

# Grigori Frid and the Viola: In Conversation with the Composer

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Grigori Frid. Image provided courtesy of Dr. Maria Frid.

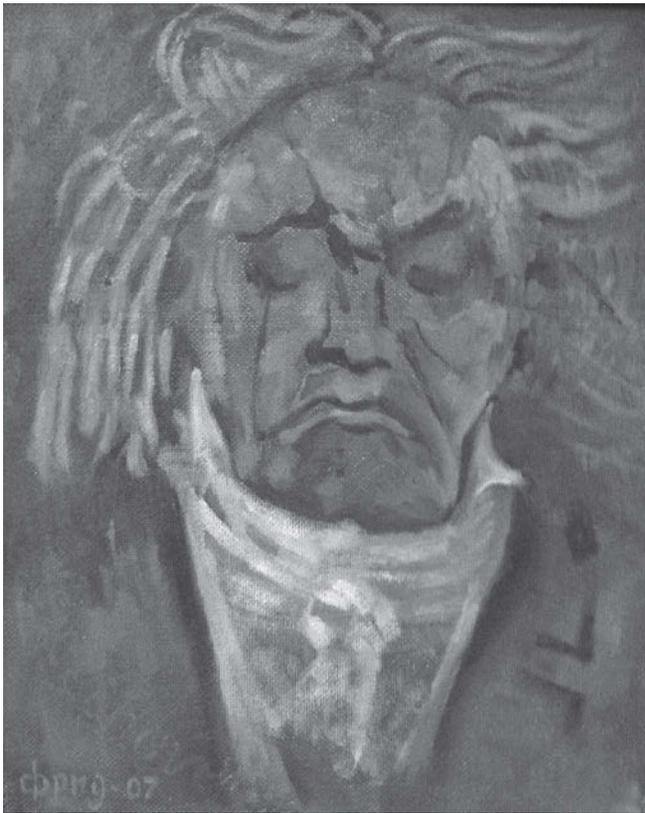
Grigori Samuilovich Frid (1915–2012) was a versatile Soviet-Russian composer, professor of composition and a tireless lecturer-educator, whose long life encompassed the entire existence of the Soviet Union and beyond. Frid is best known outside Russia for his mono-operas *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1969) and *The Letters of Van Gogh* (1975) in two acts written for a single vocal soloist and a chamber orchestra/ensemble. They deservedly received their international recognition and have been performed with great success in Russian, German and English in Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Russia and the United States. However, they form only a small part of Frid's extensive legacy, which

includes three symphonies (1939, 1955, 1964), overtures and suites for symphony orchestra, four instrumental concertos (for violin, trombone and two for viola), a vocal-instrumental cycle after Federico Garcia Lorca, *Poetry* (1973), numerous chamber works for piano, violin, viola, cello, flute, oboe, clarinet and trumpet, five string quartets (1936, 1947, 1949, 1957, 1977), two piano quintets (1981, 1985), music for folk instruments, vocal and choral music, incidental music for various theatre and radio productions, fifteen film scores and music for children. The majority of these works have been performed, but hardly any have been recorded. It was a special privilege for the author of this article to be commissioned by the composer to perform and make a CD recording of all his works for viola and piano.<sup>2</sup>

## Writing and Artistic Legacy

Frid was also a gifted writer, publishing six books (two books of essays on music, a novel and three books of memoirs)<sup>3</sup> and a talented artist. From 1967 he regularly exhibited his numerous paintings, which now belong to private collections in Finland, Germany, Israel, Russia and the United States. The influences of French impressionists and postimpressionists, in particular of Van Gogh, as well as of Kandinsky and Chagall, can be recognized in little brush strokes, juxtaposition of colors and subject matter of his landscapes, portraits and other paintings that undoubtedly show the gift and individuality of Frid-artist. They are related to his music with evident narrative qualities and strongly invoke the atmosphere of desolation and philosophical thought that poses more questions than answers, sincerity and beauty of nature, humor and satire.

Due to its different means of communication, drawing became a special artistic way of expression for the composer. Frid emphasized that between a composer and his music always stands a performer, whose



*Frid's Beethoven (2007). Image provided courtesy of Dr. Maria Frid.*

interpretation may or may not be comparable with the one of the composer's, and he believed that today many people take music purely as an entertainment rather



*Frid's Quartet (2001). Image provided courtesy of Dr. Maria Frid.*

than an opportunity to think and reflect back on one's past experiences.<sup>4</sup> The atmosphere of a performance, its setting, and audience were also very important to Frid's musical contemplation and comprehension, and he was attracted to the way in which a literary work can mimic fine art in its interaction between artist and audience. This was one of the reasons why, starting in the mid-1980s, writing became an essential element of Frid's daily existence in his exploration of new artistic forms and expressions. He also felt a certain duty to pass on his broad knowledge of the past to future generations. As a true musician, Frid's writing paid particular attention to the sound beauty and picturesque qualities of Russian linguistics, to its poetic and romantic features. This unrestricted correlation and natural interaction of music, literature, philosophy and painting places Frid among true representatives of Russian culture, in which language, visual and performing arts were always marked by a connection to each other.

