

Prokofiev, Sergey (Sergeyevich)

(*b* Sontsovka, Bakhmutsk region, Yekaterinoslav district, Ukraine, 11/23 April 1891; *d* Moscow, 5 March 1953). Russian composer and pianist. He began his career as a composer while still a student, and so had a deep investment in Russian Romantic traditions – even if he was pushing those traditions to a point of exacerbation and caricature – before he began to encounter, and contribute to, various kinds of modernism in the second decade of the new century. Like many artists, he left his country directly after the October Revolution; he was the only composer to return, nearly 20 years later. His inner traditionalism, coupled with the neo-classicism he had helped invent, now made it possible for him to play a leading role in Soviet culture, to whose demands for political engagement, utility and simplicity he responded with prodigious creative energy. In his last years, however, official encouragement turned into persecution, and his musical voice understandably faltered.

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(i) Childhood and early works.

Prokofiev grew up in comfortable circumstances. His father Sergey Alekseyevich Prokofiev was an agronomist and managed the estate of Sontsovka, where he had gone to live in 1878 with his wife Mariya Zitkova, a well-educated woman with a feeling for the arts. Prokofiev was the last of their three children, but his two older sisters had died in infancy, so that to all intents and purposes he grew up as a much indulged and pampered only child. His father supervised his general education in the natural sciences; a French governess and also, at various periods, two German governesses were engaged to teach him foreign languages; and his mother provided his early education in the arts. His playmates were the employees' children, who addressed him by the formal 'you', while he used the familiar pronoun to them. This contributed to giving him a sense, from an early age, of being privileged, indeed invulnerable and immune to criticism.

When he was four years old his mother began his first piano lessons, and his earliest attempts at composition also date from this period: he described them in detail in his autobiography, with musical illustrations. These childhood works include ‘Indian Galop’, various waltzes and marches, one for four hands, and other small piano pieces written between 1896 and 1901. Visits to the opera (in Moscow in the winter of 1899–1900 and St Petersburg two years later) acquainted him with the standard stage repertory of Russia at the time – Gounod’s *Faust*, *Prince Igor*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *A Life for the Tsar*, Dargomizhsky’s *Rusalka*, Rubinstein’s *Demon*, *La Traviata*, *Carmen* – and inspired the ten-year-old boy to try his own hand at opera. He wrote *Velikan* (‘The Giant’) in February–June 1900, and this childhood opera, in three acts and six scenes, was performed for his family with his playmates taking the parts. In 1901 he was busy with his second operatic project, on a subject of the Robinson Crusoe type: *Na pustinnikh ostrovakh* (‘On Desert Islands’) of which only a few pages survive. In his autobiography he dwelt at some length on his juvenilia, urging his readers to see how the future opera composer was already emerging in the consistent ostinato structures, the changes of dominant to tonic (although these are still simple), and the arrangement of motifs, also still simple. These childhood works were collected in special albums, and the French governess copied out several pieces. At the same time Prokofiev began planning a catalogue in which to enter the titles and openings of his works. All his juvenilia are now in the Moscow RGALI (Rossiyskiy gosudarstvenniy arkhiv literatury i isskustva, fond 29).

In January 1902 the family stopped in Moscow on their way back from St Petersburg. The son of a family they knew, Yury Nikolayevich Pomerantsev, a graduate of the Moscow Conservatory who later became a ballet conductor at the Bolshoy, put them in touch with Sergey Taneyev. Taneyev recommended that the young Prokofiev study theory with Pomerantsev, and a few lessons did take place; in addition he suggested that one of his own students could act as private tutor to the boy during the summer months in Sontsovka. The man Taneyev first thought of was the pianist Aleksandr Goldenweiser, who had also studied composition; when he declined, Taneyev recommended the young composer and pianist Reinhold Glière. Glière spent the summers of 1902 and 1903 at Sontsovka, teaching Prokofiev theory, composition, instrumentation and piano; during the winter months the boy’s instruction continued by correspondence. A phase of intensive and extremely productive activity as a composer dates from this point, and it is clear that even as a boy Prokofiev was developing the habit of working on several pieces at once. Glière urged him to begin by schooling himself to write short pieces built into the structure of a cycle. Prokofiev therefore wrote a number of small piano pieces (*Pesenki*, ‘Little Songs’, 1902–6), five series each of 12 pieces. Also in 1902 he began work on a symphony in G major, dedicated to Glière; the first movement was completed in full, the other movements only in piano score. The next year he wrote a violin sonata in C minor to which he referred in the *Ballade* for cello and piano op.15 (1912). At the same time, and encouraged by Glière, he set to music Pushkin’s ‘little tragedy’ *Pir vo vremya chumy* (‘A Feast in Time of Plague’). When Glière sent him the score of Cui’s opera on the same subject, his reaction, as he admits in his autobiography, was of jealousy. His account makes it clear that he regarded the rival opera with hostility from the first, but at the same time he systematically tried to learn from this more mature model. In 1904 he began work on his fourth youthful opera, *Undina*, to a libretto by the Russian poet Mariya Kilstett taken from Friedrich de la Motte-Fouqué’s story. He later cut the planned five acts to four, and the work was completed in vocal score in 1907.

(ii) Conservatory studies and first public appearances.

In the spring of 1903 the 12-year-old Prokofiev was introduced to Glazunov, then a professor at the St Petersburg Conservatory. Glazunov urged Prokofiev's parents to let him study music, and won their consent by arguing that the conservatory also provided a general education, so that the boy would not need to attend an ordinary school as well. Prokofiev took some private lessons from Mikhail Mikhailovich Chernov, a student about to take his examinations at the conservatory, and passed the entrance examination in the autumn of 1904. He studied theory with Lyadov, whom he described as 'dry and sparing of words', adding that he 'took no interest in his pupil's creative development'. He also ventured to criticize Rimsky-Korsakov's teaching of orchestration; however, he expressed the utmost admiration for Rimsky-Korsakov's later operas, particularly *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*. In 1908 he began studying the theory of musical form with Vitols. While a student he met Myaskovskiy, ten years his senior. A lifelong friendship between them developed, and was maintained even during Prokofiev's years abroad. It was a relationship allowing room for frank and critical discussion of both men's works.

The revolutionary unrest of the year 1905 was felt in the conservatory. One result was the dismissal of Rimsky-Korsakov, who had supported the striking students, and Glazunov and Lyadov resigned in solidarity, though all three returned in 1906. The young Prokofiev obviously paid little serious attention to these events, and did not perceive their significance. In the spring of 1909 he completed his studies in composition, and graduated with the usual Russian diploma as free artist. The pieces he offered as his examination works were his sixth sonata (numbered among his juvenilia; only pencil sketches have been preserved) and a scene from an opera *A Feast in Time of Plague* (not the same as his earlier opera). These works, Prokofiev tells us, were not well received, so that his final grade was only 'good'. It seems his years at the conservatory left no lasting mark on him, but merely reinforced a process of development that had begun early and was progressing steadily all the time, hardly affected by his studies. After his examination in composition, he took courses to train as a concert pianist, changing from Alexander Winkler to the highly regarded Anna Yesipova, the teacher of many outstanding Russian pianists. At the same time he began to study conducting with Nikolay Tcherepnin, the only lecturer at the conservatory whom he took really seriously; he also respected him as an analyst. Tcherepnin even taught him, he said, to appreciate the orchestral sound of Haydn and Mozart. He took his examinations in both these practical disciplines in the spring of 1914. For the piano examination he played his own First Piano Concerto, and won the first prize on which he had set his heart.

During his time at the conservatory he wrote a Symphony in E minor, many small-scale piano works and six early sonatas, some of which he utilized later. He left the Sonata in B \flat major of 1904 alone; the Sonata in F minor of 1907 was revised to become his First Sonata op.1 (1909); the Sonata in A minor (also 1907) became the Third Sonata op.28 (1917); the fourth youthful sonata (1908) is lost; the Sonata in C minor of 1908 became the Fourth Sonata op.29 (1917); and, as mentioned above, only sketches remain of the sixth or 'Conservatory Sonata'. Other compositions of this early period also found their way into the catalogue of Prokofiev's mature works. Four piano pieces of 1907–8 became op.3 (1911), and four further pieces of 1908 op.4 (1910–12); the Sinfonietta in A major (1909) was revised to become op.5 (1914) and in its final form became the *Sinfonietta for Small Orchestra* op.48 (1929). Early works also live on in the *Ten Piano Pieces* op.12 (1913) and the Second Sonata op.14 (1912), which

incorporates the second of two discarded sonatinas. All his life Prokofiev retained the habit of reworking his musical ideas, either because they pleased him or for financial reasons.

Other student works include two choruses with orchestral accompaniment to poems by Bal'mont (op.7, 1909–10), originally intended for the student choir, and two songs to texts by Bal'mont and Aleksey Apukhtin (op.9, 1910–11), both diptychs reacting to the literary symbolism of the period. The symphonic poems *Sni* ('Dreams', op.6, 1910) and *Osenneye* ('Autumnal Sketch', op.8, 1910, second version 1915, third version 1934) were influenced by Skryabin's orchestral *Rêverie* and Rachmaninoff's *Isle of the Dead* and Second Symphony, which shows that Prokofiev was pitting himself, quite deliberately, against the two leading (and creatively contrasting) composers of the previous generation. He also wrote his first two piano concertos, the second revised in 1923, as well as the five piano pieces *Sarkazmi* ('Sarcasms'), the Toccata for piano, and *Gadkiy utyonok* ('The Ugly Duckling') for voice and piano. In 1912 he made the decision to write for transposing instruments in C and for English horn and trumpets in the alto clef, dispensing with the tenor clef. He kept to this manner of writing throughout his life.

The operatic fragment *Maddalena* op.13 (1911, revised in 1913), after the play of the same name by one Baroness von Lieven, was to have been performed in the conservatory, but proved too difficult for the forces available. Prokofiev had completed the piano score of this one-act opera, but orchestrated only the first of its four scenes. The material remained with the Edition Russe de Musique after the composer's emigration to Paris; Edward Downes discovered it in 1953 and completed the orchestration. The action takes place in 15th-century Venice. Maddalena is leading a double life, as a married woman and also, incognito, as the mistress of a friend of her husband; incited by Maddalena, the two men kill one another in a fight. This dark drama reflects the inner turmoil of its eponymous heroine, besides displaying one aspect of the struggle for emancipation in the early 20th century, in that passion is set above bourgeois morality. The work already contains basic features characteristic of the operatic composer Prokofiev was to become: clear contrasts, differentiated motifs relating to the characters and situations, musical-dramatic movement with its own inner tempo, and a highly strung female character such as Prokofiev developed further in Paulina in *Igrok* ('The Gambler'), Renata in *Ognenniy angel* ('The Fiery Angel'), and to some extent Natasha in *Voyna i mir* ('War and Peace').

