Tracing the Origins of Shostakovich's Musical Motto

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In his Tenth Symphony of 1953, Shostakovich introduced his well-known musical motto, D-E♭-C-B, a particular transposition and ordering of the [0134] tetrachord. Example 1 shows how the motto derives from the German form of his Russian initials. Example 2 quotes the moment in the third movement where it makes its debut. From this passage onward through the rest of his career, Shostakovich frequently employed his motto as a source of pitch material, using it at various transposition levels and in various pitch orderings, typically with the notes confined to the narrowest possible registral span (i.e., four semitones).[1] In the music of Example 2, for instance, he pairs his motto with another compact form of [0134] transposed to begin on G (boxed in the figure). Together with its numerous transformations, the motto serves as a major defining element of his mature style, stamping the music with an unmistakable "Shostakovich sound." In addition, it shapes his music's broader meaning by functioning as a potent, self-referential symbol, most notably in the "autobiographical" Eighth String Quartet of 1960, the piece most fully saturated with his motto.[2] The motto has even assumed a life of its own outside of

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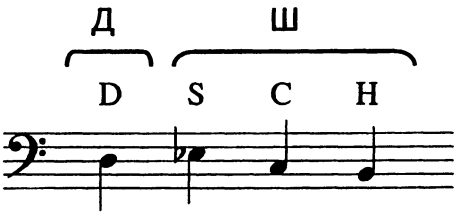
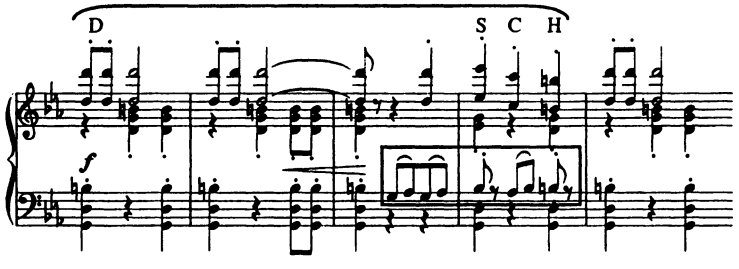
[1] In other words, Shostakovich usually treats [0134] as a scalar unit. Alternatively, given this particular pitch-space constraint, one could say that Shostakovich typically treats [0134] as a pitch-set class, or PSC (Morris 1995). Occasionally, however, he does present registrally-expanded versions of [0134]. For example, in the third movement of the Eighth String Quartet, within the accompaniment part at R36, Shostakovich conveys [0134] as a pair of semitone-related minor tenths (G-B♭ and A♭-C♭), as noted in Child 1993, 72–73.

[2] For some further examples of prominent [0134] tetrachords in selected movements from Shostakovich's post-Tenth Symphony music, see the First Cello Concerto, op. 107 (1959), first movement; Seventh String Quartet, op. 108 (1960), last movement; Eleventh String Quartet, op. 122 (1966), fourth movement;

Example 1. Shostakovich's motto.



Example 2. Shostakovich: Symphony No. 10, Op. 93 (1953), third movement, R104, mm. 4–8.



Second Cello Concerto, op. 126 (1966), second movement; Seven Verses of A. Blok, op. 127 (1967), no. 2 ("Gamayun, ptitsa veshchaya"); and *Suite on Texts of Michelangelo Buonarroti*, op. 145 (1974), no. 9 ("Noch").

Shostakovich's music: numerous composers have based compositions on it, including Roger Reynolds and Alfred Schnittke.[3]

Given its significance, it is not surprising that previous scholars have probed the origins of Shostakovich's motto. Within his own music, however, writers have only discussed precedents dating from the few years prior to the Tenth Symphony. By contrast, this essay argues that the roots of Shostakovich's motto are much older, extending as far back as the First Symphony, his graduation piece of 1924–25.[4] In advancing this claim, I suggest that Shostakovich's motto emerged primarily from his characteristic technique of modal lowering, combined with the related techniques of modal clash and scalar tightening (all of which are explored in Part I below). In addition, a number of external influences may have worked in conjunction with Shostakovich's personal style to help steer him toward his motto (as discussed in Part II).

I

In tracing precedents for Shostakovich's motto in his own music, previous writers have focused on two works composed just a few years before the Tenth Symphony: the Fifth String Quartet (1952) and the First Violin Concerto (1947–48).[5] Example 3 illustrates these findings, working backward from the Fifth String Quartet. As parts (a) and (b) of the example show, the initial viola gesture of the quartet (in m. 2) starts with the same four pitch classes, in the same order, as the opening melody in the third movement of the Tenth Symphony. To derive the motto, one simply reorders this tetrachord, just as Shostakovich does in the next section of the symphony (quoted above in Example 2). As Example 3(c) shows, the scherzo of the Violin Concerto eclipses this precedent with a melody that is both earlier and yet more

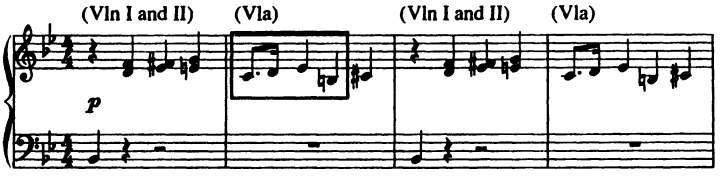
[3] Hulme 2002, 567–75 contains an extensive list of pieces by other composers that feature Shostakovich's motto.

[4] The dates of Shostakovich's compositions are taken from the works list in Laurel Fay's biography (Fay 2000, 347–61).

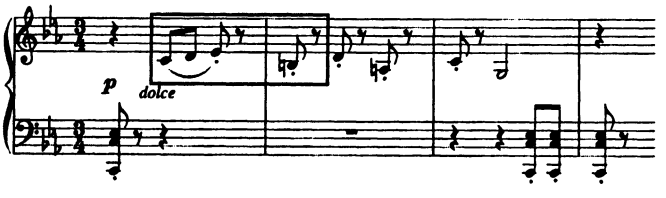
[5] Longman 1989, 134; Roseberry 1989, 204; Bobrovsky 1997, 44–45; Fay 2000, 327, n. 15; and Fanning 2004b, 35–37.

Example 3. Previously identified precedents for the motto in the Fifth String Quartet and First Violin Concerto.

a. String Quartet no. 5, Op. 92 (1952), first movement, opening.

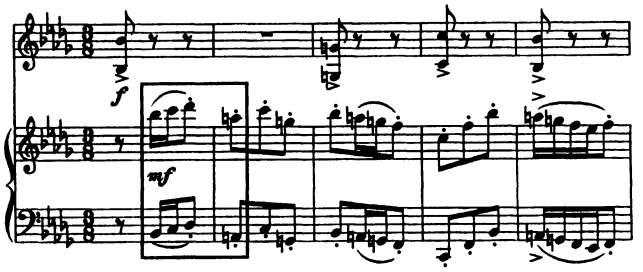


b. Symphony No. 10: third movement, opening.

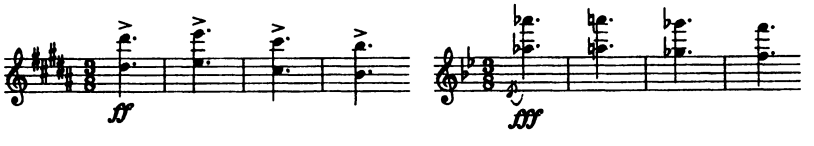


Example 3, contd.

c. Violin Concerto No. 1, op. 77 (1947–48), second movement, opening.



d. Violin Concerto No. 1, second movement, solo violin part at R35 and R67.



similar to the one in the Tenth Symphony: though a whole step lower, it corresponds with the Tenth Symphony melody for its first seven notes, with respect to both (relative) pitch and the relative durations of its notes. The scherzo also features another, perhaps more compelling precedent. As illustrated in Example 3(d), the solo violin declares a four-note motive in the middle of the movement; this gesture eventually transforms into an emphatically stated [0134] tetrachord, in the same pitch ordering as Shostakovich's motto (albeit at a different transposition level).