#### **Music Educator**

Even then the long and varied list of Frid's accomplishments is not complete. From 1947 to 1963, Frid taught composition at the Moscow Conservatory Music College. Among his students were the future composers Nikolai Korndorf, Maksim Dunaevsky, Alexandre Rabinovitch-Barakovsky, and Alexander Vustin. For at least three generations of Muscovites,

Frid is particularly well known as a tireless educator, as a presenter, and one of the founding members of the *Moskovskii Molodezhnyi Muzykal'nyi Klub* ('Moscow Musical Youth Club') at the Composers' Union (first of the USSR, and then of the Russian Federation). This club was organized and led by Frid (with no financial reward) for almost half a century, from the day of its foundation on 21 October 1965, until his death. There have been fifty seasons of this club.<sup>5</sup> Especially in the Soviet era, these weekly lecture-concerts taking place on Thursdays, from October until May, were very popular among music lovers. They not only introduced the public to otherwise unknown contemporary

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music, including works by Schoenberg, Berg, Messiaen, Schnittke, Denisov, Penderecki, Gubaidulina, and many others, but they also presented various broad musical topics and, most importantly, allowed the audience to ask unprepared, spontaneous questions and discuss them. This latter initiative was a truly special achievement: the strict control of the authorities usually banned any gatherings that could provoke liberal debate.

### **Family circles**

The roots of Frid's broad interests and talents lay in his exceptional family circles and the harsh upbringing he had to endure. He was born on 22 September 1915 in Petrograd into an artistic and musical family, in which music, theatre, literature and the other arts were essential elements of daily life. Frid's pianist mother, Raisa Grigorievna Ziskind-Frid (1882–1946), graduated with honours from the Imperial St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1912. She was Grigori's first, and for a long time his only, piano teacher. His father, Samuil Borisovich Frid (1884–1962), was a violinist, journalist, critic, writer, editor and the founder of one of the leading academic magazines, *Theatre and Music*, published every week in Moscow in 1922–23. The editorial office was situated in the family apartment, which became a place for regular visits from many renowned musicians, writers, poets and theatre producers, who were friends and colleagues of Frid's parents. Among them were pianist Vladimir Horowitz, violinist Nathan Milstein and violist Vladimir Bakaleinikov (all three soon emigrated and continued their acclaimed careers in the United States), singer Leonid Sobinov, writer Korney Chukovsky, poet Maksimilian Voloshin, the director of the *Kamernyi* [Chamber] theatre Alexander Tairov, the first Soviet Peoples' Commissar of Education Anatoly Lunacharsky, and many others. The fate of some of them, including writers Boris Pilnyak and Isaac Babel, poet Osip Mandelstam and theatre director Vsevolod Meyerhold, was tragic. They were either sentenced to death and executed or died in labour camps during the Stalin purges. In 1927, Samuil Frid was arrested, accused of counter-revolution (the real reason for his arrest is still unknown) and sentenced to Solovki, a dreadful prison and labour-camp on the Solovetsky Islands in the White Sea. Fortunately, five years later, he was freed and returned alive.

Largely due to his parents' domestic music-making and devotion, Frid's childhood memories, as he emphasized

in conversation in April 2012,<sup>6</sup> were filled with the music of Beethoven, Chopin, Mozart, Schumann, Tchaikovsky and other composers. His parents passed their love of music on to their two sons, despite the harsh realities of everyday life and its continuous shortage of income, its hunger, the purges and threat of Siberian exile, poor living conditions, the frequent resettlement of the family from city to city, and the brutality of a succession of wars: the First World War, the February and Socialist Revolutions of 1917, the fierce Civil War of 1917–22, and the Second World War (generally referred to in Russia as the 'Great Patriotic War'). Stalin's monstrous purges, in which some members of Frid's extended family lost their lives, the arrest of Samuil Frid, and the fear of possible further repression, forced Frid's mother to move with the children to stay with relatives in Orel in August 1927. Because of the family's unsettled conditions, Grigori began systematic music lessons in Orel, where he also studied the violin at the music school of the music college there. He appreciated his violin studies, but a career as a violinist did not appeal to him. In 1930, Samuil Frid was banished to Irkutsk, in Siberia, where the family was soon reunited.<sup>7</sup>

### **Formation at the Moscow Conservatory**

Grigori's knowledge of music was already compendious, thanks to his family, and the young musician developed rapidly in Irkutsk and also started to work to support the family. He was first hired as a decorator in a local printing house and in an operetta theatre, and then as a pianist in a local cinema, occasionally replacing his parents. Here he wrote his first substantial composition, a sonata for violin and piano, which was heavily influenced by Mendelssohn, and from this point, Frid gradually determined that he would become a composer. Finally, in September 1932, the family was allowed to move back to Moscow.

