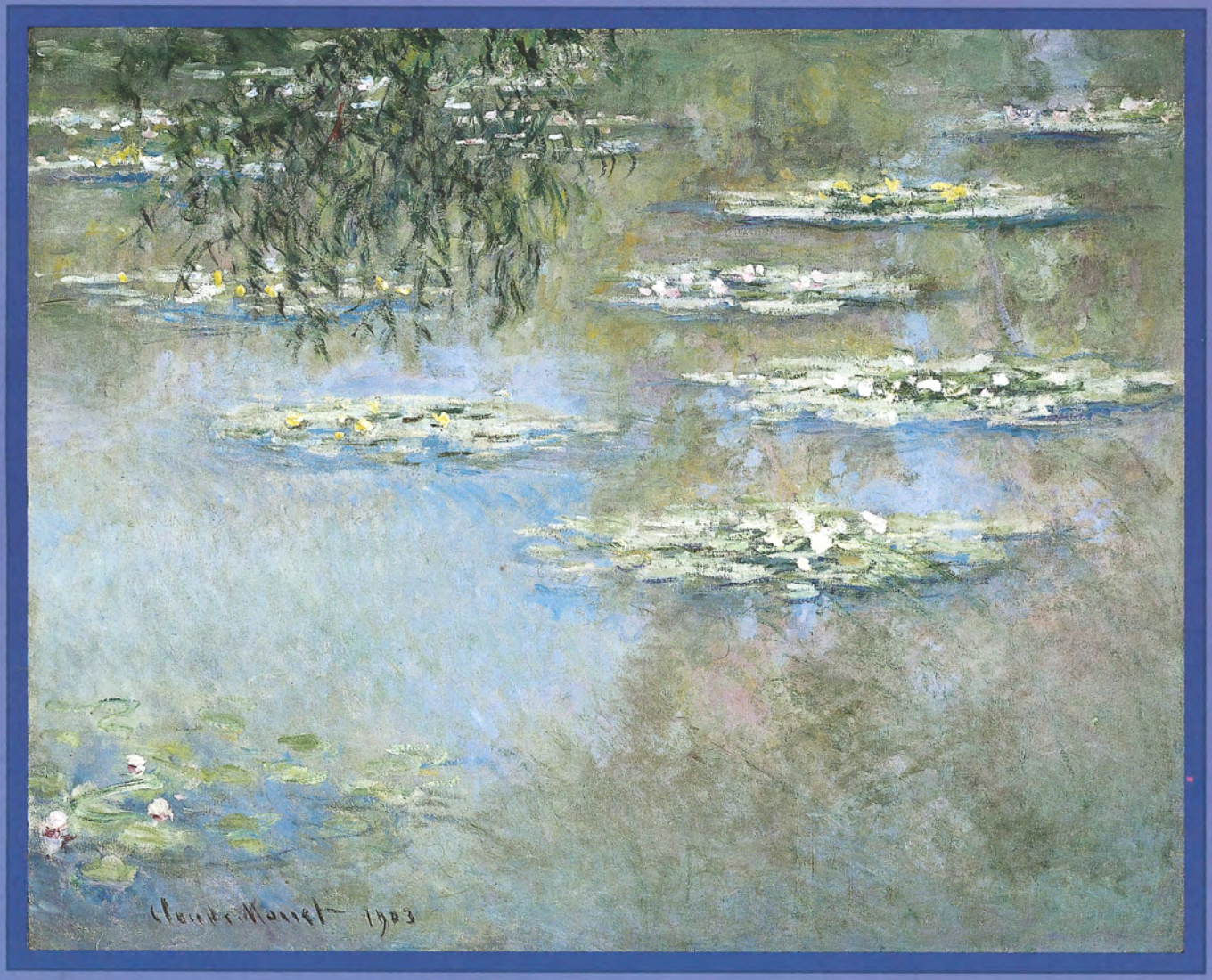
Dayton Daily News
Classical Connections

LISTENER'S GUIDE

by Music Director, Neal Gittleman



IMPRESSIONS IN SOUND

2004-2005 Season

Dayton Daily News Classical Connections

DAYTON
PHILHARMONIC

2004-2005

LISTENER'S GUIDE

by Neal Gittleman
Music Director

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Portions of this *Listener's Guide* appeared, in slightly different form, in
Listener's Guide to "Dynamic Duos" (Milwaukee Symphony 1994-1995)
Listener's Guide to "Symphonic Conversations" (Milwaukee Symphony 1995-1996)
Classical Connections Listener's Guide (DPO 1998-1999)
Classical Connections Listener's Guide (DPO 2000-2001)

Looking Back a Century

Twentieth Century Music
Robert P. Morgan
W.W. Norton
ISBN 039395272X
(DML)

The First Moderns
William R. Everdell
U. of Chicago Press
ISBN 0226224813
(DML)

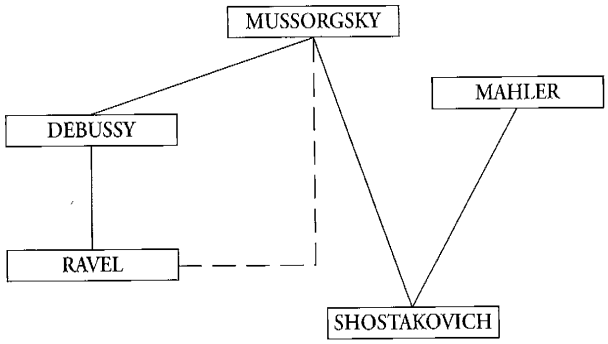
The repertoire for the 2004-2005 season of *Dayton Daily News* Classical Connections is 20th century music. Well, not quite. The piano version of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* dates from 1874 and Debussy composed his *Nocturnes* between 1897 and 1899. But those works reflect a truly modern esthetic and deserve honorary 20th century status. Our other featured pieces date from 1904, 1922, 1928, and 1957. So even though we are barely into the 21st century, perhaps this is a good time to make a possibly premature assessment of the classical music of 1900 to 1999 and place our Classical Connections pieces in their historical and stylistic context.

The 20th century was a time of chaos. And not just in music. All centuries are chaotic, but the 20th century was unique in that so many disciplines had their world views turned upside down. Quantum mechanics and Einstein's theories of relativity overthrew the old, orderly Newtonian physics and made global annihilation a real possibility. The discovery of DNA revolutionized biology and opened up thorny moral issues with which we are just beginning to grapple. Kurt Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem shook the logical underpinnings of traditional mathematics. Representational art gave way to the wild faces of Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avingon.* James Joyce walked "Stately, plump Buck Mulligan" down the stairs, had Molly Bloom say "yes I said yes I will Yes", and the novel truly became novel. A couple of bicycle mechanics made it possible for human beings to fly. Why should music be immune from all the uproar?

Picasso: *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907)

Although each of our pieces this season is decidedly modern, the music of Mussorgsky, Debussy, Ravel, Mahler, and Shostakovich doesn't sound particularly contemporary. All our Classical Connections works have recognizable, hummable tunes and familiar, not-too-raucous harmonics. Much of the music we'll be examining is popular with audiences. As conservative as our composers may seem as we look back at them from our 2004-2005 vantage point, each one was important in defining modernity in classical music and every piece in our repertoire qualifies as a modern masterpiece.

There are also important links between our five featured composers. Mussorgsky's music had a strong influence on Debussy. Debussy had direct influence on Ravel. And Shostakovich's mature style was a blend of Mussorgsky and Mahler. The 2004-2005 *Dayton Daily News Classical* Connections Family Tree looks like this:

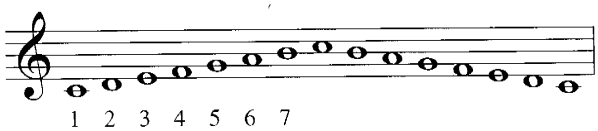


> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all convictions, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.