Through his former teacher Chernov, Prokofiev met some of the organizers of the Evenings of Contemporary Music in 1908, including the critics Vyacheslav Karatigin and Walter Nuvel', who was a friend of Diaghilev. Between 1900 and 1912 these recitals took place about six times a season in St Petersburg, and it was here that Prokofiev made his debut as a composer on 18/31 December 1908, with seven of his piano pieces written in 1907–8: *Skazka* ('Tale'), *Snezhok* ('Snow'), *Vospominaniya* ('Reminiscences'), *Poriv* ('Elan'), *Molbi* ('Imploring Requests'), *Otchayanie* ('Despair'), and *Navazhdeniye* ('Suggestion diabolique'). Works by Myaskovsky also had their first public performances at the same recital. From then on Prokofiev regularly appeared at these evenings, performing both his own compositions and those of others. He first introduced himself to Moscow audiences on 21 February/6 March 1910, with a performance of his Etudes op.2 and Sonata op.1, at one of a series of concerts given by the soprano Mariya Deisha-Zionichkaya. Other important performances took place in the summer recital programmes of the Evenings of Contemporary Music. In Moscow, where a concert series of the same name had begun, Konstantin Saradzhev conducted Prokofiev's orchestral pieces *Dreams* and *Autumnal Sketch* in 1911; the contact was provided by Myaskovsky, whose works Saradzhev had performed earlier. 1912 saw Prokofiev's first

appearance as soloist with an orchestra when he played his First Piano Concerto with great success, as he tells us, first in Moscow and then under Aleksandr Aslanov in Pavlovsk, near St Petersburg. The Second Piano Concerto, which he played at its première a year later on 23 August/5 September 1913, also in Pavlovsk and under Aslanov, created a sensation which the composer describes with evident pride in his autobiography. The work was roundly condemned in the conservative press, while progressive critics such as Karafigin reviewed it favourably. Though still a student, Prokofiev had established himself, in the recitals of the Evenings of Contemporary Music, as a controversial innovator. He was also looking for a publisher. Koussevitzky, who had founded his own orchestra and the Edition Russe de Musique in 1909, and with whom Prokofiev later had a fruitful relationship, rejected his works at this point on the recommendation of his advisers Skryabin, Rachmaninoff and Medtner. Initially the St Petersburg publisher Boris Jürgenson, son of Tchaikovsky's publisher Pyotr Jürgenson, also rejected Prokofiev, but then, thanks to the intervention of Aleksandr Ossovsky, he published the First Sonata and the Four Pieces op.3. Prokofiev remained with Jürgenson until 1916 and then changed to the publishing firm of Gutheil, which Koussevitzky took over that year, though he kept the firm's old name.

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(iii) The path to emigration.

Prokofiev had visited France, England and Switzerland in the summer of 1913, and a year later his mother gave him a trip to London as a graduation present. Here he heard Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* and Stravinsky's *Firebird*, *Petrushka* and *Rite of Spring*, the last of which he regarded with unconcealed scepticism. Nouvel introduced him to Diaghilev, who was in London with his ballet, and Prokofiev played him his Second Piano Concerto. This is said to have given Diaghilev the idea of commissioning *Ala i Lolli*, for which he suggested the symbolist poet Sergey Gorodetsky as author of the scenario. He turned down Prokofiev's proposition for *The Gambler*, since he thought opera had no future. When Prokofiev travelled to Rome in the spring of 1919, with considerable difficulty because of the war, and showed Diaghilev his sketches for the ballet, the impresario let the project drop. On this visit he had another meeting with Stravinsky, whom he had known in St Petersburg; the reservations the two composers had about each other remained unchanged. Also in Rome he encountered Marinetti and the ideas of Italian futurism, but they left him indifferent. He also played his Second Piano Concerto in Rome on 7 March 1915, his début abroad.

Using music from the aborted ballet, he wrote the *Skifskaya syuita* ('Scythian Suite') op.20 (1914–15), directly inspired by the *Rite of Spring*. It was first performed at the beginning of 1916, with the composer conducting, and created as much of a sensation as the Second Piano Concerto. From Prokofiev's account of this event in his autobiography, written in the provocative style of the Russian literary futurists, it is clear that he was seeking to create just such a scandal as Stravinsky had, to shock his audience and thus attract attention. With its harsh tone colours, frequent accumulations of dissonances, obsessive pedal-note and ostinato techniques, and extremely large orchestra, playing *forte* or *fortissimo* for long passages, the *Scythian Suite* is indeed a challenge, but it remains remarkably traditional in its formal layout and thematic structure. The four movements – an allegro with two contrasting themes (but not written as a sonata movement), a scherzo and trio, a slow movement and a rondo-like finale –

correspond to the movements of the traditional symphony. Rhythm and metre remain simple; all four movements are in 4/4, and as is usually the case with Prokofiev, there are no changes of time signature or complex superimpositions of different rhythms and metres such as are found in Stravinsky from the first, and even in earlier Russian composers. The melodies are simple, indeed plain; large intervals (9ths and even larger) are preferred in expressive passages. In addition, there are direct changes to another key as the melodic movement progresses. Harmonies move in independent layers subordinate to tone colours and registers, and displace one another so that a polytonal effect or a kind of heterophony is created (Karatigin spoke correctly, in a review, of 'a new heterophony'). This peculiar ambivalence – with an aggressive tonal structure and an accumulation of dissonances on the one side, and on the other an uncomplicated formal construction, clear melodies, simple rhythms and harmonies varied by direct changes of key – is a characteristic feature in the young Prokofiev, and in modified form he displayed it all his life. The archaic and pagan subject survives in the titles of the movements of the suite: 'The Worship of Veles and Ala', 'The Idols and Dance of the Evil Spirits', 'Night' and 'Lolli's Journey and Sunrise'. They reflect the rejection of a civilization felt to be over-refined, a longing for the primitive and for closeness to the earth and old rituals, ideas that run through the symbolist literature of the time and that also surface in Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*.

Prokofiev returned to a subject of this nature in the cantata *Semero ikh* ('They are Seven') op.30, written in 1917–18 and revised in 1933, after Bal'mont's poem 'Cries from Primeval Times', with the subtitle of 'Chaldean Invocation'. The text concerns seven giants who destroy the world with terrible violence. Prokofiev relates his choice of subject to 'the events of the revolution shaking Russia'; it may also perhaps be a reaction to the horrors of World War I. He introduced several new effects, such as the whispering of the chorus at the beginning, choral glissandi, expansive *col legno* parts, and a large body of percussion principally used as solo instruments. This work had its première in Paris in 1924, under Koussevitzky. The description of it as a cantata is an addition of the Soviet publisher, and one Prokofiev vigorously rejected, on the grounds that it allowed associations of an outworn character, though he did also use the term himself. This was his first publication in the Soviet Union.

During Prokofiev's 1919 visit to Rome, Diaghilev's idea for the ballet *The Tale of the Buffoon* took shape, and he commissioned Prokofiev to write this work, *Skazka pro shuta*, also known by the French transliteration *Chout*. The story comes from Aleskandr Afanas'yev's collection of Russian folk tales, which had already served as Rimsky-Korsakov's source for a number of works. Diaghilev asked for something typically 'Russian'; he was well aware of the attractions of the exotic, as Russian music was perceived to be in western Europe, and Prokofiev did include some national folk elements in his music. The score was completed in 1916, but the première did not take place until 17 May 1921, in Paris, conducted by Prokofiev himself.

In the period leading up to his emigration, besides revising juvenile works for his Third and Fourth Sonatas, he wrote the *Sarcasms*, op.17, 1912–14, five piano pieces which he performed to acclaim at the recitals of the Musical Contemporaries, which had superseded the Evenings of Contemporary Music, and the *Mimoletnosti* ('Visions fugitives', op.22, 1915–17), a cycle of 20 piano pieces with a title suggested by a poem of Bal'mont's. At the same time he began working on his First Violin Concerto, op.19 (1916–17), which did not receive its première until 1923 in Paris, and on the opera *Igrok* ('The Gambler'), op.24 (1915–17), from Dostoevsky's novel of the same name, a project in which he was encouraged by Albert

Coates, who had become chief conductor of the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg in 1911. The work went into rehearsal, and Prokofiev had this first version of the opera printed in vocal score for the purpose, but because of resistance by the singers and the revolutionary unrest in February 1917 the opera remained unperformed.

Prokofiev showed quite another side of himself in the Classical Symphony op.25 (1916–17). His much-quoted remark – ‘I thought that if Haydn were alive today he would compose just as he did before, but at the same time would include something new in his manner of composition. I wanted to compose such a symphony: a symphony in the classical style’ – reads like an early confession of neo-classicism. Stravinsky’s *Pulcinella*, the key neo-classical work, was not begun until two years later. Prokofiev was certainly referring back to classical models here, for instance in the proportions of the symphony, the well balanced sonata movements in the opening allegro and the finale, the triad-based melodies and the occasional Alberti bass figures. However, the stylization also includes Baroque elements, particularly in the third movement, a gavotte, and in the regular accompanying chords of its predecessor. These were also the direct harmonic idioms typical of Prokofiev which mark the symphony a 20th-century work.

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2. USA, 1918–22.

Prokofiev remarked in his autobiography that: ‘the February Revolution took me by surprise in Petrograd. Like those circles in which I moved, I welcomed it joyfully’. The 19th *Vision fugitive*, he said, reflects the revolutionary events. He was genuinely enthusiastic about the idea of revolution, as a radical break with tradition, and he sought to give it artistic shape. He found inspiration less in music than in literature, for instance in Mayakovsky’s forceful, anti-bourgeois lyrics, and in the collection published by the Russian futurists under the provocative title *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*. In his autobiography (published in extracts in *SovM*, 1941–6) he went on to explain that he had no very clear idea of the October Revolution, and ‘I had not yet become aware that I, like every other citizen, could be useful to the revolution’. This was written at the end of the 1930s and beginning of the 1940s, when it would have been dangerous to write anything that might be seen to contravene Soviet ideology. We may believe Prokofiev when he claims to have felt enthusiasm for a revolution in art; his expressions of enthusiasm for the political revolution, however, and for the idea of being useful to it, are precautionary measures, of which there are many in the book. For instance, he emphasized his allegedly revolutionary and proletarian origin by pointing out that his father maintained contact with revolutionary groups in the 1870s, and that his mother’s forebears had been serfs. In fact he must have recognized quite early that the revolution and the incipient civil war would leave him no room for artistic development, and he took the decision to go to the USA in the spring of 1918. He travelled to Petrograd and gave several concerts there, including the premières of the *Mimoletnosti* (‘Visions Fugitives’), the Third and Fourth Sonatas, and the Classical Symphony. He met Mayakovsky, called on Anatoly Lunacharsky, then cultural commissar, and applied to him for permission to go abroad. Lunacharsky granted it, as he did to many other great Russian artists. On 7 May 1918 Prokofiev travelled from Petrograd through Siberia to Vladivostok and on to Tokyo, where he gave some concerts. He arrived in New York at the beginning of September 1918.

He described his years abroad as a gradual process of failure, blaming the difficult conditions of American and European musical life. Even if his generally negative account of cultural conditions in the west was written with an eye towards Soviet censorship, the facts show that his years in exile were not as successful as he had planned and hoped. He had arrived in the USA without any firm agreements, and at first tried to make his way as the interpreter of his own works. The first piano recital he gave in New York, on 29 November 1918, was, he said, 'seen on the surface as a success'. Following his manager's advice, he had also included some works by Skryabin and Rachmaninoff in the programme, as older and more accessible music than his own. In saying that he had misjudged the rather conservative musical taste of the American public, 'while Rachmaninoff, who had come to New York at about the same time and played a classical programme with only two or three of his own preludes, was much more successful', his admission that he himself achieved only a *succès d'estime* barely conceals a weightier problem he had not previously recognized: Rachmaninoff was the leading Russian pianist in the USA. Rachmaninoff had introduced himself to the American public as early as the 1909–10 season, and had composed his Third Piano Concerto for that tour. Like Prokofiev, he had emigrated after the Revolution. American agents had engaged him for a tour comprising 36 concerts in the 1918–19 season, and over the next few years he gave 60 to 70 concerts every season. If Prokofiev were to compete, he would have to emphasize his image as a pianist. His summing up of his first season in America sounds resigned: 'The public here is not used to listening to the works of a single composer for a whole evening. People want a varied programme as a showcase for popular pieces. Rachmaninoff has accepted this compromise. I could not even dream of the overwhelming success he has with his concerts'.

Yet the first years in the USA were not as dismal as Prokofiev described them in his autobiography. He appeared in New York in two concerts with the 'Russian Orchestra', an ensemble of emigrants, under Modest Altschuler. He played his First Piano Concerto and several solo works, and the Classical Symphony was performed too. In Chicago, Friedrich Stock conducted two concerts including the *Scythian Suite* and, again, the First Piano Concerto. From then on Prokofiev regularly appeared in American concert halls. He also performed in Canada in 1919, and took account of the wish for older music by, for instance, arranging a Buxtehude organ fugue for piano, and at Stravinsky's suggestion adapting some of Schubert's waltzes and ländler into a suite. Interest shown in Prokofiev's works by American publishing firms caused him to write two collections of piano pieces: *Skazki staroy babushki* ('Old Grandmother's Tales', op.31, 1918), and four dances (op.32, 1918). However, they were not published in America, because Prokofiev would not accept the conditions he was offered; he gave both works their premières at his piano recitals in New York early in 1919. He was commissioned by the Jewish ensemble Simro, whose members had emigrated from the Soviet Union, to write the Overture on Hebrew Themes for clarinet, string quartet and piano (op.34, 1919, orchestrated 1934), which had its première in New York in 1920 with Prokofiev himself at the piano. Only a few recordings of Prokofiev himself have survived. Reports of his playing, which apparently changed little over the years, focus on the following characteristics: an emphasis on metre and rhythmic pulse, an almost complete eschewal of rubato, a striving after transparency of texture and, especially in the interpretation of his own works, an exaggeration of performance indications; only with dynamic markings did Prokofiev, in his own works as well as those of others, allow himself generous latitude.

