

A PORTRAIT  
**Dmitry Shostakovich**



**1906–1975**

## **Preface**

Talking about Shostakovich the person is a difficult task for someone of a later generation whose one abiding memory is the radio announcement of the composer's death on 11 August 1975. Judging by the varying and often contradictory accounts that have since been published, it was perhaps only marginally easier for those who knew him or had worked with him. Neither the egocentric artist nor the willing exponent of a public role, Shostakovich revealed his innermost self to few — and then only in part. Yet for anyone coming to know his music today, his legacy offers — in all its manifest variety — a musical experience whose range and depth has few parallels in the modern era.

**Richard Whitehouse**

## Contents

	Page
Track List	6
Dmitry Shostakovich: A Portrait—by Richard Whitehouse	11
Prelude	12
I: Difficult Beginnings	14
II: A Soviet Radical	19
III: Artistic Maturity	27
IV: Creative Retrenchment	34
V: In Time of Conflict	42
VI: Condemnation and Crisis	47
Interlude	53
VII: An Inner Withdrawal	54
VIII: An Inner Liberation	60
IX: Russian Re-engagement	65
X: Looking Inwardly	72
XI: A Matter of Life in Death	78
XII: Extinction and Rebirth	84
Postlude	90
Transcript of CD I, track 14	92
Credits	93

## Track List

### CD I

- |   |  |                  |
|---|--|------------------|
| 1 | <b>Prelude and Fugue in C, Op. 87 No. 1</b><br>Dmitry Shostakovich, piano<br>Recorded 6 December, 1951<br>Original cat. no. MK D873-74               | 4:46             |
| 2 | <b>Fantastic Dance in C, Op. 5 No. 3</b><br>Konstantin Scherbakov, piano   | 1:07<br>8.555781 |
| 3 | <b>Symphony No. 1 in F minor, Op. 10</b><br>Movement 1: Allegretto<br>Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Slovak Philharmonic Chorus / Ladislav Slovák | 8:11<br>8.550623 |
| 4 | <b>The Golden Age – Ballet Suite, Op. 22a</b><br>No. 2: Adagio<br>New Zealand Symphony Orchestra / Christopher Lyndon-Gee                            | 9:07<br>8.553126 |
| 5 | <b>The Bolt – Ballet Suite, Op. 27a</b><br>No. 8: General Dance of Enthusiasm and Apotheosis<br>Russian State Symphony Orchestra / Dmitry Yablonsky  | 3:25<br>8.555949 |
| 6 | <b>Prelude in E flat minor, Op. 34 No. 14</b><br>Konstantin Scherbakov, piano  | 2:12<br>8.555781 |
| 7 | <b>Symphony No. 4 in C minor, Op. 43</b><br>Movement 2: Moderato con moto<br>Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ladislav Slovák                       | 8:42<br>8.550625 |

- Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47**
- [8] Movement 4: Allegro non troppo 11:29  
Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ladislav Slovák 8.550632
- Piano Quintet in G minor, Op. 57**
- [9] Movement 3: Scherzo 3:23  
Boris Berman, piano / Vermeer Quartet 8.554830
- Symphony No. 8 in C minor, Op. 65**
- [10] Movement 3: Allegro non troppo 6:42  
Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ladislav Slovák 8.550628
- Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor, Op. 67**
- [11] Movement 2: Allegro non troppo 2:55  
Stockholm Arts Trio 8.553297
- Symphony No. 9 in E flat, Op. 70**
- [12] Movement 1: Allegro 5:16  
Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ladislav Slovák 8.550632
- Violin Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 77**
- [13] Movement 3: Passacaglia 9:57  
Ilya Kaler, violin / Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra / Antoni Wit 8.550814
- [14] **Excerpt from a radio address by Shostakovich** 0:53  
Leningrad. September 16, 1941  
Original cat. no. 33 M 40-41705-12

