



SHOSTAKOVICH

Symphony No. 10

Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich (25 September 1906 – 9 August 1975) was a Soviet Russian composer and pianist and a prominent figure of 20th-century music. Shostakovich achieved fame in the Soviet Union, but later had a complex and difficult relationship with the government. After an early period influenced by Sergei Prokofiev and Igor Stravinsky, Shostakovich developed a hybrid style, including the neo-classical style (showing the influence of Stravinsky) and post-Romanticism (after Gustav Mahler). Sharp contrasts and elements of the grotesque characterize much of his music. His works are mostly tonal but feature elements of chromaticism, putting him at odds with the more experimental Western composers (such as Schoenberg or Stravinsky). Shostakovich was admitted into the Petrograd Conservatory (Saint Petersburg Conservatory), where he made his first major achievement in the form of the First Symphony, written as his graduation piece. Although he quickly established himself as a leading composer in the Soviet Union, he fell short of the Party's expectations and in 1936 was denounced as "coarse, primitive and vulgar". Shostakovich managed to regain official favour with his Fifth Symphony (written to correct his previous "erroneous" ways), and throughout the Second World War was able to escape censure. He was denounced a second time in 1948, along with his colleague Sergei Prokofiev. Unlike Prokofiev however, Shostakovich lived to see his name rehabilitated and he served as General Secretary of the Composers' Union. Although he continued to be cautious, he was honoured in the post-Stalin era and was able to be more experimental than before. Shostakovich died in 1975 of lung cancer; although his style was not as influential in the West, he influenced his contemporaries and students within the Soviet Union.

In content and structure, the **Tenth Symphony** is an example of Shostakovich's synthesis of allusions to the symphonic tradition on the one hand, and encoded references to his own particular time and place on the other. Composed in the early 1950s, it was Shostakovich's first symphonic work since his denunciation in 1948, and thus can be comparable to the Fifth Symphony in relation to his 1936 denunciation. As in that work, he quotes from one of his settings of Pushkin: in the first movement, from the second of his Four Pushkin Monologues, entitled "What is in My Name?". This theme of personal identity is picked up again in the third and fourth movements. The first and longest movement is a slow movement in rough sonata form; the second a fast scherzo with syncopated rhythms and endlessly furious sixteenth note passages; the third a moderate dance-like suite of Mahlerian *Nachtmusik* – or Nocturne, which is what Shostakovich called it; and the fourth a slow andante (again heavily influenced by Mahler) that suddenly changes into a fast finale that has the pace of a doom-laden *Gopak*. Notably, the Tenth Symphony includes the DSCH (**D**mitri **S**hosatkovich) motive – a motive Shostakovich uses to represent himself. Taken from German notation, in music, this is represented by the notes D-E \flat -C-B.