Modal Lowering

These precedents notwithstanding, we can trace back the roots of Shostakovich's motto considerably farther once we recognize its connection to *modal lowering*, Shostakovich's characteristic practice of flattening scale degrees.[6] This phenomenon was first addressed in the 1940s by the Russian theorists Lev Mazel' and Alexander Dolzhansky.[7] For a simple illustration, Example 4 applies modal lowering to a D minor scale in two stages, creating first a Phrygian scale, then a non-traditional, non-diatonic scale known as "intensified Phrygian" (Mazel') or "lowered Phrygian" (Dolzhansky). As a result, the final scale embeds a [0134] tetrachord involving $\hat{1}$, $\flat\hat{2}$, $\flat\hat{3}$, and $\flat\hat{4}$. (For consistency, all scale degrees in this essay are expressed relative to those of a major scale.) For a corresponding excerpt from early Shostakovich, Example 5 quotes the beginning of the Prelude no. 24 (1932–33). In this passage, the melody inhabits D minor with lowered $\hat{2}$ and $\hat{4}$ (that is, intensified or lowered Phrygian). Due to this lowering, the line moves through a form of [0134] while descending to its cadence.[8]

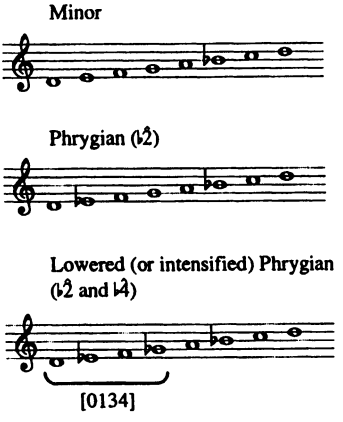
Modal lowering can yield [0134]s on other scale degrees as well. For example, the tenth Prelude features one involving $\hat{5}$, $\flat\hat{6}$,

[6] Marina Sabinina briefly mentions the connection between modal lowering and Shostakovich's motto, but does not explore the matter in any detail (Sabinina 1976, 295).

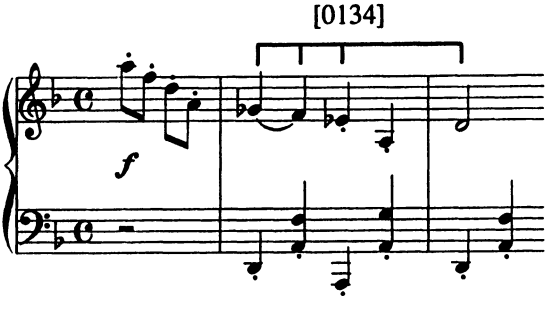
[7] Carpenter 1995, 76.

[8] Mazel' cites this passage as an example of lowered Phrygian (Mazel' 1986, 48).

Example 4. An example of modal lowering applied to a D minor scale.



Example 5. Shostakovich: Twenty-four Preludes, *Op. 34 (1932–33), No. 24, opening.*



♭$\hat{7}$, and ♭$\hat{8}$ (see Example 6); this one is later answered by a [0134] transposed to begin on $\hat{1}$ (similar to the previous example). More generally, when Shostakovich conveys a clear pitch center in his music, he most often uses [0134]s that are anchored to two members of the tonic triad (i.e., a major or minor triad built on unaltered $\hat{1}$).[9] This preference creates four possible scale-degree affiliations for [0134], as shown in Example 7, (a) through (d). Along with these affiliations, Shostakovich frequently builds [0134]s upward from $\hat{5}$, as depicted in part (e) of the example, and as evidenced in the tenth Prelude. (Table 1 lists several instances for each of these scale-degree affiliations.) Less common for Shostakovich are other [0134]s involving a single tonic triad note; rarer still are those intersecting with no tonic triad members.[10]

Regarding the music of Examples 5 and 6, it is worth stressing that the [0134]s in these passages are best understood as byproducts of modal lowering; that is, modal lowering leads to [0134], not the reverse. For a case in point, Example 8 quotes the opening of the last movement of the Second Piano Sonata (1943). Like the tenth Prelude, this excerpt features a [0134] built upward from $\hat{5}$ (in mm. 6–7). Earlier on, however, the melody presents the tetrachord B-C♯-D-E♭, an inverted form of [0124] resulting from lowered $\hat{4}$ *without* lowered $\hat{2}$ (see mm. 3–4 and 5–6). Modal lowering can therefore occur in the absence of [0134], and thus we can consider it the larger, more encompassing phenomenon. As such, it sometimes produces [0134]s, sometimes not.[11]

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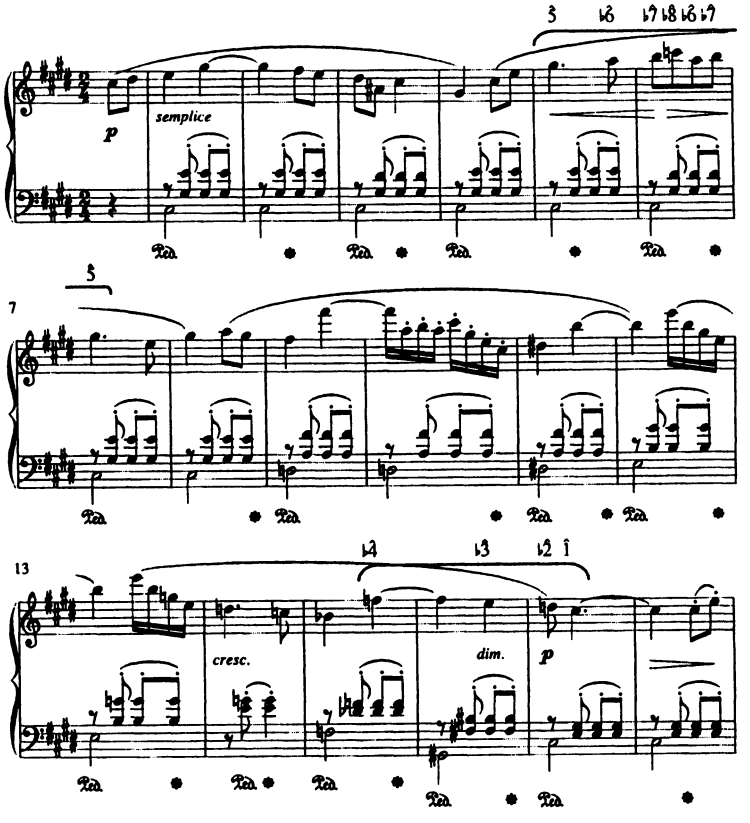
[9]Though Shostakovich's music typically lacks traditional, functional chord progressions, it often features a clear sense of pitch center, conveyed by various means, including 1) placing the pitch class in the lowest register, 2) featuring it at formal junctures (beginnings and endings of phrases, sections, and movements), and 3) emphasizing it through various "brute force" methods, such as repetition and octave doubling. In addition, Shostakovich typically reinforces a pitch center by treating it as the root of a triad, i.e., by supporting it with its upper third and/or upper fifth.

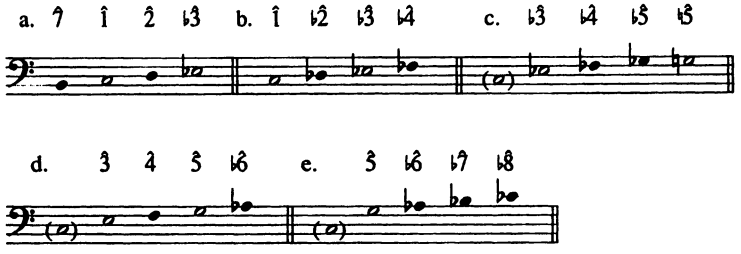
[10]The scheme of Example 7 is partly inspired by Russian work on modality in Shostakovich, especially that of V. Sereda. In particular, the [0134] scalar units are examples of Sereda's "melodic subsystems," while the tonic-triad anchoring notes are akin to her "modal supports." See Carpenter 1995 and Sereda 1968.