So begins "The Second Coming", William Butler Yeats' bleak poem about 20th century life. Those words could equally apply to 20th century music, especially

> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

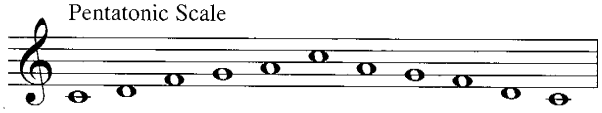
Since 1600, music's center had been tonality, the subtle system of major and minor scales that anchored music in a straightforward context based on the fundamental truths of acoustics. Composers of the 19th century had gussied up traditional tonality with lots of extra notes and complex harmonies, but their music was still based fundamentally on the seven-note scale of the tonal system:



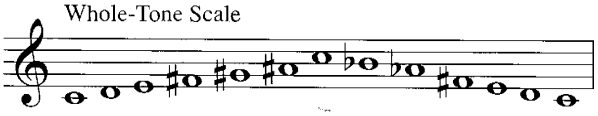
By the turn of the 20th century, composers like Claude Debussy were already experimenting with alternative scales,

spicing up the tonal context with the exotic sounds of pentatonic, whole-tone and octatonic scales:

Pentatonic Scale



Whole-Tone Scale



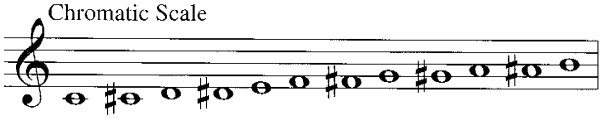
Octatonic Scale

Early in the 20th century, the musical language split. Some composers — including Stravinsky, Vaughan Williams, and Ravel — followed Debussy and continued to work in the "spiced-up" tonal system. Others — including Berg, Webern, and Krenek — followed Arnold Schoenberg, who explored atonal music (music that deliberately avoided any sense of tonal center) and then 12-tone music (atonal music where each piece was based an a specific ordering of the 12 notes of the chromatic scale).

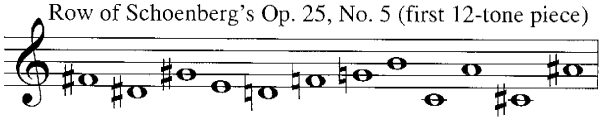
Schoenberg by Man Ray

The music of the tonal composers, modern though it was, still had ties to the music of earlier eras — ties that were audible to most listeners. Despite Schoenberg's attempt to impose order on the chaos of atonality by organizing music into 12-tone rows, organized chaos sounded pretty much like Yeats' "Mere anarchy...loosed upon the world" and tried many a listener's patience.

Chromatic Scale



Row of Schoenberg's Op. 25, No. 5 (first 12-tone piece)



The tonal line evolved into a progression of musical styles of widely divergent sound that were nevertheless linked by their tonal heritage: Impressionism (Debussy, Ravel), Neoclassicism (Stravinsky, Poulenc), Folk-Nationalism (Bartok, Copland), Neo-Romanticism (Prokofiev, Hovhannes), Socialist Realism (Myaskovsky, Khrennikov), and Minimalism (Reich, Glass). The atonal line led to Serialism (Boulez, Dallapiccola), Aleatoric Music (Cage, Stockhousen), and Electronic Music (Subotnik, Ussachevsky). There were also composers who forged their own way (Messiaen, Partch), as well as tonal composers who occasionally dabbled in atonal techniques (Stravinsky, Bernstein), and atonal composers who sometimes penned tonal works. (Schoenberg's last composition was a tonal choral piece in C Major!)

As complicated as all this stylistic variety was for composers, it was worse for audiences. After centuries of tonal music, some composers felt obliged to break free of the strong pull of the traditional scales and harmonies. But many listeners were happy with the old sounds and ran from the concert hall, holding their ears. Some never returned, happy to have modern music out of their lives forever.

But what is "modern music"? Is it the beautiful sonorities of Debussy's *Nocturnes?* The pounding rhythms of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring?* The harsh dissonances of Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw?* The dense contrapuntal web of Steve Reich's *Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices and Organ?* The maddening obsession of Ravel's *Bolero?* The moral and musical ambiguities of Shostakovich's symphonies? The lush, evocative sounds of Messiaen's *Turangalîla?* The silence of Cage's *4:33?*

Yes. Every one of those wonderful, wildly different pieces is modern in its own wonderful, wildly different way.

For many listeners "modern music" is simply recent music that they don't like. Audiences have always been slow to warm to new music. Beethoven, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky received savage reviews for pieces we now consider beloved old chestnuts of the standard repertoire. Some works (like Beethoven's *Ninth*) announced their greatness immediately, while others (like Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*) weren't recognized as masterpieces until long after their composer's demise.

I'm convinced that there is just as much good music being written today as there was in the past. And just as much bad music. Over time, the good stuff is passed on and the bad stuff is left behind. Only now, from the vantage point of the early 21st century, is the musical picture of the 20th century coming into focus. One hundred years from now classical music lovers will be able to rattle off the names of the three greatest composers of the 20th century as easily as we can say that Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven were the masters of the Classical Era. And I fully expect that they'll be just as highly regarded.

How can you, as a listener, learn to come to grips with new music — or with the challenging music of the last century? The answer is in the title of one of the Russian revolutionary songs that Dmitri Shostakovich quotes in his *Eleventh Symphony:* "Listen!" Even though you love your old favorites, try to take the time to listen to unfamiliar music, too. If one of the names I dropped in this essay sticks in your memory, go to the Dayton Metro Library and see what CDs are in the collection. Check out a few and give them a listen. Maybe even a second or third listen. Don't give up the music you know and love. Just be open to the possibility that you also might come to love music that you don't yet know. And if a piece of music — old or modern — doesn't speak to you, remember, it's not your fault. Art has always been a matter of taste. Not every piece speaks to every listener. Sly Stone said it best: "Diff'rent strokes for diff'rent folks!"

Sly, without the Family Stone

But whatever you do, keep listening!

Top-notch 20th century music site with archived radio programs: http://musicmavericks.publicradio.org/

Dayton Daily News Classical Connections No. 3

Vincent Youmans (orch. Dmitri Shostakovich): Tahiti-Trot

Dmitri Shostakovich: Symphony No. 11 ("The Year 1905")

Friday, January 14, 2005

Dmitri Shostakovich

1906 **September 25**, Dmitri Shostakovich is born in St. Petersburg to Dmitri Boleslavovich Shostakovich, an engineer, and Sofie Kokoulina, an amateur pianist.

1915 Begins piano lessons.

1916 Writes his first composition, *The Soldier* (*Ode to Liberty*), for solo piano.

1919 Enters St. Petersburg Conservatory as a piano and composition student. Writes his first orchestral piece, *Scherzo for Orchestra.*

1925 Graduates from Conservatory. His graduation composition, Symphony No. 1, receives a triumphant premiere.

1928 Completes his first opera, *The Nose*, a modernist serting of a Gogol's satirical story.

1930 Begins work on a new opera, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, completed in 1932.

1934 St. Petersburg premiere of *Lady Macbeth* is a popular and critical success. A year later, while still in the St. Petersburg repertory, *Lady Macbeth* opens to great acclaim in Moscow.

1936 **January 28**, *Pravda* article "Muddle Instead of Music" (believed to have been written by Stalin himself) denounces *Lady Macbeth* and Shostakovich, who cancels the imminent premiere of his dark Symphony No. 4.

1937 Tragic *Fifth Symphony* is met with thundetous approval at its St. Petersburg premiere. The audience's response prompts Shostakovich's political rehabilitation as authorities label the symphony "a Soviet artist's reply to just criticism". Shostakovich has no comment.

1938 Writes the first of 15 string quartets, which parallel his 15 symphonies in a "private" rather than "public" mode.

1941 In the midst of the Nazi siege of Leningrad, Shostakovich composes Symphony No. 7, dedicated to the people of Leningrad. Its premiere performances in 1942 (including a worldwide radio broadcast) provide the Allies with a major propaganda coup and ensure Shostakovich's worldwide reputation.

1947 A new round of repression of artists and musicians begins. Shostakovich's music is denounced as "formalist" by Leningrad First Party Secretary Andrei Zhdanov.

1954 A year after Stalin's death, political pressure on Shostakovich eases. He composes *Festive Overture* and Symphony No. 10 (including a harsh "musical portrait of Stalin") and prepares to release Violin Concerto No. 1 and *From Jewish Folk Poetry*, Jewish-themed works that he had withheld from performance during Stalin's lifetime.

1957 **August 4**, completes Symphony No. 11 ("The Year 1905"), premiered in October. The symphony receives the Lenin Prize in 1958.

1961 Previously suppressed Symphony No. 4 receives its first performance, 25 years after its completion.

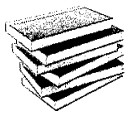
1963 Opera *Lady Macbeth* returns to Soviet opera houses in a toned-down revised version titled *Katerina Ismailova.*

1966 Suffers heart attack, the beginning of a long, slow decline which makes composing increasingly difficult.

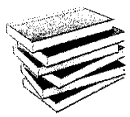
1969 Composes *Fourteenth Symphony* for soprano, bass, and chamber orchestra, set to poems about death by Apollinaire, Lorca, Rilke, and Küchelbecker.