On his début in Chicago, in 1919, he met Cleofonte Campanini, conductor of the Chicago Opera. This meeting led to the commission for *Lyubov' k tryom apel'sinam* ('The Love for Three Oranges', op.33, 1919), a subject he suggested, since the score of *The Gambler*, in

which Campanini was also interested, had been left behind in Petrograd. However, the première of the opera, Prokofiev's best known and most successful work in the genre, was postponed when Campanini died in December 1919. It was postponed again next season because Prokofiev was demanding compensation for the delay from the management of the opera company, who were unwilling to pay it. The work did not go into rehearsal until a year later, when Mary Garden had taken over as director; the première, conducted by Prokofiev, took place on 30 December 1921. The libretto is based on Gozzi's *commedia dell'arte* play *L'amore delle tre melerance* and on the comedy of the same name by Konstantin Vogak, Vsevolod Meyerhold and Vladimir Solov'yev. Meyerhold had published a magazine from 1914 to 1916 entitled *The Oranges, or Dr Dapertutto's Magazine*. The play Prokofiev used as basis for the libretto was published here for the first time, and provided the idea of an anti-bourgeois, anti-illusionist drama which brings the artificial, artistic element to the fore and dispenses with psychological study of the characters. The three planes of the action – represented by the fairytale characters (the Prince, Truffaldino), the underworld figures (Fata Morgana, the magician Celio), and the watching eccentrics, empty-heads and adherents of tragedy and comedy – are constantly disintegrated and rearranged like a mosaic, as Asaf'yev put it. This is particularly clear in the debates about the theatrical genre, or when the eccentrics intervene in the action in a parody of the *deus ex machina*, save Princess Ninetta and put Fata Morgana to flight. Prokofiev claimed to have 'chosen a simpler musical language than in *The Gambler*, taking American taste into consideration'. Certainly he showed an honest readiness to adapt – a frequent feature of his work. It is also true that he was sparing with chromatics and dissonances in this opera. However, the musical language is by no means 'simpler', based as it is on a fine web of contrasting themes and motifs. This enables Prokofiev to dispense with traditional arias, recitatives and other self-contained numbers (the only one is the famous March), and ensures the smooth inner tempo of the musical-dramatic action. Another feature is the parody of traditional operatic emotions.

After his second rather unsatisfactory season in America, Prokofiev turned his thoughts to Europe again. He spent the next three years giving concerts and composing in Europe during the summer months and returning to the USA for the winter season. In April 1920 he was in Paris and London, where he had discussions with Diaghilev about the performance of *The Tale of the Buffoon*, postponed since 1915, and began revising and orchestrating the score. Meanwhile, Koussevitzky too had left the Soviet Union, and wished to introduce himself to the Parisian public with the *Scythian Suite*. So two of Prokofiev's works had their premières in Paris very close together: the *Scythian Suite* under Koussevitzky on 29 April 1921, and *The Tale of the Buffoon* under Prokofiev himself on 17 May. They instantly made him famous and placed him on a par with Stravinsky.

He spent the summer of 1921 in Brittany, and completed the Third Piano Concerto op.26, the first sketches for which go back to 1917. At the same time he had the idea of composing a two-movement 'white' quartet, i.e. a work without any accidentals, but abandoned it. The themes intended for the second movement are incorporated into the finale of the concerto. At this period Bal'mont too was staying in Brittany; he wrote a poem in the symbolist spirit on the new piano concerto and on Prokofiev. It ends with the lines:

'But the tide foams wildly on, over all:
Prokofiev! Music and youth blossom,
In you the orchestra yearned for musical flight,
And the invincible Scythian beats the tambourine of the sun.'

His reunion with Bal'mont inspired Prokofiev to compose the Five Poems op.21 (1921), his last settings of the poet. Using Bal'mont's texts, he had previously written two poems for female chorus and orchestra (op.7, 1909–10), the two songs *It is of Other Planets* (op.9, no.1, 1910–11) and *In My Garden* (op.23, no.4, 1915), and the cantata *They are Seven*. The Third Piano Concerto, predominantly still diatonic (once again, perhaps with American taste in mind), is extremely effective and contains reminiscences of Russian folklore. Prokofiev gave it its première on 16 December 1921 in Chicago under Friedrich Stock, and played it the next month in New York under Coates; it became his best-known concerto. In 1932 it became the first of his works he recorded, with the London SO. Despite the success of *The Love for Three Oranges* and this concerto, however, he summed up 1921–2 with the remark that ‘the final result of the season spent performing in America ... was as good as nil’; he decided to move to Europe.

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3. Europe, 1922–36.

[\(i\) Musical activities and works.](#)

[\(ii\) Contacts with the Soviet Union.](#)

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(i) Musical activities and works.

In March 1922 Prokofiev went to live in southern Germany, near the monastery of Ettal, where, he said, he found the right atmosphere in which to continue work on *Ognenniy angel* (‘The Fiery Angel’, op.37), which he had begun, uncommissioned, directly after finishing *The Love for Three Oranges*. However, it was years before the opera was finally completed, since he had difficulty interesting an opera house in it. Mary Garden, who had wanted to bring it to Chicago, had left her post there. In 1926, when Bruno Walter, head of the Berlin Opera, was considering a production, Prokofiev began revision and orchestration. The score was not finished until 1927, and Koussevitzky gave a concert performance of parts of the opera in Paris. The première of the whole work did not take place until after Prokofiev’s death: in a concert performance in Paris on 25 November 1954, and in a stage production at La Fenice a year later. The libretto is based on the symbolist novel by Valery Bryusov; the action takes place during the humanist period in and around Cologne (Agrippa von Nettesheim, a historical figure, appears as the representative of humanism). The protagonist Renata, who seeks in vain for Madiel, her ‘fiery angel’, with the help of the knight Ruprecht, vacillates throughout from hysteria to madness to dark brooding and is burnt as a witch at the end. Bryusov in his novel and Prokofiev in his libretto were less concerned with historical accuracy than with the field of tension between superstition and irrationality, reason and a questionable belief in progress. In Renata, a continuation of the character type represented by Maddalena and Paulina (in *The Gambler*), Prokofiev created a complex female figure torn apart by inner conflict. A dense and extremely impressive musical language, symphonic over long passages, corresponds to the character of the protagonist, with complexes of themes for the individual characters.

When it appeared that the extremely difficult part of *Renata* might be another reason militating against a stage production, Prokofiev used the material for his Third Symphony op.44 (1928), which was first performed at the beginning of 1929 with him conducting in Brussels and Pierre Monteux in Paris, and which has entered history as the '*Fiery Angel* symphony'. Prokofiev protested against this name on the grounds that the opera derives from previous material which was not at first specific to the operatic genre (specifically the rejected 'white quartet', also incorporated into the Third Piano Concerto), and which is neutralized, so to speak, in its symphonic form. After *The Fiery Angel* Prokofiev felt that he had failed as a composer of opera and avoided the genre which was really closest to his heart until 1939, when, long after his return to the Soviet Union, he began writing *Semyon Kotko*.

He lived for over a year in Ettal, using it as his base while he gave concerts in almost all the countries of Europe. On the occasion of a revival of *The Tale of the Buffoon* in the summer of 1923, Diaghilev expressed an interest in *The Love for Three Oranges*, perhaps because this work can be understood as a parody of 19th-century opera tradition. When Prokofiev played him the opera there was a violent argument between the composer and Stravinsky, who was also present, over their respective aesthetic positions, and the tension between them, artistic and personal, was never entirely overcome. While living in Ettal Prokofiev also wrote a new version of the Second Piano Concerto (1923) and his Fifth Sonata op.38 (1923). On 1 October 1923 he married the Spanish singer Lina Llubera, who sometimes gave performances of his songs.

Later that month the Prokofievs moved to Paris. The delayed première of the First Violin Concerto took place on 18 October 1923 under Koussevitzky, with Marcel Darieux as the soloist. The reactions of the press were mixed: in the circle of Les Six the work was criticized as old-fashioned. The Second Piano Concerto and the *Scythian Suite*, performed the following year, were much more successful. Consequently, and with his characteristic willingness to adapt, Prokofiev decided to write a symphony 'of iron and steel'. This Second Symphony op.40 (1924–5) is a brittle work shot through with abrupt contrasts, in two movements: a very complex sonata movement and a set of variations. At its première, conducted by Koussevitzky on 6 June 1925, it met with a lukewarm response. Prokofiev summed up his feelings: 'this was perhaps the only time I felt afraid I might be becoming a composer of the second rank'. He rightly saw this symphony, with the *Sarcasms*, the *Scythian Suite* and *They are Seven*, as the richest in dissonance of all his works; the symphony, he said, was in part inspired by the atmosphere of Paris, since the public there was not afraid of difficult sounds. Such reflections are wide of the mark: the wealth of dissonance – which is not the same thing as complexity – can be traced back to a plain, often diatonic kernel; in other words, the process of composition takes a clear course beginning with a theme, a melody and a relatively simple accompaniment which is then made denser in several stages.

While engaged on the Second Symphony Prokofiev was writing a chamber piece in six movements for a touring ballet company, a piece danced as *Trapetsiya* ('Trapeze'), but known in the concert repertory as the G minor Quintet op.39 for oboe, clarinet, violin, viola and double bass. The European première of *The Love for Three Oranges* took place in Cologne in 1925, and a year later the opera had its first performance in Berlin. Meanwhile, in the summer of 1925 Diaghilev had suggested a ballet on a Soviet subject. The title – *Stal'noy skok* or *Le pas d'acier* ('The Steel Step') – was his idea, and he drew up the scenario together with the painter and stage designer Georgy Yakulov. The glorification of machines and their movement in the ballet is in the tradition of futurism and early Soviet constructivism: there is no real plot, but instead scenes of a poster-like nature, though no political propaganda was

intended. 'In our ballet hammers large and small, transmission shafts turning and flywheels, as well as flashing coloured light signals, were shown on stage. All came to a climax in a general creative upsurge in which the groups of dancers had to work at the machine and at the same time illustrate the working of the machines in dance', wrote Prokofiev of this ballet, and he emphasized that he had turned to a simpler language, by which he meant abandoning chromatic density and dissonances in favour of diatonicism and a style reminiscent of the music hall. He worked out the orchestration when he was in the USA to give 14 concerts during the 1925–6 season, and developed a method of including detailed instructions in the piano score, so that writing out the full score would be a mechanical process. Later, during his time in the Soviet Union, he perfected this technique to such an extent that he could leave other people to write out his scores. The première of *Le pas d'acier* in Paris on 7 June 1927, and the first London performance of 4 July 1927 attracted much attention – the work was erroneously taken to be Bolshevik propaganda – but did not establish the ballet in the repertory.

After writing several smaller works – the Overture op.42 for 17 instrumentalists (1926, revised for full orchestra 1928), written for the opening of an American Pianola Society concert hall but given its première in Moscow, the Divertimento op.43 for orchestra (1925–9), first performed under Prokofiev in Paris in December 1930, and the two piano pieces *Veshchi v sebe* ('Things in Themselves', op.45, 1928), given their première by the composer in New York early in 1930 – as well as the Third Symphony, Prokofiev received in the autumn of 1928 what was his fourth ballet commission from Diaghilev and the latter's last such request, resulting in *Bludniy sin* ('The Prodigal Son', op.46, 1928). With a scenario by Boris Kochno, this is a plain, retrospective work in the spirit of neo-classicism; the première took place in Paris under Prokofiev on 21 May 1929. He then worked material from the ballet into his Fourth Symphony op.47 (1930), commissioned for the 50th anniversary of the Boston SO and given its première on 14 November 1930 without any very great success.