[11]Dolzhansky and Mazel' cite this passage as an example of lowered or intensified Aeolian (Dolzhansky 1962, 28; Mazel' 1986, 40).

Example 6. Shostakovich: Twenty-four Preludes, *No. 10, opening. Brackets show latent [0134]s in the melody. The first is built upward from* $\hat{5}$*; the second is built upward from* $\hat{1}$.



Example 7. Typical scale-degree affiliations for [0134] in Shostakovich. Tonic triad members are shown with open noteheads. Scale degrees and accidentals are all relative to C major.



Example 8. Shostakovich: Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 61 (1943), last movement, opening. The first two brackets enclose an inversion of [0124] built upward from Î. The third bracket encloses an [0134] built upward from 5̂.

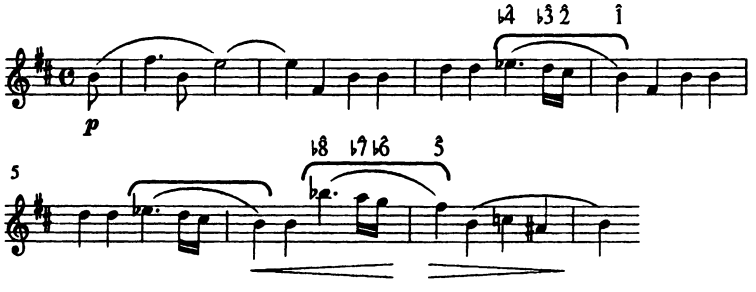


Table 1. Instances of [0134] tetrachords in Shostakovich exemplifying the scale-degree affiliations shown in Example 7.

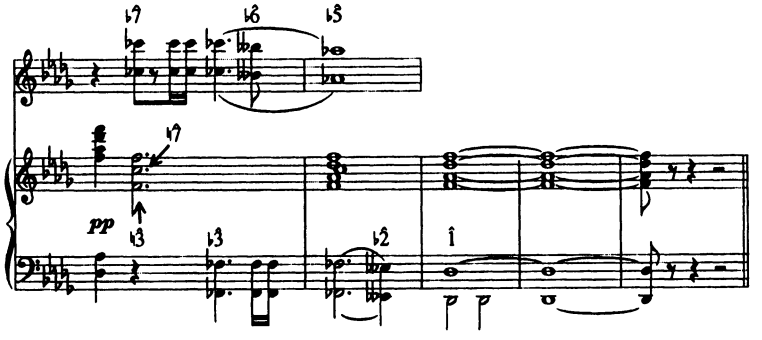
7 1 2 ♭3	*Twenty-four Preludes*, op. 34, no. 20, mm. 3–4, RH Piano Trio no. 2, op. 67, iii, mm. 9–10, violin *Six Romances on Texts of W. Raleigh, R. Burns, and W. Shakespeare*, op. 62, no. 5, mm. 16–17 and 30–31, voice *Twenty-four Preludes and Fugues*, op. 87, prelude no. 1, mm. 7–8, RH String Quartet no. 8, op. 110, opening, cello
1 ♭2 ♭3 ♭4	Figures 6, 7, 12, and 21. See also: *The Fall of Berlin*, op. 82, R13–R15, main melody; linked with one on ♭3 ♭4 ♭4 5 *Twenty-four Preludes and Fugues*, op. 87, prelude no. 11, starting 10 mm. from end, RH; linked with one on ♭3 ♭3 ♭4 5 String Quartet no. 7, op. 108, iii, R30, mm. 1–7, viola and cello; linked with one on ♭3 ♭3 ♭4 5 String Quartet no. 11, op. 122, vi, R33, mm. 1–8, viola and cello String Quartet no. 14, op. 142, iii, 5 mm. from the end, first violin (spelled 1 ♯1 ♯2 3)
♭3 ♭4 ♭5 ♭5	*Twenty-four Preludes*, op. 34, no. 10, mm. 43–46, LH (bass line combined with inner voice) String Quartet no. 2, op. 68, i, R5, mm. 3–5, first violin; linked with one on 1 ♭2 ♭3 ♭4 Violin Concerto no. 1, ii, R42, mm. 1–4, main melody *From Jewish Folk Poetry*, op. 79, no. 3, mm. 1–13, accompaniment offbeats; similar example in no. 5, mm. 1–8 (both spelled ♭3 ♭4 ♭4 5)
3 4 5 ♭6	Figure 2. See also: String Quartet no. 4, op. 83, iv, R78, mm. 1–4, first violin *Twenty-four Preludes and Fugues*, op. 87, fugue no. 24, Maestoso starting 37 mm. before the end, RH Symphony no. 11, op. 103, ii, R39, mm. 1–6, main melody String Quartet no. 8, op. 110, iii, mm. 29–34, first violin String Quartet no. 10, op. 118, ii, R38, mm. 4–14, first violin
5 ♭6 ♭7 ♭8	Figures 7 and 9. See also: String Quartet no. 5, op. 92, ii, starting 8 mm. from end, first violin and viola String Quartet no. 6, op. 101, end of each movement features a vertical "DSCH-level" [0134] in a G major context (noted in Fanning 2004, 40–41) String Quartet no. 7, op. 108, iii, R30, mm. 1–7, first violin (spelled 5 ♭6 ♭7 ♭7) String Quartet no. 11, op. 122, vi, R39, mm. 1–6, first violin Symphony no. 12, op. 112, i, mm. 4–5, cellos and basses Violin Sonata, op. 134, i, R11, mm. 6–7 (with B as local pitch center), then R11, m. 9 to R12, m. 1 (with D as pitch center), violin part

Modal Clash

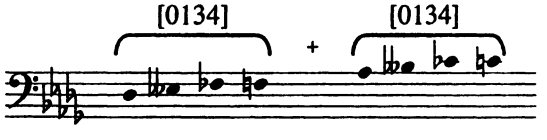
By the same token, not all [0134]s in Shostakovich arise from straightforward modal lowering. Some result from a different (though related) technique that we may call *modal clash.* This phenomenon occurs when a passage incorporates two forms of the same scale degree simultaneously or in close juxtaposition. Consider the excerpt shown in Example 9a, drawn from the third

Example 9. Shostakovich: Symphony No. 1, Op. 10 (1924–25), third movement, end.

a. Score reduction.



b. The pitch content reduces to two [0134]s resulting from modal clash, built upward from $\hat{1}$ and $\hat{5}$.



movement of the First Symphony. This passage once again features a [0134] built upward from $\hat{1}$. But unlike those in Preludes No. 10 and 24, this tetrachord involves $\hat{1}$ and $\flat\hat{2}$ together with $\flat\hat{3}$ and $\natural\hat{3}$, rather than $\flat\hat{3}$ and $\flat\hat{4}$. The distinction is subtle but significant. In the previous examples, each pitch of the [0134] functions as a distinct scale degree. In the music of Example 5, for

example, D functions as $\hat{1}$, E♭ as $\hat{2}$, F as $\flat\hat{3}$, and G♭ as $\flat\hat{4}$. By contrast, this example does not convey a one-to-one correspondence between scale degrees and the pitches of [0134]. Instead, D♭ functions as $\hat{1}$ and E𝄫 as $\flat\hat{2}$, while F♭ and F♮ serve simultaneously as two different forms of $\hat{3}$, clashing together (hence the term). Along with this tetrachord the passage features another [0134] that also involves modal clash, this one built upward from $\hat{5}$ and combining $\flat\hat{7}$ and $\natural\hat{7}$. The entire pitch content therefore comprises two fifth-related [0134]s arising from modal clash, as summarized in part (b) of the example.[12]

Scalar Tightening

Still other [0134]s in Shostakovich stem from neither modal lowering nor modal clash. After all, these techniques depend on the existence of a mode, and yet many of Shostakovich's passages convey no clear pitch center—and thus no mode—or are too chromatically dense to suggest any mode. Yet even when Shostakovich conveys no clear pitch center, he often employs scale segments in crafting melodic lines. Doing so creates the possibility of *scalar tightening*, the contraction of a scale segment into a narrower span. Example 3(d) above provides a straightforward example, in which the [0135] tetrachord {B, C♯, D♯, E} contracts into the [0134] tetrachord {F, G♭, A♭, A♮}.[13]

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[12] For more examples of [0134]s built upward from $\hat{1}$ and resulting from modal clash, see *The Nose*, R61, mm. 1–4; *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, R152, mm. 1–5; String Quartet no. 1, R8, mm. 3–7; and Symphony no. 7, R208, mm. 5–12.