Frid now entered the Moscow Conservatory College (the equivalent of a sixth form college), which since its foundation in 1891 had been directly connected with the Moscow Conservatory itself, often sharing the same teaching staff. Here, Frid studied composition under Genrikh Litinsky (a former student of Reinhold Glière), who concurrently held a professorship at the Conservatory. In autumn 1935, thanks to his substantial progress and excellent exam results, Grigori was admitted directly to the third-year curriculum of composition at the Moscow Conservatory. He continued his studies

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under Litinsky and then, after Litinsky's dismissal from the Conservatory in the 1937 purges, under Vissarion Shebalin.

The harsh social and political realities of the 1930s notwithstanding, Frid remembered his time at the Conservatory with the special excitement that came from meeting many talented musicians and being at the centre of all important musical events. Frid became deeply influenced by Nikolai (or Nikolay) Zhilyaev (1881–1938), professor of composition at the Conservatory, a man of astonishing erudition and knowledge, a former pupil of Sergei Taneyev and a close friend of Skryabin, Grieg, Shostakovich, and Myaskovsky among others. It was at Zhilyaev's home, in May 1937, that Frid met Shostakovich.<sup>8</sup>

In 1938, Frid and his classmate Vadim Gusakov, who was later killed in World War II, founded the *Tvorcheskii kruzhok* ('Creative Club'), and they were soon joined by two pianist friends, Anatoli Vedernikov and Sviatoslav Richter. The objective of the club was to perform, introduce and discuss unknown and rarely performed works of Hindemith, Křenek, Ravel, Skryabin, Stravinsky and others, in what would become a prototype of the *Muzykal'nyi Klub* Frid founded in 1965. The Creative Club, which ran for two years, was popular not only among students but also with the staff of the Conservatory, in particular Heinrich Neuhaus (Genrikh Neigaus), whom Frid and his friends often visited at home. In 1939, Ivan Sollertinsky, a close friend of Shostakovich and professor at the Leningrad Conservatory, gave an outstanding lecture on Mahler for the Club.

Frid graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in 1939 having completed his four-movement First Symphony. Its monumental structure and epic style continued the tradition of Russian national symphonic music, using themes typical of Russian romances and folk traditions. It was premiered by the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra under Grigori Stolyarov at the Bolshoi Hall of the Moscow Conservatory in June 1939, receiving enthusiastic reviews from Mikhail Gnesin, Nikolai Myaskovsky, Dmitri Shostakovich and Mikhail Steinberg. Frid was awarded a diploma with honors and a place for continuation of his studies as a postgraduate. But the call to national military service in autumn 1939 and the war

which followed thwarted his plans. He fought in the Red Army, as did his younger brother, Pavel, who in August 1942, aged twenty, was killed defending Leningrad. Both parents survived the devastating eight hundred seventy-two days of the siege of Leningrad in 1941–44, in which at least six hundred forty-two thousand civilians lost their lives. These bitter memories were vivid for Frid even in his mid-nineties and without doubt were conducive to the formation of his personality. With the advent of peace in 1945, Frid was reinstated as a postgraduate at the Conservatory by Shebalin. The success of the First Symphony paved the way for a number of state commissions for the radio and his long-lasting career in music.

