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this year. lively discussions took place on the direction of the development of Soviet music, and the tasks of greatest urgency for composers were formulated.

I am glad to say that our composers and scholars who are engaged in musical research are so keenly interested in the progress of Soviet art, in that music to which we are devoting all our powers and ability. The decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party lays upon us the task of composing music that expresses many profound and ennobling ideas; the Party and Government require that art should enter into every phase and aspect of Soviet life. Shallow, unmeaning music without any ideas behind it should not be written by us. Let's consider what we mean by music without ideas. It seems to me that unmeaning music and indifference are on a level. In our musical world the writing of music by composers indifferent as to whether it contains any meaning, whether it expresses some idea or conception or not, is inconceivable. The artist's glowing emotions and responsiveness, the flame of his soul, his ability and his professional skill, are qualities which should dominate in our future work. Unmeaning compositions are not only those that are totally lacking in idea content, but also those that suggest wrong ideas and are in bad taste.

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WE must declare war on bad taste.

I have great respect for light music that gives its listeners pleasurable and healthy recreation, but this music should be of very high standard, of excellent content, and in good taste.

We who have the honourable name of Soviet composers must strive unceasingly for our own improvement and for the improvement of our own taste, and for the broadening of the horizons of our ideas. One hears very flattering and sometimes exaggerated compliments and epithets applied to us. They are out of place, it seems to me; they are unnecessary. Soviet music has remarkable achievements to its credit in many genres—symphony, chamber, and song music—but I consider it unnecessary and untimely to label this or that piece as supremely characteristic of our epoch. If we are truly contemporaneous with our Soviet epoch, if we prove capable of getting a grasp of all the wealth and diversity of its phenomena, then undoubtedly we shall create music worthy of it.

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MUSIC is very highly appreciated by our Soviet Government, which has provided the conditions needed for the richest development of Soviet musical culture. It has aimed at giving our country spiritual culture in abundance, in as much as in this wealth of culture, including musical culture, lies one of the principal tasks of socialism. In the Soviet epoch, the age-old contradiction between the sensitive soul of the artist and real life in society has been done away with. We can see in our contemporaries the harmonious merging of personal interests with social and state interests.

We musicians are servants of the people, but there is no gulf between us. We have all come from the people; we are linked by common interests, common hopes and aims. The task, then, of Soviet composers is to satisfy the people's cultural requirements and keep

pace with their high demands on art. We must not lag behind, but help develop public taste and contribute to its enrichment by new ideas. I am proud to think that our compositions are in some measure the voice of the people, the voice of our Soviet epoch. The instructions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party head a new page in the history of Soviet art; they direct and inspire us. I think that if we bear these excellent points in mind in our work the more strongly we shall feel the throb of life, the pulse of our country, now when the wounds dealt by the fascists are being healed, and the greater successes we shall achieve in our creative art.

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