

DAVID
AVSHALOMOV

The Last Poet's
Farewell

Solo Violin
(rev. 1999)

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Written at the request of Rodion Zamourouev, soloist in the first recording of the Violin Concerto by my grandfather, Aaron Avshalomoff, in Moscow, 1997.

Duration (revised): 23 1/2 minutes

Notes by the Composer, David Avshalomov, 1999

The Last Poet's Farewell (1998), solo violin
(Further reflections on the slow suffocation of a great culture)

Prologo: Remembrance (The Poet's Song)
The Soldier Returns Home; Stump Dance
The Empty House
Tzigaret?
Drug Virus Pinwheel Icon
Zeks' Reveille / Work Party / Lights-out
The Lake Baikal Hoedown (Yakudia Yahoo!)
Final Regrets: The Poet's Last Song.

The "Last Poet's Farewell" was written in sympathy with the plight of people in Russia today; these are dances and songs of empathy and powerless compassion—from a stranger. It is the second work in my series written in reaction to the misery of postwar Eastern Europe and Russia, in both the Soviet period and the "liberated" present. The movements of the suite reflect small vignettes ranging across the society and the vast landscape, and eventual abandonment by a bitter observer, the last, regretful "poet"—the violinist. One inner movement moves through one day in the life of a gulag prisoner (or *zek*), from guarded waking to exhausted lights-out.

Accompanying vignettes, realized *after* composition:

PROLOGO: REMEMBRANCE (The Poet's Song)

I learned a story long ago, about the land. There was love, and sadness, and nostalgia and honor for the past, and pride, and we sang a sweet song better than anyone in the world.

THE SOLDIER RETURNS HOME.

A crippled soldier hobbles home from grisly duty suppressing insurrection in Chechnya. Drugs and wounds are his souvenirs. At a pause, the fiddler plays him a jumpy dance (STUMP DANCE). Onward.

THE EMPTY HOUSE.

The old place, when he returns, is deserted. No one left. Remembrance: "She used to sing a lullaby, a lovely, lovely lullaby." Gone.

TZIGARET?

A stranger offers a smoke. It is drugged. La fume. Manic escape for a while.

ZEK'S REVEILLE

Out of thin breathing, the faintest hint of light before day awakens the political prisoner, from deep dreamless sleep, to another grim round of survival.

ZEK'S WORK PARTY

The march of Soviet political prisoners in the postwar Siberian Gulag. In the middle, a souvenir of the war against the Nazis (and suppression of the Hungarians: Your own country's fascist oppression is just as evil, or worse). Brief lyrical remembrance of a lost love, let loose, then suppressed. ZEK'S LIGHTS-OUT— Exhaustion, breathing in wispy silent darkness, sleep.

THE LAKE BAIKAL HOEDOWN (Yakudia Yahoo!)

Life is also miserable today out among the “free” people in Siberia. The central government has abandoned us. So toss back a drink, and dance your cares away. A visiting Yankee offers some cheer with a fiddle; a local replies with a native twist. At the height of the dance, the Poet breaks off, in anguish.

FINAL REGRETS: The Last Poet's Last Song.

“If only you all had listened to me, oh, what I could have revealed, played, sung and taught you, secrets that were ours alone.” The Poet ends with an outcry, THE LAST DENIAL—but the soul of Russia is dying. Then a slow, dignified walk of acceptance and surrender to darkness. “Remember me. Remember us. Farewell.”

Start: [Curtain closed,] stage black. Houselights to black [, then curtain open]. Wait for silence. Player's solo spot up, center stage, fixed --2 sec. Wait for silence. Start playing--audibly--offstage, walk slowly to center stage by bar 6 to 10.