## CD 2

- |   |   |                     |
|---|---|---------------------|
| 1 | <b>Prelude in F sharp major, Op. 87 No. 13a</b><br>Konstantin Scherbakov, piano   | 1:55<br>8.554745–46 |
| 2 | <b>Symphony No. 10 in E minor, Op. 93</b><br>Movement 4: Andante – Allegro<br>Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ladislav Slovák   | 13:26<br>8.550633   |
| 3 | <b>The Gadfly: Music for the film, Op. 97</b><br>Movement 3: National Holiday<br>Ukraine National Symphony Orchestra / Theodore Kuchar  | 2:42<br>8.553299    |
| 4 | <b>Piano Concerto No. 2 in F, Op. 102</b><br>Movement 2: Andante<br>Michael Houstoun, piano / New Zealand Symphony Orchestra / Christopher Lyndon-Gee                                       | 6:38<br>8.553126    |
| 5 | <b>String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, Op. 110</b><br>Movement 5: Largo<br>Éder Quartet  | 3:43<br>8.550973    |
| 6 | <b>Symphony No. 13 in B flat minor, Op. 113 'Babi Yar'</b><br>Movement 2: Humour<br>Peter Mikulas, bass / Slovak Philharmonic Chorus /<br>Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ladislav Slovák | 7:37<br>8.550630    |
| 7 | <b>Hamlet: Music for the film, Op. 116</b><br>Movement 4: Largo<br>Russian Philharmonic Orchestra / Dmitry Yablonsky  | 3:39<br>8.557446    |

- String Quartet No. 12 in D flat, Op. 133**
- [8] Movement 1: Moderato – Allegretto 6:37  
Éder Quartet 8.550975
- Symphony No. 14, Op. 135**
- [9] Movement 9: O Delvig, Delvig! 4:49  
Peter Mikulas, bass / Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ladislav Slovák 8.550631
- Symphony No. 15 in A, Op. 141**
- [10] Movement 1: Allegretto 8:24  
Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Ladislav Slovák 8.55062460
- Viola Sonata, Op. 147**
- [11] Movement 1: Moderato 11:13  
Annette Bartholdy, viola / Julius Drake, piano 8.557231
- [12] **Fugue in D minor, Op. 87 No. 24b** 7:27  
Dmitry Shostakovich, piano  
Recorded 5 February 1952  
Original cat. no. PMC 105

**TT 79:43**





# **Shostakovich: A Portrait**

by

Richard Whitehouse

## **Prelude**

The three decades since his death have seen Shostakovich occupy a position at the centre of modern classical music, his symphonies, concertos, string quartets and piano works finding a regular place in concert halls around the world. Hand in hand with this has emerged an often heated debate concerning his music's contribution to Western culture, and its likely durability as an artistic statement. Is it good enough as music to take its place in the symphonic lineage of Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms and Mahler, or is its present success largely due to an emotive power that mirrors the still recent cultural and political conflicts out of which it emerged?

This essay does not attempt to trace these lines of argument, or to suggest where they may be headed; rather, it offers a detailed overview of the composer's varied and extensive catalogue, with a consideration of the social context against which this music came into being. Although the perception of his status may have swung from that of loyal Soviet citizen, as portrayed by Soviet officialdom in the 1960s and 70s, to that of covert freedom-fighter promoted in certain quarters since his death, Shostakovich's musically most significant works remain self-selecting. Yet they benefit from being seen in perspective with the pieces around them — whether shorter, lighter, or occasional — in order for their wider relevance to be more fully appreciated.

The music contained on the accompanying CDs offers less an inclusive survey

of Shostakovich's output than a guide to its expressive range. His orchestral and chamber music is the most potent manifestation of his art — one which amalgamates to a powerful degree the previously opposing nationalist and Western tendencies in Russian music (the epic narratives of Balakirev and Mussorgsky as against the symphonic abstraction and overtly personal expression of Tchaikovsky). However, the ballet and film score excerpts will for many be their introduction to his work — and need not be dismissed as greater knowledge of his achievement ensues. And, as one who professed his enjoyment of music from Bach to Offenbach, Shostakovich would surely have concurred (**CD I, track I**).

This is the introductory chapter of Dmitry Shostakovich: A Portrait.  
The full biographical essay, illustrated with photographs, is available to buy.  
For more details, please visit [www.naxos.com](http://www.naxos.com).