



Composer Portfolios

SHOSTAKOVICH



Name	Dmitri Shostakovich
Nationality	Russian (Soviet Union)
Born-Died	1906-1975
Quote	 <p><i>'Real music is always revolutionary, for it cements the ranks of the people; it arouses them and leads them onward.'</i></p>  <p><i>'If they cut off both hands, I will compose music anyway holding the pen in my teeth'</i></p>

Interesting Stories

Tool and Victim of Soviet Propaganda

After the phenomenal success of his first symphony, Shostakovich was hailed as the new hero of Russian Soviet music. He became an invaluable propaganda tool for the Soviet regime. However, the Soviet pedestal on which he was placed was incredibly unsecure and in 1930 he felt the full weight of this. After Stalin walked out of Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth*, he was torn apart by the newspaper: 'This bedlam of noise quacks, grunts, growls and suffocates itself in depravity'. This type of criticism from high up could result in death in Soviet Russia. It was a terror that defines Shostakovich's life as a composer.

The Code Maker

Musical code is something Shostakovich is famous for. He would code his name-DSCH- into his compositions. You often find this pattern in autobiographical works of the composer reflecting his personal feels at certain points of his life.

Facts:

- Dmitri Shostakovich was born in St. Petersburg on 25 September 1906
- Shostakovich was a perfectionist. This was not only in his music but also his personal life. He was obsessed with cleanliness, would synchronise his clocks and would send post to himself to check how well the postal services was working.
- Shostakovich loved football. He was a qualified referee and his favourite team was Zenit Leningrad.
- His 8th String Quartet was written over just three days
- Shostakovich was regarded as a great film composer. His film music was popular with Stalin.
- In the 1960s, he became good friends with British composer Britten.
- Shostakovich died of lung cancer on 9 August 1975

Shostakovich's Music

Now we know more about the man, why not listen to some of his music!

- Symphony No.1
- Symphony No.5
- The Leningrad Symphony
- Piano Concerto No.1
- Suite from the Gadfly
- String Quartet No.8
- Three Fantastic Dances
- Twenty-Four Preludes and Fugues
- The Nose
- Moscow, Cheryomushki
- The Golden Age
- Waltz No.2
- The Limpid Stream