PROLOGO: REMEMBRANCE

(the Poet's Song)

Largo (quasi Siciliano) ♩ = 44

mesto *portato* ----- *portato* -----

p *poco* *rubato* *rubato* *poco mosso*

6 *rubato*

10 *espr.* *mp*

15 *mf* *port.* -----

20 *f* *tornando al . .* *Tempo I* *p*

25

30

THE SOLDIER RETURNS HOME

34 *Allegro ritmico* ♩ = 112 - 120 *sempre*

mf *gliss.* *p* *p* *sotto voce* *mf* *p*

40 *p* *p* *mf* *p* *come prima*

46 *mf* *p* *come prima* *mf*

2
52

57

p come prima *f* *p* *f*

STUMP DANCE

Allegretto (poco meno mosso) ♩ = 100

64

f *p* *f* *p*

68

cresc *f*

72

f *p* *mf cresc*

77

ff *f* *p* etc. come prima

83

pizz. *mf*

Lento

90

arco *pizz.* *arco* *p* *mf*

THE EMPTY HOUSE

95 *Largo, quasi Sarabande* ♩ = 52

101

p *pp* *pp*

106 *p* *ppp*

("She used to sing a lullaby")

111 *semplice, sostenuto* *etc.*

116

122 *ritardando* *a tempo*
espr. *ancora semplice*

126 *pp* *ritardando* //

"TZIGARET?"

(Always mark the beat:
Stress 1st of 4 16ths, accented or not.)

131 *Toccata, Allegro Robusto* ♩ = 126
ff *ritmico* *mf*

136

141 *f* *mp* *f* *p*

146 *f* *rinforzando* *p*

451 *f* *p* *mp*

156 *f* *p*

161 *mf* *f* *p*

166 *f* *p*

171 *mf*

176 *f* *p* *pp*

181 *"La Fumee"*
sempre in tempo
p *lyrical, ethereal* *pp* *(ritmico)*

186 *p* *pp* *p*

191 *etc.*

196

201

206 *f*

211 *ff* *mf*

216 *mp* *f* *f*

220 *f non espressivo*

225 *mf* *f* *ritardand*

--- rit.

230 *etc* *ff* *sffz* *A Tempo*
(piu mosso ch'il Tempo I possibile)

235 *mf* *ff* *feroce* (Mark the beat.)

239

244 *crescendo*

249 *f cresc* *ff*

254

259 *riten.* *molto riten.* *fff* $\geq \geq \geq \Delta$

264 *Lento* $\text{♩} = 40$ *p* *portato* *pp*

ZEKS' REVEILLE

tranquillo $\text{♩} = 50$ *8va* (as though awakened before first light)

269 *p senza vibrato* *ritardando*

ZEKS' WORK PARTY

Alla Marcia $\text{♩} = 112$ *sempre tempo giusto*
273 non-espressivo; quarters, full-length

mf *grimly accurate*

278

283

288 (L.H.) *pizz.* *mf* *etc* *pizz.* *mp* *(arco)*

293 *(mf)* *(mp)*

(pizz.)
(arco)

303

307

311

315

319

323

327

quasi tamburo (snare drum)

331

335

339

342

344

gliss. *gliss.* *(sempre non-espressivo)*

ff *sfz* *f*

348

espressivo

cresc. ed appassionato

353

ff *poco rit.*

358

a tempo *pizz.*

mp *dim.*

363

ZEKS' "LIGHTS OUT"
tranquillo ♩ = 50 *a dormire*

368

arco *pizz. rit.*

pp *p senza vibrato*

8va

372

8va

376

ritardand

pp *p* *pp* *p*

8va

THE LAKE BAIKAL HOEDOWN

381 *Allegro Vivo* ♩ = 126

Musical staff 381-385. Starts with a treble clef, a 2/4 time signature, and a dynamic marking of *f*. The music consists of eighth-note chords and rests. A fermata is placed over the final measure of this staff, which contains the word *etc.*

Musical staff 386-390. Continues the rhythmic pattern of eighth-note chords and rests.