1971 Writes last symphony, his fifteenth, with enigmatic quotations from Wagner, Rossini, and earlier Shostakovich works.

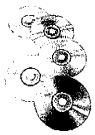
1975 **August 9**, dies in Moscow of complications from cancet and heart disease.



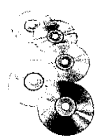
Shostakovich: A Life Remembered
Elizabeth Wilson
Princeton U. Press
ISBN 0691044651
(DML)



Shostakovich and Stalin
Semyon Volkov
Alfred A. Knopf
ISBN 0375410821
(DML)



Shostakovich
Symphony No. 11 &
Tahiti-Trot
Philadelphia
Orchestra
EMI Classics 55601
(DML)



DSCH Shostakovich
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CD-ROM
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50001

Terror and Protest

Dmitri Shostakovich is one of my favorite composets, and the Dayton Philharmonic's recent repertoire history reflects that. The DPO has played Shostakovich's music 40 times, with 15 of those performances in the orchestra's first 60 years and the test during my tenure. My November 1994 audition concert closed with Shostakovich's *Fifth*. The first music we played in the Schuster Center, at the acoustical try-out of the Mead Theatre, was his *Festive Overture*. The Philharmonic's 2006-2007 season will feature a major Shostakovich Festival in celebration of the composer's centennial.

Our January *Dayton Daily News* Classical Connections program coincides with anothet centennial — thc 100th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday". On January 9, 1905, Tsarist troops opened fire on a peaceful demonstration of unarmed proresters in Palace Square in St. Petersburg, killing more than 100 and wounding ovcr 300. That event, a turning point in the abortive Russian Revolution of 1905, lies at the heart of Symphony No. 11, one of Shostakovich's most powerful and most intriguing works.

But the *Eleventh Symphony* is not just about Bloody Sunday. Nor is it just about 1905. This ptogram begs a whole series of thorny questions: How can work of art mean something? What does it mean to say "Piece X is about Y"? Who decides what a work of art means, the artist or the audience? Should we pay attention to composers' wotds about their music or only the notes they write on the page?

Things get even tricker when we ask these questions about a secretive, equivocal, ambivalent artist like Shostakovich, who lived and worked in the continually shifting political winds of the Soviet Union. These questions must be asked, but the answers may only tell us about ourselves, rather than the man we are trying to understand.

This will bc a "hcavy" program. The music is heavy and the issues are heavy. Shostakovich was a heavy dude. But the music is great, too. Shostakovich's *Eleventh* inspires the emotions just like the symphonies of Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, and Mahler.

Shostakovich's music is effective at moving audiences because he was a composer of consummate skill. The piece that opens our concert demonstrates a different side of that skill. *Tahiti-Trot*, an orchestration of "Tea for Two", was written during a party in 1928 on a dare from conductor Nikolai Malko. Shostakovich had complained about the quality of an arrangement of Vincent Youmans' song that was playing on the phonograph. Malko said "If you can write a better arrangement in an hour, I'll perfotm it." Shostakovich found paper, pencil, and a quiet room. He finished *Tahiti-Trot* with 20 minutes to spare!

Comprehensive Shostakovich site:
http://www.siue.edu/~aho/musov/dmitri.html

Up for Grabs: The Battle Over Shostakovich

Dmitri Shostakovich was the greatest of all Soviet composers. Hc was the greatest symphonist of the 20th century. His music, which reflects the turbulent times in which he lived, still resonates today even though the times have changed. Nearly 30 years after his dcath, Shostakovich is the center of a raging debate between performers, listeners, critics, and musicologists, all of whom claim the composer as their own. It is ironic that this great artist who defined himself in his music and battled against a political and musical establishment determined to define him in theit own terms, is still the subject of similar struggles. Ironic, yes. But not surprising. Everyone wanted a piece of Shostakovich during his lifetime. Why should things be different after his death?

Shostakovich, age 19

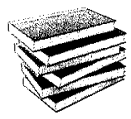
It started in 1926 at the ptemiere of his *First Symphony*. It wasn't until the shy, bespectacled composer rose to acknowledge the ovations of the Leningrad crowd that people realized that the author of this brilliant, compelling new symphony was a 19-year-old recent conservatory gtaduate who looked younger than his actual age.

Overnight, Shostakovich found himself plugged into the Soviet Union's powerful support and promotion system for talented artists and composers. He became the prize exhibit in Stalin's musical menagerie.

Five symphonies, one denunciation, and one rehabilitation later, it was *déjà vu*. In 1942, Shostakovich's *Leningrad Symphony* became the focus of a worldwide ptopaganda campaign. Composed in Leningrad during the Nazi siege, this powerful work became a cultural weapon in the war against fascism and a symbol of Allied resistance. Although simpler, more efficient means were available, the score was microfilmed after its Russian premieres and flown via Teheran to the West. There, the two greatest conductors of the day — Arturo Toscanini and Leopold Stokowski — fought bitterly over the right to lead the United States premiere. Toscanini won, and his performance was broadcast wotldwide over Armed Forces Radio. A portrait of Shostakovich, wearing his Leningrad Fire Brigade helmer, appeared on the cover of *Time* magazinc.

Shostakovich, "Cover Boy"

At the peak of thc Cold War it was the same old song. Thc 1963 premiere of Symphony No. 13 ("Babi Yar") — set to controversial poems by Yevgeny Yevtushenko — rekindled Western interest in Shostakovich and led to intimations that the composer might be a dissident, a musical Solzhenitsyn.



Testimony
Dmitri Shostakovich
Semyon Volkov, ed.
Limelight Editions
ISBN 0879100214
(DML)

A Shostakovich Casebook
Malcolm Hamrick Brown
Indiana U. Press
ISBN 025334364X

Round Four began in 1979, four years after the composer's death, with the publication of *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich as Related to and Edited by Semyon Volkov*. Despite a title that read like the small print on a lawyer's disclaimer form, here, at last, was what everyone had been looking for: what Shostakovich really thought; what his music really meant. The contents of *Testimony* were explosive. This was a "new Shostakovich" — an angry, bitter man, and, most importantly, a strident anti-Stalinist and anti-Soviet.

Shostakovich with Volkov, 1974

The Shostakovich of *Testimony* was so different from the party line familiar to both Eastern and Western musicologists that rumors of forgery surfaced almost immediately. Volkov, to whom Shostakovich was said to have dictated the text, counterattacked, producing a typed manuscript bearing Shostakovich's authenticating signature on the first page of each chapter.

The old guard counter-counterattacked. Two Shostakovich experts — one American, one Russian — established that *Testimony* contained passages lifted verbatim from articles Shostakovich had published years before. When it was ascertained that all the plagiarized passages appeared on pages signed and authenticated by Shostakovich, the implication was Volkov had fraudulently obtained the signatures by misrepresenting the text to the seriously ill composer. Shostakovich recognized and acknowledged the old texts, but the words on the subsequent pages of each chapter (presumably unread by Shostakovich) were fabrications of Volkov's own making.

The battle has raged ever since, with each rhetorical salvo (recapped in excruciating detail in books, articles and web sites) taking us further and further into the minutiae of academic debate and further and further away from Shostakovich's music. As we approach the centennial of his birth, there will doubtless be new attempts to define, claim, and co-opt Shostakovich's legacy.

Who was Dmitri Dmitrievich Shostakovich? Was he the loyal Soviet who wrote Symphony No. 2 ("To October") with its factory steam whistle and closing chorus set to a revolution-praising poem? Or the author of the brutal "portrait of Stalin" in the scherzo of the *Tenth Symphony*? Did he use his music to commemorate the iconic events of the Russian revolutions or to expose the shame of Soviet anti-Semitism? Did he write "a Soviet artist's reply to just criticism" or *Antiformalist Rayok*, a scathing spoof of the 1948 artistic purges?

(Before I answer those questions, this proviso: This is *my* answer, and, as such, could be read as my own attempt to define Shostakovich. My only defense is to say that as a conductor it is my duty to speak for the composer, to serve as what the great 20th century conductor Erich Leinsdorf called "The Composer's Advocate". In that role, I believe *every* note of Shostakovich's music and view everything written or said about the music by anyone — even the composer himself — with skepticism.)

The answer to the questions above is "Yes."

Shostakovich was all those people. He was a loyal communist, dedicated to the ideals of the Russian revolutions. He was also an *intelligent*, a member of Russia's liberal, democratic-leaning "thinking class", who could easily see through the double-speak and contradictions of the Soviet government and bureaucracy. He was above all, an artist, not a politician. He believed that a composer's role was to speak through music. Not through words, speeches, or public statements. His first — perhaps only — priority was to compose.