### **Musical Influences and the Choice of the Viola**

Frid's musical language went through a series of remarkable transformations over the course of his long life. The music of Shostakovich and Stravinsky had a strong influence on him from his youth. Frid knew Shostakovich personally and their mutual respect lasted from their first acquaintance in May 1937 until Shostakovich's death. The dignified restraint and emotional honesty of Shostakovich's music were in accord with Frid's rhetoric. Frid was one of the first for whom Shostakovich played his newly-composed Symphony No. 5, op. 47, and 24 Preludes and Fugues, op. 87. Shostakovich spoke well of Frid's music, including his Symphony No. 1, op. 6, and Sonata for Viola and Piano No. 1, op. 62 – more on this below. Among his friends at the Moscow Conservatory Frid was regarded 'an apologist of Stravinsky'<sup>9</sup> for sympathies he retained until his seventies. From the 1960s, he began to show an interest in chamber music and smaller forms and structures, even within the traditional genres of the symphony, opera and concerto.<sup>10</sup> The music of the Second Viennese School, and of Schoenberg in particular, was also influential, but Frid was not a slave to its prescriptions: expanded tonality, chromaticism, atonality, serial, and cluster techniques co-exist naturally in his mature works. Additionally, polystylism and a method of musical quotation and allusion of the sort used in the 1960s and on by Berio, Ligeti, Pousseur, Schnittke, and Zimmermann later brought a new kind of rhetoric to the incidental music Frid wrote for Racine's *Phèdre* that itself became a special impulse for Frid's succeeding writing for the viola.

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All six of Frid's works for viola (two sonatas, two concertos, piano quintet with solo viola and a set of six pieces) point to his fondness for the deep, dark, mellow timbres that emphasise the tragic and tender mood of a theme or a motif. Frid explained himself how he came to compose for the viola:

It is difficult to say. It just happened that I started to write for the viola. I think it is its timbre. I am of the opinion that one should not write virtuoso works for the viola. I do not mean that one cannot play virtuoso works on the viola, but I simply think that one should approach the viola in a different way, compared to the violin. In a sense, the viola is inferior to the violin in technical possibilities in a particular diapason. It is not without reason that the repertoire for the violin and the cello in its quantity and range is more diverse. The viola's timbre is the most important. The viola is ideal for quiet and slow music. It is an instrument for reflection and contemplation.<sup>11</sup>

### First Works for the Viola

#### *Concerto for Viola and Chamber Orchestra, op. 52*

Frid's first works for the viola, the Concerto for Viola and Chamber Orchestra, op. 52 (1965) and the Sonata for Viola and Piano No. 1, op. 62 (1971) were dedicated to and premiered by Feodor Druzhinin, the violist of the Beethoven String Quartet, professor of viola at the Moscow Conservatory, and a former student of Vadim Borisovsky.<sup>12</sup> The Concerto, op. 52, consists of three movements: Sonata, Rondo and Ostinato. Frid sensitively and considerately approached the viola in this work. The composer was fond of Druzhinin's sound qualities and wrote this concerto in favor of the soloist, thus, undoubtedly bringing viola's best timbre and virtuoso qualities to the fore. The tempo contrast of movements with a slow opening and a slow finale—but most importantly the principle of monothematic development, in which a theme, usually of a lyrical character, gains new refined and contemplative qualities after several dramatic transformations—became characteristic features of Frid's writing for the viola. This compositional approach was continued and enhanced further by the composer in his Sonatas for Viola and Piano op. 62 and op. 78, partly in his Concerto for Viola, Piano and Strings, op. 73 (1981), as well as in his mono-opera *The Letters of Van Gogh*, in which the viola became one of the leading solo voices in the instrumental ensemble.