Musical staff 391-395. Continues the rhythmic pattern. A fermata is placed over the final measure of this staff, which contains the word *etc.*

Musical staff 396-400. Continues the rhythmic pattern of eighth-note chords and rests.

Musical staff 401-405. Continues the rhythmic pattern of eighth-note chords and rests.

Musical staff 406-410. Continues the rhythmic pattern of eighth-note chords and rests.

Musical staff 411-415. Continues the rhythmic pattern of eighth-note chords and rests.

Musical staff 416-420. Continues the rhythmic pattern of eighth-note chords and rests.

Musical staff 421-425. Continues the rhythmic pattern of eighth-note chords and rests.

Musical staff 426-430. Continues the rhythmic pattern of eighth-note chords and rests. The staff ends with a dynamic marking of *p non-espress.*

10

431

436

441 *f*

446

451

456

461

466 *sempre*

Bob and weave on the 2's & 3's

471

476

481

485

490

494

498

tap toe

504

509

513

518

523

tap toe

12

528

diminuendo

533

(dim.) *accel.* *p* *(etc.)*

538

al Presto ♩ = 144 **YAKUDIA YAHOO!**
f (Stamp foot, turn around, dance, whoop or sharp whistle if you like)

543

548

553

558

563

568

573

8va

578

583

588

(♩ = ♩) Mezzo ♩ = 72 *accel. poco a poco*

f sf mf pesante (heel and toe)

593

(cresc. ed. accel.)

3/4 2/4 7/8

597

(cresc. ed. accel.)

Pesante ♩ = 80 poco accel.

f cresc.

601

(poco accel.)

Giusto ♩ = 84

cresc. ff

606

Rit.

quasi improvvisando accel.

rit. rit.

sfz ff f mf etc. p f

610

Largo ♩ = 50

Lento ♩ = 44 (in tempo)

portato mf crescend

616

FINAL REGRETS
(sempre Lento)

quasi improvvisando, quasi in tempo

sf p pp

espr. come prima, piu mesto, dolce, con tenerezza

leggerissimo, rapido

620

in tempo

portato

p

623 *pp simile, rapido* *P semplice* (in tempo)

625 *poco mosso* *ancora espr. come prima* *f*

THE LAST DENIAL ["Ach, Ach! Nur du weisst was es meint."] (b)

631 *sostenuto* *ritenuto* *meno mosso* *Lento* *ff* *passionato, schreiend moltissimo sostenuto* *ff sempre*

635 *ritenuto* *(Lento)* *poco mosso* *f* *rit.*

639 *ritenuto* *In tempo, Lento* ♩ = 44 *mp* *p sway* *sempre diminuendo*

645 (dim.) *(start walking offstage in tempo as early as needed)*

651 *pp* *(offstage:)* *mf*

657 *p* *(outside stage door, half closed)* *portato, molto espressivo (coll'ultima lagrima)* *pp* *p* *ppp* *morendo al niente* *(tenuto)*

(Solo spot fade slowly to black.)

(If you choose to take curtain calls, wait for applause, house lights to half, no stage light.)

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Works for/with Strings

Elegy - string orchestra [9]

Pangs of Love - string orchestra [32]

(Romantic variations on a Rachmaninoff Love Theme)

Diamond Variations on an original theme,
string orchestra with opt. harp [12]

Concerto con Timpani (baroque) - timp., strings, harpsichord [12]

Arietta - flute and strings (opt. 2nd flute) [2]

String Quartet [23]

Trotsky's Train, piano sextet (string quartet with double bass) [32]

Also: version for string orchestra and piano

The Last Poet's Farewell - solo violin [22]

Elegy arranged for solo violin with piano [9]

Dance - violin (intermediate) and (student) piano [3]

Diversion - violin and timpani [5]

Torn Curtain suite - viola with piano [32]

Sonata for Violoncello with piano [28]

Variations on a Beethoven Theme - solo violoncello [12]

Performance materials and complete list of works available through



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