As a result, Shostakovich's entire professional life was a game of cat-and-mouse with the authorities. They used him and he used them. They abused him and he abused them in return. He knew when to lay low and when it was safe to poke up his head. When the opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* landed him on Stalin's bad side, he retreated to writing movie scores. ("The Great Leader and Teacher" closely followed musical events, but film was his true passion.) If a new work's subject matter or musical style made it too dangerous to perform in the political climate of the day, Shostakovich would put it "in the drawer" and wait until times changed. And if the times demanded a Socialist Realist work like *The Sun Shines on Our Motherland* or *The Song of the Forests* (commemorating Stalin's 1948 reforestation plan), that's what he wrote.

Shostakovich was consistent only in his dedication to his music. The polemicists of the Shostakovich debate, however, demand consistency above all else: he was either "the Soviet Union's most loyal son" (as he was eulogized in *Pravda*) or he was an anti-Soviet dissident. This results in absurd distortions of the truth as expressed in the composer's music.

The He-Was-a-Dissident crowd puts great stock in the symphonies. But they denigrate symphonies that don't pass anti-Soviet muster (the second, third and twelfth), and a symphony like "The Year 1905" is acceptable only when interpreted through prism of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising (see "Under the Gun" on page 27.) I don't deny the connection between Hungary and the *Eleventh*. Shostakovich didn't write his "1905 Symphony" in 1955, the obvious year for it. He composed it after the events of 1956. Any *intelligent* would have seen the parallels between 1905 St. Petersburg and 1956 Budapest. But instead of writing a simple protest symphony that would have landed him — even him — in jail, Shostakovich wrote a patriotic symphony that nevertheless begged the question "How did we get here from there?"

The He-Wasn't-a-Dissident side has its own "problem pieces" that they strain to explain away. The moving song-cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry* is a perfect example. Written in 1948 (a time of intense official anti-Jewish agitation) but withheld from public performance until 1955 (the thaw after Stalin's death), it is one of a series of works in which Shostakovich declares his solidarity with Jews. To compose such a work in 1948 was a clear act of defiance. So one of the most prominent critics of the "Dissident Shostakovich School" falls back on the weak argument that in 1948 composers were being exhorted to write simple, tuneful music drawing on folk music traditions and

A brief summary of the case against *Testimony*:
http://www.geocities.com/rickredrick/Testimony.html

A lengthy consideration of the *Testimony* controversy:
http://www.siue.edu/~aho/musov/deb/deb.html/

Dmitri Dmitrievich had the misfortune to draw inspiration from "the wrong folk". Shostakovich knew full well that using Jewish folk poems and writing music inspired by Jewish folk music was not at all what the authorities had in mind. I have no doubt that he deliberately chose his source material to send a message: "You want folk music? I'll give you folk music!" Suppressing the work for seven years was a practical act of self-defense. Indeed, Shostakovich was not ashamed of the piece and performed it privately for audiences of close personal friends between 1948 and 1955.

A true and honest appraisal of Shostakovich, using his music to interpret his circumstances rather than vice-versa, reveals a complex portrait of a man trying to make art in an environment that was always difficult, often trying, and sometimes insane. In the end, Shostakovich was neither a perfect hero nor an abject servant. He wasn't a straw-man for Stalinist ideology, and he shouldn't be a straw-man for post-Communist neo-conservative ideology. He was an artist and a human being with real, human strengths and flaws. He was a man of his time. And he was the greatest symphonic composer of the 20th century.

That should be enough.

From Jewish Folk Poetry: First public perfomance (with the composer at the piano)

Under the Gun: Winter Palace to Parliament Square to Opus 103

Symphony No. 11 ("The Year 1905), Dmitri Shostakovich's Opus 103, is unique among the composer's 15 symphonies. It is the only one that is programmatic. Others have titles that frame them in a historical context (Symphony No. 2 is "To October", Symphony No. 3 is "The First of May", Symphony No. 7 is "Leningrad", Symphony No. 12 is "The Year 1917", Symphony No. 13 is "Babi Yar") but only the *Eleventh* actually uses music to tell a story in the traditional sense of program music.

Like any great work of art, this symphony is not one-dimensional. It tells the story of Bloody Sunday, the central event in the Russian Revolution of 1905, but the story it tells is more allegorical than documentary. The fact that Shostakovich composed this work in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's bloody suppression of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising has led to speculation that Shostakovich was deliberately drawing parallels between Bloody Sunday and events of October 27-November 3, 1956.

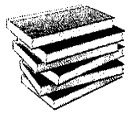
For a full understanding of this symphony we must, therefore, consider events of 1905 and 1956, plus the music itself. Let's do that.

Russia, January 1905

Russia in 1905 was a mess. Tsar Nicholas II was bogged down in a disastrous war with the Japanese. Russian universities had become hotbeds of dissent. Despite factional divisions among Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries, and Liberals, the Left was beginning to coalesce into a serious anti-authoritarian movement. Low wages, long hours, and terrible working conditions led to labor unrest and sporadic strikes. Even the traditionally pro-Tsarist countryside was in turmoil over several bad harvests and appalling living conditions. Nicholas was indecisive and his government seemed incapable of dealing with the nation's problems. Never before had the monarchy been so weak. Revolution was in the air. It only awaited a spark.

The spark came on Sunday, January 9, 1905: Bloody Sunday. (In 1905, Russia was still on the Julian Calendar, so Russia's January 9 was our January 22. Shostakovich's symphony refers to the date as January 9, and so shall we.) On that day Father Georgii Apollonovich Gapon, an Orthodox priest who

Tsar Nicholas II



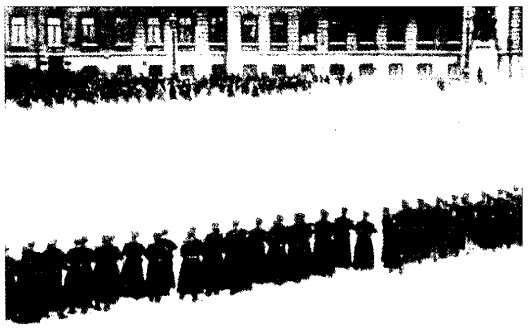
The Revolution of 1905
Abraham Ascher
Stanford U. Press
ISBN 0804723273

had become leader of the Assembly of Russian Factory and Mill Workers of the City of St. Petersburg, led a march of between 50,000 and 100,000 people to the Tsar's Winter Palace. The purpose of the march was to present a petition to Nicholas asking him to implement reforms on behalf of the Russian people. The petition began: "We, the workers and inhabitants of St. Petersburg, of various estates, our wives, our children, and our aged, helpless parents, come to Thee, O SIRE, to seek justice and protection. We are impoverished; we are oppressed, overburdened with excessive toil, contemptuously treated. We are not even recognized as human beings, but are treated like slaves who must suffer their bitter fate in silence and without complaint. And we have suffered, but even so we are being further (and further) pushed into the slough of poverty, arbitrariness, and ignorance. We are suffocating in despotism and lawlessness. O SIRE, we have no strength left, and our endurance is at an end. We have reached that frightful moment when death is better than the prolongation of our unbearable sufferings."

Father Gapon (in white) and petitioners

The tone of that preamble captures the mood of Gapon's crowd. This was no angry mob calling for bloody revolution. The marchers believed in the Tsar as the political, religious, and moral leader of the nation. They were begging Nicholas to act on their behalf. The march was more religious procession than political protest. Nevertheless, the petition's specific demands did include revolutionary content: release of recently arrested political prisoners; freedom of speech, press, association, and worship; free universal compulsory education; equality of all citizens before the law; separation of church and state; replacement of indirect taxation with a progressive income tax; an end to the Russo-Japanese war; freedom of workers to form labor unions; an eight-hour work day with regulation of overtime. In short, the march called for the establishment of a European-style constitutional monarchy.

The Tsar never saw the petition. Contrary to the marchers' beliefs, he was at his palace in Tsarskoe Selo, not at the Winter Palace. Instead of meeting Nicholas, the marchers met the Tsar's army, which opened fire on the demonstrators in the Palace courtyard. Official casualty figures were 130 killed and 300 wounded. The true numbers were higher.



Bloody Sunday, The army opens fire

Bloody Sunday became the rallying cry for the disparate reformist and revolutionary forces across the country. The result was a year of violence from one end of Russia to the other. Strikes gripped factories and universities. Protests continued. Mutinies wracked the armed forces, including the famous June 1905 mutiny on the Battleship Potemkin. Thousands of Russians died in clashes between revolutionaries and Tsarist soldiers. Only the revolutionaries' inability to unite their efforts allowed the Tsar's ineffective but brutal government to regain control by December 1905. Leon Trotsky declared, "The revolution is dead. Long live the revolution." His words were prophetic. Nicholas II had less than a dozen more years to rule — and to live.

