

CHAPTER 3

THE PICCOLO

3.1 Introduction

The piccolo is undoubtedly one of the instruments Shostakovich favoured in the realisation of his orchestral style and sound. From as early as the First Symphony (1925) the piccolo makes a significant contribution to *tutti* and solo passages and plays a major role in the definition of the orchestral tapestry. The prominence and flair of this auxiliary instrument throughout the symphonies are remarkable.

Shostakovich scores the piccolo in all the symphonies (except No. 14 where no wind instruments are used) and specifically two piccolos in Symphonies No. 4 and 8. The piccolo is usually employed as an extension of the pitch range of the flute. However, Shostakovich not only exploits the instrument's auxiliary capacity but also treats the piccolo as an autonomous personality.

3.2 Register

There are very few instances in the symphonies that Shostakovich writes passages in the low register for the piccolo. Adjectives such as “breathy”, “feeble” and “hollow” have been used in various orchestration manuals to describe the quality of lower notes in the piccolo's range. There are, however, isolated examples of Shostakovich's use of the piccolo's low register, in spite of its weak qualities in this register.

There is a moment of particular interest in the first movement of Symphony No. 5 (Ex. 3-1) where the piccolo has been allocated a brief solo beginning in the low register with a *pianissimo* dynamic indication. The texture at this point is very transparent with the remnants of a brief flute solo overlapping in unison the beginning of the low piccolo solo. Strings provide a muted accompaniment while two trumpets and timpani reinforce the ascending interval of a fourth,

which is prominent in the string part. Although a fleeting example of the piccolo in its low register, it proves Shostakovich's awareness of the piccolo's capabilities in its low register by combining it tactfully with the first flute to create a seemingly seamless solo in m. 302, as well as ensuring a supportive yet not overbearing accompaniment with *pianissimo* muted strings.

Example 3-1: Symphony No. 5, first movement, mm. 300-308

44 Moderato $\text{♩} = 42$ 45 solo

Picc. I solo *pp* *morendo*

Fl. *p* I. II $\text{♩} = 2$

Tr-be *pp*

Timp. *pp*

Archi *con sord.* *pp* *con sord.* *pp*

300 *ppp*

Picc. *ppp*

Fl. I *ppp*

Tr-be I. II $\text{♩} = 2$ *pp*

Timp. *pp*

Arpe *p*

V-no solo *con sord.* *p* *gliss.*

V-ni I *altri con sord.* *pp* *con sord.* *pp* *gliss.*

V-ni II *pp* *con sord.* *pp* *gliss.*

V-la *gliss.*

V-ca

C-b.

305

The piccolo's low register is used effectively in appropriate surroundings in the first movement of Symphony No. 7 (Ex. 3-2). This time the timbre combinations are limited to strings only, without mutes. The piccolo and first violins have a brief solo conversation from mm. 121-124. It is interesting to note that the beginning of the phrase on the last beat of m. 120, scored for the lowest note of the piccolo range (d₂), does not have any accompaniment. In the author's opinion Shostakovich deliberately intended the beginning of that particular phrase to begin with the delicate timbre of the piccolo's low range, which attests to the meticulous care he took when orchestrating for the piccolo.

Example 3-2: Symphony No. 7, first movement, mm. 111-142

$\text{♩} = 126$

111

121

142

9373

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 127-137, and the second system covers measures 137-147. The Piccolo part is in the top staff of each system, and the Archi part consists of four staves below it. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (*pp*, *ppp subito*, *unis.*), articulation (*div.*), and performance instructions (*cresc.*, *V-no solo*). Measure numbers 127, 137, and 147 are indicated at the bottom of the staves.

The typical piccolo sound in the symphonies is manifested in the abundance of examples found of the instrument scored in its very high register. Del Mar (1983:158), a flautist himself, writes the following:

At this extreme top the piccolo becomes very hard to control at anything less than an earsplitting fortissimo, and also develops serious problems of intonation. Composers have nevertheless been merciless at times, as is shown by the crucial passage from Schoenberg's Gurrelieder at the

beginning of the section entitled 'Des Sommerwindes wilde Jagd'. Here four piccolos alternate in sustaining the upper B's in octaves pp over a period of no less than 24 bars. So excruciating was this when I was rehearsing the London Symphony Orchestra for the performance in the Festival Hall in London that one of the players ingeniously contrived to substitute a small whistle that produced exactly the right sound and pitch in moreover, a true effortless pianissimo.

Orchestral players would agree with Del Mar that even Shostakovich was sometimes less than merciful in his use of the piccolo's very high register. However, the majority of material is allocated with very loud dynamic indications and often forms part of a woodwind ensemble where the piccolo serves as reinforcement of the upper partials, or to create the "piercing edge" to *tutti* sections, also usually with very loud dynamic indications. According to Piston (1994:143) the instrument is unsurpassed in penetrating power. He also suggests that the highest octave should therefore be used sparingly.

Judging by the amount of material scored by Shostakovich for the piccolo in the high register in extreme dynamic levels, the author speculates that the composer's intention is more than just to underline the clarity of *tutti* passages. The piccolo is a perfect ally in the composer's realisation of frenetic *tutti* passages, along with his use of rhythm, to create the characteristic atmosphere of tension.