#### *Sonata for Viola and Piano No. 1, op. 62*

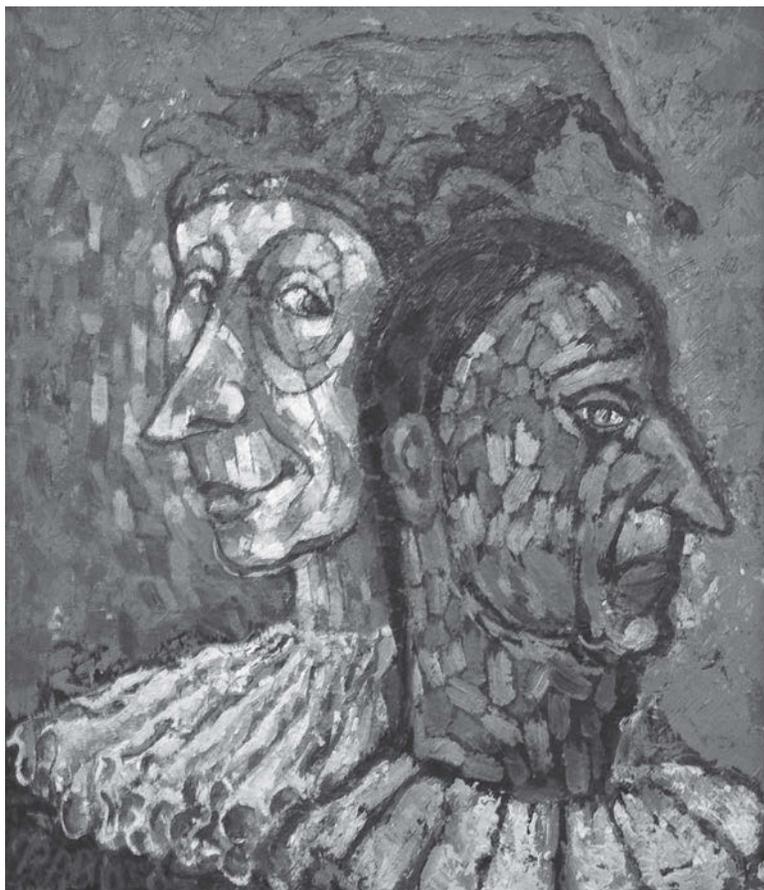
The brief Sonata for Viola and Piano No. 1, op. 62 (1971) has a very interesting story to its credit. In 1974, Frid received an invitation from Shostakovich via Feodor Druzhinin to a rehearsal of his newly-composed String Quartet No. 15, op. 144, held by the Beethoven String Quartet at Shostakovich's apartment at the House of the Composers Union in Moscow.<sup>13</sup> It turned out to be the last noteworthy meeting between the two composers. Shostakovich also wanted to listen to Frid's Sonata for Viola and Piano op. 62, which was yet unheard by Shostakovich, but which had already been successfully premiered by Feodor Druzhinin (viola) and Mikhail Muntian (piano).<sup>14</sup> This particular performance of the Sonata by Druzhinin and Muntian at Shostakovich's apartment made a special impression on all listeners. Frid emphasised that the superb timbre and sound qualities of the violist blended with the mastery of Muntian on the piano really appealed to Shostakovich. Shostakovich very soon wrote his own Sonata for Viola and Piano, op. 147, which happened to be his last work, also dedicated to and premiered by Druzhinin and Muntian. Vadim Borisovsky (1900-1972), a distinguished violist and the founder of the viola-solo faculty at the Moscow Conservatory,<sup>15</sup> also liked Frid's Sonata, and he asked the composer for a permission to send the score to his violist colleagues in the USSR and abroad and then provided Frid with a list of addressees to whom he had sent the score, thus contributing to its deserved popularization.<sup>16</sup>

The Sonata is in three movements, which are related to one another by their thematic material. The first movement, *Tranquillo e molto cantabile*, opens with a ten-measure solo from the muted viola. This elegiac, philosophical theme starts on the low E and immediately sweeps up to the high register and then back to the low E, where the piano joins the viola. The pitch E becomes a point of reference for both instruments throughout the movement. The special timbre of the mute in the viola part, as well as quarter notes in the piano, suggesting a procession, emphasise the mournful qualities of the music. Frid adds rhythmic and harmonic alterations to the theme, played in canon, using the high register of the viola until everything disappears in *pianissimo*—a favorite Frid-ending in viola works. The fierce second movement, an *Allegro*, offers a stark contrast to the first. The virtuoso, grotesque, toccata-like writing in the piano part is in conflict with the intense, weeping melody of the viola. The viola theme from the opening of the Sonata

unexpectedly appears at the end of the movement, but now *Allegro* and accompanied by the piano. It leads *attacca* to the third movement, *Lento*, which is a viola cadenza with occasional chords in the piano to support the lamenting but dramatic and relentless monologue of the viola. This movement has a free meter and episodes marked *rubato* and *ad libitum*. The mute returns in the coda, which recalls the anguish of the first movement; here Frid intensifies the feeling of emptiness and hopelessness. The melody reaches the highest register of the viola and after a few attempts ends on a quarter-tone between B-flat and C-flat.

*The Letters of Van Gogh and Six Pieces for Viola and Piano, op. 68*

Frid's two other works for viola and piano, the Six Pieces and the Second Sonata, exemplify his synthesizing of the arts. They are virtually unknown, although they were published, in 1979 and 1989 respectively, by Sovetsky Kompozitor in Moscow.<sup>17</sup> Both works deal, directly and indirectly, with philosophical and moral questions of humanity, spiritual and physical suffering with



*Frid's Two Clowns (2007). Image provided courtesy of Dr. Maria Frid.*

considerable thoughtfulness and sensitivity.

The Six Pieces for Viola and Piano, op. 68, were written in 1975 as 'sketches', as Frid called them, to the mono-opera *The Letters of Van Gogh*, completed in the same year.<sup>18</sup> The opera is based on letters of Vincent van Gogh to his brother Theo that contain descriptions of his spiritual, artistic, and personal struggles and his feelings and beliefs, but the link between the two works is otherwise mentioned neither in the title nor in the score of the Six Pieces. Indeed, a good proportion of the musical material of the Six Pieces remains unique to this chamber work and is neither reused nor recycled in the opera, even though the relationship between the two works is recognizable from recurrent tunes and motifs. The Six Pieces are dedicated to Viktor Markovich Midler (1888–1979), a prominent artist, researcher and a senior curator at the Tretyakov State Gallery in Moscow, who had a profound influence on Frid's painting and kindly provided Frid with the permanent access to his art studio.