The Gambler had its première in Brussels on 29 April 1929, and maintained its place in the repertory for two years. With a view to a planned performance in Leningrad which never materialized, Prokofiev had thoroughly revised the opera in 1927. With its directly literary emphasis and eschewal of closed musical forms, and its contemplative ensembles or large choruses, it belongs to the tradition of 'opéra dialogue' which had been begun at the end of the 1860s by Dargomizhsky with *The Stone Guest* and Musorgsky with *The Marriage*, and was continued by Rimsky-Korsakov with *Mozart and Salieri* and Rachmaninoff with *The Miserly Knight*. Prokofiev followed this tradition by incorporating passages of direct speech from Dostoyevsky's novel into the libretto, basing his formal construction on a differentiated system of characteristic motifs, and using no choruses except in the scene in the gambling hall (Act 4, scene v). The work shows Prokofiev's liking for exaggerated, grotesque, even humiliating situations, in which the protagonists are under great psychological pressure, so that a very tense and chromatically dense language is appropriate. His liking for comic situations is also clear, for instance in the unexpected appearance of the grandmother when the other characters think she is on her deathbed and are already dividing up her inheritance. The rapid changes of mood and expression, and a certain brevity in the various sections of the music, produce an effect close to the techniques of film cutting.

In the early 1930s Prokofiev wrote a series of commissioned works. His First String Quartet op.50 (1930) was written for the Library of Congress in Washington, which was commissioning works by famous composers for its collection of manuscripts. The quartet is in three movements, and strikes a neo-classical note which the composer achieved, according to

his own account of it, by turning back to an intensive study of Beethoven's quartets. In the summer of 1930 Serge Lifar, ballet master of the Paris Opéra, commissioned a work to be dedicated to the memory of Diaghilev. Under the title of *Na Dnepre* ('On the Dnieper' or 'Sur le Borysthène' after the old name of the river), Prokofiev wrote an atmospheric piece again without any real plot. Stylistically it is similar to *The Prodigal Son*, and at its première on 16 December 1932 it was such a dismal failure, despite the expensive production (with sets by Larionov and costumes by Goncharova), that Lifar removed it from the repertory at once and did not pay Prokofiev the full agreed sum of 100,000 francs. There was a lawsuit, which Prokofiev won. He wrote his Fourth Piano Concerto op.53 (1931) for the Austrian pianist Paul Wittgenstein, who had lost his right hand in World War I. Wittgenstein rejected the concerto, and Prokofiev never carried out his plan to revise it for both hands and the work was not performed until 1956. The last two great works to be first heard by western European audiences were the Fifth Piano Concerto op.55 (1932, première on 31 October 1932 in Berlin under Furtwängler), which was not very well received, and the Second Violin Concerto op.63 (1935), commissioned by admirers of Robert Soetans, who gave the première in Madrid on 1 December 1935. The work's clear tonality and reminiscences of Russian folklore are indications of the 'new simplicity' for which Prokofiev was striving in the early 1930s.

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(ii) Contacts with the Soviet Union.

Directly after settling in Europe, Prokofiev resumed contacts with the Soviet Union, and despite his increasing success in the 1920s and early 30s, in the USA as well as western Europe, he purposely intensified them. A new journal which appeared in 1923 and ceased publication after three numbers) – *K novim beregam* ('Towards New Shores'), named after a famous remark of Musorgsky's – devoted four articles to Prokofiev in its first issue, giving an extensive and very laudatory account of his work and activities abroad. From then on almost all his works were played regularly in the Soviet Union (as well as the west), some even having their premières there: the Bal'mont Poems in 1923, the G minor Quintet and the Overture op.42 in 1927, the suite from *Le pas d'acier* in 1928, the Sinfonietta in 1929, the piano pieces from the *Prodigal Son* and the Sonata for two violins in 1932, the Symphonic Song in 1934 and the Three Piano Pieces op.59 in 1935.

In addition, and beginning with the cantata *They are Seven*, many works appeared in print not under Koussevitzky's Gutheil imprint but in the Soviet Union (published by the All Russian Music Publishing House – later Muzgiz, the State Music Publishing House); the Soviet publications included the piano scores of *Le pas d'acier* and *On the Dnieper*, which at the time had been performed complete only in western Europe. Prokofiev must have intended to make sure that, though absent, he was prominent in Soviet musical life. It is very likely, too, that he kept open the possibility of his return, at least after 1922. He was never an emigrant in the legal sense: when France granted the Soviet Union diplomatic recognition in 1924, he registered as a Soviet citizen, and never concealed the fact that in principle he welcomed the developments in his native land.

In January 1927 he accepted an invitation to make a two-month concert tour in the Soviet Union. He gave eight concerts in Moscow, with four different programmes, including the Third Piano Concerto, which he played with Persimfans, a conductorless orchestra. In Leningrad he gave the same four programmes, attended a performance of *The Love for Three Oranges*, which had become part of the repertory there, and encountered several works by young Soviet composers, including Shostakovich's First Sonata and a septet (also known as a chamber symphony) by Gavriil Popov, which he particularly liked. Then there were concerts in Kharkiv, Kiev and Odessa. A tour of the Soviet Union planned for 1928 fell through; in November 1929 Prokofiev travelled to Moscow again, but did not appear as a pianist because he had injured his hands in a car accident. He attended rehearsals for a new production of *The Love for Three Oranges*, which had now established itself firmly in the Moscow repertory as well. A plan for staging *Le pas d'acier* – the symphonic suite from it had been performed several times – was thwarted by the resistance of the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians, which supported an aesthetic of primitive affirmation and saw the ballet as a caricature of Soviet ideals. Prokofiev visited the Soviet Union for the third time in November 1932 and took a flat in Moscow, but he still made Paris his main home. He travelled to Paris from Moscow for the première of the ballet *On the Dnieper*, and from there went on to the USA for a three-month tour.

He recorded his impressions of his first visit to the Soviet Union in a diary; its existence was long known to Soviet musicologists, but they ventured to publish it only in the context of perestroika and to celebrate the centenary of the composer's birth. Two aspects of this diary made any earlier publication in the Soviet Union seem inopportune. Firstly, Prokofiev regarded the political system sceptically and sometimes even critically (in contrast to his public pronouncements and despite his agreement with it in principle). Secondly, he was interested principally in musical life under the new circumstances, and the opportunities it could offer him. The political system interested him only in so far as it might be useful or injurious to his career, and in connection with the compromises he might have to make. He obviously regarded the diary as a document for his eyes only, intended to help him decide between the Soviet Union and the west. It was also meant as an antidote to the blurred judgements or rose-tinted visions of memory. Prokofiev's keen analytical gift of observation is revealed. He soberly noted the changes that had occurred during the ten years of his absence. He was clear in his own mind that art in the Soviet Union was subject to political and social ideals, and that these ideals – not criteria immanent in art – would decide between success and failure in any doubtful case. By 1932 at the latest he had consciously assessed the field of tension between adaptation and self-assertion. Moreover, since the end of the 1920s he had been seeking to find a simpler musical language, and he believed his aesthetic of a new simplicity could be combined with the official Soviet concept of art. So much does he make of this accord in his comments in the press (*Vechernaya Moskva*, 6 December 1932; *Sovetskaya muzika* 1933, no.3; *Isvestiya*, 16 November 1934; *Vechernaya Moskva*, 23 January 1936) that it is difficult to know which was more important to him: proclaiming his own ideal of art or paying homage to an aesthetic dictated from outside. He signalled his readiness to adapt with a collection of folk and choral songs (op.66, 1935), one of which, 'Anyutka', was awarded a prize by *Pravda*. The Soviet side came halfway to meet him too: in 1932 he was commissioned to write film music for *Poruchnik Kizhe* ('Lieutenant Kijé') and a little later to write incidental music for *Yegipetskiye nochi* ('Egyptian Nights'), a Muscovite collage made from Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and Pushkin. Both scores provided material for symphonic suites (opp.60 and 61, 1934). At the end of 1934 the Leningrad opera house (now renamed after Sergey Kirov, an associate of Stalin's who had

been murdered on 1 April that year) negotiated with Prokofiev for the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*; when this project fell through, the Bol'shoi in Moscow commissioned the score.

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[Prokofiev, Sergey](#)

4. The USSR, 1936–53.

[\(i\) Return and first Soviet works.](#)

[\(ii\) World War II and after.](#)

[\(iii\) 'Zhdanovshchina'.](#)

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(i) Return and first Soviet works.

In the summer of 1936 Prokofiev finally moved to the Soviet Union, to live there with his wife and two sons. Stalin's power politics were approaching their ghastly climax in the purges at this time. It must remain an open question how far Prokofiev was able to assess the existing political structures, which were very dangerous for his non-Russian wife. In his public utterances, he explained his return in terms of patriotic feeling and homesickness. 'I must see the real winter again', and 'hear the Russian language in my ears', he told French friends. Such sentiments seem out of tune with his down-to-earth, clear-thinking character. He must have had other and more convincing reasons for taking such a step, and we can only conjecture what they were. Between 1926 and 1936 Shostakovich was the leading, most highly regarded and most internationally renowned composer of the Soviet Union. His second opera, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (given its première on 22 January 1934) had been performed 83 times in Leningrad and 94 times in Moscow within two years, until it found itself a political target. On 28 January 1936 the article 'Chaos instead of Music' appeared in *Pravda*. Ostensibly it was a venomous condemnation of the opera and its composer, but first and foremost it was a politico-cultural manifesto seeking to base all Soviet art on the principles of 'socialist realism'. It terrified all Soviet artists and shook their creative confidence; Shostakovich's career as a composer was at a temporary end, only to be re-established with the première of his Fifth Symphony in 1937. One reason for Prokofiev's departure from America had been Rachmaninoff's greater success, and in Europe he came second to Stravinsky; he returned to the Soviet Union just when Shostakovich was out of the running as a rival.

We must assume that a decision to return to the Soviet Union was also made palatable to him by promises of privileges. He retained his passport, with which he could travel abroad without the humiliating petitions usually necessary in the Soviet Union, and he continued to give guest performances in Europe and even undertook an American tour in 1938. Then the trap snapped shut: he was asked to hand in his passport for the transaction of a formality, but did not get it back, so that there could be no question of further tours abroad, as he later told the violinist Mikhail Goldstein.

As a composer, Prokofiev was cautious and ready to adapt in the first years after his return. In 1936 and 1937, like all composers in the Soviet Union, he was busy with works to mark the centenary of Pushkin's death, celebrated as a great event. However, his music for a film version of *Pikovaya dama* ('The Queen of Spades') and two sets of incidental music for stage performances of *Boris Godunov* and *Yevgeny Onegin* were not performed; some of their themes were later incorporated into other works (*Semyon Kotko*, *War and Peace*, Eighth Sonata). At the same time he was writing music for children, no doubt partly with his growing sons in mind. In addition, music for children was highly valued in the Soviet Union, and even composers of the first rank took it very seriously. Prokofiev wrote Music for Children, twelve easy piano pieces (op.65, 1935, seven of them arranged for orchestra in 1941), three songs for children (op.68, 1936–9), and the rightly famous symphonic fairytale *Petya i volk* ('Peter and the Wolf', op.67, 1936), for which he wrote the text himself, providing opportunities to use instruments and tone colours with sensitive educational skill. He was also turning to genres favoured by official Soviet cultural policy, as in his Four Marches op.69 for wind band (1935–7), Russian Overture op.72 inspired by folklore (1936), op.79 song cycle on patriotic texts (1939) and four patriotic cantatas. However, *Pesni nashikh dney* ('Songs of Our Times' op.76), a suite in nine movements for solo voices, chorus and orchestra (1937) was criticized by Soviet writers as excessively simple, and the cantata for the 20th anniversary of the October Revolution (op.74, 1936–7) – a monumental work in ten movements for two professional choruses, an amateur chorus, symphony orchestra, wind band, percussion ensemble and accordion band, to texts by Marx, Lenin and Stalin – was not granted permission for performance by the Committee for Artistic Affairs, on the grounds that it did not meet the criteria of 'socialist realism'. Not until April 1966 was the work performed. In 1939, for Stalin's 60th birthday, Prokofiev wrote the cantata *Zdravitsa* ('Hail to Stalin', op.85), an occasional work on folk tunes of the most varied nationalities of the Soviet Union and one of countless works of homage to Stalin from this period. With a revised text, it maintained its place in the Soviet repertory even after the dictator's death. The cantata *Aleksandr Nevskiy* (op.78, 1938–9), drawn from the score for Eisenstein's film, was the only work of this time to be praised outside as well as within the Soviet Union. Prokofiev's second work for Eisenstein, the film music for *Ivan Grozniy* ('Ivan the Terrible', op.16, 1942–5) also exists in an oratorio arrangement by the conductor Abram Stasevich (1961).