A fine example of sustained notes in the extreme of the piccolo register, as in Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, is found in the first movement of Symphony No. 4 (Ex. 3-3). The following example shows the piccolo's "earsplitting" high register with the dynamic indication of *fffp crescendo*. The visual effect of the full score in this particular example emphasises to the reader Shostakovich's intention for the piccolo to shine at the pinnacle of the harmonic stack against the sheer weight and force of the intense *tutti*. It is also a typical example of Shostakovich using the *tutti* orchestra, with the piccolo in its extreme high register at acute dynamic levels, to exude an atmosphere of frustration, horror and helplessness at the evil hand of Stalinism, which was gripping his country. It has to be borne in mind that during the rehearsals in 1935 Shostakovich was "coerced" by the authorities into withdrawing the première of Symphony No. 4. It was performed for the first time in 1962.

Example 3-3: Symphony No. 4, first movement, mm. 752-761

$\text{♩} = 168$

The musical score is a full orchestral score for Example 3-3, Symphony No. 4, first movement, measures 752-761. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 168$. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout with the following parts from top to bottom:

- Picc.
- Fl.
- Ob.
- Cl. picc.
- Cl.
- Cl. b.
- Fag.
- C-fag.
- Tr. bc.
- Cor.
- Tr. pt.
- Tube
- Timp.
- Legno
- T-ro
- P-ttl
- Cassa
- T-tam
- Sil.
- Archl.

The score is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *f* (forte). The woodwind and brass sections play sustained notes with intricate rhythmic figures, while the percussion and string sections provide a complex rhythmic accompaniment. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature.

3.3 Allocation of solo material to the piccolo

It is quite evident, when considering the sheer number of piccolo solos found throughout the symphonies, that Shostakovich's use of the piccolo exceeds the role of a mere auxiliary instrument. A selection of brilliant *scherzando* type passages and delicate solos could be chosen for this section of the chapter.

Jan Gippo (1998:32), piccolo performer, co-editor of the journal *Flute Talk* and regular author of the articles "Let's Talk Picc", writes that the wind parts of Shostakovich's works are "virtuoso-like" and the symphonies "concerto-like". In the same article Gippo initiated a survey about piccolo solos where leading piccolo players in the USA were asked their opinion on piccolo solos in the symphonic repertoire. The participants were asked to comment on solos in the following categories:

- most beautiful
- most challenging
- most treacherous
- most fun.

The survey revealed a remarkable interest in Shostakovich's symphonies in all the categories.

In the "most beautiful" category, piccolo performers voted solos from Shostakovich's Symphonies No. 6, 7, 8 and 10. In the "most challenging" category the overwhelming choice was Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. Shostakovich's Symphony No. 15 was mentioned because of the first movement section, which combines the piccolo with two flutes in unison, as well as the Symphonies No. 6 and 10. According to piccolo players the "most treacherous" category involves solos or passages whose difficulties are such that perfection cannot be guaranteed even when practiced well at home. In these cases, circumstances during actual performance determine everything. Mahler's Symphony No. 10 received significant votes along with Shostakovich's Symphonies No. 6, 8, 9, and 11.

Bearing in mind the sombre quality of most of the symphonies it is surprising that Shostakovich was given most votes in the "most fun" category. Three players stated that anything

Shostakovich wrote is most fun because he had a “wonderful understanding of the colour and flurry of the piccolo as well as its ability to play beautiful mournful melodies and create the perfect mood”. In order of preference Symphony No. 9 received most votes followed by Symphonies No. 7 and 8, and then 5 and 6. (Gippo 1998:33.)

In the examples of solos mentioned by piccolo players it can be observed that Shostakovich seems to have gained more confidence in his orchestration, particularly in his orchestration for the piccolo, from Symphony No. 5 onwards where the solos are increasingly prominent and challenging. It is as though Shostakovich suddenly realised the scope of the piccolo’s potential and began a voyage of exploring the instrument’s boundaries.

Symphony No. 6 (completed in 1939) deserves much attention with regard to solo writing for the entire woodwind section, but particularly for the piccolo. According to Wilson (1994:128) audiences were expecting a symphony along the lines of the Fifth, but were “in for a surprise”. The three-movement symphony did not follow the traditional symphonic layout. There is the long and static first movement, written in a “spirit of introspection”, followed by a “demonic energy in the *Scherzo* and an almost flippant hilarity in the *Finale*”. Wilson also states that Shostakovich was “getting on with what he wanted” in Symphony No. 6, particularly because it has a strong tendency toward ensemble writing, unheard of in the preceding four symphonies, because he was increasingly drawn to chamber music. Shostakovich composed, by far, more chamber music than for any other genre, which inevitably influenced his style of orchestration.

Not only are the piccolo solos throughout Symphony No. 6 beautiful and charming but are also enhanced by innovative instrument combinations, timbres and *tessitura* combinations. An excellent example of this is heard in the delicately mournful solo for the piccolo in the introspective first movement of Symphony No. 6 (Ex. 3-4). The piccolo has a prominent *piano* solo with frugal *pianissimo* accompaniment for maximum effect from the contrabassoon, second violins and double bass from mm. 44-47. The accompaniment becomes even more transparent as the piccolo solo takes on a descending line from mm. 46-51 with mostly the harp and second violins as support. It is evident in examples like this that even with the smallest melodic instrument in the orchestra Shostakovich manages successfully to assume a melancholic character, given the composer’s tendency toward serious atmospheres.

