the conservatory (13 Gertzen street)

Letter 160- 20 April 1943, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Yesterday I received an order, and today I'm going to my new apartment (21 Kirov street, apartment 48). While my mood is unimportant, the complete lack of furniture upsets me: Apparently for a long time, I will live within these four walls without things. M.B. Khrapchenko promised to help with this, but likely won't fulfill his promise anytime soon. The apartment is pretty decent, and if I have some sort of junk, I will live decently. (note- furniture was being delivered from his Leningrad apartment, but this could only happen after the blockade was lifted) I hope that on your trip to Moscow (Kanin told me that you're going here soon), I can provide you some, however modest, hospitality. There are some nuisances in my life, such as when different people from different organizations stop by, which convince me that soon, I will be evicted from my apartment, but Comrade Gusev (head of the Moscow Housing Department) recommends not to pay attention to them. I heard that you have been treated disgracefully in matters of life and supplies* and you will be okay again. Write to me at the conservatory (13 Gertsen street). I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

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*Footnote: As a result of the intrigues of the leadership of the Philharmonic, I. I. Sollertinsky was deprived of the right to visit the closed dining room, to which he, along with the director and chief conductor of the Philharmonic, was attached and from where he could bring food to his family. This circumstance greatly affected Sollertinsky's financial situation: his wife, son and stepson, as well as a nanny who came with his family from Leningrad, were dependent on him; they all received minimum ration cards. This, as well as strained relations with the leadership of the Philharmonic, played a role in the deterioration of Sollertinsky's health. In the complexity of his life, he did not want to tell Shostakovich, so as not to upset his friend and so that he would not spoil relations with Mravinsky - then and for many years the best performer of the composer's symphonic works. Apparently, N. T. Kanin related the details of Sollertinsky's troubles to Shostakovich.

Letter 161- 29 April 1943,

Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

This will be a business letter. Yesterday, I listened to the concert by the State Orchestra of the USSR, conducted by Rakhlin (note- conductor). I'm listening to this concert more than once. I am convinced that Rakhlin is an unimportant conductor. After the concert, I had a conversation with S.I. Shlifstein. He wanted to raise the question to Khrapchenko about appointing you as the artistic head of the state orchestra, and Mravinsky as the main conductor. I beg you to write to me, if you like such a combination. If yes, then I, for my part, will speak about this with Khrapchenko. I'd really want this, in order for you to be in Moscow, although on the other hand, it's a pity for the Leningrad Philharmonic: the orchestra, for all its faults, is much better than the Orchestra of the USSR. Think about it and write to me, or telegraph me one word: "agreed." Then, I will take action. Between others: don't speak about this letter to anyone, including Mravinsky. However, it's at your discretion. I'm staying in Moscow. I received an apartment. My address is on the back. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

Greetings to you from everyone.

Letter 162- 30 April 1943, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I received your letter today, addressed to you from the Union of Soviet Composers. Yesterday, I sent you a letter, and now I'm writing one more. I'm still very sad about your letter. I'm sad that Olga Pantaleimonovna is sick, and that you're sick, and that it turns out Sviridov is also sick. What's the matter with him? I'm healthy, but I'm afraid of the lack of satiety in the coming days. The passportist from my house management didn't bother to register us, and thus, we haven't received cards for May yet. (note- possibly referring to ration cards.) Well, maybe we'll endure somehow, all the more so, while the children are still in Kuibyshev. I spoke with Ronya (note- Shebalin), and he really wants to include you in the staff. I would like this, in order for you to move to Moscow. But I don't presume to give advice on this matter. It's very difficult to get cards, and life at the hotel is not good. I lived around there for two months, and now, moving to an apartment, I feel great pleasure. If an apartment is built for you here, then it's necessary for you to move there. Kanin said that he's going to send you to Moscow (note- Sollertinsky also worked as a consultant for the A.S. Pushkin Theatre). This would be so good. Stay with me, although my life is not very established yet. I kiss you hard,

D. Shostakovich

Letter 163- 4 May 1943, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I'm receiving your letter, addressed to the conservatory and to the SSK. Now, address them to my apartment (Central Moscow, 21 Kirov street, apartment 48,

telephone K5-98-72). Your aforementioned letter brought me very little joy. (note- apparently, this letter from Sollertinsky had mentions of his heart disease progressing, fatigue, and bitterness) I beg you to come to Moscow. Kanin said that he's going to send you here on theatre business. Yesterday, I spoke to Shebalin. He wants to use you at the research institute. I advise you: Until you make any decisions to travel, look, and then decide. I already wrote to you about the project to attract you to work for the State Orchestra of the USSR together with Mravinsky. You as the artistic supervisor, and him as the main conductor. Today, I will speak about this to Khrapchenko. I'll find out his opinion and write to you. And most importantly- come. You healed up in Novosibirsk. You need, so to speak, to see people and to show yourself. I invite you to stay with me. I have a good apartment, but it's absolutely empty. But if you come to stay, I will somehow furnish it, so you will have something to sleep on, to sit on, etc. Maybe we'll talk on the telephone, although doing this is difficult, and it's awkward to drag you awake when it's night for you in the city. I kiss you hard. Greetings to Olya and the children.