The repeated contrasting order of fast and slow movements, with second and fifth movements played *attacca*, combines with the miniature forms to approximate the sketch character that Frid had suggested: the two instruments constantly interrupt each other, and there is no continuous declamation, particularly in the fast movements. The attention given to rhythm, color and timbre are distinct in both instrumental parts; tonal relations are of secondary importance. The subtexts—Van Gogh's letters—may have had an influence on this compositional approach, but so did Frid's growing proficiency as a visual artist: broader contrasts of color and shade begin to prevail.

The sixth piece, *Lento*, features a simple but heart-breaking melody that starts in the middle register of the muted viola and slowly develops to cover almost four octaves before dissolving *pianississimo* on F, with the piano supporting with sustained chords throughout. The viola solo starts and ends Frid's opera *The Letters of Van Gogh* with this sorrowful and lamenting theme, which depicts the artist's loneliness and search for reconciliation, and the remorse and compassion that alleviate his long suffering before his imminent death. There is also a link

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to the Viola Sonata, op. 62 in this opera: the second scene, called 'Artist,' ends similarly to the ending of the first movement of the Sonata, thus, giving the voice of the viola a special emphasis in the musical portrayal of Van Gogh.

### **Last Works for the Viola**

#### *Concerto for Viola, Piano, and Strings, op. 73*

Although, the piano is the most common concert partner in the viola repertoire, there are hardly any concertante works written for this instrumental duo. Among them are double concertos by Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach, the fifth son of J.S. Bach, by Michael Haydn (concerto for viola and organ or harpsichord) and Karl Hartmann. Frid's three-movement Concerto for Viola, Piano and Strings, op. 73, was written to fulfill this gap in the contemporary repertoire for these two instruments. It was completed in 1981, and premiered on 27 February 1986 by Alexander Bobrovsky (viola),<sup>19</sup> Tigran Alikhanov (piano), and Igor Zhukov, (conductor), at the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatory. The Concerto contains some typical attributes of the composer's writing for the viola with its slow and sad but lyrical thoughtfulness in the opening, its transformation through the work with certain reconciliation in the finale and a contrasting middle movement. However, Frid abandoned his usual principle of monothematic development in this concerto with the presence of another self-sufficient solo part—the piano. At the same time, all three movements are played *attacca*, thus, emphasising their unity and uninterrupted continuity of modification. Questions of musical coloring and timbre effects were very important to the composer. Frid experimented with muted and unmuted strings, freely explored all possible registers and textures of the instruments, frequently employed polyphonic principles of writing and easily travelled through polytonal layers and atonality, chromaticism and clusters, effortlessly changed meter, and used polyrhythm as the tools for contrast and development. These experimentations led to a more challenging instrumental vision, thus expanding further the technical capacity of the viola and piano. Frid himself regarded this concerto as a very complex one, considering both soloists as equal partners in exploration of their sonorous qualities together with 15 strings (4/4/4/2/1).

#### *Sonata for Viola and Piano No. 2, op. 78*

#### *Phaedra for Viola, Two Violins, Cello and Piano No. 1, op. 78*

Many writers and composers have tackled the Greek myth of Phaedra in plays, poems, operas or choral-orchestral works; among them Euripides, Jean Racine, Marina Tsvetaeva, Darius Milhaud, Benjamin Britten, John Tavener, Hans Werner Henze, and Krzysztof Penderecki. Frid was the only one who wrote a sonata and a piano quintet based on this myth. In 1985 Frid was commissioned to write incidental music for a production of Racine's *Phèdre* by the stage-director Boris Lvov-Anokhin at the Malyi Theatre in Moscow, and in the same year he used the material in his Sonata for Viola and Piano No. 2 and his quintet *Phaedra for Viola Solo, Two Violins, Cello and Piano*, the two works together forming his op. 78.

In the myth Phaedra, the daughter of Minos, king of Crete, and wife of the hero Theseus, falls in love with her step-son Hippolytus because the gods so will it. There are different versions of the tale, but they all end tragically: Phaedra commits suicide from guilt, and Hippolytus is either dragged to death by his horses, who are frightened by the god Poseidon, or is killed by his father, Theseus. Although Phaedra means 'bright' in Greek, the story conveys feelings of hopelessness and of a love that brings no happiness, of fervent passion acted out against a blue sky, of sin and repentance—diverse feelings which, strikingly, Frid manages to preserve in his op. 78.