Example 3-4: Symphony No. 6, first movement, mm. 41-53

Example 3-4: Symphony No. 6, first movement, mm. 41-53

8

Picc. *pp* *sole*

Cl. b. *dim.* *pp*

Fag. *dim.* *pp*

C-fag. *p* *dim.* *pp*

Cor. *I. II* *mf* *p* *pp*

Archi *fz* *pp* *fz* *pp* *fz* *pp* *fz* *pp*

41

Picc. *pp*

C-fag. *pp*

V-n II *pizz.*

C-b. *pp*

44

9

Picc.

C-fag.

Arpa *p non arpeggiato*

V-n II *47*

0 245

10

Picc.

Arpa

Archi

pp

cresc.

pp

cresc.

pp

cresc.

p espress.

cresc.

50

An unusual dialogue of timbres accompanying a piccolo solo is found in the *Scherzo*-like second movement of Symphony No. 6 (Ex. 3-5). It is also a typical example of the meticulous detail of Shostakovich's orchestration. The passage begins with a *staccato piano* flute solo in m. 203, and is seamlessly connected to the piccolo solo from m. 204, with harmonic support from the harp and strings, joined by the clarinets in m. 206. Shostakovich makes use of a wide representation of registers and unusual combination of instruments as the accompaniment changes colour with the high strings being replaced by *pianissimo* clarinet broken chords in m. 206, a pedal point from the tuba, cellos and double basses, and sustained chords from the harp. Shostakovich draws attention to this passage by emphatically underlying the highest note of the piccolo solo's phrase, the E-flat in m. 206, with the droning addition in octave unison in the low register of the tuba, harp, cellos and double basses from mm. 206-211. In this instance the piccolo E-flat and the tuba E-flat span six octaves. According to piccolo players the challenge in examples like this one, where the piccolo takes over a melody from the flute (and even more so if the joint note is a direct unison), is to attempt to blend the piccolo's timbre and dynamic as much as possible with that of the flute.

Example 3-5: Symphony No. 6, second movement, mm. 198-215

♩ = 88-96 Fl.

Arpa

Archi

198

pp

pp

54

solo

Pic.

Fl. I

Cl. I

Cl. II

Cl. III

Tuba

Arpa

Archi

204

9245

Picc.

Cl. I
Cl. II
Cl. III

Cor. *I solo*
mp

Tr-ni
e
Tuba
Tuba

Arpa

Arch.

210

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score, page 210. It features six staves of music. The top staff is for Piccolo (Picc.). The next three staves are for Clarinets I, II, and III (Cl. I, II, III). The fourth staff is for Cor Anglais (Cor.), with the instruction 'I solo' and a dynamic marking of 'mp'. The fifth staff is for Trumpets and Tubas (Tr-ni e Tuba), with the instruction 'Tuba' written below the staff. The sixth staff is for Harp (Arpa). The bottom section of the page shows the beginning of the string section (Arch.) with four staves. The music is written in a common time signature and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs.

Possibly one of the most difficult and lengthy piccolo solos in the repertoire is found in the second movement of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8 (Ex. 3-6). The player is faced not only with technical challenges, but articulation and intonation difficulties as well.

Blokker & Dearling (1979:99) describe this *Allegretto* movement as “war-like march, fast and powerful, alternating between sheer energy and play. It displays Shostakovich's best biting, acid-etched orchestration, and it is very Russian in feeling”. According to the present author this is a huge understatement as the first four of the five movements of Symphony No. 8 (1943) are by far the darkest, most tragic sounding of the symphonies. Wilson (1994:172) shares this sentiment and describes Symphony No. 8 as a Requiem with its “tragic canvas”.

The movement also includes prominent solos for one and sometimes two piccolos, bassoon, contrabassoon and the E-flat clarinet. This particular piccolo solo, also referred to in an article on “note releases” by Walfrid Kujala (in *Flute Talk* 1995:15), encompasses almost 80 bars during which the stage is shared on two brief occasions with the E-flat clarinet.

The accompaniment throughout the piccolo solo is sparse with an *ostinato*-like detached contribution from the strings from mm. 67-95, after which the string accompaniment becomes even thinner with *pizzicato* accompaniment from only the violas and cellos (mm. 102-110). Adding an extra touch of interest to the timbre of the *staccato* string part, Shostakovich includes muted *staccato* chords by the three trumpets from mm. 81-101. A pedal point on the tuba from mm. 81-85, taken over by the four horns from mm. 87-96, lends support to the harmonic foundation. Prominent melodic intervention from the bassoon and contrabassoon doubled at the octave (mm. 78-81 and mm. 85-86) introduces an interesting conversation, utilizing vastly different registers and tone colours, with the piccolo; every now and then the E-flat clarinet (mm. 90-96 and mm. 106-108) contributes a new voice with similar material.

Example 3-6: Symphony No. 8, second movement, mm. 60-115

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 60 to 65, and the second system covers measures 65 to 70. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 132$ at the beginning and $\text{♩} = 144$ at the start of the second system. The instrumentation includes Flute (Fl.), Trombone (Tr-be), Cor, Trumpet and Tuba (Tr-ni & Tuba), Timpani (Timp.), Violin I (V-al I), Violin II (V-al II), Viola (V-la), Violoncello (V-co), Contrabass (C-b.), Piccolo (Pico.), and Archi (Archi). The score contains various dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, *f*, and *plz.*, along with performance instructions like *poco accel.*, *I. II*, *a2*, *arco*, *I solo*, and *morendo*. Measure numbers 60, 65, and 70 are indicated at the bottom of their respective staves.