Only two works of Prokofiev's first years back in the Soviet Union are not marked by political considerations. He had begun his Cello Concerto op.58 in 1933, but did not finish it until 1938. It failed miserably at its première (with Berezovsky on 26 November 1939), and Prokofiev revised it, following the critical advice of Myaskovsky. In this version Pyatigorsky performed it in the USA in 1940; then a further revision was made in 1950 at the urging of Rostropovich. The other non-political work, *Romeo and Juliet*, had been finished in 1936; while writing it Prokofiev considered giving the story a happy ending, but rejected the idea as sacrilege to Shakespeare. Since the Bol'shoy rejected the work as too complicated, and the Leningrad School of Choreography also backed out of a contract made in 1937, the première did not take place until December 1938, and then in Brno. Prokofiev had previously arranged two symphonic suites (opp.64a and b) and a collection of ten piano pieces (op.75) from the ballet, and these were performed very successfully in 1936 and 1937. In 1946 he arranged a third orchestral suite (op.101). The first performance of the ballet in Leningrad was on 11 January 1940, in a magnificent production with the prima ballerina Galina Ulanova as Juliet. At the request of the choreographer, Leonid Lavrovsky, Prokofiev made many alterations and composed two extra numbers (no.14, Juliet's Variations, and no.20, Romeo's Variations). *Romeo and Juliet* soon became a showpiece of Soviet ballet and entered the international repertory.

Prokofiev returned to opera after a break of over ten years with *Semyon Kotko* op.81 (1939), attempting to treat a modern Soviet subject in the manner of the 'song opera' then officially favoured, for which Ivan Dzerzhinsky's now long-forgotten *Quiet Flows the Don* was regarded as the model. Prokofiev's opera was based on the story *I am the Son of the Working People* by Valentin Katayev, published in 1937, and Katayev worked with the composer on the libretto. The action takes place in the Ukraine during the Civil War, with young revolutionaries as the protagonists. In his setting of the text Prokofiev complied with the demand for song-like music, the folk idiom, revolutionary emotion and propagandist art. Though the music is distinguished from other Soviet works of this period (for instance, Khrennikov's *In the Storm*) by a fine network of characteristic motifs, short sections in the manner of film scenes and a wealth of ideas, and though Prokofiev found an intelligent way of presenting the idea of socialist realism, this very connection with the ideals of the time is an obstacle to the wider dissemination of the opera. The work also failed in the Soviet Union. Preparations dragged on a long time, because Meyerhold, who was to direct the work, was arrested in June 1939. As a result, the première did not take place until 23 June 1940. The opera set off a violent dispute, which was won by the narrow-minded cultural ideologues, so that the piece was taken out of the repertory in 1941 and not performed again until after Prokofiev's death.

In spite of this failure he immediately began another operatic project, *Obruchenije v monastire* ('Betrothal in a Monastery', op.86, 1940), based on Sheridan's comedy of mistaken identity, *The Duenna*, made into a libretto by Mira Mendel'son, Prokofiev's new companion. The opera is neo-classical, with clear references to Mozart and Rossini. It is often described as a Soviet counterpart to *The Love for Three Oranges*, though it is far inferior in musical versatility, comedy of situation and irony with respect to the operatic genre. It did not have its première until after the end of the war, on 5 May 1946 in Prague (the first performance in Leningrad followed on 3 November), and it too was unable to maintain its place in the repertory.

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(ii) World War II and after.

On 21 June 1941 Germany attacked the Soviet Union, and the so-called 'Great War of the Fatherland' began. Prokofiev was evacuated in August, like all important artists. His travels took him to Nalchik in the northern Caucasus, then in November to Tbilisi, in June 1942 to Alma-Ata, in June 1943 to Perm' in the Urals, and back to Moscow in October 1943. During this period he was, like Myaskovsky and several other composers, awarded the highly regarded title Honoured Artist of the RSFSR. His creative work during the war years was along two lines: he reacted to the events of the war with propaganda music, and he devoted himself increasingly to chamber works. He completed the three piano sonatas he had begun simultaneously in 1939 (opp.82–4), and they were given their first performances during the war by Sviatoslav Richter and Emil Gilels. The Ninth Sonata op.103 was added in 1947, and he was planning two more sonatas in 1953, the year of his death. The Second String Quartet op.92 (1941) is based on Kabardinian themes from Nalchik, which give this work a modal character and brittle charm characteristic of the folk music of one of the areas to which Prokofiev had been evacuated. The Flute Sonata op.94 (1943), of which the composer also

arranged a version for violin as his Second Violin Sonata, became a popular repertory piece thanks to its playful elegance. With its dark colours, the First Violin Sonata op.80, begun in 1938 and completed in 1946, seems like an intimate reflection of the events of the war. In 1947 came a Sonata op.115 for unaccompanied violin. All these works are without non-musical function; like the Fifth Symphony op.100 (1944), they display the freely tonal harmonies, melodic and thematic wealth of ideas and lyrical expressivity characteristic of the mature Prokofiev – qualities that have established these works firmly in the international repertory.

Of those compositions relating to the war, the only ones to find much favour in the Soviet Union were the March op.99 for military band (1943–4) and the arrangements of folksongs for voice and piano (op.104, 1944), intended as an expression of patriotic feeling. The first two songs in the collection, ‘In the Summer of the Snowball Bush’ and ‘The Green Grove’, were even awarded a prize. The other war-related works – the Symphonic March op.88 (1941), the Seven Choral Songs op.89 (1941–2), the symphonic suite *The Year 1941* op.90 and the *Ballad of an Unknown Boy* op.93 (1942–3) – were honestly intended as expressions of resounding patriotism, yet they too were negatively judged by critics whose opinion carried weight (Shostakovich and Myaskovsky), and were soon forgotten. The sensation caused in the Allied countries by Shostakovich’s Seventh Symphony (1941) also renewed western interest in Prokofiev’s music during the war, especially in England and the USA – interest not in the explicitly patriotic Soviet works, but in the cantata *Aleksandr Nevskiy*, the Fifth Symphony, the Sixth and Seventh Sonatas, the two suites from *Romeo and Juliet*, and earlier compositions such as the Classical Symphony, the *Scythian Suite*, *Peter and the Wolf*, and the suite from the film music to *Lieutenant Kijé*.

The main works of the war years are the opera *Voyna i mir* (‘War and Peace’, op.91), after Tolstoy, which was written in its first version in 1941–2 and had its première in a concert performance during the war, on 16 October 1944, and the ballet *Zolushka* (‘Cinderella’, op.87, 1940–44). The latter did not receive its première until 21 November 1945, in Moscow, and joined the international repertory, if in a place second to *Romeo and Juliet*. Then the end of the war was celebrated by Soviet composers with festive works. Prokofiev contributed his *Ode on the End of the War* op.105 (1945), a monumental work in one movement for eight harps, four pianos, wind ensemble, percussion and double basses, which was intended as a mighty dithyramb, with the archaic Russian sound of bells, but baffled the audience at its première on 12 November 1945 and was condemned by the critics.

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(iii) ‘Zhdanovshchina’.

During the war art had been less strictly supervised by the state. Certain works (in particular literary works by Zoshchenko and Akhmatova, and the films of Eisenstein, but also music by Shostakovich and Prokofiev) had aroused great interest in the west, and had deviated from the ideal of ‘socialist realism’. But in the years 1946–8 four major resolutions affecting cultural policy were passed. The man responsible was Andrey Zhdanov, the leading cultural ideologue of the Stalinist period, and they paralysed cultural life until Stalin’s death in 1953. Hence the informal term ‘Zhdanovshchina’ for this terrible period, though Zhdanov himself had died

suddenly in August 1948. The first resolution, of 14 August 1946, related to the Leningrad literary journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*; the second, of 26 August 1946, affected the theatrical repertory; the third, of 4 September 1946, was aimed at the Soviet film industry, in particular Eisenstein and the second part of *Ivan the Terrible*, for which Prokofiev had written the score. The resolution on music was not passed until two years later. These state measures were intended to bring art back to a unified party line, emphasizing the folk tradition and an affirmative outlook. At first Prokofiev did not let them affect him; he was busy with three symphonic suites from *Cinderella*, and another suite, of waltzes from various of his works (opp.107–10, all 1946). At the same time he was completing the Sixth Symphony, a thoughtful work in three movements which he initially wished to dedicate to the memory of Beethoven, and he made a new version of the Fourth Symphony (op.112, 1947), though this was not performed until 1957. He also paid tribute to the 30th anniversary of the October Revolution with two works: the symphonic poem *Tridtsat' let* ('Thirty Years', op.113) and the cantata *Rastsvetay moguchiy kray* ('Flourish, Mighty Homeland', op.114), to a text by Yevgeny Dolmatovsky.

On 10 February 1948 the resolution 'On the Opera "The Great Friendship" by Vanno Muradeli' was passed. Perhaps the saddest document in Soviet musical history, this decree was directed not so much against the composer Muradeli – forgotten today, along with the work which aroused Stalin's ire at the time and which was the ostensible occasion for official criticism – as against the great composers of the Soviet Union. To Prokofiev, it was a blow from which he did not recover. After 1948 he was a sick and deeply insecure man; the few further works he wrote before his death bear traces of this insecurity. What happened at the time can be reconstructed from a special number of *Sovetskaya muzika* published in 1991 on the centenary of Prokofiev's birth. Four days after the passing of the resolution, a ban on the performance of certain works by Prokofiev was issued by the highest authority; on 16 February Prokofiev acknowledged his alleged artistic errors in a letter of self-abasement; this letter was read out to a meeting of the Union of Composers on 17 February; on 20 February his first wife Lina was arrested; on 3 December his *Povest' o nastoyashchem cheloveke* ('The Story of a Real Man') was given a private performance before members of the Union of Composers at the Kirov and so savagely criticized that there could be no question of a public première; on 28 December he again accused himself of his alleged artistic errors in an open letter to the Union of Composers.

In the resolution Zhdanov had attacked Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Myaskovsky and several other composers by name, denouncing their works for 'formalistic distortions and anti-democratic tendencies', as a 'rejection of the principles of classical music' and for the 'dissemination of atonality'. Comprehensive polemics of this nature were nothing new to Soviet artists. Zhdanov referred expressly to the article attacking Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth* which had appeared in *Pravda* in 1936, and it was not forgotten that the composer had been regarded thereafter as *persona non grata*, had lost the positions he held and even faced arrest. The artists rebuked for nonconformity in 1946 had also lost their opportunities to work and be published. It was clear to the composers, therefore, what this resolution meant for them. Only Prokofiev, who had hitherto remained unaffected, does not seem to have understood the threat represented by the Zhdanov tribunal at once. Rostropovich commented that Prokofiev had 'always been a great child, of astonishing naivety. ... When Zhdanov made his caustic speech attacking the composers in the Central Committee, Prokofiev was in the hall. There was a deathly silence, but he went on talking to his neighbour, the next conductor of *War and Peace*'.

