

AS I REMEMBER NOW...

In May 1967, that is 56 years ago, I traveled abroad for the first time. My first foreign country was Serbia (then part of the SFR Yugoslavia). The first foreign institute that I visited was the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. And since that distant spring day, everything Serbian, like first love, became dear and unforgettable for me.

As I remember now: Nadezhda (Nadežda) Mosusova came out to meet me. She was holding the piano reduction of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *The Snow Maiden*. "I am very glad that you have come", she said in her excellent Russian language. "You do not know yet, but my dear colleague Radmila Petrović, with whom you are in correspondence, has asked me to translate your messages to her from Russian into Serbian." Nadezhda continued: "I am interested in those specific melodies of Russian folk songs the composer used in this opera. I have no one here to consult with on such, to put it bluntly, special matter," she added, delicately apologizing for her request. Understandably, I could not but agree. We sat down with the piano reduction in our hands, opened it and, step by step, went through its pages. Allow me to confess that Professor Mosusova turned out to be a meticulous examiner! After a while, I even humorously exclaimed: "If I had known that I would be given such a serious examination in the history of Russian music here, I would not have come to Serbia!" It is clear that behind this joke was my admiration for the professional depth of the respected musicologist Nadezhda Mosusova.

This was our first of many dialogues, each of which turned out to be a kind of celebration of collegial friendship, a meeting of congenial souls. They took place both at the dinner table and at the work table, in Belgrade, in St. Petersburg, and elsewhere.

In May 2017, I decided to remind Nadezhda of that distant meeting. Our correspondence I still keep to this day. Here is a fragment of it:

Dear Nadezhda,

If I'm not mistaken, today is the 50th anniversary of our first meeting! Let us at least mentally raise our glasses and remember this memorable for us – already historical – date. I wanted so much to celebrate this date at your home, the four of us... alas, we did not have to. Well, let's live long enough to celebrate the next anniversary together! Alma and I love you very much indeed. Be well.

Always yours,

Izaly

17.05.17

And here is Nadezhda's immediate reply:

Really? I can't remember what I was doing exactly with Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Snow Maiden* back then! Thank you, Izaly, for your memories. They deeply touched me. Izaly and Alma are very much loved by Nadezhda. May you be well too!

Among many work-related and friendly meetings with Nadezhda, I tenderly remember one when Radmila Petrović invited Nadezhda and me to her place for dinner. I will never forget the basket full of apples on her table: they all had more or less obvious wormholes. Seeing our surprised eyes, Radmila with her usual charming smile said: "It is no accident, this is how I choose the most delicious apples at the market – I trust the worms' preference: they don't eat bad fruits." "That's how a real ethnomusicologist thinks!" I exclaimed then. "The genuine professional always favors the authentic." After such a cheerful introduction it was possible to move on to the dinner itself – to the expertly prepared meal.

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Izaly Iosifovich Zemtsovsky