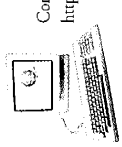
Although the 1905 revolution was quashed, it remained an iconic event in Russian history, particularly among the intelligensia. Long after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, liberal-leaning Russians and Soviets would look back on the 1905 Revolution as "the one that got away" — a lost opportunity that might have led to democratic socialism rather than dictatorial socialism. Even though the text of *Testimony* must be regarded with skepticism (see "Up for Grabs" on page 25), Shostakovich's words about 1905 ring true: "Our family discussed the Revolution of 1905 constantly. I was born after that, but the stories deeply affected my imagination. When I was older, I read much about how it all had happened. It think that it was a turning point — the people stopped believing in the tsar. The Russian people are always like that — they believe and they believe and then suddenly it comes to an end. And the ones the people no longer believe in come to a bad end."

Hungary, October 1956

As the Second World War neared its conclusion, Hungarians had great hopes of achieving democratic self-government — a dream that the Magyar nation had harbored for nearly a millennium. Even when the Potsdam Conference cemented Soviet control over the Eastern European countries that Stalin's forces had liberated, Hungarians still hoped that democracy was around the corner. Although the non-Communist Smallholders Party won 60% of the seats in November 1945 elections, the Hungarian Communist Party (with 17% of the seats) was able to consolidate power and control by fragmenting the Smallholders and discrediting their leadership. Elections in 1947 confirmed the Communists' dominance. By 1948, the Soviet Union was working to transform the nationalist governments of Eastern Europe into compliant satellites. Hungary, filled with officials with murky pasts from the closing year of the War, was easily splintered and co-opted.

Ironically, the event that sparked the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 took place in Moscow. In February, at the 20th Party Congress, Party Secretary Nikita Khrushchev issued a surprising denunciation of Stalin's "cult of personality", blamed Stalin for the Soviet Union's current problems, and declared that the nation would undergo major reform to restore Russian communism to its pre-Stalinist ideals.

The Road to Bloody Sunday
Walter Sablinsky
Princeton U. Press
ISBN 069110204X



Comprehensive site about the 1905 Russian Revolution:
http://www.thecorner.org/hiss/russia/revo1905.htm

Khrushchev denouncing Stalin at the 20th Party Congress

Hungary's Communist Party First Secretary, Matyas Rakosi, a hard-line Stalinist, found his political legs cut out from under him and the movement for democratic socialism in Hungary revived overnight. On October 21, 1956, when Polish premier Vladislav Gomulka announced — with apparent Soviet acquiescence — that Poland would embark on its own uniquely Polish path to socialism, Hungarian reformers moved into high gear. The Hungarian Uprising began the next day, with student and worker groups demanding the immediate withdrawal of Soviet forces from Hungary.

The Hungarian government shuffled its personnel — and its policies — almost daily. On October 23, Premier Andras Hegedüs declared martial law and called for help from Soviet troops. On the 24th, as Hungarians battled with Soviet fotces, Imre Nagy replaced Hegedüs and appealed for calm. One day later, October 25, was Hungary's Bloody Sunday.

Imre Nagy addressing the Hungarian Parliament

The events of that day in Budapest are eerily reminiscent of January 9, 1905 in St. Petersburg. Thousands of Hungarian patriots marched to Parliament Square in a peaceful demonstration of support for the Nagy government. Agents of the pro-Soviet Hungarian secret police opened fire on the crowd from roof-top machine-gun positions and from tanks positioned in front of the parliament building. More than 500 people were killed in the massacre. Less than an hour later Nagy sacked Ernö Gerö, the pro-Soviet First Party Secretary, replaced him with reformer János Kádár, and called for negotiations on the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

The next day, October 26, secret police killed 87 unarmed demonstrators in Magyarovar, a small town near the Austrian border. Nagy again shuffled his cabinet on the 27th, trying to strike a balance between those pushing for rapid moves towards

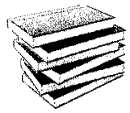
Parliament Square, just before the massacre

democratic socialism and those — like himself — who felt that the only way to forestall a full-scale Soviet invasion was to move slowly and cautiously.

Several days of calm ensued. Nagy moved to disband the secret police and cease-fires were negotiated with the Soviets. On the 29th, some Soviet tanks were even seen leaving Budapest. On October 30, Nagy called for free elections and the establishment of a multi-party coalition government in place of one-party rule. On October 31 the Suez Crisis exploded as British and French forces attacked Egypt, an event which may have accidentally doomed the Hungarian reformers. With world attention focused elsewhere, the Soviets rushed over 75,000 troops into Hungary from Russia, Czechoslovakia, and Romania on November 1.

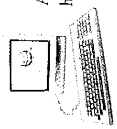
Nagy immediately announced Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, declared Hungarian neutrality, and appealed to the United Nations for protection and for an immediate U.N. debate on Hungary's predicament, saying "The Hungarian people, on the basis of independence and equality and in accordance with the spirit of the U.N. Charter, wish to live in true friendship with its neighbors, the Soviet Union, and all the peoples of the world. The Hungarian people desire the consolidation and further development of the achievements of its national revolution without joining any power blocs. The century-old dream of the Hungarian people is being fulfilled."

The United Nations debate of November 2 focused on the Suez, not Hungary. The Security Council's brief consideration of Hungary ended with the Soviet ambassador denying that any Soviet troops were there. In reality, the Soviets were consolidating their endgame position, and on October 3, when they captured Hungarian Defense Minister Pal Meleter, who had been coordinating anti-Soviet resistance forces, the Uprising was doomed. Imre Nagy's final address to his countrymen as Premier took place at 5:00 am on November 4: "Today at daybreak, Soviet forces started an attack against our capital with the intention of overthrowing the legal Hungarian democratic government. Our troops are fighting. The government is in place. I notify the people of our country and the entire world of this fact." By afternoon Nagy was under arrest and the Soviets were back in control. The Hungarian Revolution was over.

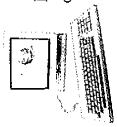


Seven Days of Freedom
Noel Barber
MacMillan
ASIN 0333149432
(DML)

An introduction to the Hungarian Uprising:
http://www.cserkeszek.org/scouts/webpages/zoltan/1956.html



Free .PDF download of David Irving's book *Uprising!*, a detailed history of Hungary in 1956: http://www.fpp.co.uk/books/Uprising/



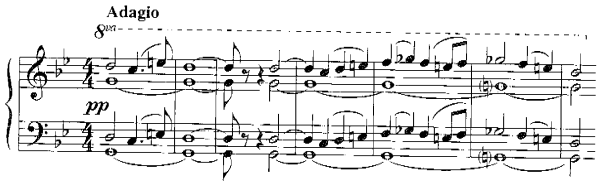
Soviet Union, June 1957

Dmitri Shostakovich spent most of the summer of 1957 at his retreat in Komovaro finishing his *Eleventh Symphony*, which had been started in February. In addition to its programmatic content, this symphony stands apart from the others in two important respects: (1) it uses extensive quotation from revolutionary and prison songs of the 1905 period; (2) while it is broken into four movements, the movements are played without pause, making this 60-minute work the longest continuous stretch of symphonic music in Shostakovich's career.

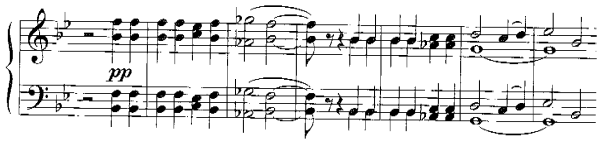
Shostakovich first hinted at a symphony based on the 1905 Revolution in 1954, telling the authorities that he was planning a symphony for the 50th anniversary of the revolution. This was part of his *modus operandi*. When prodded by Soviet music bureaucrats for another "official piece", Shostakovich would make big promises, which rarely materialized. Indeed, 1955 was not to be a symphony year. Instead, he worked on two film scores (*The Gadfly* and *The First Echelon*) and a song-cycle (*Songs of our Days*), saw to the long-delayed public premieres of *From Jewish Folk Poetry* and Violin Concerto No. 1, and tended to his ailing mother who died on November 9, 1955.

There is no way to know for certain whether it was coincidence that the composition of "The Year 1905" began three months after the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution. The timing is especially intriguing given the parallels between historical events and the music.