In his long letter of 16 February 1948 to the Union of Composers, Prokofiev wrote that his state of health did not allow him to attend their meeting; he welcomed the resolution because it had created 'the conditions for the recovery of the entire organism of Soviet music'. It was particularly important, he continued, because it had shown 'that the formalistic movement which leads to the impoverishment and decline of music is foreign to the Soviet people and because it has shown us, with the utmost clarity, the aims toward which we must strive in order to serve the Soviet people as best we can'. Passages of self-accusation and justification follow. Under the influence of western currents, Prokofiev said, he was guilty of formalism and atonality, but in such works as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Aleksandr Nevskiy*, the cantata *Hail to Stalin* and the Fifth Symphony, he hoped he had overcome these tendencies successfully. Finally he expressed his gratitude to the party 'for the clear guidelines laid down by the resolution'.

Here we see a great artist forced by an unspoken but only too comprehensible threat to ape the language of narrow-minded cultural bureaucrats, deny his own talent and abase himself. Such confessions and self-accusations were usual in Soviet cultural politics. After *Lady Macbeth*, Shostakovich had found a specific musical vocabulary with which he could reflect official criticism, the threat of power, and the tragic events in the Soviet Union. He reacted to the resolution with the choral works *Song of the Forests* and *The Sun Shines Over Our Homeland*, wrote a primitive song of praise to Stalin which has only recently become known again in the Soviet Union, and apart from that composed works to be put quietly away (the First Violin Concerto, the cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry*), works in which he took the mechanisms of suppression as his theme. Prokofiev did not have such a vocabulary at his disposal, nor did he need it, for in his view tragic themes and a critical relation to contemporary history did not have a place in music; he had thought that art and politics could be kept separate. Accordingly, he was helpless and baffled in the face of the resolution. He obviously hoped to come to some agreement with his tormentors, for in his letter to the Union of Composers he promised to take the recommendations of the Central Committee to heart in his new opera, *The Story of a Real Man*, to strive for a simple harmonic language and to make use of Russian folksongs – and he meant his promise seriously.

When Prokofiev wrote his letter of contrition he did not know that some of his works were already banned. The extract concerning him from 'Order no.17 of the Committee for Artistic Affairs of the Ministerial Council of the USSR, Main Department for Control of Theatrical and Musical Programmes', dated Moscow, 14 February 1949, runs:

The following works of Soviet composers at present on the programmes of concert organizations are to be removed from the repertory and may not be played: Prokofiev: symphonic suite '1941', *Ode on the End of the War*, Festive Poem [*Vstrecha Volgi s Donom*], Cantata on the 30th Anniversary of the October Revolution, *Ballad of an Unknown Boy*, Piano Sonata no.6.

The list of banned works is surprising and revealing, for it affects not works which might be suspected of 'formalism', but compositions with unambiguously Soviet subjects. It is relatively improbable that Stalin's cultural ideologues did not see the principles of 'socialist realism' realized in these particular works (although the *Ode on the End of the War* and the *Ballad of an Unknown Boy* were not published in Prokofiev's lifetime). The list of banned works, rather, is arbitrarily drawn up with deliberate intent: only in this way could music directors and programme planners be so thoroughly alarmed that they would not venture to include any works by Prokofiev in the repertory at all. A good year later the ban was lifted, in a decree dated 16 March 1949 and signed by Stalin himself. There was a very practical reason

for the rescinding. Skostakovich was to travel to the World Peace Congress in the USA in the spring of 1949, at Stalin's express wish. He declined to go on the grounds that he would not know what to say when he was asked why his and his colleagues' compositions were not played at home.

The heaviest and most threatening blow to Prokofiev followed after Zhdanov's tribunal and his letter of contrition when his first wife was arrested, accused of spying and treachery, and condemned to 20 years in a labour camp. Prokofiev heard the news from his sons, and he must have tormented himself with self-reproaches, for it was possible that he had contributed to the situation. As early as 1941, he had left his family and gone to live with the writer Mira Mendel'son, who wrote the librettos for his operas *Betrothal in a Monastery*, *War and Peace* and *The Story of a Real Man* and the scenario for the ballet *Skaz o kammenom tsvetke* ('The Stone Flower'). 'When my father decided to legalize his new marriage', Svyatoslav Prokofiev recalled:

the court told him, much to his relief, that a divorce was unnecessary: the marriage he had contracted on 1 October 1923 in Ettal in Germany was declared null and void because it had not been registered in a Soviet consulate. Mother, who had gone to the USSR as his wife, ceased to be his wife at all at some mysterious moment. Father, convinced that his marriage to mother was legal, turned to the next highest court, but there he was told the same thing – so he could marry his second wife without going through a divorce first.

In view of the arbitrary and unpredictable Soviet system, it is hard to decide whether there is any connection linking Prokofiev's public humiliation, his marriage to Mira Mendel'son and the arrest of Lina Prokofieva. Nor should Prokofiev be blamed for acting irresponsibly and risking his first wife's arrest in marrying again. He was under enormous psychological pressure, and lived in constant anxiety after 1948: if Lina had been arrested and deported on the flimsiest of grounds, then the same thing could happen to his two sons, himself, or even Mira Mendel'son. Lina spent eight years in labour camps, and was released in 1956 on the grounds of 'suspension of the proceedings'. She died on 3 January 1989 in London.

Prokofiev hoped to rehabilitate himself with his seventh opera, *The Story of a Real Man* op. 117 (1947–8), based on the story of the same name by the war reporter Boris Polevoy, who was awarded the Stalin Prize, second class, in 1946. The plot concerns an airman who loses both legs when his plane is shot down, but who fights heroically on. Prokofiev's failure was the result of his attempt to fulfil the demands of the resolution too scrupulously. The patriotic and sentimental tone is overdone, the musical language so simple, unspecific and banal over long passages that the opera became an unintentional caricature of the principles of 'social realism'. Prokofiev tried to defend himself against its rejection in his second long letter to the Union of Composers, which shows how earnestly he had wanted to adapt and how unjustly he now felt he had been treated:

It was clear from the resolution ... that the party and the government allot special significance to operas on Soviet subjects, and that the composition of such an opera is particularly important for the Soviet people. Consequently I felt bound to devote my powers to a work in this area, and I laboured unceasingly for almost a year on a Soviet opera ... In my opera I endeavoured to be as melodic as possible and write melodies that would be very easily understood. In the depiction of my hero I was particularly concerned to indicate the internal world of a Soviet man, love of the homeland and Soviet patriotism. It gave me pain to hear the comrades' critical opinions. However, I would rather write operas on Soviet subjects, and even hear criticism if they do not succeed, than not to write and to hear no criticism.

This letter, like *The Story of a Real Man* itself, betrays a dire sense of helplessness and artistic insecurity. After these events Prokofiev composed very little more: there could be no compromise between the narrow-minded official aesthetic and his own concept of art, and he found no critical answer to the humiliations he had to endure. In addition he was a sick man; he suffered from nervous headaches and had several heart attacks, and his doctors strictly forbade work. His works now were seldom performed or printed, so that he had economic problems too. On 20 March 1952 the Committee for Artistic Affairs made a very modest petition to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, asking the composer to be allowed a pension of 3000 roubles a month and a single payment of 25,000 roubles. The request was partially granted with a decree of 22 April 1952 giving him 2000 roubles a month. This document too is signed by Stalin himself.

In the last years of his life Prokofiev was working further on *War and Peace* and trying to change and extend his style in conformity with the 1948 resolution. The opera had been given a second concert performance directly after the end of the war, on 7 June 1945. Following the advice of the conductor Samuil Samosud, Prokofiev had added two scenes to the original version (the new additions were scene ii, the ball at Catherine's court, and scene x, the council of war in Fili). Of this second version, now in 13-scenes and a choral prologue, and intended to be played over two evenings, the first part (eight scenes) was performed on 12 June 1946 in Leningrad in a production by Boris Pokrovsky, conducted by Samosud, and met with a favourable response. No one dared perform the second part in the poisoned atmosphere of the three first resolutions affecting art, and after 1948 performance became absolutely unthinkable. In the hope that the opera might yet be staged, Prokofiev worked until 1953 on a third version, cut to 11 scenes again. It was not given even in a concert performance until the summer of 1953, after the composer's death; the stage production followed in Leningrad on 1 April 1955. The 13 scene version, much cut, was performed on 8 November 1955 at the Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre in Moscow; the première of the full opera took place on 15 December 1959 at the Bolshoy.

Besides working on *War and Peace*, Prokofiev was writing works in the spirit of 'social realism': a 'Soldiers' Marching Song' (1950), the eight-movement suite *Zimniy kostyor* ('Winter Bonfire', op.122, 1949), the oratorio *Na strashe mira* ('On Guard for Peace', op.124, 1950) and the symphonic festive poem *Vstrecha Volgi s Donom* ('The Meeting of the Volga and the Don', op.130, 1951) for the opening of the Volga-Don Canal. The fairytale ballet *The Stone Flower* op.118 (1948–50) did not have its première until 12 February 1954, and has not kept a place in the repertory, nor have the four orchestral suites Prokofiev drew from it (opp.126–9, all 1951). The late instrumental works are curiously colourless, and conspicuous for an almost excessive tendency to simplicity; there is nothing here of the lively nonconformity of the young Prokofiev. This is true also of the Symphonic Concerto op.125 for cello and orchestra (1950–52) and the unfinished Cello Concertino op.133 (1952), both written for Rostropovich, and also the Seventh Symphony op.131 (1951–2).

From the first Prokofiev sought to conduct a dialogue with his public by adapting to prevailing tendencies. As a young composer he startled his audiences with his provocative tone colours and tone combinations, his many dissonances and his sheer volume of sound. He found inspiration in the Russian futurists of the circle of Mayakovsky, but also in Stravinsky's ballets, then seen as challenging. In other words, he took his bearings from those who represented the avant garde of the time. In the USA he strove, as he said, to find a simpler musical language without sacrificing his artistic integrity, and *The Love for Three Oranges* was the impressive result. In Europe he reacted to a more sophisticated public with

differentiated formal structures and more complex harmony. Finally, in the Soviet Union, he adapted to the never clearly defined maxims of ‘socialist realism’. However, in his comments intended for public consumption he always emphasized that a simpler musical language was not to be confused with excessive simplicity and composing to a stereotyped pattern, and in the USSR too, for all his caution, he succeeded in retaining his unmistakable style. It must remain an open question whether the many works concretely motivated by Soviet events, in which function takes precedence to the extent that artistic quality is irrelevant, were written out of genuine conviction or should be seen as efforts to conform. Prokofiev held no position in cultural politics, for instance in the Union of Composers, nor did he ever take a teaching post. Unlike Shostakovich and many of his colleagues, he never became a member of the Communist Party, so that he retained a certain freedom of space in which to manoeuvre. It was not until 1948 that Soviet cultural policy really caught up with him and destroyed him both artistically and physically.

A large number of the works that are free from political professions have a firm place in the international repertory, and he is rightly counted one of the major composers of the 20th century. He was not a great influence on younger generations of composers, unlike Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, Stravinsky, Bartók and Messiaen – except in the Soviet Union, where Soviet-trained musicians of a whole generation took their guidelines from either Shostakovich or Prokofiev, raising the achievement of one or the other to the status of a philosophy of life, and passed on their stylistic features to those who followed.

Prokofiev’s death on 5 March 1953 passed almost unnoticed, for Stalin died on that same day.

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operas

op.