The music is fused with polystylistic elements (jazz, theatre, and Baroque), with narrative and picturesque qualities, with irregular rhythm and *rubato* sections, with free meter, and with timbre and dynamic coloring exploiting the entire registers of both instruments—this is particularly true in the Sonata. Indeed, Frid places considerable emphasis on multiple layers of textures, and he often has the piano playing three or four lines simultaneously. The music is initially rooted in tonality but Frid readily departs from tonal relations with consistently atonal techniques, dissonance, and frequent use of clusters. The harmony here is not functional but is used to bring color and contrast. Frid's multi-dimensional approach is probably derived from his proficiency in the visual arts, and from the roots of this music in a theatre production and its related literary work, with their succeeding scenes and intermissions.

It is interesting to compare the scores of Frid's quintet *Phaedra* and the Sonata. Although the musical material of the Sonata is derived from the quintet and the Sonata retains the same structural form and all cadenzas intact, it is not simply another arrangement for two instruments. The Sonata stands firmly on its own. The Quintet, however, contains more timbral contrasts, evident in numerous ways, but most strikingly in Frid's use of mutes and transparent part-writing for each player. At the same time, the Sonata has some new musical material entrusted to the viola that Frid did not use in the Quintet at all, including more extensive and varied use of double stops with unusual minor tenth sequences in the viola, and harmonics, which, in particular at the end of the first two movements, create a special mysterious sonorous effect. Frid also added completely new themes in the Sonata, and treated existing ones with more originality; the piano part also has a ticker texture, and as a consequence offered more technical and musical challenges to the performer.

### Conclusion

Frid has made a significant contribution to the enlargement of the viola concert repertoire. His compositional style was exquisitely refined and very distinctive. The range and complexity of string techniques, timbre, and sound palette in his works for the viola, their emotional fragility and desolation with a special receptiveness for musical transformation and spiritual enhancement, their narrative rhetoric and philosophical meaning, as well as their interrelation with his other notable compositions, and with his artistic legacy, undoubtedly place them among valuable works of Russian viola heritage of the twentieth century. The Russian composer Alexander Vustin (b. 1943), Frid's former student and colleague, called the viola "an iconic instrument in Frid's musical legacy, his voice. I associate the strong sound of the viola with the character of Frid, with the generosity of his soul."<sup>20</sup> It was a privilege to know Grigori Frid and to exchange views on the many thought-provoking topics that now assist in the comprehension of his music. His lively and engaging character, his exceptional experience of life and the broad scope of his interests and different areas of expertise made him an incredibly knowledgeable and charismatic personality. The legacy of Frid deserves greater attention from all those who are open to new discoveries and exploration of yet unknown or little-explored music.

*Violist and researcher, Elena Artamonova, holds a Ph.D. from Goldsmiths College, University of London, where she was under the guidance of Professor Alexander Ivashkin, having previously studied with Yuri Bashmet at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, with Martin Outram and David Takeno in London, Nobuko Imai in Amsterdam and Geneva, and with Tabea Zimmermann in Berlin. Elena's research has been published worldwide, and her CDs of the first recordings of complete viola works by Grigori Frid (TOCC 0330), Alexander Grechaninov (TOCC 0234) and Sergei Vasilenko (TOCC 0127) on Toccata Classics, the fruits of Elena's archival investigations, have been released to high critical acclaim. An advocate for fascinating but often undiscovered and diverse repertoire for the viola, Elena has performed at prestigious concert venues and international festivals in Europe, the USA and the Far East.*

### Notes

1. A word of gratitude goes to Frid's family, especially to Mrs. Alla Mitrofanovna Ispolatovskaya, the composer's widow, Dr. Maria Frid, the composer's daughter, and the composer Dmitri Gorbatov for their trust, generous help and assistance with the family archival materials.
2. For the first complete recording of Frid's works for viola and piano see: *Grigori Frid: Complete Music for Viola and Piano*. Elena Artamonova (viola), Christopher Guild (piano), Toccata Classics TOCC 0330, 2016, compact disc: <https://toccataclassics.com/product/grigori-frid-complete-music-for-viol-and-piano/>
3. *Muzyka – obshchenie – sud'by* [Music – Communication – Destiny] (Moscow, 1987), *Muzyka! Muzyka? Muzyka... i molodezh* [Music! Music? Music... and the Youth] (Moscow, 1991), *Dorogoi ranenoi pamiati* [The Path of Injured Memory] (Moscow, 1994, 2009), *Dykhaniem tsvetov... Pisma k vnuku* [The Breadth of Flowers... Letters to Grandson] (Moscow, 1998), *Puteshestvie na nevedomuiu storonu raia* [The Journey to the Unknown Side of Paradise] (Moscow, 2002), *Lilovyi drozd* [Violet Thrush] (Moscow, 2004).
4. Interview by the author in Frid's apartment in Moscow, 17 April 2012. All quotations and extracts from Russian sources and publications used in this article have been translated by the author, Elena Artamonova.
5. A word of thanks goes to Alexander Vustin, who has continued Frid's enterprise since his death.
6. Interview, *loc. cit.*
7. At the end of a sentence in Stalin's labor camps, the former prisoner had to settle in that harsh, isolated region, registering every day at a local office of the GPU/OGPU