Picc. *I* *sf* *sf* *sf*

V-nl I

V-nl II

V-le 70

Picc. *I* *sf* *sf* *sf* 54

Fag. *I* *p*

C fag. *p*

V-nl I

V-nl II

V-le 75

Picc. *I* *p* *sf* *sf*

Fag. *I* *sf* *sf*

C fag. *sf* *sf*

Tr-be *con sord.* *mf*

Tuba *mf*

V-nl I

V-nl II

V-le 80

This image shows two pages of a musical score, numbered 55 and 90. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves for each instrument. The instruments listed on the left side of the page are:

- Picc. (Piccolo)
- Fag. (Bassoon)
- C-fag. (Contrabassoon)
- Tr-be (Trumpet)
- Cor. (Cor Anglais)
- Tuba
- V-nl I (Violin I)
- V-nl II (Violin II)
- V-lc (Viola)
- Picc. (Piccolo)
- Cl. picc. (Clarinet in C)
- Tr-be (Trumpet)
- Cor. (Cor Anglais)
- V-nl I (Violin I)
- V-nl II (Violin II)
- V-lc (Viola)

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, dynamics (e.g., *sf*, *f*, *p*), articulation marks (accents, slurs), and performance instructions (e.g., *I*, *55*, *90*). The page numbers 55 and 90 are prominently displayed at the top and bottom of their respective systems.

56

Picc. *p* *sf* *sf*

Cl. p. *sf* *sf*

Fag. *p* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

C-fag. *p* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

Tr-be

Cor. *a2* *a2*

V-nl I

V-nl II

V-le *95*

57

Picc. *sf* *sf* *sf*

Fag. *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

C-fag. *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

Tr-be

V-nl I

V-nl II

V-le *pizz.*

V-o *pizz.* *p*

99

9375

Picc. I

Cl. picc.

V-le

V-o.

103

Picc. I

Fl.

Cl. picc.

Cl.

Fag.

C.fag.

V-ni I

V-ni II

V-le

V-o.

58

108

This page of a musical score, numbered 112 at the bottom left, features woodwind and string parts. The woodwind section includes Piccolo (Picc.), Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in G (Clngl.), Clarinet in E-flat (Cl. picc.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl.), Clarinet in Bass (Cl. b.), Bassoon (Fag.), and Contrabassoon (C-fag.). The string section includes Violin I (V-nl I), Violin II (V-nl II), Viola (V-lo), Violoncello (V-co), and Double Bass (C. b.). The score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The woodwinds play a rhythmic, melodic line starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic, marked with slurs and accents. The strings play a steady accompaniment, with the double bass part marked *pizz.* (pizzicato) and *p* (piano). The page number '112' is located at the bottom left corner.

Another highlight for the piccolo in Symphony No. 8 (Ex. 3-7) is a fantasia-like solo with a *pianissimo* dynamic indication, found in the fourth movement. An uneasy atmosphere at this point has been set by a *piano espressivo dolce* solo for first horn against a backdrop of muted strings. The challenge for the piccolo performer lies in the accurate execution of the complex tied quintuplets in mm. 64 and 66. The *tremolo* string accompaniment has become somewhat of a trademark since its appearance as early as the second movement of Symphony No. 1. In this example the resulting effect of the *tremolo* accompaniment from the first and second violins is nervous tension, aggravated by the gloomy countermelody from the cellos and double basses.

Example 3-7: Symphony No. 8, fourth movement, mm. 56-67

♩ = 50

118

Picc. *I solo*
pp

Cor. *I*
morendo

V-ni I *ppp*

div.

V-ni II *ppp*

V-le *ppp*
div.

V-c. *ppp*

C-b. *ppp*

56

Picc. *I*

Cor. *I*

div.

Archl *morendo*

61

Picc. I

V-ni II

V-ni III

V-o.

C-b.

64

Picc. I

riten.

119 a tempo

Picc. muta in Fl. IV

Fl.

V-ni II

V-o.

C-b.

68

A challenging solo is heard in the tranquil ending of the second movement of Symphony No. 9 (Ex. 3-8). As the tempo slows to *Adagio* the piccolo utters the final statement of the opening melody, supported by muted strings and *pianissimo* muted chords from three French horns. The challenge of this solo lies in the sustained F-sharp (mm. 294-303), which closes the last ten bars of this movement. Breath control, stable intonation and stamina are requirements for the successful execution of this taxing solo.

Example 3-8: Symphony No. 9, second movement, mm. 286-303

solo **Adagio**

Picc. *p*

Cor. *con sord.*
III *pp con sord.*
pp

Archl *p*
p
p
p

286 *p*

Picc. *morendo*

Archl *pp*
pp
pp
pp
pp
pp
pp

288 *pp* *pp* *pp*

Symphony No. 15 (1971) is renowned for its sparse orchestration and the composer's fascination with chamber sonorities. In fact, the full orchestra is only used in 31 bars during the course of the work (Blokker & Dearling 1979:151). A predilection for the variety and timbres of mostly small percussion instruments - such as the triangle, castanets, soprano tom-tom, wood block, whip, cymbals, gong, xylophone, chimes, vibraphone and celesta - results in a number of innovative timbre combinations with the rest of the conservative *tutti*, consisting of the usual strings, piccolo, two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons and trumpets, four horns, three trombones and tuba.