[13] Scalar tightening can be understood as a special case of "modular transformation" (or MODTRANS), a concept developed by Matthew Santa 1999. As defined by Santa, MODTRANS is a transformation that maps each scale degree (or "step class") of a musical entity in one modular system (perhaps a chromatic, octatonic, or diatonic collection) to a corresponding step class in another modular system. Thus, for instance, the second tetrachord in Example 3(d) can be interpreted as a transformation of the first tetrachord from a diatonic space into an octatonic one. (For more on the connection between [0134] and

For another example, consider the music of Example 10, taken from the fifth of the *Six Romances on Texts by Japanese Poets*, op. 21. The passage starts with a brief suggestion of F major harmony and eventually reaches a root-position, thirdless B chord (also short-lived). No clear pitch center governs the wandering tonality of these measures, which taken together embrace all twelve pitch classes except C♯/D♭. Thus the "DSCH-level" [0134]s marked in the figure cannot be reconciled to any scale degrees, and hence cannot be understood in terms of either modal lowering or modal clash. Yet we can invoke scalar tightening for the passage. For instance, we can assert that the bracketed portion of the vocal line is tightened relative to a diatonic scale segment. To untighten it, we could raise E♭ to E (creating the diatonic segment B-C-D-E) or lower B to B♭ (creating the segment B♭-C-D-E♭). The latter of course would create further tightening, resulting in the scale segment F♯-G-A-B♭, but this new tightening could be eliminated by lowering F♯ to F.[14]

In sum, Shostakovich employs three related techniques—modal lowering, modal clash, and scalar tightening—all of which can produce musical environments containing [0134]s. From within these environments, Shostakovich eventually began seizing on [0134], highlighting versions of it that emerge more distinctly from their surroundings, much like a sculptor seeing a shape in the stone and then carving it out. A clear example occurs in the Sixth Symphony, at the end of the first movement. As Example 11 shows, this passage features yet another [0134] built upward from $\hat{1}$, in this case resulting from modal lowering. Yet this one stands out more strongly than the others we have observed so far. Consider for instance the first [0134] of Example 6, in the right-hand part of mm. 5–7. Though plainly audible, the tetrachord is nonetheless embedded within a larger melodic phrase extending from the second half of m. 4 to the first half of m. 8 (as the phrase marking indicates). By contrast, the [0134] in Example 11

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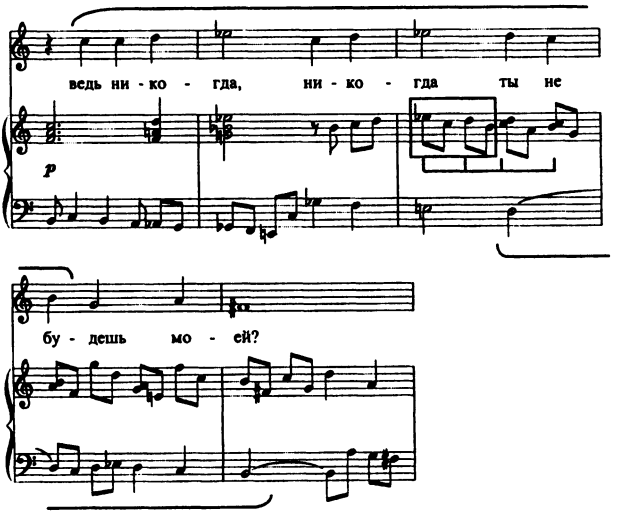
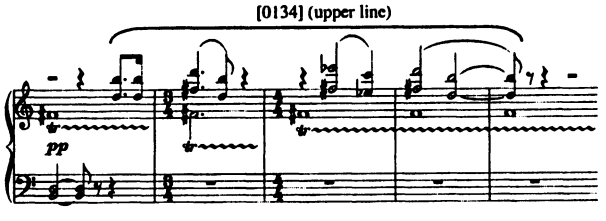
octatonicism, see below.) Michael Friedmann describes a similar transformation, which he calls "modal transposition" (Friedmann 1990, 118–119).

[14] The Fifth String Quartet offers more examples of scalar tightening. Compare the first violin parts at R3 and R25, as well as the viola and cello parts at R1 and R25.

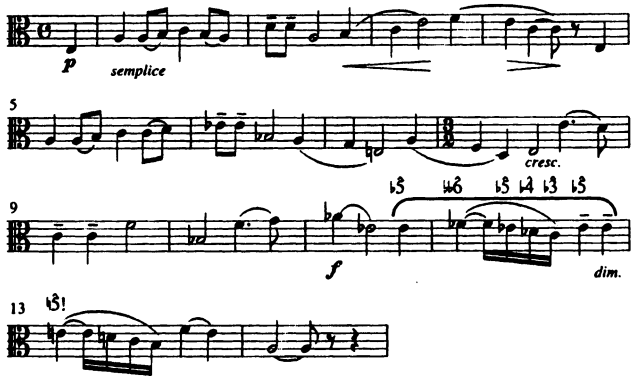
Example 10. Shostakovich: Six Romances on Texts by Japanese Poets, *Op. 21 (1928–32), No. 5, mm. 8–12.*



Example 11. Shostakovich: Symphony No. 6, Op. 54 (1939), first movement, R33.



Example 12. Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 2, Op. 68 (1944), last movement, R92 (theme of the theme-with-variations, played by the viola alone; measures are numbered starting at the beginning of the theme, not the beginning of the movement).



coincides exactly with the melodic phrase, rather than blending into a larger one.[15]

Completed five years after the Sixth Symphony, the last movement of Shostakovich's Second String Quartet both exemplifies and surpasses the trends we have witnessed thus far. The movement opens with a brief introduction, which leads to a string of continuous variations beginning with the solo viola theme shown in Example 12. This A-minor melody starts out completely diatonic, using white notes only in the first phrase (mm. 1–4). In the second phrase, however, the viola begins to employ modal lowering, a process that culminates in mm. 11 and 12, coinciding with the registral and dynamic climax of the line. Right after this

[15] Mazel' discusses this passage as an example of lowered Phrygian (Mazel' 1986, 48).

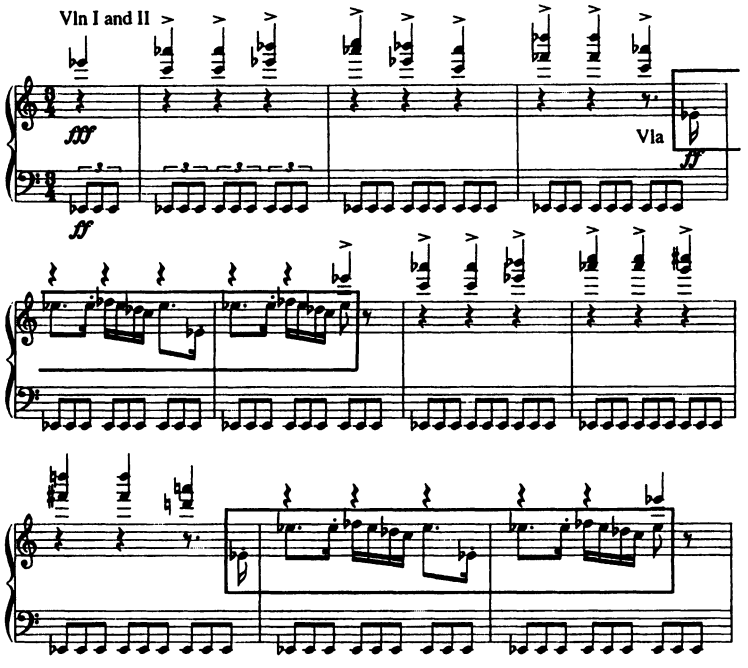
highpoint (m. 11), the viola briefly fixes on a [0134] resulting from extreme modal lowering, embracing ♭$\hat{3}$, ♭$\hat{4}$, ♭$\hat{5}$, and 𝄫$\hat{6}$. The latter scale degree is of course enharmonically equivalent to unaltered $\hat{5}$, a relationship that Shostakovich strikingly clarifies in the next measure by recasting F♭ as E♮; in this way, he prepares the return of white-key diatonicism to the line, facilitating tonal closure.[16]

