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Political Influence in the Chamber Music of Dmitri Shostakovich: An Annotated Bibliography

Assignment 4 - Annotated Bibliography

Evan De Long

Introduction to Graduate Study

November 12, 2019

Political Influence in the Chamber Music of Dmitri Shostakovich

Annotated Bibliography

Fay, Laurel E. *Shostakovich: A Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

This biography provides an overview to the complex life of Dmitri Shostakovich, outlining his life from childhood until death. Fay refers to many primary sources, such as newspapers, concert programs, reviews, and diaries to tell Shostakovich's story. The biography also gives insight to the Soviet political climate at the time, and highlights Shostakovich's compositional restrictions because of this.

Gerstel, Jennifer. "Irony, Deception, and Political Culture in the Works of Dmitri Shostakovich." *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 32, no. 4 (December 1999): 35-51.

This article addresses Shostakovich's use of irony in his music, which was directly influenced by the strict government at the time. Gerstel provides a history of Shostakovich as a composer and his unusual position under Stalin's power. She also highlights specific musical examples that demonstrate Shostakovich's compositional irony, and several of these examples are from Shostakovich's chamber works, including the Eighth Quartet and the Second Piano Trio.

Katerina Clark. "Shostakovich's Turn to the String Quartet and the Debates about Socialist Realism in Music." *Slavic Review* 72, no. 3 (Fall 2013): 573-89.

This article discusses the idea of Socialist Realism and how this applies to Shostakovich's music. Clark argues that Shostakovich's quartet writing should be studied in the context of the strict orders of Socialist Realism from the Soviet government, and how this could be applied to music.

Clark doesn't provide a musical analysis of the quartets, but rather focuses on what Shostakovich had to say about them. She also gives us context for these statements based on what Shostakovich was going through while writing each quartet.

**Kuhn, Judith. *Shostakovich in Dialogue: Form, Imagery and Ideas in Quartets 1-7*.
Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010.**

This source provides an in-depth study to Shostakovich's String Quartets 1-7. A lengthy introduction summarizes the strict rules from the Soviet government, and provides a table outlining both acceptable and unacceptable qualities of Soviet music in the 1930s. After this, there is a chapter for each of the seven quartets that gives us a more detailed analysis of the music, as well as outlining what was going on in Shostakovich's life and in Russia when he wrote each quartet.

**Lesser, Wendy. *Music for Silenced Voices: Shostakovich and His Fifteen Quartets*.
New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011.**

This text gives us an overview of Shostakovich's quartets and how he wrote them in the context of the strict rules given by the government at the time. Lesser makes a point that Shostakovich had to be more careful when writing his large-scale works, like symphonies and operas, since the government would most likely care more about these works. However, when writing small-scale chamber music, Shostakovich didn't need to worry so much about the government interfering, so she argues that he was able to showcase his artistic talent more in these works. She also gives us specific details about each quartet and how Shostakovich wrote them in this context.

Maróthy, János. “Harmonic Disharmony. Shostakovich’s Quintet.” *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 19, nos. 1-4 (1977): 325-348.

One of Shostakovich’s most beloved chamber works is his Piano Quintet, which is one of his earlier chamber works. This article provides an in-depth musical study of each movement of the piece, noting important stylistic elements that were influenced by Shostakovich’s life and the political climate at the time. Maróthy’s main point is that this work is far more harmonic than most of Shostakovich’s works, and is surrounded by much disharmony, including Shostakovich’s other works as well as the environment at the time. The idea of socialist realism is also touched upon in this source, providing a general overview of the term and how it relates to Shostakovich’s music.

Mulcahy, Kevin V. “Official Culture and Cultural Repression: The Case of Dmitri Shostakovich.” *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 18, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 69-83.

Artists during the time of the Stalinist regime had very strict regulations about what they were allowed to create. This article provides some specific regulations that composers faced in Russia at the time. Mulcahy makes a clear point that Shostakovich was very much against these regulations and would try and bend the rules as much as possible. While this article is not specifically focused on Shostakovich’s chamber works, the string quartets are mentioned briefly, and the article gives us a much better understanding of Shostakovich’s difficult position as a composer in Soviet Russia.

**Shostakovich, Dmitri. *Quintet for Two Violins, Viola, Cello, and Piano, Op. 57*.
Moscow: DSCH Publishers, 2014.**

This is the score to one of Shostakovich's great chamber works, the Piano Quintet. The quintet has five movements, each with a very different style and mood. The first, second, and fourth movement of the quintet are rather dark in nature, and the third and fifth movements are more bombastic and ironic in nature. This score will be used to help prove certain musical elements that show Shostakovich's struggle as a composer in Soviet Russia.

--- *String Quartet No. 8: Op. 110.* Hamburg, Germany: Musikverlag H. Sikorski, 1967.

The Eight Quartet is Shostakovich's most famous quartet out of his cycle of 15 quartets, and also one of his most well-known chamber works. We can identify many musical features in this quartet that highlight the struggles that Shostakovich had as a composer. The work is very dramatic and has many different moods.

Takacs Quartet. *Shostakovich: Piano Quintet; String Quartet No. 2.* Recorded 2014. Hyperion CDA67987, 2015. CD.

This recording features two of Shostakovich's early chamber works, his Piano Quintet and his String Quartet no. 2. These recordings give us a sense of some of the ironic features of his chamber works, especially in the Piano Quintet. There is a sense of struggle that can be heard in the more somber movements of these chamber works, however, Shostakovich was clearly able to bend some of the government's restrictions and there is a great sense of fun and excitement in many moments of these works.

Weickhard, George G. "Dictatorship and Music: How Russian Music Survived The Soviet Regime." *Russian History* 31, nos. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 2004): 121-41.

This article outlines the lives of three Soviet composers: Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and Shnittke. A significant portion of the article discusses the life and work of Shostakovich. Weickhard makes a point that despite the fact that the government was so strict towards artists, Shostakovich and his contemporaries were able to make a major contribution to 20th century music and showed much artistic freedom. He also points out that when Shostakovich started writing his chamber music there was a higher focus on the political climate at the time.

Wilson, Miranda Clare. "Shostakovich's Cello Sonata: Its Genesis Related to Socialist Realism." DMA diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2005. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

This dissertation analyzes Shostakovich's Cello Sonata and how this piece is representative of Socialist Realism. Wilson gives us an overview of the political issues happening in Russia during Shostakovich's career, and how composers had to incorporate Socialist Realist ideas into their music. The dissertation also provides a formal and stylistic musical analysis of the Cello Sonata, and how Socialist Realism impacted this particular work.