There are a number of remarkable similarities between Symphony No. 1 and Symphony No. 15. Amongst others, they both have a seemingly light character as a result of their melodic content as well as their orchestration. Apart from the enlarged percussion department the scoring for Symphony No. 15 is, in fact, smaller by one trumpet than that of Symphony No. 1 (1925). A comparison of the two scores elucidates the vast world of experience assimilated during the intervening 45 years. Comparing Shostakovich's writing of solo material for the piccolo and the rest of the woodwinds reveals the composer's finely tuned sense of virtuoso writing and characteristic use of each instrument in Symphony No. 15. Blokker & Dearling (1979:151) conclude that this experience is shown graphically in the way the composer has paired down his requirements and maximised the potential of each instrument.

Symphony No. 15 is full of characteristic solos for the piccolo, but the solo which is indeed challenging, also belonging to the "most treacherous" category (Gippo 1998:26), is the following one in the first movement in which the piccolo shares an octave unison *staccato* passage at high speed (crotchet = M.M. 120) with two flutes. The *subito piano* piccolo and flute solo passage is introduced by a *fortissimo* triplet rhythm by the tom-tom in mm. 438-439. An unveiling effect is achieved as the instruments and timbres grow in number with the inclusion, one by one, of the side drum in m. 444; oboe m. 445; xylophone m. 447; cellos m. 448; clarinet and bassoon m. 451; and muted trumpets m. 454. All this happens at break-neck speed. At this tempo it is virtually impossible to perfect intonation between piccolo and flute.

Example 3-9: Symphony No. 15, first movement, mm. 438-458

$\text{♩} = 120$

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes:

- Picc.** (Piccolo): Treble clef, playing a melodic line with a box around the measure number 47.
- Fl.** (Flute): Treble clef, playing a melodic line with a box around the measure number 47.
- Ob.** (Oboe): Treble clef, playing a melodic line with a box around the measure number 47.
- Cl.** (Clarinet): Treble clef, playing a melodic line with a box around the measure number 47.
- T-tom** (Tom-tom): Percussion line with rhythmic notation.
- T-ro** (Timpani): Percussion line with rhythmic notation.

The second system includes:

- Archi** (Strings): Four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass) with rhythmic notation.

Measure numbers 438 and 458 are indicated at the bottom of the string staves.

48

Picc. Fl. Ob. T-tom T-ro

443

p 3

Detailed description: This system covers measures 443 to 446. The Piccolo part has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Flute and Oboe parts play a similar melodic line, with the Oboe part including a dynamic marking of *p* and a triplet of eighth notes. The Tom-tom part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. The Snare drum part has a triplet of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *p*.

Picc. Fl. Ob. T-tom T-ro C-III SII

447

p 3

Detailed description: This system covers measures 447 to 450. The Piccolo, Flute, and Oboe parts continue their melodic lines. The Tom-tom part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. The Snare drum part has a triplet of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *p*. The C-III and SII parts have a bass line with a dynamic marking of *p*.

49

Picc. Fl. Ob. Cl. Fag. Tr-be T-tom T-ro C-III SII

451

p 5

non sord.

Detailed description: This system covers measures 451 to 454. The Piccolo, Flute, and Oboe parts continue their melodic lines. The Clarinet part has a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *p* and a quintuplet of eighth notes. The Bassoon part has a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *p* and a quintuplet of eighth notes. The Trumpet part has a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a triplet of eighth notes. The Tom-tom part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. The Snare drum part has a triplet of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *p*. The C-III and SII parts have a bass line with a dynamic marking of *p*.

50

Picc.

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Fag.

Cor.

Tr-be

Tr-nl e Tuba

Timp.

T-tom

T-ro

C-lli

Sil.

50

con sord.

mf

con sord.

mf

con sord.

mf

con sord.

mf

con sord.

mf

secco

p

con sord.

mf

con sord.

mf

Archl

455

3.4 Articulation

From the outset Shostakovich clearly distinguishes a uniform articulation method for the woodwinds. Conventional articulation markings have been used throughout the symphonies. The piccolo has not been treated in any way differently to the other woodwinds with regard to articulation. In instances of its combination with other woodwinds or *tutti* woodwind passages the piccolo is treated exactly the same as the other woodwind instruments. It is also not possible to speculate whether Shostakovich used more *legato* or *staccato* articulation for the piccolo in certain symphonies as these variables are directly subject to the character and programmatic content of the symphony. For example, predominant use is made of *non legato* articulation for the *tutti* in Symphony No. 7 where the atmosphere simulates marching German troops.

Conversely, it is easier to draw conclusions about Shostakovich's use of articulation markings for the piccolo with regard to solo passages. He has shown insight into the idiomatic characteristics and idiosyncrasies of the instrument by using articulation indications effectively in an effort to bring across a musical idea with maximum effect. Much has been left to the discretion of the performer to blend articulation variables.