First Movement ("Palace Square"): The opening of the first movement is an example of the link between Shostakovich's film scores and symphonies. The stark, hushed sound of muted strings would be the perfect underscoring for the beginning of a film about Bloody Sunday: a long tracking shot of Palace Square, empty at dawn.



This "sound of silence" is overlaid with a series of figures that set the stage for the events of January 9, 1905. We hear distant, ominous rumblings of martial activity: a soft, pulsating figure in the tympani and a muted trumpet fanfare. Then the strings enter with a hushed chorale:



In the opening minutes of the symphony Shostakovich introduces music representing the two opposing forces of his narrative: the authorities (military figures) and Father Gapon and his devout marchers (chorale).

Having set the scene and introduced the protagonists, Shostakovich turns to the revolutionary-period songs. Though he uses only the songs' melodies, the notes are meant to bring to mind the unspoken lyrics. The words to the first song, "Listen!" begin:

Dark like the traitor's deed, dark like the tyrant's conscience

Is the autumn night.

Blacker than that night, the prison

Rises out of the fog like a dark ghost.

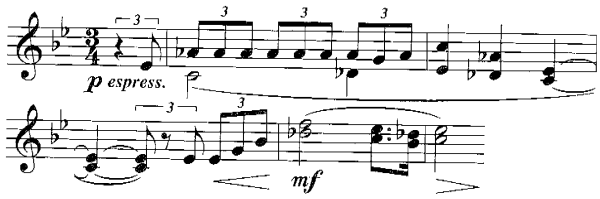
The guards slowly make their rounds,

The night's calm is pierced

By a drawn-out, melancholy call — like a moan:

"Listen!"

Shostakovich introduces the "Listen!" melody as a hushed flute duet:



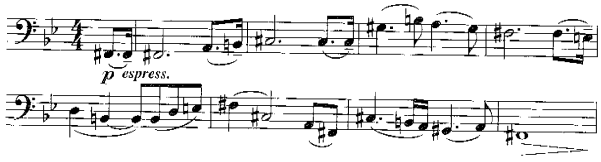
The second song quoted is "The Convict":

Dark is the night... Seize the moment!

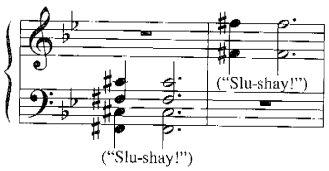
But the prison wall stands fast.

Two iron locks bar its gates.

While the cellos and basses play the melody of "The Convict",



the brass play a two-note figure as if to answer...



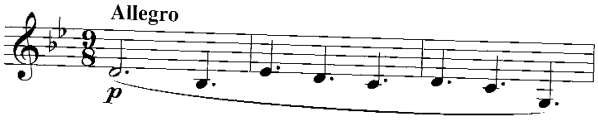
..."Listen! Listen!"

To us living in the United States in the 21st century, these songs have no particular meaning. But to listeners of Shostakovich's time — especially those who remembered the revolutionary years — they carried special, potent meaning. Moreover, the prison imagery of the unspoken lyrics conveys a double-edged message. On the one hand, the words speak of 1905. On the other, they suggest parallels with 1956 and 1957.

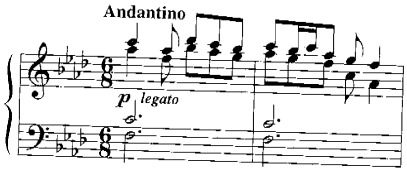
This parallel is not a stretch. Any *intelligent* of Shostakovich's generation would have made the connection instantly.

Nothing at all actually happens in the 15 minutes of this movement except for the statement of Shostakovich's musical materials and the symbols they represent. Precisely because of this long passage with no action, the music builds a mood of extreme tension and anticipation which sets up the dramatic second movement.

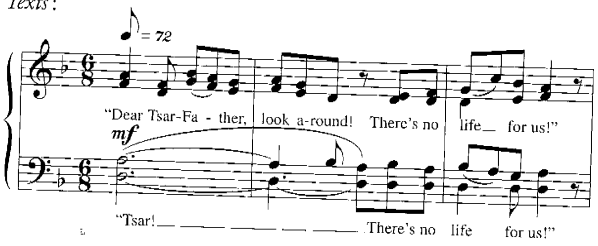
Second Movement ("January 9th"): This 20-minute whirlwind is one of the most powerful movements in the Shostakovich catalogue. Although it is not narrative in a strict blow-by-blow sense, it does convey a sense of the key events of Bloody Sunday. The first of its three main sections is based on a melodic fragment that has a long history with Shostakovich:



This motive first appears in the last of his Five Preludes for Piano (1920),



though there is some evidence to suggest that it may actually go back to a *Revolutionary Symphony* which Shostakovich destroyed — along with other juvenile pieces — after the publication of his Symphony No. 1 in 1926. The direct antecedent of this melody in Opus 103 is the song "The Ninth of January" from Shostakovich's 1951 choral suite *Ten Poems on Revolutionary Texts*:



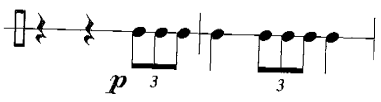
In fact, "The Ninth of January", the sixth of the *Ten Poems*, is an important key to unlocking the mysteries of the *Eleventh Symphony*. Here is the entire text of the song, set to a poem by Arkady Kots (1872-1943):

The Ninth of January

Take off your hats! Take off your hats!
The shadow of the long night trembles on this sorrowful day.
Faith in the Father-Tsar has fallen,
And a new dawn rises over the Motherland.
With prayers and faith,
The exhausted people went to the Tsar
Not as enemies, with no bad thoughts.
They went to ask:
"Dear Tsar-Father, look around!
There is no life for us,
No strength left in us to deal with
Tradespeople, robbers, kulaks, landowners.
Our hearts are burned by thunderstorms,
Our eyes are eaten away by bitter tears,
We are dying in chains and starving to death.
There is no way to go on.
You are our only defender, Tsar-Father.
Protect us!
The fate of the working man is a bitter fate,
But the Tsar's hand is generous."
The earth shook
And the square before the palace was covered with dead bodies.
The people died, fed with bullets and with lead.
It was the Tsar's idea!
The Tsar's soul was satisfied!
Take off your hats! Take off your hats!
Where the rain fell as a thunderstorm...
Where the people's blood flowed as a river...
There, from every drop of blood and lead,
The Motherland gave birth to a fighter!
Take off your hats! Take off your hats!

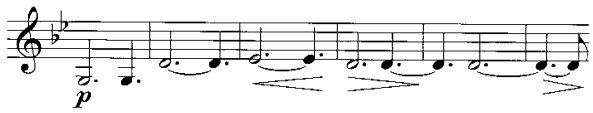
(translation by Iryna Karpushyna)

The beginning of the second movement features the "Dear Tsar-Father" melody combined with itself at two different speeds — one slow, one fast. It is as if we see the January 9th demonstrators flowing from every part of St. Petersburg towards Palace Square. Some walk in solemn processions, others run through the streets. The orchestral texture is one of constant change, yet the musical materials stay the same. As at the beginning of the first movement, the effect is cinematic: a montage of quick cuts of various groups of marchers, creating a dizzying effect of motion and agitation. To this Shostakovich eventually adds a soft, ominous martial pulse in the timpani, snare drum, and bass drum:

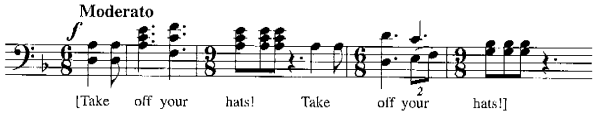


As the revolutionary forces assemble, so does the Tsar's army.

At the end of the movement's first section, Shostakovich introduces another melody,



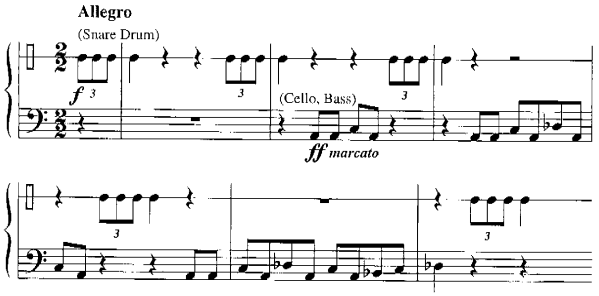
which comes from the beginning of the song "The Ninth of January":



Shostakovich treats the "Dear Tsar-Father" and "Take Off Your Hats!" motives as musical artifacts/symbols in the same way he uses "Listen!" and "The Convict" in the first movement. The important difference is that the old revolutionary songs of the first movement were tunes the composer expected his audience to know. Shostakovich would have no reasonable expectation that his listeners would know his *Ten Poems on Revolutionary Texts*, and even if they knew Kots' poem, they would have no reason to associate those words with these tunes. Yet Shostakovich treated these two original melodies exactly as if they were famous revolutionary songs of the period. And the treatment is so skillful that it is easy to imagine the audience humming along, "knowing" the tunes, but unable to place them precisely.