As the movement progresses, the regular pattern of variations breaks down while the music gains in both dynamic and rhythmic intensity. Finally we reach the triple *forte* climax shown in Example 13, a moment punctuated by viola outbursts emphatically conveying a clear variation of its earlier [0134] (see the boxed gestures in the example). A few measures later (at R115, shown in Example 14), Shostakovich reaches outside of the variation trajectory he has established and restates material from the introduction of the movement (in the viola and cello parts). At this crucial point of formal synthesis, the first violin seizes upon the viola's tetrachord, repeating it obsessively and then transposing it downward several times (see the brackets in the example). Thus, over the course of the movement, we hear a [0134] that arises from modal lowering, and later achieves prominence in a way that parallels and reinforces the broad formal sweep of the music.

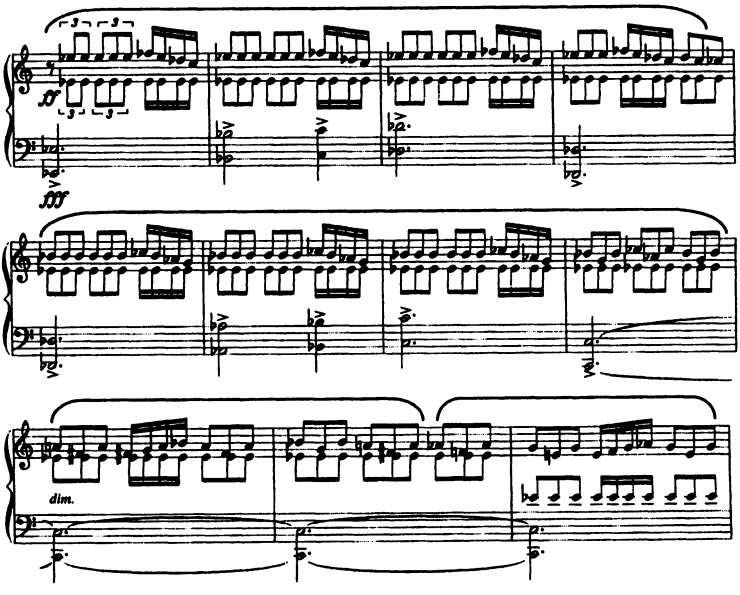
Moving forward nearly a decade to the Tenth Symphony, we find a similar trend in Shostakovich's handling of [0134], this time culminating in his motto. As Example 15 shows, the opening melodic phrase embeds a [0134], which is followed by several others in the next few measures. From here until the third movement, [0134]s begin to emerge more strongly from their surroundings, often at formal junctures or expressive highpoints. For example, at a climactic point in the first movement's development section, Shostakovich takes the beginning of the primary theme, stated by the clarinet in the exposition (see

[16]The [0134] tetrachord in the passage is foreshadowed by several noteworthy [0134]s presented earlier in the quartet. For instance, the second theme of the first movement (at R6) features a pair of interlocking [0134]s: C♯-D-E-F and E-F-G-G♯. In addition, the first violin part in the second movement highlights several [0134]s; see for example the *poco accelerando* figure right before R32. Finally, in the last movement, the first violin part touches briefly on a [0134] in the introduction (one measure before R91), and the variation theme itself embeds the tetrachord B-C-D-E♭ (see Example 12, mm. 5–6).

Example 13. Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 2, last movement, R112.



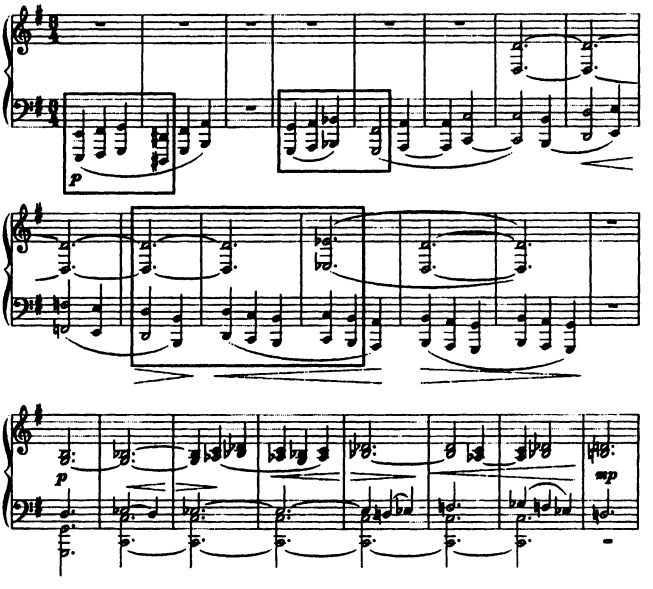
Example 14. Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 2, last movement, R115.



Example 16 [a]), and applies scalar tightening to it, resulting in a conspicuous statement of [0134] played by the high woodwinds (see Example 16 [b]). By emphasizing [0134], this passage (along with others) sets the stage for the third movement, whose initial, "DSCH-level" [0134] (Example 3[b]) leads finally to the motto in the second theme (Example 2).

Regarding the motto's first appearance in the Tenth, we should bear in mind something that Shostakovich does *not* do. Namely, he does not begin the symphony by showcasing the motto, as does Beethoven's Fifth or Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, where the *idée fixe* occurs near the beginning. Instead, Shostakovich gradually reveals his motto in a way that encapsulates its emergence in his music over a period of years. Indeed, it would seem that ontogeny

Example 15. Symphony No. 10, first movement, opening. Boxes indicate embedded [0134]s. Note that the [0134] in the second system anticipates the motto's debut in the third movement by conveying the same scale degrees, within the same (locally G-centered) tonal environment. In the third system, the inner voices feature [0134]s built upward from $\hat{1}$ *and* $\hat{5}$ *(still within a G-centered tonal environment): compare with Examples 6 and 9.*

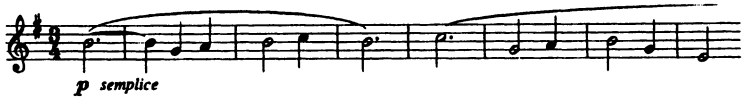


recapitulates phylogeny, to borrow an evolutionary concept long discredited by scientists but no less suggestive for musical interpretation.[17]

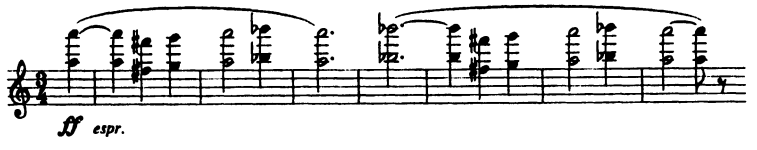
[17]The process by which Shostakovich reveals his motto in the Tenth is reminiscent of the way that some composers first introduce motivic material derived from a musical source (often a quotation), and later unveil that source explicitly. Peter Burkholder dubs the technique "cumulative form" in his work on

Example 16. Symphony No. 10, first movement. A prominent [0134] emerging from scalar tightening.

a. Clarinet melody at R5.



b. Variation of this melody (subjected to scalar tightening) at R36, mm. 5–11.