Articulation markings for piccolo solos throughout the symphonies vary between languid *legato* passages to quaint and cheeky *staccato* ones. The following example from the second movement of Symphony No. 6 (Ex. 3-10) displays a very exposed crisp *staccato* solo at a *fortissimo* dynamic level. Characteristic and very effective descending and ascending demisemiquaver *legato* scale passages (mm. 407, 409, 410) are interspersed throughout the solo. Due to the tempo requirements in this movement the solo demands the closest attention to clean articulation.

Example 3-10: Symphony No. 6, second movement, mm. 396-419

 $\text{♩} = 88-96$

72 *solo*

Picc. *ff*

Cl. b.

Archi *pp*

396

Picc.

Archi

402

Picc.

Archi

408

Picc.

73

Archi

413

p

p

The synthesis of articulation, dynamic indication and combination of instruments is effectively achieved in the following excerpt from the third movement of Symphony No. 6 (Ex. 3-11). An informal atmosphere is created by the combination of *piano staccato* grace notes from the piccolo, E-flat clarinet and clarinet against an oscillating harmony in *pizzicato* from the strings, an octave apart. This tongue-in-cheek effect created by the piccolo playing grace notes has already been used liberally throughout Symphony No. 4. The effect of the grace note together with the *pizzicato* string accompaniment in this movement of Symphony No. 6 reminds the author time and again of Rossini, particularly the *Thieving Magpie* overture. In the second movement of Symphony No. 6 Shostakovich employs the humorous character of the piccolo to relieve the tension from the serious opening movement. The atmosphere throughout the second movement of Symphony No. 6 is refreshingly light and transparent.

Yet the mood belies the simmering bleakness of the times. MacDonald (1990:141) writes that Shostakovich recalls this period as “difficult and mean, unbelievably mean and hard ... every day brought more bad news ... I was so lonely and afraid...”. The last two movements of Symphony No. 6 give the listener a respite against the heaviness of previous symphonies, a moment of escapism. The next symphony to contain a lighter character is Symphony No. 9.

Example 3-11: Symphony No. 6, third movement, mm. 55-68

$\text{♩} = 152$

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 55 to 88. The second system covers measures 89 to 62 (likely a typo for 68). The instruments are Pico, Flute (Fl.), Clarinet in C (Cl. picc.), Clarinet in Bb (Cl.), and Archi (Violins, Violas, Cellos, and Double Basses). The score includes various performance markings such as *pizz.* (pizzicato), *arco* (arco), and *f dim.* (fading fortissimo). Measure numbers 55, 88, and 89 are clearly marked. The tempo is indicated as $\text{♩} = 152$.

3.5 Special effects and devices

Of all the contemporary technical effects available to the flute family such as mutes, keyslaps, timbral trills, air tones, multiphonics and microtones, Shostakovich only briefly makes use in his symphonies of flutter tonguing and double/triple tonguing for the piccolo.

Shostakovich does not stipulate double or triple tonguing preferences for the piccolo or any other woodwinds in the symphonies and leaves it to the judgment of the players.

Flutter tonguing for the piccolo is only used in Symphony No. 4. Shostakovich indicates this effect on his score as *frull.*, an abbreviation for *frullato*, the Italian term for flutter tonguing. According to Blatter (1980:74) flutter tonguing is possible on all wind instruments, although it is a more common technique for the brasses, flutes and saxophones than it is for the clarinets and double reeds. In flutter tonguing the performer allows his tongue to vibrate, much as a rolled “r” is produced in some languages, for example Italian. The difficulties encountered at the extremes of dynamic and register ranges are more noticeable at the start of a flutter-tongued passage, but lessens as the passage continues. Del Mar (1983:194), in the author’s opinion, is more realistic when stating that flutter tonguing is a specialty of flautists and less practical on reeds.

Considering the grandiose scale of the Symphony No. 4 it is not surprising that Shostakovich chose this symphony to experiment with the *frullato* technique for the piccolo and flutes. The ingenuity of Ex. 3-12 is clear, especially in the light of the level of virtuosity required to play rolled “r’s” at a *piano* dynamic level described by Blatter (1980:74). Two pairs of piccolos and flutes create a sinister pedal point of octave doubling *frullato* notes at a *pianissimo* dynamic level as a backdrop to a melody played by the cello and double bass. The high winds are layered in such a way that the piccolo is always combined with a flute in a kind of relay, similar to circular breathing. One could assume that Shostakovich was trying to create a continuous undisturbed *frullato* effect.

Shostakovich uses the typical orchestration technique of subtly overlapping the end of a phrase with a unison note at the beginning of the next passage in the following example, as is seen in the piccolo and flute in each bar from mm. 855-881. By scoring a quaver B-flat in the first

piccolo part in m. 855 the second piccolo and first flute have a small boost in their attempt to produce a clear, clean attack for the *pianissimo frullato* notes. Every subsequent bar is scored with a quaver alternating between piccolo and flute, which in itself creates an interesting effect given the individual qualities of the two instruments. The passage significantly ends in harmonic dissonance with all the instruments playing a quaver in m. 881. The effect of rolling “r’s” is discreetly handed over to the timpani from m. 882, as Shostakovich once again cunningly exploits every resource of the orchestral range.