The first part of the movement comes to an abrupt end with a return to the opening music of "Palace Square". Two logical interpretations suggest themselves: (1) Shostakovich deliberately subverts the narrative drive of the second movement in order to remind the listener that the symphony is not just a continuous, forward-moving story told in music. (2) He is literally drawing the picture of the marchers entering the Square and stopping dead in their tracks as they face the Tsar's Winter Palace. Choose your favorite interpretation!

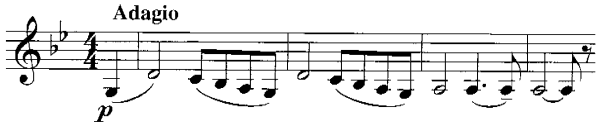
Part two of the movement depicts the Tsar's army moving into position in the Square with a rough, rapid fugue that begins in the snare drum and low strings:



This is one of Shostakovich's stock "scherzo figures": the strings (particularly the low strings) playing fast, machine-like passagework that, in effect, turns the entire orchestra into a gigantic drum. (He had previously used this style of music in the scherzos of the eighth and tenth symphonies.)

At the climax of the fugue the percussion section takes over, full *fortissimo* and there is a brutally loud passage pitting the full orchestra blating "Dear Tsar-Father" and "Take Off Your Hats!" against the tattoo of the drums. Although Shostakovich never actually portrays the Tsar's army opening fire on Father Gapon's demonstrators, when the percussion suddenly stops and we hear the harp, celesta, and muted strings playing the "empty Palace Square" music once again, our imaginations tell us that the Square is not empty. It is full of bodies.

Third Movement ("Eternal Memory"): Muted violas intone a solemn melody accompanied by the soft tread of pizzicato cellos and basses:

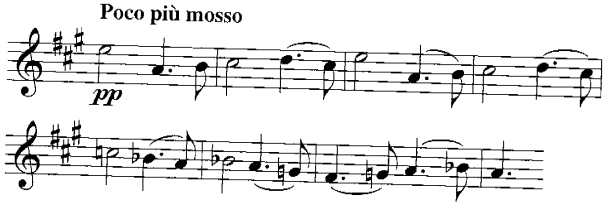


This is "You Fell as Victims", another famous revolutionary song of the 1905 era. The lyrics of this song inspired John Reed when he heard them in 1917. They would have resonated equally powerfully for Shostakovich's 1957 audience:

You fell as victims in the fatal battle
For the liberty of the people,
For the honor of the people.
You gave up your lives and everything dear to you,
You suffered in horrible prisons,
You went into exile in chains...
Without a word, you carried your chains
Because you could not ignore your suffering brothers,
Because you believed that justice is stronger than the sword...
The time will come when your surrendered life will count.
The time is near.
When tyranny falls, the people will rise, great and free!
Farewell, brothers.
You chose a noble path.
At your grave, we swear to fight,
To work for freedom and the people's happiness...

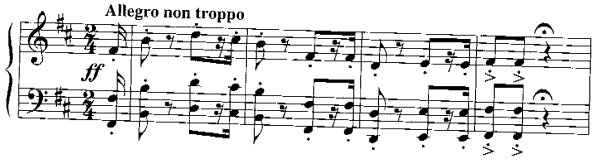
Street demonstration in Petrograd, March 1917.
The banner reads "You Fell as Victims"

This evolves into a Mahler-style funeral march and leads to a hushed statement of the tune of yet another revolutionary song, "Hail, Freedom's Word!":



The tune grows, as if the survivors of the massacre are taking it up as an anthem. Shostakovich reaches a tremendous climax, at which point the melody of "Take Off Your Hats!" blares out at full volume. The movement gradually dies down and ends with the violas returning to "You Fell as Victims". This memorial to the victims of Bloody Sunday is simple, yet powerfully moving, and it sets the stage for the thunderous finale.

Fourth Movement ("The Tocsin"): Bells don't actually ring until the closing bars of this overpowering movement. Bur as the unison brass scream out the opening bars, it's clear that the tocsin — the alarm bell of disaster — has already sounded:



This melody is yet another revolutionary song drafted into Shostakovich's symphony: "Rage, You Tyrants!" Its lyrics underscore the venomous, defiant mood of the finale:

Rage, you tyrants!

Mock us!

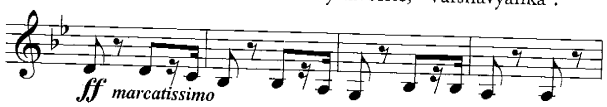
Threaten us with prison and chains!

We are weak in body, but strong in spirit.

Shame, shame on you, tyrants!

With this movement, Shostakovich departs from his narrative of the events of 1905. If this were a true, "anatomically correct" 1905 Symphony, it would end with warfare followed by defeat of the revolutionary forces and victory for the Tsar. But to Shostakovich, and to most other Russians, 1905 was not about the defeat of the revolution. It was about the collective decision that, one way or another, the Tsar had to go. Regardless of the outcome of the 1905 Revolution, change was inevitable. The defeat of December 1905 is thus seen as the prelude to the victory of October 1917. That determined the mood and shape of the finale. Having shown the forces of authority overwhelming the Russian people in the second movement, Shostakovich used his finale to create a vision of the Russian people overwhelming the forces of authority.

The music of the finale recalls the stormy mood of the battle music from Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* but raises the intensity level by an order of magnitude. The principal motives of the second movement — "Dear Tsar-Father"and "Take Off Your Hats!" — return, connecting the finale to the Bloody Sunday. He even tosses in the tune of one more revolutionary favorite, "Varshavyanka":



Just when it seems as if the music can't get any louder or wilder, there's a thunderous cymbal-plus-gong crash and suddenly we're back to the hushed muted strings from the first pages of the symphony. Now they provide the background for an extended english horn solo: the melody "Take Off Your Hats!" turned into a threnody. This solo harkens back to the english horn solo in the first movement of the *Eighth Symphony*. In the *Eighth* the english horn mourned the dead of World War II. In the *Eleventh* it mourns the dead of the Russian Revolutions.

One last time, Shostakovich whips up the frenzy machine. He returns to the rapid swirling figurations that started the second movement. But instead of leading us to Palace Square and the guns of the Tsar's army, this time Shostakovich presents a vision of October 1917. The tocsin — *fortissimo* chimes — sounds the death knell of the old regime as the symphony roars to its conclusion.

Exactly which old regime is this symphony talking about? Is it the authoritarianism of Tsar Nicholas revealing its moral bankruptcy in the hail of bullets in Palace Square? Is it the totalitarianism of Premier Khrushchev revealing its moral bankruptcy in the rank blasts on the streets of Budapest? Shostakovich lets the music speak for itself and obliges his listeners to resolve the ambiguities for themselves.

Those ambiguities are central to the essence of Shostakovich *Eleven*. On the one hand, this is *the* great masterpiece of Socialist Realism. After years of playing cat-and-mouse with the authorities — writing dark, tragic symphonies and string quartets for himself and bright, optimistic patriotic fluff for the Party — Shostakovich gave the bosses what they had always wanted: a simple, straightforward, tuneful, rabble-rousing symphony filled with echoes of popular patriotic songs. But he also gave them what he wanted: a complex, enigmatic work that inspires listeners to rush out into the street ready to rush to the barricades, but then forces us to ask ourselves why we have been inspired, and what, exactly, we intend to do in the street.

On the one hand, "The Year 1905" was universally praised for its compelling recreation of the seminal events of that critical year in Russian history. On the other hand, the composer's son Maxim, then 19 years old, is said to have asked his father during the dress rehearsal, "Papa, what if they hang you for this?" In *The Gulag Archipelago*, Solzhenitzyn takes Shostakovich to task for using prison songs such as "Listen!" in a work that glorifies the Russian Revolution. But in *Testimony*, Semyon Volkov quotes Shostakovich as saying: "I think that many things repeat themselves in Russian history. ... I wanted to show this recurrence in the *Eleventh Symphony*. I wrote it in 1957 and it deals with contemporary themes even though it's called '1905'. It's about the people, who have stopped believing because the cup of evil has run over."