- Velikan [The Giant] (3, Prokofiev and others), vs, 1900, unpubd; Kalnga guberniya, private home, sum.1901
- Na pustinnikh ostrovakh [On Desert Islands], (ov. and 3 scenes of Act 1, Prokofiev), 1900–02, unpubd
- Pir vo vremya chumī [A Feast in Time of Plague] (1, Prokofiev, after A.S. Pushkin), vs, 1903, 1 scene rev. 1908–9, unpubd
- Undina (4, M. Kilstett, after F. de la Motte Fouqué), 1904–7, unpubd
- 13 Maddalena (1, Prokofiev, after M. Lieven), 1911–13, inc., concert perf., BBC, London, 25 March 1979 orchd E. Downes]
- 24 Igrok [The Gambler] (4, Prokofiev, after F. Dostoyevsky), 1915–17, rev. 1927–8; Brussels, Monnaie, cond. M. Corneil de Thoran, 29 April 1929; see orch works, op.49
- 33 Lyubov' k tryom apel'sinam [The Love for Three Oranges] (prol, 4, Prokofiev, after C. Gozzi), 1919; Chicago, Auditorium, cond. Prokofiev, 30 Dec 1921 as *L'amour des trois oranges*; see orch works, opp.33bis, 109, pf works, op.33ter
- 37 Ognenniy angel [The Fiery Angel] (5, Prokofiev, after V. Bryusov), 1919–23, rev. 1926–7; Act 2 in concert perf., Paris, cond. S. Koussevitzky, 14 June 1928; complete, Paris, Champs Elysées, cond. C. Bruck, 25 Nov 1954 as *L'ange de feu*; see orch works, op.44, vocal orch works, op.37bis
- 81 Semyon Kotko (5, V. Katayev, Prokofiev, after Katayev), 1939; Moscow, Stanislavsky, cond. M.N. Zhukov, 23 June 1940; see orch works, op.81bis
- 86 Obrucheniye v monastire [Betrothal in a Monastery] (4, Prokofiev, M. Mendel'son, after R.B. Sheridan: *The Duenna*), 1940–41; Prague, National 5 May 1946; Russ. première, Leningrad, Kirov, cond. B. Khaikin, 3 Nov 1946; see orch works, op.123
- Khan Buzay, 1942–, inc., unpubd
- 91 Voyna i mir [War and Peace] (5, epigraph, Prokofiev, after L. Tolstoy), 1941–3, rev. 1946–52; II scenes, concert perf., Moscow, Actors' Club, 16 Oct 1944; Pf I, 8 scenes, Leningrad, Mal'iy, cond. S.A. Samosud, 12 June 1946; complete (13 scenes), with cuts, Moscow, Stanislavsky-Nemirovich-Danchenko, cond. A. Shaverdov, 8 Nov 1955; Moscow, Bol'shoy, cond. A. Melik-Pashayev, 15 Dec 1959, first relatively complete perf., incl. epigraph; see orch works, op.110, pf works, op.96
- 117 Povest' o nastoyashchem cheloveke [The Story of a Real Man] (4, Prokofiev, Mendel'son, after B. Polevoy), 1947–8; private concert perf., Leningrad, Kirov, cond. Khaikin, 3 Dec 1948; staged, Moscow, Bol'shoy, cond. M.F. Ermler, 8 Oct 1960
- Dalyokiye morya [Distant Seas] (Prokofiev, after V.A. Dikhovichni), 1948–, inc., unpubd; planned as op.118

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ballets

- 20 Ala i Lolli (S. Gorodetsky, Prokofiev), 1914–15, withdrawn, unpubd; see orch works, op.20
- 21 Skazka pro shuta [The Tale of the Buffoon] (Chout) (6 scenes, Prokofiev, after A. Afanas'yev), 1915, rev. 1920; Paris, Gaîté Lyrique, cond. Prokofiev, 17 May 1921; see

- orch works, op.21bis
- 39 Trapetsiya [Trapeze] (1), 1924; Berlin, Romanov Company, late 1925; music also as Quintet, op.39
- 41 Stal'noy skok [The Steel Step] (Le pas d'acier) (2 scenes, Prokofiev, G. Yakulov), 1925–6; Paris, Sarah Bernhardt, cond. Désormière, 7 June 1927; see orch works, op.41bis
- 46 Bludniy sin [The Prodigal Son] (L'enfant prodigue) (3, B. Kochno), 1928–9; Paris, Sarah Bernhardt, cond. Prokofiev, 21 May 1929; see orch works, opp.46bis, 47
- 51 Na Dnepre [On the Dnieper] (Sur le Borysthène) (2 scenes, S. Lifar, Prokofiev), 1930–31; Paris, Opéra, cond. P. Gaubert, 16 Dec 1932; see orch works, op.51bis
- 64 Romeo i Dzhuletta [Romeo and Juliet] (4, Prokofiev, others, after W. Shakespeare), 1935–6; Brno, cond. Q. Arnoldi, 30 Dec 1938; see orch works, opp.64bis, 64ter, 101, pf works, op.75
- 87 Zolushka [Cinderella] (3, N. Volkov), 1940–44; Moscow, Bol'shoy, cond. Y. Fayer, 21 Nov 1945; see orch works, opp. 107–10, chamber works, op.97bis, pf works, opp.95, 97, 102
- 118 Skaz o kammenom tsvetke [The Tale of the Stone Flower] (4, L. Lavrovsky, Mendel'son, after P. Bazhov), 1948–53; Moscow, Bol'shoy, cond. Fayer, 12 Feb 1954; see orch works, opp. 126–9

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other dramatic works

incidental music

- Yevipetskiye nochi [Egyptian Nights] (Pushkin, Shakespeare, G. Shaw), 1934; Moscow, Kamerniy, April 1935; see orch works, op.61
- Boris Godunov (Pushkin, produced Meyergold), 1936; Moscow, Central Children's Theatre, April 1957; selected nos. from opp.70, 70bis and 71 arr. as Pushkiniana by Rozhdestvensky (1962)
- 71 Yevgeny Onegin (Pushkin), 1936, unpubd; BBC, London, 1 April 1980
- 77 Hamlet (Shakespeare), 1937–8; Leningrad, 15 May 1939; see pf works, op.77bis

film scores

- Poruchnik Kizhe [Lieutenant Kijé], 1933, unpubd; film unrealized; see orch works, op.60, other vocal works, op.60bis
- 70 Pikovaya dama [The Queen of Spades] (after Pushkin), 1936; film unrealized
- Aleksandr Nevskiy (dir. S. Eisenstein), Mez, chorus, orch, 1938, unpubd; see vocal orch works, op.78, other vocal works, op.78bis
- Lermontov, 1941, unpubd; see orch works, op.110, pf works, op.96
- Kotovskiy, 1942, unpubd
- Partizani v stepyakh ukraini [The Partisans in the Ukrainian Steppes], 1942, unpubd
- Tonya, 1942, unpubd; film unrealized

116 Ivan Groznīy [Ivan the Terrible] (dir. Eisenstein), part 1, 1942–4, part 2, 1945, unpubd;
arr. as orat by A. Stasevich, 1961

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orchestral

- Symphony, G, 1902, unpubd
- Symphony no.2, e, 1908, unpubd, reworked in Piano Sonata no.4
- 5 Sinfonietta, A, 1909, rev. 1914–15, unpubd; rev. as op.48
- 6 Snī [Dreams], sym. tableau, 1910, unpubd
- 8 Osenneye [Autumnal Sketch], small orch, 1910, rev. 1915, 1934
- 10 Piano Concerto no.1, D^b, 1911–12
- 16 Piano Concerto no.2, g, 1912–13, unpubd; rev. 1923
- 19 Violin Concerto no.1, D, 1916–17
- 20 Suite from Ala i Lolli (Skifskaya syuita [Scythian Suite]), 1914–5
- 21bis Suite from The Tale of the Buffoon, 1920
- 25 Symphony no.1 ‘Classical’, D, 1916–17
- 26 Piano Concerto no.3, C, 1917–21
- 29bis Andante from Piano Sonata no.4, 1934
- 33bis Suite from The Love for Three Oranges, 1919, rev. 1924
- 34bis Overture on Hebrew Themes [after chbr work], 1934
- 40 Symphony no.2, d, 1924–5; see also op.136
- 41bis Suite from The Steel Step, 1926
- 42 Overture, B^b, chbr orch, 1926, unpubd
- 42bis Overture, B^b, full orch, 1928
- 43 Divertissement, 1925–9; see pf works, op.43bis
- 44 Symphony no.3, c [material from The Fiery Angel], 1928
- 46bis Suite from The Prodigal Son, 1929
- 47 Symphony no.4, C [material from The Prodigal Son], 1929–30, unpubd; rev. as op.112
- 48 Sinfonietta, A [rev. of op.5], 1929; see pf works, op.52
- 49 Four Portraits and Dénouement from The Gambler, 1931
- 50bis Andante from String Quartet no.1, str, ?1930, unpubd
- 51bis Suite from On the Dnieper, 1933
- 53 Piano Concerto no.4, B^b, left hand, 1931
- 55 Piano Concerto no.5, G, 1931–2
- 57 Symphonic Song, 1933, unpubd
- 58 Cello Concerto, e, 1933–8
- 60 Suite from Lieutenant Kijé, with Bar ad lib, 1934
- 61 Suite from Egyptian Nights, 1934

- 63 Violin Concerto no.2, g, 1935
- 64bis Suite no.1 from Romeo and Juliet, 1936
- 64ter Suite no.2 from Romeo and Juliet, 1936
- 65bis Letniy den' [Summer Day], children's suite [after nos.1, 9, 6, 5, 10–12 of pf work op.65], small orch 1941
- 69 Four Marches, military band, 1935–7
- 72 Russian Overture, with quadruple ww, 1936; rev. with triple ww, 1937, unpubd
- 81bis Suite from Semyon Kotko, 1941
- 88 Symphonic March, B \flat , 1941, unpubd
- 89bis March, A \flat , military band [after no.2 of 7 Songs, op.79], ?1941
- 90 1941-y god [The year 1941], suite, 1941
- 99 March, B \flat , military band, 1943–4
- 100 Symphony no.5, B \flat , 1944
- 101 Suite no.3 from Romeo and Juliet, 1946
- 105 Ode to the End of the War, wind, 8 hps, 4 pf, perc, dbs, 1945
- 107 Suite no.1 from Cinderella, 1946
- 108 Suite no.2 from Cinderella, 1946
- 109 Suite no.3 from Cinderella [3rd no. from The Love for Three Oranges], 1946
- 110 Waltz Suite [from Cinderella, War and Peace and Lermontov], 1946
- 111 Symphony no.6, e \flat , 1945–7
- 112 Symphony no.4, C [rev. of op.47], 1947
- 113 Tridtsat' let [30 years], festive poem, 1947
- 120 Pushkin Waltzes, 1949, unpubd
- 123 Letnyaya noch' [Summer Night], suite from The Duenna, 1950
- 125 Symphony-Concerto, e, vc, orch, 1950–51, rev. 1952 [after op.58]
- 126 Wedding Suite from The Tale of the Stone Flower, 1951
- 127 Gypsy Fantasy from The Tale of the Stone Flower, 1951, unpubd
- 128 Urals Rhapsody from The Tale of the Stone Flower, 1951, unpubd
- 129 Khozyayka mednoy gorī [Lady of the Copper Mountain], suite from The Tale of the Stone Flower, unrealized
- 130 Vstrecha Volgi s Donom [The Meeting of the Volga and the Don], festive poem, 1951
- 131 Symphony no.7, c \sharp , 1951–2
- 132 Cello Concertino, g, 1952, completed by Rostropovich and Kabalevsky
- 133 Piano Concerto no.6, 2 pf, str, 1952, inc.
- 136 Symphony no.2, d [rev. of op.40], unrealized

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vocal orchestral

- 7 Two Poems (K. Bal'mont), female chorus, orch, 1909–10, unpubd: Beliy lebed [The White Swan], Volna [The Wave]
- 18 Gadkiy utyonok [The Ugly Duckling] [after song op.18], 1v, orch
- 30 Semero ikh [They are Seven] (cant., after Bal'mont), T, chorus, orch, 1917–18, rev. 1933
- 35bis Mélodie [no.2 from 5 Songs, op.35], 1v, orch, ?1920
- 37bis Ognenniy angel [The Fiery Angel], vocal suite from opera, 1v, orch, 1923, inc., unpubd
- 67 Petya i volk [Peter and the Wolf] (Prokofiev), tale for children, narrator, orch, 1936
- 74 Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution (K. Marx, V. Lenin, I. Stalin), 2 choruses, orch, military band, accordion band, perc band, 1936–7, unpubd
- Pesni nashikh dney [Songs of our Times], solo vv, chorus, orch, 1937: Marsh [March], Cherez mostik [Over the Bridge], Bud'te zdorovi [Good Luck], Zolotaya Ukraina [Golden Ukraine], Brat za brata [Brother for Brother], Devushki [Maidens], Dvadtsatiletniy [The 20-Year-Old], Kolibel'naya [Lullaby], Ot kraya do kraya [From Shore to Shore]
- 76 Aleksandr Nevskiy (cant., V. Lugorsky, Prokofiev) [from film score], Mez, chorus, orch, 1939
- 78 Zdravitsa [Hail to Stalin], chorus, orch, 1939
- 85 Ballada o malchike, ostavshemsya neizvestnim [Ballad of an Unknown Boy] (P. Antokol'sky), S, T, chorus, orch, 1942–3, unpubd
- 93 Rastsvetay, moguchiy kray [Flourish, Mighty Homeland] (Ye. Dolmatovsky), cant. for the 30th anniversary of the October Revolution, 1947
- 114 Zimniy kostyor [Winter bonfire] (S. Marshak), suite, reciters, boys' chorus, orch, 1949–50
- 122 Na strazhe mira [On Guard for Peace] (orat, Marshak), Mez, reciters, chorus, boys' chorus, orch, 1950
- 124