II

Thus far, I have argued that Shostakovich's musical language fostered environments hospitable for [0134] tetrachords, and that over time Shostakovich increasingly highlighted these tetrachords, eventually achieving his motto in the Tenth Symphony. As part of this process, however, a number of external factors may have helped steer Shostakovich toward his motto. These potential catalysts divide into two categories: the first comprises the famous musical mottos preceding Shostakovich's own, while the second

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Ives (Burkholder 1995). For a related case, see Charles Rosen's discussion of the first movement of Schumann's *Fantasie*, op. 17 (Rosen 1995, 101–112). Cumulative form differs in that it typically entails separate fragments that are later merged to form a larger whole, rather than a single motivic cell that undergoes transformation (as in the Tenth Symphony); yet it is similar in that it involves an end-oriented process of revelation.

includes pieces by other composers featuring prominent [0134] tetrachords. Within the first category, the BACH motif not only stands out as the most well-known, but also bears distinct similarities with Shostakovich's motto: both comprise four notes compressed into a narrow space, with the last two notes the same; and both divide into a pair of half-step dyads (see the first two parts of Example 17).[18] Another possibility is Schumann's ASCH motif from *Carnaval*, whose last *three* notes are the same as Shostakovich's motto (see the right-hand part of Example 17).[19] Moreover, Schumann's treatment of ASCH in *Carnaval* seems to prefigure the way that Shostakovich reveals his motto in the Tenth Symphony; that is, Schumann initially blends ASCH seamlessly into its surroundings, only later revealing it explicitly in the "Sphinxes" movement (along with two other motives). By the same token, when Bach himself uses his own motif in Contrapunctus XIV of the *Art of the Fugue*, he too refrains from trumpeting it at the outset, instead waiting until the third subject to introduce it.[20]

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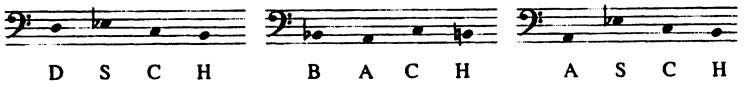
[18] In addition, Arkady Klimovitsky has noted that the first three notes of BACH and DSCH are related by inversion about C (Klimovitsky 1996, 265). Shostakovich was surely aware of the BACH motif. Several major nineteenth-century composers had written pieces based on it, including Schumann, Liszt, and Rimsky-Korsakov, and Shostakovich himself later used it in his Fifteenth Symphony (at R138 in the fourth movement, as noted in Jackson 1998, 633). And as Klimovitsky discussed, Bach (and thus perhaps the BACH motif) was on the forefront of Shostakovich's mind in the years prior to writing the Tenth Symphony, owing to the bicentennial of Bach's death in 1950 (Klimovitsky 1996, 265). Shostakovich participated in the Leipzig Bach celebrations during that summer (as the head of the Soviet delegation) and afterward was inspired to begin work on his own *Twenty-four Preludes and Fugues* (1950–51). David Fanning also discusses this connection in his recent book on Shostakovich's Eighth String Quartet (Fanning 2004b, 34).

[19] Klimovitsky also mentions this possibility (Klimovitsky 1996, 266). As a pianist and Schumann fan, Shostakovich almost certainly knew *Carnaval*. According to Isaak Glikman, Shostakovich "loved Schumann's music" and "regarded him as a composer of genius" (Shostakovich 1993, 296 and 286). As a student, Shostakovich played Schumann's piano music, and later, as a teacher, brought Schumann's music to composition class (Fay 2000, 18 and 109); in fact, he assigned Rostropovich to score *Carnaval* (Wilson 1994, 186).

[20] For more on the Russian (and specifically St. Petersburg) tradition of constructing musical monograms, see Klimovitsky 1996, 200–201.

Example 17. DSCH, BACH, and ASCH.



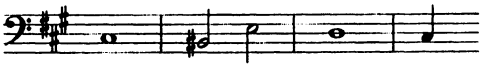
The second category embraces a number of possibilities, including Bach's C♯ minor fugue from Book I of the *Well Tempered Clavier*, Schubert's *Doppelgänger*, and Ravel's *Rhapsodie Espagnol*, all of which highlight [0134] right at the outset (see Example 18, [a] through [c]).[21] In addition, some of Shostakovich's students from the 1930s and 40s incorporated prominent [0134]s in their music (and thus may have influenced their teacher). As David Fanning has noted, German Galynin's 1946 Piano Concerto includes several conspicuous melodic [0134]s in the ordering of Shostakovich's motto, though at different transposition levels.[22] Moreover, a [0134] tetrachord underlies the opening melody of *Rothschild's*

[21] Viktor Bobrovsky has pointed out the Bach and Schubert examples (Bobrovsky 1997, 44). Timothy Jackson has also explored the possible connection between Bach's fugue subject and Shostakovich's motto (Jackson 1998, 611–15). Derek Hulme has observed that Britten's 1943 cantata *Rejoice in the Lamb* presents some conspicuous [0134]s in the ordering of Shostakovich's motto, but not at the same transposition level; however, it is unlikely that Shostakovich encountered this piece before writing the Tenth. Finally, Arkady Klimovitsky and David Fanning have identified instances of [0134] in previous music that are at the same transposition level *and* in the same ordering as Shostakovich's motto. These include Clementi's Sonata in F minor, op. 13 no. 6 (1785), first movement, m. 69; Berg's *Chamber Concerto* (1923– 25), m. 4; Walton's Viola Concerto (1928–29), R12, m. 7 to R13 (all three identified in Fanning 2004b, 35); and Beethoven's Sonata op. 53 ("Waldstein"), third movement, mm. 14–16 (identified in Klimovitsky 1996, 262 and Fanning 2004b, 35). The [0134] in the "Waldstein" does not stand out as a distinct motive but instead blends into a larger melodic line. The [0134]s in the Berg and Walton pieces do stand out from their surroundings but are short-lived. The Clementi [0134] is an isolated "DSCH-level" statement of a tonal motive based on scale-step relationships; originally it appears in the form E-F-D♭-C ($\hat{7}$-$\hat{1}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$ in the home key of F minor).

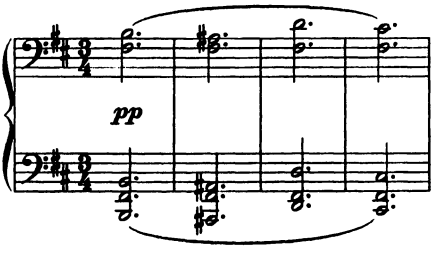
[22] For more discussion see Fanning 2004a, 291–92.

Example 18. Some prominent [0134] tetrachords in previous pieces.

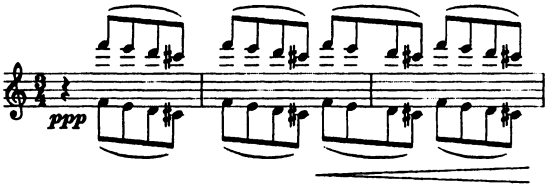
a. Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier, *Book I, Fugue No. 4 in C♯ minor,*



b. Schubert: Der Doppelgänger, *mm. 1–4.*



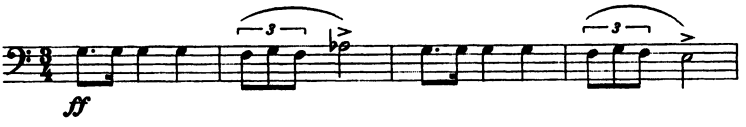
c. Ravel: Rhapsodie Espagnol, *mm. 1–3, first violins and violas.*



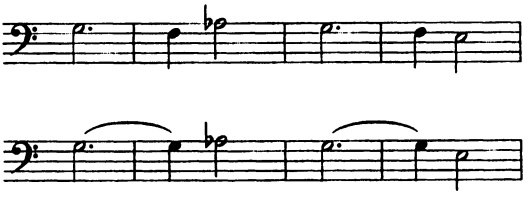
Violin, the one-act opera by Shostakovich's favorite student, Veniamin Fleyshman (see Example 19). Shostakovich knew this work well, having completed its orchestration in 1944, after Fleyshman's death (in the war) left it unfinished. One can even tease out a transposition of Shostakovich's motto from the opening melody, although is unlikely that Fleyshman's opera influenced Shostakovich to adopt his motto. By the time he encountered it, Shostakovich had already begun to highlight [0134]s in his music, as evidenced by the passage from the Sixth Symphony quoted

Example 19. Veniamin Fleyshman: Rothschild's Violin.

a. Opening melody (doubled two octaves higher).



b. Two reductions.



above. Moreover, extracting a transposed version of Shostakovich's motto from Fleyshman's opening melody requires a rather arbitrary selection of notes; part (b) of the figure shows two ways of pruning the melody that are more consistent, neither of which yields a transposition of the motto.