What is Shostakovich telling us in this uniquely powerful symphony? He is telling us, "Listen!" He is warning us: "Think!"

Mischa and Mitya

Dayton Philharmonic violinist Mikhail Batanovsky was born in Ukrainian city of Dnepropetrovsk in July 1945. His father served as the Principal Trombone of the Minsk Opera Orchestra, and his mother was a music professor and conductor. Mischa started playing violin at age 6 and studied at the Leningrad Conservatory. From 1969 to 1973, he played in the Leningrad Radio-Television Symphony Orchestra as Assistant Principal Second Violin, then joined the Minsk Symphony Orchestra in Byelorussia as Principal Second Violin. The Baranovsky family emigrated from the Soviet Union in 1989 and settled in the United States in March 1990. Mischa joined the DPO in the fall of 1990. He also performs as a regular substitute with the Columbus Symphony.

Mikhail Baranovsky

NG: What does the music of Dmitri Shostakovich mean to people from Russia?

MB: It doesn't matter whether it's Russian people or people from the whole world. This is a very, very famous composer for everyone. People in the Soviet Union loved him because his music was like a mirror of the life of the people, for the whole period, from the 1920s on. Stalin and the Communist Party said this was the best possible life for the Soviet people. No. Shostakovich was really smart about this because he looked at everything and he wrote it in his music. It's all about the tragedy of the people who lived in the Soviet Union. He could express in his music what people were thinking but couldn't say. He didn't say it either — in his words — just in the music. Shostakovich was very famous in the Soviet Union. He was a composer who had lots of medals: the Stalin Prize, the Lenin Prize, Socialist Hero of the Soviet Union. This is political, of course. What the people say about the composer is that this is gorgeous music. Especially for people who lived with him through this period. I lived in this period, too. Symphony No. 13 was premiered in Moscow and then in Minsk. It was 1963 and I played this symphony in Minsk. I remember him from then.

NG: Some people think that Shostakovich's music sounds like protest music. What do you think?

MB: This is a very political question. I can't say that Shostakovich wrote music in protest of the Soviet Union or the situation there. I think he wrote music looking around at how we lived. From 1920 to 1930. From 1930 to 1940. From 1940 to 1950. For every period, his music shows us how people lived. All his symphonies have humor, sarcasm, the heroism of people, the hard work and hard life of people. All the symphonies show us the situation — how it was for people in the Soviet Union. I can't say it's a protest. When he wrote the music he wasn't thinking of protest. It's the reality of the life of all people inside the Soviet Union — and sometimes outside.

NG: You're too young to remember much of the Stalin Era. But you know people who do. What did you hear about those times?

MB: My father studied in a Jewish School from 1929. He studied Hebrew and Yiddish. In the 1930s they closed all the Jewish schools. The political situation in Stalin's Soviet Union up to the Second World War was this: Kafka's people were sent to Siberia; many people from Ukraine were sent to Siberia. It was very, very bad for Jewish people. But where I lived with my family, I couldn't feel this. I was very young. And my parents protected me.

NG: And after Stalin?

NG: In 1955 and 1960 and the next years, my father and mother were very frightened about the situation because in these years people were afraid to talk in Hebrew or Yiddish. People were listening and saying, "What was that?" It depended on where you lived. In Minsk, and maybe in the big cities, the people didn't feel the situation so badly. But it was dangerous.

NG: Shostakovich's *Eleventh Symphony* was written in 1957, when you were 12 years old. What did you learn in school or at home about the Russian Revolution of 1905?

MB: I remember how my father and mother would talk about the situation in 1905 — the square in front of the White Palace. A lot of people came to ask the Tsar to change the situation, and they shot those people. This symphony is about this tragedy and this period. We knew about it just as Shostakovich did. We knew about it because our teachers explained the whole situation to us. For all people who lived in the Soviet Union, this history was very important. Because the revolution in 1905 was the first step to the 1917 Revolution. In 1905, all people were thinking about revolution. Families like Shostakovich's — the intelligentsia — thought this would have been a new change. It wouldn't be so bad for the Tsar to be the figurehead leader of the people. Like the Queen of England. It was a big mistake for Lenin and the Communists to shoot the whole family of the Tsar. It was a big, big mistake for all the people, and also for history.

NG: Did you learn anything about the 1956 Hungarian Revolution?

MB: It wasn't really a revolution. There was an opposition inside the Communist Party. They wanted to change it a little bit for Hungary — to have more democracy. In the Soviet Union we knew something was happening in

Hungary. But we didn't know the details.

NG: Who's your favorite Russian composer?

MB: Right now I very much love Schedrin. Of coutse, there's Shostakovich. He's like the big, big rock — a titan of music. And then I think of Tchaikovsky. The music of Schedrin, it's newer music than Shostakovich, in another style. It's very interesting. I like his *Carmen* Suite very, very much.

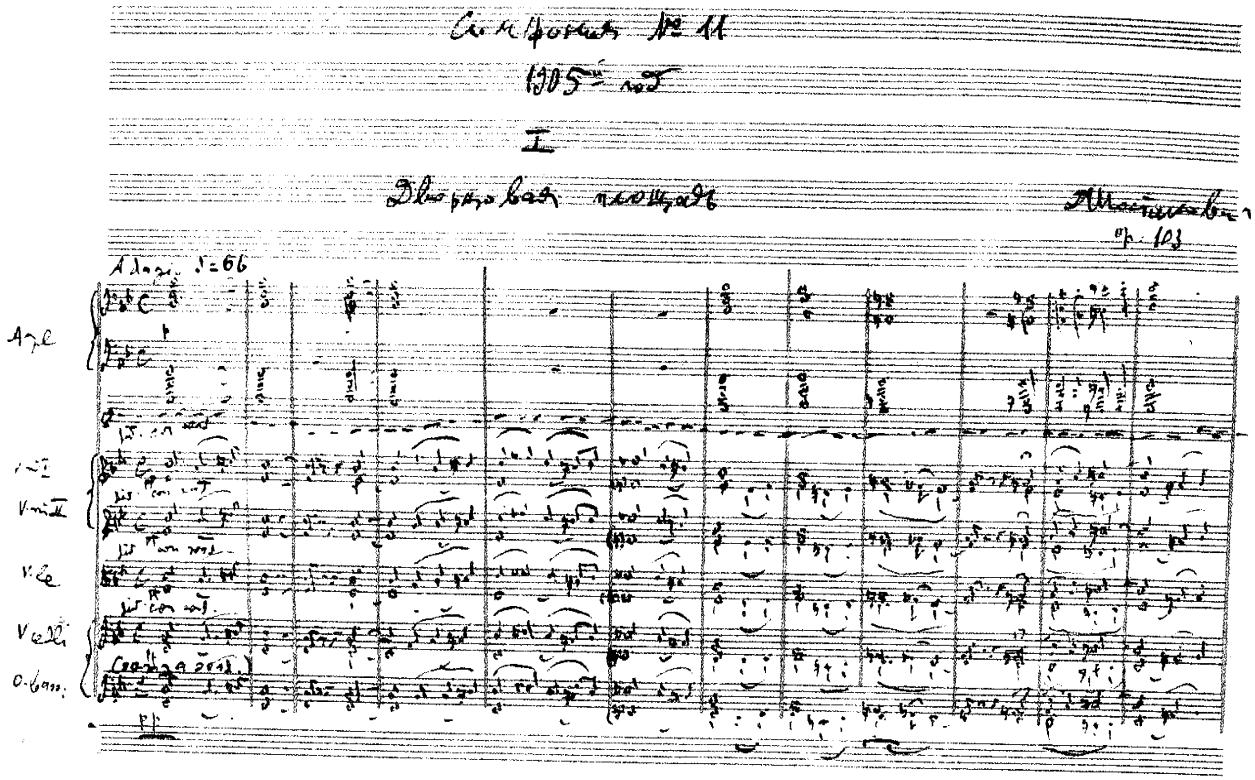
NG: What's your favorite Shostakovich symphony?

MB: That's a very hard question because every symphony is very good. But the best ones, I think, are *Seven, Ten, Eleven, Thirteen, Fourteen,* and *Fifteen.* And the *Fourth Symphony* is vety good. But I've never heard the *First Symphony.*

NG: What Russian music has the DPO not played that you'd like us to play?

MB: Maybe Shostakovich's *First Symphony.* That would be very interesting for me. And maybe for the people of Dayton, too. It might even be a premiere for this region.

NG: An excellent idea fot Dmitri Dmitrievich's 100th birthday, I think!



The opening of Symphony No. 11, in Shostakovich's hand-written manuscript.