D. Shostakovich

Letter 164- 9 September 1943, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

I received your postcard and rejoiced at it a little less than I should have been: I was looking forward to your trip all the time. From your postcard, I found out that you have not been called. Tomorrow, I'll find out why this happened, and I hope that you will visit Moscow*. In recent times (a few months), I did not have anything from you, including telegrams. I met with Mravinsky. We spoke about you. I miss you and am strongly restless without you. We spoke about how you feel very bad and eat poorly. Therefore, I sent Comrade Kulagin a telegram about this (note- Novosibirsk city official). It's interesting to know if this played any role. I haven't received an answer from Comrade Kulagin. There's not much to write about myself. I'm healthy. The only thing to say (literally) is that I finished my Eighth Symphony. There is some emptiness in my soul, which always happens after finishing a large work. The symphony is made up of five movements: 1) Adagio, 2) March, 3) March, 4) Mournful march, 5) Pastorale. The score has been urgently rewritten. Mravinsky is taking it to Novosibirsk. I played it for him in its finished form. He decided to perform it. My dear friend, sometimes it's excruciatingly difficult without you. I hope that we'll meet soon. There was a project to appoint you as director of the Moscow Philharmonic, but so far Director Vaslov has been appointed (Fere and Vaslov) (note- composers). I kiss you hard. I really want your life to go well. D. Shostakovich

Footnote: Sollertinsky was supposed to come to Moscow in August 1943: he was summoned to the Committee for the Arts. But due to the beginning of the season at the Pushkin Theater, the trip was postponed. A second call to Moscow came on 1 September. It took half a month to complete the paperwork and obtain the pass. And

Sollertinsky left Novosibirsk on September 16, arrived in Moscow on the 21st and stopped at Shostakovich's. The trip was very successful: Shebalin provided a professorship at the conservatory, the MGF asked for a series of lectures, the Institute of Art History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR invited him to the staff; and by the end of the year, an apartment was promised. Sollertinsky returned to Novosibirsk on October 11, and in the first days of November he again went to Moscow - he was entrusted with the main report at the celebrations on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the death of P. I. Tchaikovsky. And during this visit, the question of moving to Moscow was finally resolved. Sollertinsky returned to Novosibirsk on December 11, 1943.

Letter 165- 4 January 1944, Moscow

Dear Ivan Ivanovich,

Happy New Year. I'm sure that the new year will bring us the joy of victory, and a lasting peace will reign throughout the world. Not long ago, I received a letter from Tamara Ivanovna Brianskaya (note- film director). She says that her husband, our friend Yuri Grigorievich Briansky, died a hero's death, fighting for our Soviet Fatherland. This is tragic news. I loved Y.G. Briansky and he affirmed my love: he died with honor, having given his young, wonderful life to our Soviet Fatherland (note- a similar letter is written to Glikman). I was going to come to Novosibirsk, but a thief stole my suitcase with all my documents. Now, I'm in the process of restoring them. I kiss you hard. I wish you health and happiness.

D. Shostakovich

Letter 166- Mail delivery with unstated dates

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, S.V. Sviridov called me and asked for you and I to write "fresh impressions" of the season on a piece of paper. Do this soon and bring it to me tomorrow, because he wants to come and take them before leaving for Novgorod. On his return, he's designing the season of "creative melodeclamations." He needs to prepare 2-3 love poems, and he will make melodeclamations on them. D. Shostakovich. Be sure to prepare a fresh impression!!!

The following are all telegrams from earlier dates:

11 February, 1935 From Moscow, 12 Pushkinskaya street, apartment 2 I live in Metropol number 223 waiting for the arrival and call. Shostakovich

After 11 February, 1935 From Kostantinovsky Street, Moscow Coming on the 24th, will try to be home in the evening or will call. Shostakovich

Letter 169- Phototelegram from Kuibyshev

Dear Ivan Ivanovich, I'm sorry that I didn't telegram you until now. I'm a bit sick. I sat at the stadium for one and a half hours and caught a cold. I completed your task, but it seems unsuccessful, because the Committee and Union insist on your trip to Moscow. Kiss Olga Pantaleimonovna, Kira, and Mitya. Don't forget to write. D. Shostakovich

Telegram from Kuibyshev- Worried about the absence of news. Telegraph Kuibyshev. Shostakovich

From Moscow- I advise you to travel and then decide on the question of leaving. The apartment is most difficult. Shostakovich

From Moscow- I'm very sorry that I can't say hello to everyone. Shostakovich

Letter 173- Letter from Shostakovich to O.P. Sollertinskaya

Dear Olga Pantaleimonovna! It's impossible for me to put into words all the grief that seized me upon hearing news of Ivan Ivanovich's death. Ivan Ivanovich was my closest and dearest friend. I owe all of my artistic development to him. Life without him will be unbearably difficult. Time has separated us. In the past few years, we saw each other infrequently, and talked little. But it always brought me joy to know that somewhere in the world, Ivan Ivanovich was living with his wonderful mind, clear vision, and inexhaustible energy. His demise was a brutal blow to me. Ivan Ivanovich and I talked a lot about everything. We spoke about the inevitable, about what awaits us at the end of life- in a word, about death. We were afraid of it and did not wish for it. We loved life. But we knew that sooner or later, we would have to part with it. Ivan Ivanovich left us terribly early. Death seized him and tore him away from life. He died, but I remain. When we spoke of death, we always remembered our relatives and those close to us. We thought with anxiety about our children, wives, parents, and always gave each other a solemn promise that, in the case of the death of one of us, we would do everything we possibly could to help the family of the other. Dear Olga Pantaleimonovna, if this is difficult for you, if it is hard, I beg you, in the name of the sacred memory of Ivan Ivanovich, tell me this, if I can do anything to help, then I will do everything in my power to. If it isn't too difficult for you, write to me, and tell me what Ivan Ivanovich died from. The telegram about his death was far too brief, but it's important for me to know what happened. I firmly press your hand, and kiss the orphaned children.

Your D. Shostakovich.