Fleyshman's opera nevertheless touches on an issue worth addressing, namely, Shostakovich's use of Jewish musical idioms and its relation to his motto. Elements of East European Jewish folk music appear in several of Shostakovich's best-known compositions, including the Second Piano Trio, the First Violin Concerto, and the First Cello Concerto.[23] Most scholars agree that Shostakovich's first substantive engagement with Jewish music stems from his relationship with Fleyshman from 1937 to 1941, and his subsequent contribution to *Rothschild's Violin.*[24] According

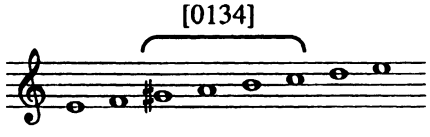
[23] For fuller lists of Shostakovich's "Jewish" works, see Braun 1985 and Kuhn 2001.

[24] Judith Kuhn mentions two other cases of Shostakovich's exposure to Jewish music, both dating from after his initial contact with Fleyshman (Kuhn 2001, 192).

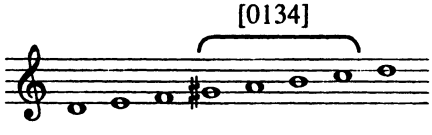
to Joachim Braun, the opera contains the seeds of most of Shostakovich's Jewish devices.[25] Among these devices are the traditional Jewish modes, including Phrygian with raised $\hat{3}$ (or *freigish*) and Dorian with raised $\hat{4}$, both of which embed [0134] tetrachords, as shown in Example 20.

Example 20. Freigish *and altered Dorian modes.*

a. Freigish.



b. Altered Dorian.



Though these altered modes are certainly conducive to [0134], our previous examples demonstrate that Shostakovich was using scales that embed one or more versions of [0134] before his work with Fleyshman. However, Shostakovich's preexisting penchant for modal lowering and modal clash no doubt gave him an affinity for Jewish modes, allowing him to assimilate them into his own language, or incorporate his own, idiosyncratic versions of them. Shostakovich's engagement with Jewish music therefore seems to have reinforced and enriched the musical language that gave rise to his motto. Thus we find passages like that of Example 21—taken

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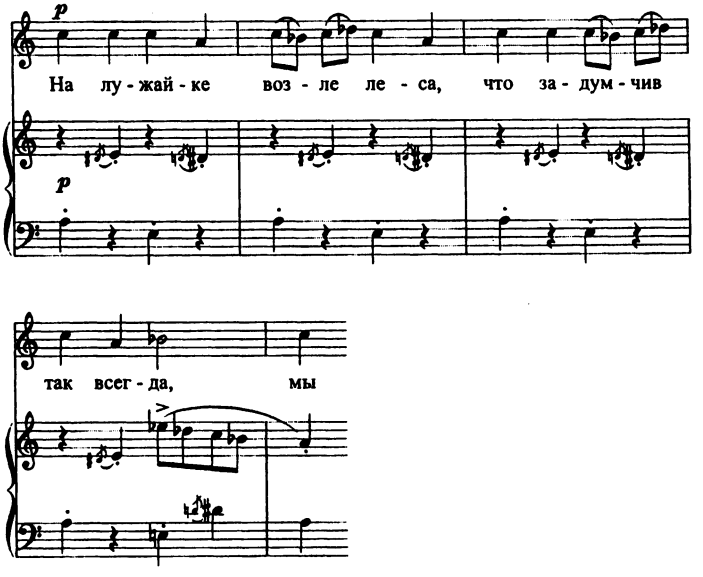
Timothy Jackson gives an earlier date for Shostakovich's initial involvement with Jewish musical idioms, citing the Fifth Symphony (1937) as containing the "first direct reference to Jewish music" (Jackson 1998, 609).

[25] Braun 1985, 69.

Example 21. Shostakovich: From Jewish Folk Poetry, *Op. 79 (1948), No. 10, mm. 9–12.*



from the song cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry*—which conveys Shostakovich's stylized version of Jewish music, while featuring an [0134] built up from Î, like the several examples we have already witnessed from earlier in his career. Given passages like this, it comes as no surprise that the movement featuring the clearest precedent for Shostakovich's motto (the second movement of the First Violin Concerto) and the piece most saturated with his motto (the Eighth String Quartet) both contain Jewish elements.[26]

[26] Braun 1985, 76. There is another potential connection between folk music and Shostakovich's motto: in 1945, the Soviet-Azerbaijan composer-theorist Uzeyir

Within the second category, Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* stands out as the most compelling potential influence. Completed in 1930, the work treats an ordering of [0134] as one of its main motives. (Stravinsky himself called it the "root idea of the whole work.")[27] Example 22 cites two instances drawn from the first two movements. In one (Example 22 [a]), Stravinsky crafts a fugue subject from a series of [0134]s, starting with a "DSCH-level" [0134] repeated several times; in the other (Example 22 [b]), he forms an octatonic collection out of two tritone-related [0134]s. (Below we will return to the question of [0134] and octatonicism.) When Shostakovich prepares his motto's debut in the Tenth Symphony by embedding it within the beginning of the third movement (as well as the first movement) he uses the same, broken-thirds ordering that Stravinsky does, albeit with a passing tone thrown in (see Examples 3[b] and 15).

This connection might still seem tenuous, were it not for Shostakovich's profound interest in Stravinsky's music. As Shostakovich wrote, "the work of Stravinsky influenced me greatly. Each new work created a powerful impression on me, and stimulated an enormous interest."[28] Shostakovich was particularly well-acquainted with the *Symphony of Psalms*, having made a four-hand arrangement of it shortly after its publication.[29] Such did he value the work, that when Shostakovich evacuated Leningrad during World War II, he took the full score and his arrangement with him—among only four scores in total.[30] After the war, Shostakovich continued to play through his arrangement with his composition students at the Moscow Conservatory. According to one of them, Rostropovich, Shostakovich considered the piece

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Hajibeyov published his *Principles of Azerbaijan Folk Music* (see Hajibeyov 1985 for an English translation). The book focuses on modes in Azerbaijan music, of which a principal one is "Shustar," described by Hajibeyov as two "1/2-1-1/2" (i.e., [0134]) tetrachords linked by augmented second, as in C♯-D-E-F + G♯-A-B-C. I thank Stephen Blum for mentioning this connection to me.

[27] Stravinsky and Craft 1968, 45.

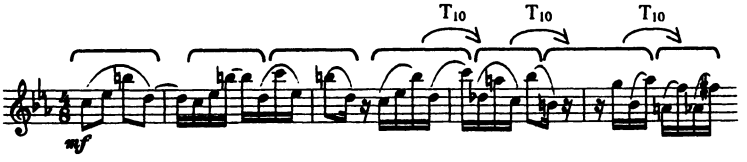
[28] Shostakovich 1973, 7–8.

[29] Ibid.