Example 3-12: Symphony No. 4, first movement, mm. 850-892

$\text{♩} = 184$

85

Picc. I *frull.* *pp* *b.a.* *b.a.* II *frull.* *pp* *b.a.* *b.a.*

Fl. I *frull.* *pp* *b.a.* *b.a.* II *frull.* *pp* *b.a.* *b.a.*

C-III *p*

Archl. (*pp*) *pizz.* *mp* *morendo*

850

854

10778

89

Picc. I b \flat . II b \flat .

Fl. I b \flat . II b \flat .

C-fag.

Tube I *pp*

Archi *div. p ten.* *div. arco* *un.* *un.*

870

90 *J. 69*

Picc. I b \flat . II b \flat .

Fl. I b \flat . II b \flat .

C-fag.

Tr-be *con sord.* *mp* *mf* *mf* *f* *III con sord.* *f* *ff*

Tr-ni *I, II con sord.* *f* *ff*

Tube *con sord.* *I* *mp* *mf* *mf* *f* *f* *ff*

Timp. II *PP* *P* *P* *mp* *mp* *mf* *mf* *f*

Archi

881

Shostakovich engages an atypical variety of special effects and unusual instrument combinations to delicately close the second movement of Symphony No. 4 (Ex. 3-13). The piccolo is granted an opportunity to use double tonguing in m. 401 followed by a *frullato* note, *pianissimo*, in the first flute an octave below. The piccolo and flute are strategically placed at the close amidst an assembly of percussion, harp and strings.

There has been much speculation about the closing of the second movement of Symphony No. 4. Maxim Shostakovich (MacDonald 1998:2) makes the unusual suggestion that his father envisaged the onset of war in Symphony No. 4 and the percussion at the end of the second movement is intended to show “the passage of time... a clock or heartbeat”. Gennadi Roshdestvensky (during Shostakovich’s lifetime he held positions of chief conductor at the Bolshoi Theatre, the Moscow Radio Orchestra and Moscow Chamber Theatre) offers an alternative view: “For me, and I think for Shostakovich, the association is prisoners tapping out messages to one another on the hot-water pipes in jail.” In the author’s opinion the movement ends with an eerie atmosphere, conducive to the probability of both the interpretations of Maxim Shostakovich and Roshdestvensky.

Shostakovich has only used the *frullato* effect in two symphonies, twice in Symphony No. 4 for piccolos and flutes, and twice in the second movement of Symphony No. 8, which is scored for four and then three flutes (see Example 3-12 and Example 4-9). One can therefore conclude that Shostakovich strategically used the *frullato* effect in these two symphonies that clearly have a war-centred programme.

Example 3-13: Symphony No. 4, second movement, mm. 399-403

$\text{♩} = 144$

Picc.

Fl.

Cast.

Legno

T-ro

Sil.

Arpe

Archi

399

3.6 The piccolo in combination with other woodwind instruments

The process of combining certain instruments can surely be compared to an artist choosing shades and hues to best emphasise an impression through his own unique taste and style. Limited only to a varied degree by the technical limitations of the instruments, Shostakovich seems to revel in his vivid realisation of the orchestral canvas when combining the piccolo with other instruments.

The importance Shostakovich placed on the piccolo is already clear from the multitude of solo examples. His innovative combination of instruments with the piccolo reveals a keen fondness of unusual and traditional timbres. In *tutti* writing the piccolo is used to its full potential in many varied roles. Its shrill high register is used as the tip of the harmonic stack, to give clarity to a passage, harmony or cadence, and to contain and define thickly orchestrated sections. In many instances the piccolo is merely used in its traditional way to add to and blend the homogenous timbre of woodwinds by doubling, in its middle to low register, in unison with the flutes.

Predictably, Symphony No. 1 is conservative in piccolo combinations, with mostly unexposed passages with flute or flute and clarinet, either in unison or doubled at the octave. From Symphony No. 2 the piccolo is frequently scored in its very high register, which adds an extra dimension of range in the *tutti* sections. It seems as though a tendency has been established where the piccolo makes its mark in the colour of the ensemble as the outliner of full *tutti* sections in its very high register, usually in *fortissimo* dynamic levels. The effect of using the piccolo in the *tutti* to outline a harmony is increasingly more focused throughout the symphonies into smaller combinations of instruments, yet still emphasising extreme registers and striking timbres. This is evident in the number of times Shostakovich combines the piccolo with the contrabassoon, double bass or cellos in often very thin textures and at varied dynamic levels.

From Symphony No. 2 Shostakovich explores more combination possibilities with the piccolo by using it with other woodwinds as well as strings in octave doubling. For example, the piccolo and clarinet are combined for the first time in a successful duet.

The unusual effect of timbres in the combination of piccolo and E-flat clarinet is regularly used, with prominent passages in Symphony No. 4. Many challenging duets for piccolo and E-flat clarinet are scored throughout the rest of the symphonies. Examples of these will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, which deals with the E-flat clarinet.

The combination of piccolo and voice is used very conservatively with only one instance in Symphony No. 3, where the high woodwinds play a recitative-like passage an octave above the sopranos and tenors.