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other vocal works

choral

- 66a Two Choruses, vv, pf, 1935: Partizan Zheleznyak, Anyutka
- Four Songs, 1v/vv, pf, 1935: Rastyot strana [The Fatherland Awakens], Skvoz snega i tumanı [Through Snow and Fog], Za goroyu [Beyond the Hill], Pesnya o Voroshilove [Song about Voroshilov]
- 66b Seven Songs and a March in A, vv, pf, 1941–2: Pesnya [Song], Pesnya smelikh [Song of the Brave], Klyatve tankista [The Tankman's vow], Sin Kabardi [Son of Kabarda], Podruga boytsa [The Soldier's Sweetheart], Frits [Fritz], Lyubov' vojna [Love of War]; nos.1–2 and 7 unpubd
- 89 National Anthem (S.V. Mikhalkov, El-Registan), 1943, All-Union Hymn (S.P. Shchipanchev), 1946; both in sketches, unpubd
- 98 Soldiers' Marching Song (Lugovsky), 1950
- 121

songs, 1 voice, piano

- Juvenilia, unpubd: Skazhi mne [Tell Me] (M.Yu. Lermontov), 1903; O, net, ne Figner [Oh, No, not Figner], 1903; Smotri, pushinki [Look, the Down] (Prokofiev), 1903; Uzh ya ne tot [I am no Longer the Same] (Pushkin), 1903: Mastitiye, vetvistiye, dubi [Ancient, Gnarled Oaks] (A. Maykov), 1906–7
- 9 Two Poems, 1910–11: Yest' drugiye planeti [It is of Other Planets] (Bal'mont), Otchalila lodka [The Drifting Boat] (A. Apukhtin)
- 18 Gadkiy utyonok [The Ugly Duckling] (after H. Andersen), 1914, orchd; see vocal orch works, op.18
- 23 Five Poems (Bal'mont), 1915: Pod krishey [Under the Roof], Seroye platitse [The Little Grey Dress], Doversya mne [Follow me], V moyem sadu [In My Garden], Kudesnik [The Prophet]
- 27 Five Poems (A. Akhmatova), 1916: Solntse komnatu napolnilo [The Sun has Filled my Room], Nastoyashchaya nezhnost' [True Tenderness], Pamyat' o solntse [Memory of the Sun], Zdravstvuy [Greetings], Seroglaziy korol' [The King with Grey Eyes]
- 35 Five Songs without Words, 1920; see vocal orch works, op.35bis, chbr works, op.35bis, pf works, op.52
- 36 Five Poems (Bal'mont), 1921: Zaklinaniye vodi i ognya [Incantation of Fire and Water], Golos ptits [Birdsong], Babochka [The Butterfly], Pomni menya [Remember Me], Stolbi [The Pylons]
- Five Kazakh Popular Songs, 1927
- 60bis Two Songs from Lieutenant Kijé, 1934: Stonet siziy goluboček [Moans the Little Grey Dove], Troika
- 68 Three Children's Songs, 1936: Boltunya [Chatterbox], Sladkaya pesenka [Sweet Song], Porosyata [The Little Pig]
- 73 Three Romances (Pushkin), 1936: Sosni [Pine Trees], Pumyanoy zareyu [With a Blush], V tvoyu svetlitsu [In your Brightness]
- 78bis Three Songs from Aleksandr Nevskiy (Lugovsky), 1939: Vstavayte, lyudi ruskiye [Arise, Men of Russia], Otvovitesya, yasni sokoli [Mark, ye Bright Falcons], A i bilo delo na Neve-reke [And it happened on the Neva River]
- 79 Seven Songs, 1939: Pesnya o rodine [Song about the Fatherland], Stakhanovka, Nad polyarnim morem [On the Polar Seas], Provodi [Send-Off], Smelo vperyod [Bravely Forward], Shyol stanitseyu Kazak [Through the Village Came a Cossack], Hey, po doroge [Hey, to the Road]; see orch works, op.89bis
- 104 Twelve Russian Folksongs, 1944
- 106 Two Duets, Russian folksong arrs., T, B, pf, 1945
- Pro soma [Broad and Deep the River Flows] (S. Mikhalkov), inc., unpubd

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chamber and instrumental

- Juvenilia, vn, pf, unpubd; Sonata, c, 1903; Little Song, d, 1903; Little Song no.2, c,

1904

- 12bis Humoresque Scherzo, 4 bn [after no.9 of 10 pf Pieces, op.12], 1915
15 Ballade, c, vc, pf, 1912
34 Overture on Hebrew Themes, c, cl, str qt, pf, 1919; see orch works, op.34bis
35bis Five Melodies, vn, pf [after 5 Songs, op.35], 1925
39 Quintet, g, ob, cl, vn, va, db, 1924; see ballets, op.39
50 String Quartet no.1, b, 1930; see orch works, op.50bis, pf works, op.52
56 Sonata, C, 2 vn, 1932
80 Sonata no.1, f, vn, pf, 1938–46
92 String Quartet no.2 (on Kabardinian themes), F, 1941
94 Sonata, D, fl, pf, 1943; arr. as op.94bis for vn, pf, 1944
97bis Adagio, vc, pf [from Cinderella], 1944
115 Sonata, D, unison vns/vn, 1947
119 Sonata, C, vc, pf, 1949
134 Sonata, c[#], vc, inc., unpubd

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piano

juvenilia

Indian Galop, F, 1896; March, C, 1896; Waltz, C, 1896; Rondo, C, 1896; March, b–D, 1897; Polka, G, 1899; Waltz, G, 1899; Waltz, C–G, 1899; March, 1900; [untitled work], 7 pieces, 1901; Little Songs, 1st ser., 12 pieces, 1902; Bagatelle no.2, a, 1902; Little Songs, 2nd ser., 12 pieces, 1903; Sonata, B^b, 1904; Little Songs, 3rd ser., 12 pieces, 1903–4; Variations on ‘Chizhika’, 1904; Little Songs, 4th ser., 12 pieces, 1905; Polka mélancolique, f[#], 1905
Little Songs, 5th ser., 12 pieces, 1906; Song without Words, D^b, 1907; Intermezzo, A, 1907; Humoresque, f, 1907; [untitled work] b^b, 1907; Oriental Piece, g, 1907; [untitled work], c, 1907; Sonata no.2, f, 1907, reworked in op.1; Sonata no.3, a, 1907, reworked in op.28; 4 Pieces, 1907–8, rev. as op.3; Sonata no.4, ?1907–8, lost; 4 Pieces, 1908, rev. as op.4; Sonata no.5, c, 1908, reworked in op.29; Examination Fugue, 1908; Andante, c, 1908, inc.; 2 Pieces, 1908; Study, c, 1908; Piece on Es–C–H–E, 1908; Sonata no.6, ?1908–9, lost
For 4 hands: March, C, 1897; March, C, 1899; March, F, 1899; Piece, F, 1899; Piece, d, 1900; Piece, with zither, 1900, inc.; Bagatelle no.1, c, 1901

mature works

- 1 Sonata no.1, f [after Sonata no.2, 1907], 1909
- 2 Four Etudes, 1909
- 3 Four Pieces [rev. of 4 Pieces, 1907–8], 1911: Skazka [Story], Shutka [Jest], Marsh [March], Prizrak [Phantom]

- 4 Four Pieces [rev. of 4 Pieces, 1908], 1910–12: Vospominaniya [Reminiscences], Poriv [Elan], Otchayanie [Despair], Navazhdeniye (Suggestion diabolique)
- 11 Toccata, d, 1912
- 12 Ten Pieces, 1906–13: March [after Little Songs, 5th ser., no.6], Gavotte, Rigaudon, Mazurka, Capriccio, Legenda, Prelude, Allemande, Humoresque Scherzo, Scherzo; see chbr works, op.12bis
- 14 Sonata no.2, d, 1912
- 17 Sarkazmī [Sarcasms], 5 pieces, 1912–14
- 22 Mimoretnosti (Visions fugitives), 20 pieces, 1915–17
- 28 Sonata no.3 (from old notebooks), a [after Sonata no.3, 1907], 1917
- 29 Sonata no.4 (from old notebooks), c [after Sonata no.5, 1908 and Sym., 1908], 1917
- 31 Skazki staroy babushki [Old Grandmother's Tales], 4 pieces, 1918
- 32 Four Pieces, 1918: Dance, Minuet, Gavotte, Waltz
- 33ter March and Scherzo from The Love for Three Oranges, 1922
- 38 Sonata no.5, C, 1923, rev. as op.135
- 43bis Divertissement [after orch work], 1938
- 45 Veshchi v sebe [Things in Themselves], 2 pieces, 1928
- 52 Six Pieces, 1930–31: Intermezzo, Rondo, Etude [all from The Prodigal Son], Scherzino [from 5 Songs, op.35], Andante [from Str Qt no.1, op.50], Scherzo from Sinfonietta, op.48]
- 54 Two Sonatinas, e, G, 1931–2
- 59 Three Pieces, 1933–44: Progulka [Promenade], Peyzazh [Landscape], Pastoral Sonatina, C
- 62 Mīsli (Pensées), 3 pieces, 1933–4
- 65 Music for Children, 12 pieces, 1935; see orch works, op.65bis
- 75 Ten Pieces from Romeo and Juliet, 1937
- 77bis Gavotte [from Hamlet], 1938
- 82 Sonata no.6, A, 1939–40
- 83 Sonata no.7, B \flat , 1939–42
- 84 Sonata no.8, B \flat , 1939–44
- 95 Three Pieces from Cinderella, 1942
- 96 Three Pieces, 1941–2: Waltz [from War and Peace], Contredanse, Mephisto-waltz [both from Lermontov]
- 97 Ten Pieces from Cinderella, 1943
- 102 Six Pieces from Cinderella, 1944
- 103 Sonata no.9, C, 1947
- 135 Sonata no.5, C [rev. of op.38], 1952–3
- 137 Sonata no.10, c, inc., unpubd
- 138 Sonata no.11, unrealized
- Dumka, after 1933, unpubd

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Music for gymnastic exercises, ?1936, inc., unpubd

Arrs.: D. Buxtehude: Organ Prelude and Fugue, pf, 1920/?1918; F. Schubert: Waltzes, suite, pf, 1920/?1918, pf 4 hands, 1923

Principal publishers: Boosey & Hawkes, Editions Russes de Musique, Gutheil, Jürgenson, Muzgiz

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Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev was a Russian composer, pianist and conductor. Check out this biography to know about his childhood, family life, achievements and other facts about his life.Â Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev was a Russian composer, pianist and conductor. Check out this biography to know about his childhood, family life, achievements and other facts about his life. Quick Facts. Sergey Prokofiev, in full Sergey Sergeyevich Prokofiev, (born April 23 [April 11, Old Style], 1891, Sontsovka, Ukraine, Russian Empireâ€”died March 5, 1953, Moscow, Russia, U.S.S.R.), 20th-century Russian (and Soviet) composer who wrote in a wide range of musical genres, including symphonies, concerti, film music, operas, ballets, and program pieces.