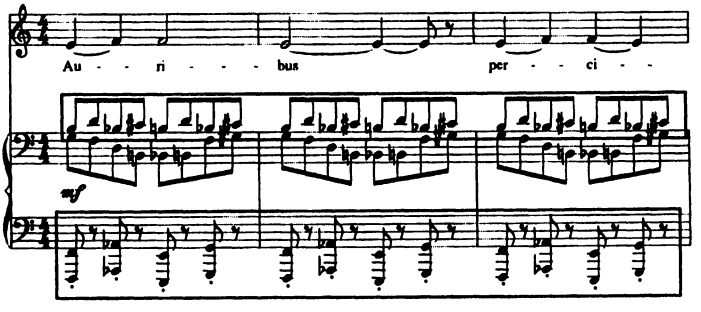
[30] Fay 1995, 178. The others were that of the Seventh Symphony and *Lady Macbeth*.

Example 22. Stravinsky: Symphony of Psalms *(1930).*

a. Second movement, opening; [0134]s bracketed.



b. First movement, R7; tritone-related [0134]s boxed.



"one of the most brilliant works in existence."[31] Given his deep and longstanding interest in the piece, then, it seems entirely possible that the *Symphony of Psalms* nudged Shostakovich in the direction of [0134], to "see the shape in the stone." In fact, Shostakovich's music displays other Stravinskian traits as well. For example, Shostakovich often emphasizes the thirds of chords, as Stravinsky does in the "Psalms chord," an E minor chord with heavy G-doubling.[32] In Stravinsky's music, these unusual triad

[31] Wilson 1994, 187–88.

[32] For more examples of third-heavy chords in Shostakovich, see the openings of the following movements: String Quartet no. 3, iii; Symphony no. 10, ii; Cello Concerto no. 1, i; String Quartet no. 8, ii. Stravinsky's use of heavy, low thirds is discussed in Andriessen and Schönberger 1989, 225–27. Taruskin traces the

weightings are often linked to his use of tonal axes, as described by Joseph Straus.[33] And indeed there is some evidence of axis thinking in Shostakovich's music as well.[34]

Before closing, let us briefly consider the relationship between [0134] and octatonicism, an issue that surfaced in connection with Stravinsky's use of [0134] in the *Symphony of Psalms* (see Example 22[b] above). Octatonicism provides an environment very conducive to [0134], in that each of the three collections contains four instances of the tetrachord (more than any other collection contains, assuming that the [0134]s are limited to contiguous segments within a scalar ordering of the collection). Indeed, Stravinsky may have seized upon [0134] by distilling it from the octatonic collections he was working with. For example, in the second movement of the *Octet* (1922), he initially highlights {A, B♭, C, C♯} as part of a larger, octatonic melody.[35] As Richard Taruskin recounts, Stravinsky inherited octatonicism from his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov.[36] Yet the degree to which the latter inspired [0134] usage in Stravinsky is problematic. On the one hand, Rimsky-Korsakov tends not to emphasize [0134] in his octatonic music. Indeed, none of the excerpts in Taruskin's detailed treatment of Rimsky-Korsakov's octatonicism features prominent [0134]s. On the other hand, they do emerge occasionally, as evidenced by the music of Example 23.[37] Thus it is possible that Rimsky-Korsakov influenced Stravinsky to highlight [0134] in his octatonic music. For that matter, Rimsky-Korsakov may have influenced Shostakovich himself to focus on [0134], either through his music or through Shostakovich's

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practice back to Rimsky-Korsakov, citing a precedent in Act III of his opera, *The Invisible City of Kitzeh* (Taruskin 1996, 698–700).

[33] Straus 1982.

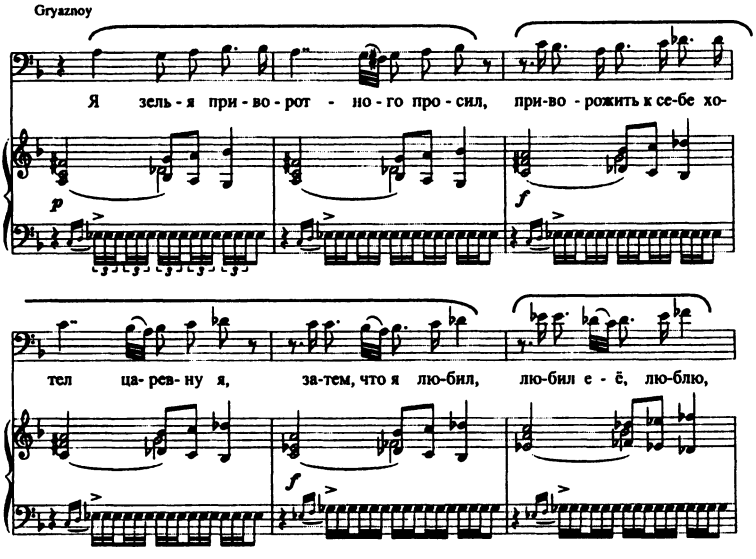
[34] For example, the first movement of the First Cello Concerto composes out a large-scale tonal polarity involving E♭ major and C minor, thus projecting the axis C-E♭-G-B♭; the movement also conveys several smaller-scale versions of this axis.

[35] Pieter van den Toorn associates octatonic partitions emphasizing [0134] with Stravinsky's "Neoclassical" period, as opposed to the [0235]-based partitions more common in his "Russian" period (Van den Toorn 1983, 261–68).

[36] Taruskin 1996, 255–306.

[37] For other examples of prominent [0134]s in Rimsky-Korsakov's octatonic music, see *Sadko*, R174, m. 8 to R175, and *Christmas Eve*, R60, mm. 4–7.

Example 23. Rimsky-Korsakov: The Tsar's Bride, *Act IV, Scene ii, Quintet with Chorus, mm. 120–125. [0134]s in the vocal part are bracketed. In addition, the top line in each measure of the accompaniment presents an [0134]. (The Ds and Fs in the grace-note figures of the accompaniment's bass line are not part of the underlying octatonic collection.)*



composition teacher, Maximilian Steinberg (student and son-in-law of Rimsky-Korsakov). Compared to Stravinsky, however, Steinberg and Rimsky-Korsakov appear to have been less potent influences for Shostakovich. In a 1924 letter, for example, Shostakovich wrote that Steinberg was "too conservative" and cynically complained that he upheld the "sacred traditions of Nikolai Andreyevich [Rimsky-Korsakov]."[38] Finally, within Shostakovich's own music, octatonicism plays only a limited role, and thus does not constitute a significant source of [0134]

[38] Fay 2000, 24.

tetrachords.[39] Instead, it is more likely that Stravinsky's (and perhaps Rimsky-Korsakov's) octatonically-oriented [0134] usage influenced Shostakovich to highlight [0134] within his own modally-lowered (but usually non-octatonic) environments.

* * *

In the foregoing, I have argued that Shostakovich's musical motto evolved over time as a result of modal lowering and related techniques, likely combined with certain external influences (such as Stravinsky's music). But maybe things did not play out this way: perhaps Shostakovich got the inspiration for his motto at a much earlier age (for instance, after first encountering the BACH or ASCH motifs). Were this the case, however, we would have to accept the interesting (if unlikely) scenario that Shostakovich deliberately revealed his motto in stages, purposefully forging a decades-long, inter-opus narrative of self-realization, culminating with his explicit self-assertion in the Tenth Symphony.[40] Moreover, if Shostakovich came to his motto at a much younger age, then modal lowering would not be the ultimate progenitor that I have made it out to be. Even so, there still remains an intimate connection between modal lowering and his motto. This connection is what makes his motto work so well in his music, and why it serves as an emblem not just of the composer, but of his musical language.

[39] If anything, the reverse seems to be the case: the occasional octatonic melodies one finds in Shostakovich often emerge from a series of linked [0134]s. See for example the Tenth Symphony, second movement, R94, mm. 2–8 (first violins); the First Cello Concerto, first movement R4, mm. 4–11 (solo part); and the Twelfth Symphony, first movement, R42, mm. 1–5 (especially m. 5).

[40] The Tenth Symphony, in the words of David Fanning, "is not merely an archetypical First Thaw period work but also a monument to [Shostakovich's] assertion of independence" (Fanning 2004b, 32).

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