

Sergei Prokofiev



Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953) is the greatest composer of the twentieth century. New images of Prokofiev's vibrant, translucent and dramatic music were born by a live sense of modernity. You can talk about Prokofiev's harmony, Prokofiev's melody, Prokofiev's instrumentation. The clear, sometimes harsh, but at the same time transparent style of the composer emerged in the early twentieth century, like the works by a prominent Russian poet Vladimir Mayakovski. Both wanted to speak "powerfully, roughly, visibly" and boldly. Prokofiev wrote music in various genres. He created eight operas, seven ballets, seven symphonies, nine concertos, more than fifteen sonatas for different instruments, and thirty suites, songs, cantatas, music for theater and films. Among my favorite works are the First Piano Concerto, the opera *The Love for Three Oranges*, the ballet "Romeo and Juliet", *Symphony No. 1* and *Symphony No. 7*, and the Cantata "Alexander Nevsky". From the first notes one can recognize his distinctive melodies, rhythms and harmony, as well as the sharp, tart, swift, brave music. Even in romantic moments it becomes deeply insightful and even sensitive, remaining elastic and strong. Freshness, vitality, "juiciness" – those are the three most specific qualities of Prokofiev's works. It's the music of life's motion, music that knows no fatigue.

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Here is a poem that evolved from a memory exercise (see p. 21).

A BROOCH

My grandma had a dark blue brooch.
It was just glass, few pennies' worth.
Held to the light, it flashed, as bright
as all the diamonds on earth.
My 'treasure chest' full to the brim
had all the wonders of the world.
The magic brooch there reigned supreme,
though no one heard the tales it told.
Its every facet was to me
an invitation to the ball,
where ladies dance in evening gowns
and shadows flutter on the wall.
My grandma said, 'One day I'll go.
Then you'll have all my jewels, dear.'
She sounded proud, as if proclaimed
me heiress to the throne. No fear
of death, self-pity or complaint.
She knew and waited for her day.
The dark blue brooch was all I kept
when she did pass away.

By Yulia Klimenova, MSU