A typical aspect of Shostakovich's style is combining light and dark timbres, as well as high and low registers. This is clearly seen in the recurring combination of piccolo and lower double reeds, more specifically bassoon and contrabassoon, with examples found as early as Symphony No. 3. In this instance the piccolo and bassoon share a passage for four bars, doubled at the octave. The third movement of Symphony No. 4 includes a solo with piccolo, contrabassoon and double bass. Later in the same movement the piccolo and contrabassoon are combined as accompaniment to an exposed bassoon solo. The next similar, but brief encounter, is found in the first movement of Symphony No. 6 already discussed (see Ex. 3-4) where the combination of contrabassoon, double basses and harp supports a piccolo solo.

The bassoon, contrabassoon and piccolo combination is used again in the second movement of Symphony No. 8 (Ex. 3-14). The combination almost seems comical as the bassoon and contrabassoon play a melody, an octave apart, in duet with the piccolo's energetic melodic conversation, while the trumpets and strings provide a static *staccato* accompaniment. The piccolo is later briefly combined with the E-flat clarinet (mm. 106-108) whose phrase skilfully overlaps that of the bassoons in mm. 108-109, then a bar later by the contrabassoon in octave unison from mm. 109-111. The author concludes that Shostakovich deliberately used the combination of piccolo with the lower double reeds (as opposed to that with the oboe and cor anglais) because the passage used in this example is one of the very few lighter moments in this otherwise gloomy movement. The use of the piccolo with the bassoon and contrabassoon are a clear indication of his intentions to "ease the mood". Intonation could not have been a deciding factor for the choice of the combination of piccolo and E-flat clarinet, but rather the timbres of

the two instruments. Intonation would have been less of a problem had he used the piccolo with the oboe and cor anglais, for example.

Example 3-14: Symphony No. 8, second movement, mm. 95-111

$\text{♩} = 144$

56

Picc. *p* *sf* *sf*

Cl. p.icc. *sf* *sf*

Fag. *p* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

C.fag. *p* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

Tr-be

Cor. *a2* *a2*

V-nl I

V-nl II

V-le 95

57

Picc. *sf* *sf* *sf*

Fag. *sf* *sf* *sf*

C.fag. *sf* *sf* *sf*

Tr-be

V-nl I

V-nl II

V-le *pizz.*

V-c. *pizz.*

99

9375 *p*

Picc. I
Cl. picc.
V-la
V-o

103

Picc. I
Fl.
Cl. picc.
Cl.
Fag.
C.fag.

68

V-ni I
V-ni II
V-la
V-o

108

A typical example of Shostakovich's use of contrasting tone colours can be found in the second movement of Symphony No. 4 (Ex. 3-15). The light and dark timbres as well as high and low registers of the piccolos and bassoons are juxtaposed in an imitative conversation in fifths in mm. 165 and 167 against an oscillating two-note octave unison accompaniment from the clarinets. Before the brief encounter between the piccolo and bassoon, the flutes and bassoons were involved in a similar dialogue of which the remnants can be seen in mm. 163-164. The initial melodic material from the bassoons and piccolos make way for a ferocious *forte* melodic entry in octave doubling by the bassoons, contrabassoon, cellos and double basses in m. 170.

Example 3-15: Symphony No. 4, second movement, mm. 163-175

$\text{♩} = 144$

Picc.

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. picc.

Cl.

Cl. b.

Fag.

C-fag.

Tr-be

Cor.

Tr-ni

Tube

Timp.

Archi

163

128

Picc. *ff*

Fl. *ff*

Ob. *ff* *a2*

Cl. picc. *ff*

Cl. *ff* *a2*

Cl. b. *ff* *a2*

Fag. *ff* *a2*

C-fag. *ff* *a2*

Tr-be (con sord.) *a2* *b*

Cor. *f* *a2*

Tr-ni

Tube

Timp.

169

10778

128

Arch. *ff*

The combination of piccolo and percussion presents endless possibilities and opportunities for exploiting the potentially cheerful characteristic qualities of the instruments' timbres. It is probably not surprising that Shostakovich is frugal with the inclusion of lighter moments in the mostly very serious nature of the symphonies, which also explains the scant examples of the combination of piccolo and percussion. Nevertheless, a few bright moments using this combination are found in some symphonies, particularly Symphony No. 15 (Ex. 3-16) which has a rich percussion component throughout and a few delightfully animated conversations between the piccolo and tom-tom.

Symphony No. 15 was written in a couple of months during 1971. Its four movements feature solos for nearly every instrument in the orchestra and contains many quotations from various composers such as Rossini and Sibelius. The apparent light-heartedness of the symphony brings the listener to question Shostakovich's intentions – is he being sincerely witty and cheerful, or is this Shostakovich at his satirical best?

Example 3-16: Symphony No. 15, first movement, mm. 161-165

$\text{♩} = 120$

17

Picc. *f* *ff*

T-tom *p*

C-III

S.II.

161

3.7 Conclusion

The piccolo has a very prominent part in the symphonies and is clearly one of Shostakovich's favoured instruments. It is treated as an autonomous instrument with a wide variety of solos to exhibit its maximum lyrical and technical capacity. The piccolo is scored in all the symphonies (with the exception of Symphony No. 14 which has no woodwinds) and two piccolos are employed in Symphonies No. 4 and 8. The piccolo's low register is rarely used as opposed to the high register, which is frequently employed, especially with very loud dynamic levels. Shostakovich makes frugal yet resourceful use of the special effect *frullato*. He favours the unusual although complementary combination of piccolo and bassoon and/or contrabassoon in order to emphasise the extremes of register and timbres.