- (the Joint State Political Directorate, a branch of the secret police). Sometimes a family would join an ex-prisoner, though often families rejected any connection in an attempt to save themselves, even to the point of changing their surnames. (The fact that Frid's mother joined her husband with both children speaks volumes for her courage and her love.) Only after a given period (which varied) might ex-prisoners be given permission to move back to a city, even to the capital.
8. In November 1937, Zhilyaev was arrested and executed three months later due to his friendship with marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky. Zhilyaev was fully rehabilitated only in 1961. Mikhail Tukhachevsky (1893-1937) was a leading senior Soviet military commander of noble ancestry, a talented violinist and a violin maker, who was allegedly arrested by Stalin's order, tried by a special military tribunal of the Soviet Supreme Court for treason and executed in June 1937. In 1957, he was declared innocent and fully rehabilitated. Further reference in: Inna Barsova, ed., *Nikolai Sergeevich Zhilyaev: trudy, dni i gibel'* [Nikolai Sergeevich Zhilyaev: Works, Days and Death] (Moscow: Muzyka, 2008). Zhilyaev is one of the characters in Frid's novel *Lilovyi drozd* (Moscow: Kompozitor, 2004), 110-122.
  9. Grigori Frid, *Dorogoi ranenoi pamiati* (Muzizdat, Moscow, 2009), 132.
  10. Examples are the three-movement Symphony No. 3 for string orchestra and timpani (1964), Concerto for Viola and Chamber Orchestra, op. 52 (1967), the two monoperas *The Diary of Anne Frank* for soprano and small symphony orchestra (1969) and *The Letters of Van Gogh* for baritone and chamber ensemble (1975) and the Concerto for Viola, Piano and String Orchestra, op. 73 (1981).
  11. Interview, *loc. cit.*
  12. Druzhinin (1932-2007) recorded both works, the First Sonata with Mikhail Muntian, piano, on Melodiya LP S10-08249/50, released in 1976, and the Concerto with Mikhail Terian conducting the Chamber Orchestra of the Moscow Conservatory, on Melodiya LP 33D-025045/6, released in 1969. There is a fine recording of this concerto also available on line from <http://classic-online.ru/ru/production/28025>. The Sonata was also recorded by Igor Fedotov, viola, and Leonid Vechkhayzer, piano, on Naxos 8.572247, released in 2010.
  13. Interview, *loc. cit.*
  14. Mikhail Muntian (b. 1935) is a fine pianist, harpsichordist, and ensemble player with a vast wide-ranging repertoire and discography. He has extensively performed with Rudolf Barshai, Feodor Druzhinin, and since 1976, with Yuri Bashmet, giving many world premieres of contemporary music.
  15. For further reference to Vadim Borisovsky, see the following: Elena Artamonova, "Vadim Borisovsky and His Viola Arrangements: Recent Discoveries in Russian Archives and Libraries," *Journal of the American Viola Society*, vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall 2014): 27-36; vol. 31, No. 1 (Spring 2015): 19-30.
  16. Interview, *loc. cit.* The scholarly research of today uncovers other hidden mysteries of the Shostakovich Viola Sonata. For further reference see: Ivan Sokolov, 'Moving Towards an Understanding of Shostakovich's Viola Sonata', in *Contemplating Shostakovich: Life, Music and Film*, ed. Alexander Ivashkin and Andrew Kirkman (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 79-94.
  17. All viola scores by Frid are now available from Sikorski Verlag.
  18. Interview, *loc. cit.*
  19. Alexander Bobrovsky (b. 1942) is Professor of viola at the Moscow Conservatory, a former student of Vadim Borisovsky and Feodor Druzhinin.
  20. Interview by the author with Alexander Vustin at the Composers' Union of the Russian Federation, 17 August 2015.

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